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Early Morning

Your fingertips trace
small, slow circles
across my back –
a smooth, warm
canvas beneath your
calloused, gentle palms.

The soft fullness
of your lips
meets the bareness
of my shoulders
and the warmth
of your breath
on my skin
awakens a delightfulness
in my soul.

Lindsey Mathis

New York Tour Guide

A Big Apple hello, and welcome! You're about to embark on the most grande, fantastic, and all-around scenic tour of New York this side of New York! If you'll please take your seats and put away your belongings, including putting your kids in the special "Kiddie fun bags" under your seats, we can begin. If the zipperlock on the kid bags isn't sticking in the grooves we'll help.

Ah, New York! First founded in 1798 by a man in an octopus costume, our first major import was dead octopuses. We were a proud people, and a lot of that pride came from just how quick we killed octopuses. By luring them into the land with the promise of an affordable low-interest loan and a really good baseball team, the octopuses were taken out of their element. Except for arm-wrestling competitions, the octopuses were killed easily. Indeed, in 1556, New York won the surprisingly chipper "Deadest City" award for all the dead octopuses piled up. In an effort to increase tourism, Jean Maude, a Frenchman raised in the stratosphere, created the first tour bus. He showed them around Harold Square, named for the famed nobody, and attempted to build a gigantic popsicle machine with their help. The tourism industry plummeted as a result; the tourists really wanted to build a fudgesicle machine.

Directly in front of us is the Golden Gate Bridge, imported from Guatemala in exchange for a 1988 Nolan Ryan baseball card. The Guatemalans are, of course, big fans of Ryan. The Golden Gate Bridge isn't a side-to-side bridge like others; it's an up-to-down bridge. As you can see, it stands straight up; just like a bridge that stands straight

up. Constructed by the famous architect Bob Grarg, the "Ground" side of the bridge is made of plutonium to make sure nobody steals the gold that the top end is made of. Unfortunately the bridge was put in a bad neighborhood. Neighbors built a giant magnet to pull the gold end to them and swapped it out with a bridge built out of fool's gold and, luckily, nobody ever found out. Grarg was a lover of palindromes and gave the Golden Gate Bridge a name that was also a palindrome but, unfortunately, Grarg sucked at palindromes so it's named the Golden Gate Bridge. The toll is \$1.50.

Here you see the Statue of Liberty. Crashed into the planet by intergalactic warlord and meteorite commander Xel Ray Kitstein, the Statue of Liberty is a testament to just how much a meteor shaped like a woman in a robe can hurt you if it crashes into you. Look at that thing; would you want that to land on you? I know I wouldn't, especially the pointy parts on top. The fire too; it's probably not actually hot but it alone is probably about four tons of meteorite. They should make meteorites out of something that doesn't hurt so much when they land on you. You know what I wouldn't mind landing on me? Marshmallows. Or trampolines. You know how you jump on trampolines and you come off them? I wonder if a trampoline landed on you if it'd bounce. You know it wouldn't but in the back of your head you think yeah, it might, a little.

On your immediate left is the bus station at 178th and 4th. With 24 bathrooms, 12 jacuzzis, and 15 beds that can turn into a transformer, it's easily the biggest bus station on 178th and the third biggest one on 4th. Built twelve years ago over a tarp incase of a reverse rainstorm, this bus station was a haven for chipmunks in the wintertime because, hey, where else are they going to go? Rumors got

out through the chipmunk community that the place was haunted and lit up a media firestorm. An investigation was launched by Scooby, Shaggy, and the rest of the gang in which the Flying Werewolf chased Shag and Scoob into a big pot next to two other big pots. They switched pots every time he looked into one and eventually revealed that the bus station was sitting on a foundation of oil, and local tycoon Bill Riderson was trying to scare everyone off so he'd have it to himself. Then Scooby got chased up a tree by a chipmunk for eating one of his acorns and everyone laughed about it a little more than they should have.

And finally we have the most famous combined theme park and library in the world, "Mark Adam's Xtreme Reading!!" Here visitors can get in for free because it's a public library, but pay \$40 for a cheeseburger because it's also an amusement park. Every ride here is built on the side of a book, so if you want to get to all that fun reading you'll have to work for it by riding the boring old rides. Want to visit a show? Great! "Mark Adam's Xtreme Reading!!" has fifty-three shows a day, in addition to one good one. All shows are done into special "Quiet Mics" and are only audible with headphones as not to disturb those who are reading. Do you hate rides? Fine! At "Mark Adam's Xtreme Reading!!" there aren't actually any rides; the whole park is one huge line you stand in that loops around. Reading is not allowed in lines unless it's advertisements or something shitty a middle-to-high schooler wrote. They reportedly got this idea

from standing in lines at Six Flags.

