



Lulu

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LULU

Kathy Acker



Kate Simon

1. The Selling of Lulu

(On the street, outside the professor's house.

Lulu sits down on the plinth of a column, sorting her flowers. She doesn't at all look romantic or virginal or anything at all. This is what she looks like: she isn't even a kid (being a kid is romantic): she's eighteen, perhaps twenty years old. She wears a little French-ish hat, where she got this one we'll never know, which has been exposed for more years than she has to London soot, wind and rain and has seldom if ever been brushed or loved. Neither has her hair. Her hair color's natural; she's not a punk; it's mousy. She wears some kind of black coat which manages to touch her knees. The coat's too tight around her chest. Her boots, likewise, are something-or-other. She is as clean as she can be.

But she's had a hard life.

Compared to real ladies, she is dirty. Do we see any ladies? Are there any ladies to be seen? Like all women, she needs unnaturalness.)

LULU: *(To Schön, a dignified professor.)* Cheer up, captain, and buy a flower off a poor girl. *(Her hand is reaching for his wallet.)*

SCHÖN: *(Politely.)* I'm sorry. *(He sees her hand on his wallet; as if he's almost not acting grabs this hand, and brings her to her feet.)* Something is going to have to be done with you poor people.

LULU: I ain't done nothing wrong. I'm only trying to sell you a flower. I have a right to sell you a flower if I stay off the curb, don't I?

SCHÖN: Why're you scared of me? Do you think I'm trying to hurt you?

LULU: I don't know *what* you are.

SCHÖN: *Who* I am.

LULU: Who I am.

SCHÖN: You do not know who you are because you do not know how to speak properly. A woman who utters depressing and disgusting sounds has no right to be—anywhere—no right to live. Certainly no right to sell flowers. Remember that you are a living being with a soul and thus with the divine gift of articulate speech. Your soul's language is the language of Milton and Shakespeare and the English Empire. Wouldn't you like to be able to speak properly? (*Lulu doesn't say anything.*) Come along now. I have to do something to help out the poverty-stricken in this country.

Inside the Professor's house

SCHÖN: (*To the Maid.*) Take her clothes.

THE MAID: Yes, sir.

SCHÖN: By George, the streets will be strewn with the bodies of men shooting themselves for your sake before I've done with you.

LULU: You've got no right to touch me.

SCHÖN: I have no desire to touch you. I'm going to find out whether I can change you. I'm going to find out whether I can make a poor . . . member . . . of society into a member of society. It's a social experiment.

LULU: You can't change me cause there's nothing to change. I've never been.

SCHÖN: Well, now you are. Or hopefully, you're going to be. Think of this: You shall marry a socialist politician who controls the arts. His father, who's a conservative member of Parliament, disinherits him for marrying you. But when he finally realizes your exquisite beauty, your fine manners, your dinner parties, his Lordship . . .

LULU: Shit.

SCHÖN: What?

LULU: Shit. I gotta shit.

SCHÖN: Oh. If you are naughty, and idle, you will sleep in the kitchen among black widow spiders and be hit by my chauffeur with his huge car rod. If you do not do what I tell you to, you will be guilty.

—Outside and inside Schön's house

(A day-laborer, actually whatever's worse than a worker, manages to knock his hand against Schön's door. His name is Schigold. Since he has nothing else to do, he keeps on knocking. After a long while, Schön opens his door.)

SCHÖN: Excuse me.

SCHIGOLD: I want my daughter. That's what I want. See?

SCHÖN: I thought she doesn't have a father.

SCHIGOLD: Everyone has a father. If a child didn't have a father, it wouldn't know how to want.

