

Suicide bomber

Here is my labyrinth mind: invade it with your memes
My framework hands: wire them to your dreams
My blank memory: load it with your sin
My acrylic skin:
crack it with your convoluted pain
My desert eyes: wash them with your rain
My blood: to melt in light
Smacked face:
track to grace
Soul: in all the night: nova-bright.



Thank you

Thank you for the versions, the visions,
the voices, fiddles, drums, electric
guitars in my head, and the chanting, the wailing,
translations of ashes and orchids
and terrified cities. Thank you for rinsing me.
Thank you for unmasking me, washing and anointing me,
in cloth-of-love clothing me,
filling my dark church with candles.
Thank you for showing me the strength of the sweet
fire in us. Thank you for the public
temples and private shrines, the amulets,
tokens and icons. Thank you for the books,
posters, websites, unexpected
parcels of grace. Thank you for the encouragement.
Thank you for the path, and the torches along it,
and the rocks and sticks strewn on it.
And thank you for not knowing me, and not
understanding me, and not telling me how.

In the church of my skull



Attach

In the melting mess of your face see
paintings. In the stiff wick of your hair see
tellings. In your filigreed neck see tree-rings
recording the layered war of your fortress. Blow
on your thin blue eyelids,
lash your mighty breath to your brow. Study
your frownsmile muzzle,
sew your noisome strings in your circle. Shred
your wasted skincloth.
Attach your awesome wings to your back.

Poems by Janet Jackson

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Read more at **Proximity**: www.arach.net.au/~huxtable/janet/proximity.html

Arm you with magic

Saying
in our boxes, your small
and private
name

In our houses.
We light a candle,
shed a tear,
be silent.

In our places.
All we can do.
We wish through the walls and the wires
for medicine to help you
for mother's soft palms to arm you with magic
for family to shield you
for father's calloused fingers to spark up a spell.

Jump up laughing, a whole child again.
Let their hands bless you,
heal and seal you,
send you out dancing as the calloused fingers cry
their relief,
as the soft palms relax
and give thanks.

Saying
in a muted breath
a prayer, your
name.



Take a stick to the truth, a

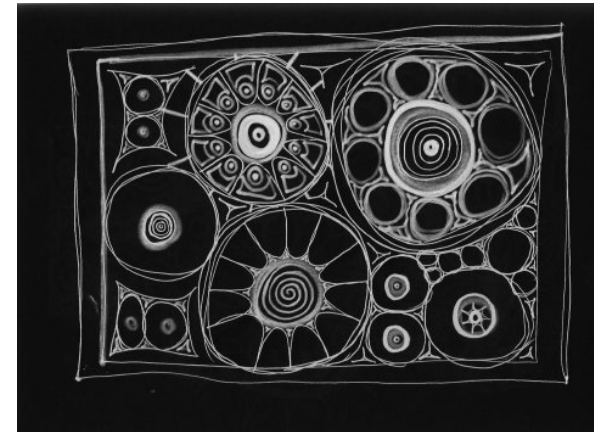
stirring stick, a mixing stick
and stick
your truth all over me like jewels,
like geegaws, fabulous flashes, black
flak jackets, cigarette packets, like
nothing on earth, like birth, like, like,
California, I've never been there...

Where are you?
In America. Anywhere
in America.

And the wind
howls and the walls creak
and the trees
shiver and the animals wail
and the weapons take over
the warriors.

THERE ARE NO MORE WARRIORS, ONLY OPERATORS.

Stick to the truth. I loathe
your lies, those grey lying
ways. Don't you be like that.
Stay with us, now! Stay real, y'hear me?
I want no plastic doll. Reality,
I want reality and make no
mistake — make all the mistakes you can.
I want no fake, no sharp mask. Your
own flawed skin, uneven jawline, off-white teeth.
Stick to the truth.



Entropy and order sing

A weekend at New Norcia,
a strange, Catholic place
that made me a foreigner.
But a spirit is there.
Entropy and order sing
in the walled spaces and spacious view,
old buildings, new birds,
disused rooms, souvenir shop,
graveyard, church and bell.
So I sent a question.

And yesterday, the answer arrived.
There is no good, no evil.
Only harmony and disharmony.
And we know which is which.

xtend

```
if (  
  I xtend  
  beyond fone & skin, paper & sweat, screen & breath,  
  a weave thru web&layers intu  
  yu /*a piece of me in yu*/  
)  
then {  
  I contain a piece, a peace, of  
  yu; /*all */  
  /*yu hu */  
  /*have reached me*/  
}  
cradle; keep safe;
```

Ripped

I CARE FOR NOBODY
says the shirt.
\$60. 10 identical. 600 blankstare dollars.
Fucked, ripped, empty 2005.

1976 shirts said CRASS or ANARCHY.
Ripped – but not in Chinese sweatshops.

Who cares for nobody?
The corporation.

"Anger is an energy"

If I can't have love give me hate.

Alternative energies

Humanity: a species that survives by burning things
and each other.

Smoke in my eyes
so I take them out and put them away
Marching's hard
so I decommission my legs
Speaking hurts
so I shut down my tongue

But I forget my ears, Harmony.