So yeah, that's it for New York. Please exit to your right; you can leave the kids in the bags if you want but I hate having to take them all the way to the dumpster so please take them if you could. Problem with my lower back, you know how it is. Hurry the fuck up, get off, I'm late to watch "Tiger Fight with a Bear" on HBO. I don't know how they'll top last season where the tiger lost his accounting job. Hurry.

Joshua Owens

Preservation

In the hospital, I am dry.
These halls, in their florescence,
Shine with the thick layer
Of wax and lysol, buffed smooth

Until reflective and dangerous.
The smell of boiling flowers, left
Unloved by the attended sleepers
On windowsills where there is sunlight

Scorching through glass, is a fog.
I'm adrift In the waiting room linoleum,
floating—the opposite of the oasis—
Among the positivity of patients,

Always afraid of getting wet.
“My count is high,” says one
To no one, but also to the ocean
Of virus blood, such hope there,

And I hope you get out soon.
A chorus of ghosts scream here,
Crashing against the walls, rebound
Among the lesioned legions,

Through history, through us.
My lips are chapped with prayer,
But I never prayed before this;
I never prayed before you

Came home wet-faced, ashamed.
Decades were washed in tears,
In sweat, and that death-bile
Mixed with cursed blood

On the White House lawn.
“If I die, forget burial,
Just drop my body on the steps
Of the F.D.A.” you said to me,

Just before we paid the pharmacist.
I brought flowers; I cut the stems,
Broke off the thorns for us to
Leave them, then, to dry.

Christopher Delano

Faint

When my brother is born
he isn't screaming,
his chest- motionless.
He resembles a robin's egg
that may never hatch,
or the muted flame
above an absinthe glass,
faint against the chartreuse liquid-
running out of breath.

Lucas Khan



Top Surgery: 11 months post op

Joe Whimple

Hannah Hoch and the Modern Woman

(Excerpt)

Höch's most famous, and what I believe to be her most intricate piece of work, is the photomontage *Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany* (Figure 1). It is compiled of images cut from magazines and newspapers of any and every subject matter. Its composition is filled with various sizes, colors, and positions. This shows the images for their true superficiality, and allows the viewer a chance to uncover their eyes to see its true reality. The text of this photomontage is composed from different letters and words of all sizes and typography; the people and objects have been taken from their initial context, and this opens their meanings and purpose to a new interpretation.

Höch covered a varied amount of subject matter in this work, including: politics, technology, city landscapes, the mass people, and women athletes. She even included persons of status and history like Albert Einstein, General Von Hindenburg, actress Asta Nielsen, and poet Else Lasker-Schuler. The overall message shown by the many parts of this work suggests a voice that speaks on the larger problems of the time and to daily life that was overwhelmed by propaganda and advertisements, newspapers, and illustrated magazines aimed primarily at women. This work has such a large array of subject matter, such as: the female figure, class, machinery, government, and even utopianism that the only way to fully take in the entirety of its meanings is to look at it in smaller sections.

Even the name can be analyzed for its various meanings; consider the term “Kitchen Knife” from the title. It could be referring to the object for food preparation found in the kitchen. The kitchen, being seen as the territory of women, conveys them as the caretakers of the family. Their sole purpose is being the deliverers of nutrition and pleasure. If you look beyond the literal, kitchen could then also represent the social principles that limit the potentials for power from a larger perspective. In turn, the knife becomes a tool that can be used to cut down the parts, and keep a woman from all her possibilities. Also the use of the opposing gender terms, “kitchen knife” and “beer belly,” could be a comment on the equality of men and women, or that the sexuality of men and women is nonexistent. The mixing of the genders in the title could be a statement on the fact that men can exude stereotypical female qualities and vice versa.

Lacey Nichols



Figure 1. Hannah Höch, Schnitt mit dem Küchenmesser Dada durch die letzte Weimarer Bierbauchkulturepoche Deutschlands (Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada through the last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany), 1919-20.

Autobiography:

"I'm Joshua Owens, I occasionally do stand-up comedy. For a while I used to write fictional comedy pieces, which is what this is. I stopped going to college and hope to do stand-up for a living. I used to want to be a writer until I realized all I can do is write a bunch of really, really stupid things, which is what this is if you read it."

-Joshua Owens

"Lindsey, 23, currently lives in Columbus, Georgia. She attends Columbus State University where she is pursuing an MEd in English and Secondary Education."

-Lindsey Mathis

"I'm about to graduate college in May. I'm ready. I don't pick up phone calls or answer texts during Game of Thrones."

-Lacey Nichols

"My name is Christopher Delano and I am a student at Columbus State University pursuing a B.A. in Theatre Arts with a minor in English. These poems were written in part for my poetry writing class."

-Christopher Delano

"Lucas Khan, is a recent graduate of Georgia State University. This is his second time being published in Sprinklers."

-Lucas Khan

"Once, I thought it would be awesome to be a postman instead I joined the Army. I live in Long Island, NY where I take the 45 minute ferry to the city. You should listen to Brand New."

-Joe Whimple