SCHÖN: Then of course you want your daughter. Take her. Back.
 SCHIGOLD: Take her back? Just like that?
 SCHÖN: Why should I pay for her? Why should I pay for her wants?
 SCHIGOLD: Somebody's got to pay. *What* do you think she is?
 SCHÖN: *Who. Who* do you think she is? She speaks the same . . . language . . . as you.
 SCHIGOLD: Now now, look here, Governor. I don't know what you're saying. The girl belongs to me. You got her. Don't you believe in free enterprise?
 SCHÖN: Only for the free. Since she belongs to you, she isn't free. Take her away.
 SCHIGOLD: No, Governor. Don't be so hasty. Haste makes waste and you've wasted my daughter, so I want something in return.
 SCHÖN: This system isn't capitalism.
 SCHIGOLD: No, it's decapitation. Listen, Governor. I don't want my daughter to waste her life. I want her to have the chance to be something.
 SCHÖN: Someone.
 SCHIGOLD: To own something. A girl needs to have a man. You and me is men of the world, ain't we?
 SCHÖN: No, we are not just because we are both men. *Of* and *own* are two different worlds.
 SCHIGOLD: All I ask is me rights as a man. You're a man, aren't you, Governor? A man is a man. Or are you a thief? Would you take away a man's bread-and-butter and give back nothing? Are you a slaver?
 SCHÖN: Only if you're a slave.
 SCHIGOLD: I'm not a slave: I know what money is. What's a fifty to you? What's Lulu to me?
 SCHÖN: Lulu? Is that her name?
 SCHIGOLD: Of course not. What's in a name?
 SCHÖN: Are you a white slaver?
 SCHIGOLD: Not in a general way I'm not, but to oblige a gentleman like you I'd do a good deal, I do assure you.
 SCHÖN: Fifty pounds is not a good deal. Fifty pounds of flesh.
 SCHIGOLD: Then forty.
 SCHÖN: Here's a tenner and good riddance. (*Schigold grabs the money and weasels away.*) Moral questions are exceedingly difficult.

2. The Creator and The Creation

The Creator

(Schön is pacing around his study. His study looks like a room in a Renaissance painting where a room is both a microcosm of the whole world and reflects endless numbers of microcosms, for there is no other reality than anthropomorphism. Thus: no escape for man from himself. The ideological revolution that began in Renaissance Italy was men's new belief that they, not God, were the centers of the world. That they can do anything. That they can do whatever they want. So Schön, who is now rich,

believes that he owns the world. He is surveying his room: the world.)

SCHÖN: Thrones, Dominions, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers I now possess, as Lord, a spacious World, to Heaven little inferior.

I was a working-class boy.

I didn't have any security. Of course I didn't have any schooling.

With my own two hands, I made a kingdom. All this:

Not only with my hands, with my very body, like Hercules, I wrestled Fate, the nine-headed snake, the Hydra of the poor. Like Hercules the hero, I won.

How does a working-class boy become a hero in this world? By his own two hands: by fraud and bribery. Every time I successfully seduce a man with money, I steal that man's will: he is then lifeless: a robot; he can be controlled. In this manner I extended my economic control, for economic control is only the control of other humans. I know.

There are those who dislike me. There are those who dislike me. There are rats. There are rats everywhere. They creep. They sneak. They have brains. They carry diseases. I cannot get rid of my rats. Rat!

I have been forced to take drastic measures against those who want to hurt me. This is not my fault. But I always have to be careful: they might attack me at any moment, the humans whom I don't fully control. Every second of the world I have to be at the trenches.

My world is rotting.

The rat rot is deep, deep: there are so many enemies and people at war that sooner or later the world is going to end.

When the world ends, there'll be no more air. That's why it's important to pollute the air now. Before it's too late.

After the end of the world, also, all the technological advances which have been made in this century, which could at this very moment allow a leisure society for all but a few technicians, and a few women with wombs,—so that there will, I mean there could, be no more social class—after the end of this world when humans are no more, the machines for human paradise will run on their own. Just as McDonald's now runs.

After the end of the world, there will be no more time because the world has ended. Since there won't be any more time barriers, all the airplanes'll be super-Concordes. Anyone, even a woman, can travel anywhere in human reality instantaneously. Therefore after the end of this world, feminism will be viable.

It's the women who're doing this! It's her. The bitch. The one for whom I did everything. The one I brought out of nothing to make into a decent human. My very creation is turning against me. She's a traitor.

In the same manner as when England deigned, out of the goodness of his heart, to turn the black devils in Africa into decent social products and did so then their human products turned on them devilishly and are still turning on them devilishly, so for those in power good deeds are always mistakes.

Bitch: I'll give you what's coming to you. Why should I turn you into anything but nothing so you can turn against me?

LULU: (*Yelling from offstage.*) Daddy!

SCHON: This child is now an abortion.

The Creation

(*Lulu enters.*)

LULU: Do you love me?

SCHÖN: Parents always love their children.

LULU: That's why I'm asking you: *Do you love me?*

THE MAID: (*Who's always in the background.*) You have to respect your father, Lulu.