Sing, put the tears back into our eyes, bang
the eyes back into our heads, call
the tongues back into our mouths, thrum
the bones back into our legs

We won't be propped up: stand up.
Walk, see, cry,
ask out loud: can we worship
wind, sea, sun

and each other?

Skeleton

Bring to mind a nylon garden
and a paper bird-bath.
A lead bird with four wings
and a plastic gardener with aniseed eyes.

Do you like it?

Imagine a melamine desert
and steel tumbleweeds.
A bald saloon with rubber walls
and a silicon bartender with margarine lips.

Do you like it?

Will you eat here?

Do you like your restaurant?

Can you see your name
on your chair
where your hot skeleton waits
for its chemicals?

Bring to mind a Jell-O cubicle
with a painted view.
A fur television with fifty screens
and a holographic prostitute with no legs.

Do you like it?

Will you stay here?

Do you like your hotel?

Can you see your needle
on your table
where your tainted skeleton shakes
for its input?

Imagine a titanium bathroom
a velour phone
and a three-armed valet with corduroy hair.
This will be yours. Do you like it?

Centred

Knees slightly bent, body lightly curved around
his guitar, held close, vital

Elegant fingers on the Telecaster's neck
lift and slide and press

Long thumb and finger delicately direct
the plectrum

Face an intent mask
mouth a concentrated line
eyes lost in love with it

Sound surges up his spine, through his chest, shoulders, head,
into his eyes, into his hands on body, neck, strings, pick
and by magic he understands, wire and amp and wave
and magic he doesn't understand, music-magic
into listeners and band and back
into his ears, his body, into the walls and into everything

Instrument

My guitar is silent
Waiting to be touched.
Body rigid on a chrome stand.
Mouth open in a frozen 'O'.
Strap hanging limply,
embroidery adorning nothing.

My guitar is silent
Waiting to be touched
Not knowing, not asking if my touch
will be soon or distant,
tender or violent.

Hair and guts and numbers

When I was 13 I wrote a fictional letter.
I played that I was married to my crush
(15, dark eyes, black wavy hair,
face like Clark Gable,
back like Brad Pitt,
and gutless me with no idea what to say).
I played at him away working, and me writing,
telling him our baby's latest movements
and, as I'd heard adults do,
complaining about the price of petrol.
I played it scary: 33 cents a litre.

Today's cheapest is 98.9.
Something to do with Venezuela, apparently.
I see no choice but to pay it and try to smile,
but Caltex give me a bonus: the boy behind the
counter,
maybe 18, maybe 19,
long red-dyed hair loosely tied back,
eyes deep and quiet,
cheekbones, lips, smooth skin,
and I'm 38 and full of guts
so I give him a second look
straight in the eyes
and he sees it

then I shop for sleek knickers
and go home to the father of my kids,
the laidback geek with the salary package
and the hairy gut and the number-3 beard
and the balding, greying number-2 scalp.

On the radio news a 36-year-old teacher
is jailed for fucking her 15-year-old student
couldn't handle it

Dream 45 (Walking)

He walks in new steps
out of his city, his alley, his archway
walks in new steps
feet leaving the broken shoes
chest emerging from the bloodshot shirt
walks in new steps
in the rain, in the rain...
always in the rain

He casts off the layers
the hat and mask
the polyester and glitter that didn't keep out the rain
and the clown shoes.
He finds his workman's pants and his path
and walks again
He thought he could run but he walks again
in the rain

The dirty acid rain splashes
around him, serves only to cleanse him
as he walks. The echoes of his steps
reach the corners of the world, but his steps
are quiet.

His feet are bare
and his blood marks his path.
The acid rain can't fade it.

He brings the fields green to the city
the grey sea-rush to the suburb
the ancient stone to the skyscraping offices.
Brings faerie lights to the freeway
faerie breaths to the runway
hedgerow-river mead to the glass apartments.

He sends home dreams as he walks in new steps,
bare and brave in the rain.

Hold the line

Is that the ink of your mind
or is that just so much
artificially-coloured water?

The ink of my mind is streaked with blood
house of anger
house of confusion

looking here, looking there where new black flowers spread their maybe
poison

bluer than death, this anger
an aurora, this anger
a roadblock, this confusion
a freeway, this confusion

Help us, you with the beautiful
skin! Help us, you with the witch-hazel
hands! Help us, you with the hair like
sin! Help us, you with the half-cracked smile!

You hosting the angels in the distorted sky of your eyes
and you slipping through silver fish in the live seas of your chest
and you trapping volcanoes in the desert rains of your shoulders
and you making sunbursts on the strikeplate of your lips

give us the sandpaper grip of your fists
give us the megaphone ink
of your wrists

tell us the terrible names
of our peers

tell us your truth, be our shamans, seers,
bards, makers, shakin' psalm-shapers, be our
souls' soul-brothers, our
sweet soul sisters, our
reason for blisters, our master and mistress

hiphoprissy, rockocracy, intellimockracy!
alloycats, nervocrats, dance-o-mats! work
and play, vortex
and apex

but don't be our gods,
be our shoes.