LULU: You *don't* love me.

THE MAID: Lulu. Do what your father tells you to do. Go to your room.

LULU: You don't love me! I'm nothing. You've made me nothing. (*Schön hits her. Lulu, from the floor.*) Daddy, you have given me everything. I don't have anything else but you because I don't know anything but you.

If I lose you, I am not.

What could I've known before you? It's not possible for a child to know anything prior to her father.

How could I know anything besides you? Is there anything else here? This is your smell. These are your objects: your touch. Everything that I see and touch is yours. My smell is your smell. My touch is to touch you. My eyes cannot see beyond you. Who are you, daddy?

It must be true because if not, nothing is true: I am yours.

Daddy, I am yours. Can't you love me?

THE MAID: Your father wants you to go to your room.

LULU: (*Directly to Schön.*) Don't you realize what this lack of love is? I'm not denying that you picked me up from nothing and made me. But if you do not love what and who you have made, for all is living, what you have made is polluted and an abortion. Just as your world is now polluted and an abortion. I am polluted and an abortion.

I was better off before I existed.

Don't you see what you're doing because you refuse to love me? Look. See.

SCHÖN: (*Finally speaking.*) I see a disobedient child. I see a child who has no respect for her elders, for the culture into which she was born, thus, for society, I see someone who will become amoral, if not worse. I see. I can't even say "a person," of whom I am deeply, Lulu, deeply ashamed.

Lulu. From now on, you will be confined to your room. I have nothing more to say to you because you will not be worth speaking to until you learn to be a person and to act in manners acceptable to this society.

(*Lulu looks around her and no longer bothers to speak to anyone because IT ISN'T WORTH COMMUNICATING ANYMORE.*)

Their End.

(While both Schön and Lulu are absorbed in their own realities, Schön in paranoia and Lulu in autism, Schigold, who is now so old, worn-out and poor he looks exactly like death, sneaks into the room. He might as well be Death or dead for all Schön or Lulu care about him.)

SCHIGOLD: My home! My home my kingdom!

Farewell happy fields where Joy forever dwells:

Hail horrors, hail infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell

Receive thy new possessor: One who brings A mind not to be chang'd by

Place or Time:

Me.

The mind is its own place, and in it self

Can made a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.

Where's some booze?

(Looking about him. Finding it.)

Here at last we shall be free.

(Drinking.)

Here we may reign secure.

Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n.

I own everything here! I do.

You only need to ask and you shall have:

3. False and True Love

Waiting for Godot

(Schön's study is now too dark to see clearly into. Voices:)

THE MAID: What're you waiting for?

LULU: I'm waiting for my brother.

May The Rich And The Poor Join Hands

(Schigold is now alone in this study of the world. But he's pickled. He looks even poorer and more down-and-out than death. He looks as if he's living in urban USA.)

SCHIGOLD: I'm a worthless piece of something-or-other. Humanity. I'm not even that good. I'm not even good enough for the bombers of humankind.

I hope they kill me off fast because this slow death is killing my guts. Where's more liquor? (*He looks around the study for more booze, but, like everything else, it's hopeless. Being intelligent, he changes his mind.*) I'm not going to have anything more to do with them.

You know what they said to me when I was good enough—well-dressed enough—in a suit,—for them to take a little notice of. A little.

Maybe I could enter that society. They said, "Here, dog. Play along with us and we'll let you into society so you'll begin to have a few friends." What dog wouldn't lick a little? What man here is so naive that he is too purist to survive? But I'll tell you something: the tongue that licks their hands, even slightly, is torn out. They are the masters of intelligent torture.

(*Looks around him. Confused.*) Who are they? Who's out there? Where are you, people who hide in total sufficiency and your lack of need, you people whom I hate?

(*Lulu enters this study. She is now rich. Jewels are making love to her nipples and hairs. Her gown is Chanel, not Claude Montana nor Jean-Paul Gaultier. Money, not being Marxist, is worshipping humanity, as it should.*)

SCHIGOLD: (*Looking up to her.*) Please help me.

LULU: What are you doing here?

SCHIGOLD: I'm your father. I used to take care of you.

LULU: I'm terribly sorry. (*She has learned how to speak.*) I'm waiting for someone.

SCHIGOLD: I know who you're waiting for. You're waiting for a man. Aren't you?

LULU: Do you want me to get you a drink? (*Thinking that if she gets him drunk enough, he'll be non-existent.*)

SCHIGOLD: Get me another bottle of Jack Daniels. (*As she looks for a bottle of anything.*) You can't fool me, you know, I'm your father. I know about you: I know you've got a man around here.

LULU: You're drunk.

SCHIGOLD: I am drunk, but I will tell you something no other man ever tells you: No man respects you. Not one of the men you have anything to do with has any respect for you. I'm the only man, Lulu, who cares for you and more important has respect for you. (*He starts crying.*)

LULU: Look. Daddy . . .

SCHIGOLD: I care for you: I can make you happy. (Almost unconsciously he is searching for her breast.) I'm the only man you should trust.

LULU: (*Pulling away.*) Why don't you do it with my mother?

SCHIGOLD: Your mother doesn't do these sort of things. She's dead.

LULU: You'll have to keep your hands off of me if you want me to let you have anything to do with me in the future.

SCHIGOLD: (*Crying, and sucking her nipple.*) You can't trust men, Lulu. I'm the one who's taken care of you and paid for you all these years. (*The doorbell rings.*)

LULU: Shit. (*She adjusts her breasts and jewels.*) Hide in the bathtub. Stop

weeping like a woman. (*Schigold manages to crawl only to a curtain which he wraps around him ostrich-style.*)

The Theatre

(*When Lulu opens the door, Alwa, Schön's son, enters. Alwa is a successful theatre director. He is bald and has a slight stomach from drinking too much beer and never eating. Even though he's a slight sadist, as are most theatrical directors, he ignores this and all his other personal attributes by allowing only work in his life.*)

ALWA: I've been thinking about the new play.

LULU: Why do you have to think about work all the time? Don't you have any feelings?

ALWA: What I really want is the actors to have freedom. I want the actors to find their freedom. But they won't do this. That's the problem.

LULU: I have to talk to you. Personally. I've been waiting for you all day. You're the only person I can talk to because you're my brother.

ALWA: I have to make my actors take their freedom. You're my actress, Lulu. How can I do this? I know what I want to do, but I can't do it.

LULU: I have a problem. (*With increasing realization that she can't talk to him because he isn't her brother. That she has no one.*) I'm very lonely.

ALWA: I know what to do. Listen to me, Lulu. Just shut up for a second. Sit down. Is there anywhere we can sit down? We have to talk.

LULU: Here. Would you like anything to drink? What can I do for you? (*They sit down on a couch; rather, Lulu on the edge of the couch, and Alwa on a nearby hard chair.*)

ALWA: I know how I'm going to do it. I shall push my actors until they're forced to take their own freedom: they're forced to revolt against me. At that moment the play will begin.

LULU: (*Sadly.*) That's a brilliant conception.

ALWA: It's conceptually correct. This is Sartre's notion of freedom.

LULU: (*Shaking.*) Will you hold my hand?

ALWA: (*Not holding her hand.*) Lulu, you're the one who's inspired me. I've learnt most of this from working with you, for your relations with men teach me what happens when a woman's pushed too far.

LULU: (*Sadly.*) I don't understand what you want with me.

ALWA: I can't afford to disrupt my emotional balance when I'm in the middle of a play. I have to give all my attention to the play. Look, Lulu: it isn't easy between us now because, since you're my father's wife, I would be destroying this familial stability if I felt anything for you.

LULU: I want a brother.

ALWA: Wait until the play's over. (*He french-kisses her goodbye. Lulu clings to him and kisses him. She wants to ask if he loves at all, but can't because such language isn't allowed. For reasons unknown to her he kisses harder and she embraces with all the need of her inability to talk or loneliness: her need for a brother.*)

4. Lulu In Hell: Casting The Devils Out Of Hell

for Eleggua, lonely spirit, friend to violent warring Ogun, causer of all automobile accidents, you my black lonely spirit, loneliness, Holy Guardian Angel who joins Yemaya from whose bursting stomach comes out the world. To cast out what is dead inside (which is outside) my mind.

for the peace of the heart.

Hell: The End Of Affection

(The scene continues from the end of 3: Schön, entering his study, sees his wife kissing his son, but doesn't say anything. They don't see him.)

LULU: *(Drawing back from Alwa.)* I want to know if you're going to fuck me.