Ears well-sucked

Underblanket of the soul,
the old, old soul,
full of fluff and dustmites,
patched and ragged,
but warm

Underblanket of the soul
underpinning
the skin
underwriting
the veins

Security blanket with a teddy-bear head,
ears well-sucked. You need a busload of faith, said Lou Reed

Several truckloads, Lou,
rolling into your town,
rolling into my town,
rolling down the highway, the scab of a highway,
stereos pumping,
blasting past the silence

Power tools grinding, sanding
the layers, sucking
the fat, finding
the arteries, exposing
the nerves, growing
the dendrites, extending
the tendrils, culturing
new organs, nurturing
new skin,
bandaging, sheeting, blanketing, wheeling,
truckin' on down to my town

blasting across the South Sea to my town
A Lear jet, a rocket
ship, a cruise
missile,
landing on my nose, putting out my eyes
shredding my eardrums and ripping out my tongue
warm and cosy and blind and dumb

Samantha, 7 weeks

fuzzy honeyblonde hair, blonde
eyebrows, faint
nipples, neat navel,
fat bare labia
chubby bent legs
tiny toenails, unused
knees, soft
buttocks, downy
hair in the small of the back
wriggling arms, waving fists, double chin, round pink cheeks
and eyes...
sometimes wild with pain or glazed with hunger, animal eyes
sometimes soft with satisfaction or bright with inner laughter, gentle hello eyes
Samantha
older than earth,
older than pure slow life, older than age,
older than beauty, and older and wiser than me.

Sling

The baby, softly breathing on my chest
offers me his fuzzy scalp to kiss.
His warmth is on my belly
his lips against my breast.
He's ready to embrace.
Strapped on firmly as I work and walk and rest
my baby, softly sleeping, fills my abyss.
He's heavy on my body
but easy on my heart.
He's ready to embrace.
He's my emblem of peace.

Hold the line.
Hold the line that links our ankles,
and hear:

I'll be nothing to you if you'll be nothing for me.
Be silent behind your wall
be deaf behind your wall
be arcane behind your wall
and be,
just be,
in the end if you just be
it'll be
enough. So be.

I am your sunlight

Like sunlight, I need
your love. Like a tree high
on sunlight, I am
your sunlight. Made of your rich rays.
In all my naked nights they are stars.
In all my empty rooms they are chairs.
In the splattered dark they are angels' voices
and in the church of my skull they are the altar
where I sacrifice and satisfy myself.

Your mad rays in rows and rhythms reach me
in fire and feather find me
in slow succession search me
in world water wash me
in warm waves welcome me
in liquid lilt lend me
love. Like sunlight.

In the mirror-maze

Like love, I need this sunlight.
Like arms around me, I need this thunder and rain.
I need this storm of noise like I need to breathe.

Like anticipated lips, I kiss
these wet stones gleaming with a blue dawn,
these diamonds in the dirt,
these nightingales.

Like eyes locked on mine,
this constructive engagement,
this desert wind, this evening of silence,
this morning of crows and magpies.

Like hair under my hand I feel
this sweet slow susurration, spiked
with spice and smeared with honey, stabbed
with lemon and scattered
by looking-glasses...by a mirror-maze.

*Look at the floor - it'll be OK.
Keep your gaze on the vinyl.*

When I pray,
when I face that way and put
my head on the floor,
when I drink
the ritual drink,
when I sing the hymn,
when I breathe...

In the mirror-maze, I meet this sunlight.
Like a new train on a new line, I catch
this thunder and rain. In the mirror-maze,
examining my lips and eyes, checking my jacket,
looking for traces of these wet stones,
these nightingales.

In the mirror-maze in the long tunnel in
the nightplace of Dali and Magritte in the storm,
flung by the whirlwind, given
to crows and magpies, smeared
with honey, in the mirror-maze.

*Look at the sky - it'll be alright.
Look at the clouds - they're still here.*

Heartbeat in the mirror-maze:
hooded, black-clad, shaded,
red and powerful,
full of carolling magpies,
full of clouds,
full of this sunlight.

Don't be afraid.
Give it all away.
Give it all the sunlight and all the thunder
and all the nightingales you have.
Give it to the mirror-maze,
let the mirror-maze duplicate it and send it everywhere.

We'll all meet there in the middle of the mirror-maze,
up to our ears, smeared with everything,
stabbed by black beaks of magpies,
bleeding all over the sky,
blurring the glasses with beautiful blood,
throwing it all away.

Where did it come from, this sunlight, this thunder?
From the blue and brown eyes,
the connected fingers and feet,
the wet stones of the street and the river -
from the foundation.

*Like love, I need this sunlight.
I'll see you in the mirror-maze.
Look at the sky - it'll be alright.*

My Brother Is Dead

I am unbreakable.	You are broken.
I am built of crystals of words and I am unshakable.	You were made of small twigs and now you are broken.
I am made of modern metal and I am unbendable.	You were struck and shattered. You are unmendable.
I am sheathed in thin Teflon. Nothing sticks.	You are sheathed in thick earth. Nothing sticks.