ALWA: I told you: I can't afford to disrupt my life. You're married to my father.

LULU: Are you even sexually attracted to me?

ALWA: *(Lying.)* What man wouldn't be? You're the femme fatale.

LULU: Just put your arms around me. Hold me. *(Not even caring what the reality is or what the effects will be as long as she gets hugged. Over his shoulder, as he's hugging her against his will, she sees Schön.)* Daddy!

Casting Out Devil One By The Lack Of Causality

LULU: Daddy. Why're you staring like that? What's wrong?

SCHÖN: I neither cry nor speak a word, nor will I, until a new sun looks down upon a cleaned-out world.

LULU: I'd feel better if you'd show your anger, if you'd take your anger out on me. If you'd punish me. If you'd touch me. How many times have you told me that I am only the cause of you: by the grace of your tongue I have a name; by your money's power I am clothed. Justly punish me. Strip me! There's nothing in this existence I want. *(The two men are watching her as if she's their stripper.)*

SCHÖN: You're a stanger to everything decent; your flesh is corruption. I don't know why this very earth *(his foot strikes either concrete or plastic)* tolerates your presence on it.

Always, Lulu, you have been a piece of shit. You were always unlike every other person. You did everything wrong. You are genetically wrong. Your very being is proof that you should die.

LULU: *(Bending to floor.)* Kill me. Take away my life. This is the only way I can get affection. *(The play director, disgusted by this scene, has turned away from Lulu. Schigold, who's been in a drunken stupor somewhere or other, is attracted enough by this scene to wake up enough to move toward them.)*

SCHÖN: What do you want? *(Schon takes out a gun and points it at Schigold. Schigold doesn't see it because he's staring at Lulu.)*

SCHIGOLD: Hey. You're cute. I want to fuck you.

SCHÖN: *(To Lulu.)* You see: you're a whore. You're a toilet men use, an emp-

ty hallway any men wander in and out of. You are nothing.
SCHIGOLD: I'd like to fuck the shit out of you. I'd like to stick my thingy-dingy up your witchy-washy. I'll rub and dub you until you scream for help.
ALWA: Why don't we all sit down and try to straighten this out. A glass of wine mi . . . (*Schön pistol-whips his son. Alwa falls to the floor.*)

Casting Out Devil Two By Innocence

SCHÖN: (*Looking down at his son.*) The night's coming up. (*He grasps his gun even harder.*)
SCHIGOLD: I'm not so confused anymore. I think I know what's going on.
SCHÖN: (*Looking at Schigold.*) The air in here stinks. (*Showing him the gun.*)
SCHIGOLD: Don't hurt me. Don't hurt me. I never did anything to you. I never hurt you. Let me out of here.
SCHÖN: There's nowhere to go.
LULU: (*To her fathers.*) If memories are realities, this world is a prison.
SCHIGOLD: (*To Lulu.*) Lulu. At least I can look at you. Do you know, when you were a child, you were always smiling? Your mother called you "Sunshine."
LULU: I had a mother? I thought she was mad.
SCHIGOLD: (*On his knees again, clawing to grasp on to Lulu's legs.*) Lulu, don't leave me. Never let me go, child. All that we have is blood!
SCHÖN: (*Kicking him.*) Get your filth off.
SCHIGOLD: No. Never. Innocence is all that we can proclaim! (*He is biting Lulu's knee so hard, it bleeds. Schön shoots him.*)
SCHÖN: Shit. This world is a piece of shit.

Casting Out Devil Three, The Father, The Last Of The Holy Trinity, By Murder: The Battle Against Love

LULU: No.
SCHÖN: What're you saying?
LULU: You don't love me. You don't love anyone.
SCHÖN: If I loved no one, I'd love you because you don't exist.
LULU: (*To herself.*) Since I've been submitting my soul to my appetite for being loved, I have put myself in prison. (*To Schön.*) You said that parents always love their children. Fathers always love their daughters . . .
SCHÖN: (*Interrupting her reason.*) You're not my daughter: You're a dead man's daughter.
LULU: . . . This is so: The child is born into a situation of love. Being born into a situation of love, the child must love. A child cannot not be love. Don't you see?
SCHÖN: You are not my child. I do not love you: I hate you, hole.
LULU: I can not say "No" to love to my appetite for love, and yet I must. To survive I must not love. Don't you understand?
SCHÖN: I understand everything. (*He puts the gun to his head.*)

I was once a man, but now I'm as dead then rotten as a forest after a conflagration's lived in it for days. The entire world that I see is dead and rotten.

All your emotions. All your emotions—these needs—whatever you speak about—are nothing, trivial, in this total pain that is. You still do not see how deeply you are nothing to me. (*He is still holding the gun to his head.*)

LULU: I see. I won't deny that I love you even if it costs me my life.

SCHÖN: Can you love ash? Can you love fish rotting on the burnt-up sands? If you can not understand, if you are so stupid that you are unable to "feel"—as you phrase it—what I see and am, at least spare me your tender emotions. Your love.

What you call "love," if I paid any attention to it, would rip me (and this world) apart. Get out.

LULU: No. I know now what's right. (*She puts her hand on the gun.*) You'll shoot me before you shoot yourself.

SCHÖN: You still do not understand. All of you are shit. You're not worth anything. There is nothing.

LULU: You're wrong. You must be wrong, but I can't understand anymore. It can't be mistaken to need someone else to love and yet only human solitariness allows human survival.

If you won't kill me, at least someone kill off this heart and mind! (*They wrestle for the gun. Schön wins.*)

SCHÖN: I will not have you show me love. You are nothing, nothing. I will not have you break into my world, break me up, destroy me. (*He points the gun at Lulu.*)

LULU: (*Coming to her senses.*) You're mad. This is a world of madness. All of my memories of you and of my life are valueless. (*She takes the gun out of Schön's hand and shoots him.*) I have no more memories.

5. An Escape

Before the Beginning

(*There are no spoken words here. Lulu is in jail. She is about to be killed for her murder of Schön. At that moment she begins to speak her own words:*)

LULU: When the soul and the heart, for the soul and the heart are the eyes, are so desolate that every incident is pain, when the nerves have been scraped into shreds for so long that only fantastical torture is real, when there is bottom: DIVINE HOPE IN THIS WORLD still pursues her way and is saying, "There is something better: your ideal."

These are the days of my romance:

The Home of Childhood

LULU: I was on a ship. I left the ship; I walked through a village; I came to its

other end.

This happened in Spain where drama is reality. I kept on walking.

When I raised my head, I saw a massive house, a house so grand it seemed to be a force detrimental to the existence of human beings . . .

I have nowhere else to go but home.

The Beginning of Inside: Before the Beginning Of The World

LULU: The inside of the house—downstairs—was a huge room. Inside this extended kitchen there were three women. (*Lulu to the women.*) I'm looking . . .

WITCH-BITCH: Are you looking for someone special, dear?

LULU: The first old woman was hideous. She was a hundred years old if she was a day. Her skin, hanging in long folds, couldn't have been skin which any man or woman would want to touch.

And her breasts, visible through shreds of some material, vomited down as my grandmother's breasts used to wave here and there on the waters of her bathtub.

Old age appalls me.

I'm looking for a friend.

THIN WITCH: Yes yes yes. Your little friend's been here.

LULU: The second old hag wiggled her finger-frankfurter at me while her head kept on bobbing as if someone had almost succeeded in cutting it off or as if she was listening to rock'n roll. This biddy was as fluffy as a puffed-up parrot: She had fluffed-up or watered-up skin so white it seemed about to burst and flood the world.

The two old women chattered to each other about my friend with such rapidity I could neither tell what they were saying nor did I know about whom they were talking. I thought I heard the names of cards.

I drew up whatever courage I had from my solitude and asked them for food. I was hungry.

The oldest hag asked me if I was looking for someone special. Her sister chimed in: Wait until the morning, the morning, she said, when the world will be able to begin . . . (*Lulu, to the two sisters:*) I'm looking . . .

A young girl, the only person in this world, brought a bowl of steaming broth and a piece of bread to a wood table. She watched me like a starving cat, a beast of wet sexuality. If I moved, she would eat me. Already her eyes ate me so deeply, these eyes were empty, they contained nothing. She gave me my food and squatted on the ground.

She said, "The archbishop once slept here," spat on the floor, and rubbed her left thumb in the spit until the spit disappeared.

I replied I wasn't looking for an archbishop.

YOUNG GIRL: You've been looking for a long time, haven't you? You're tired, aren't you?

The archbishop once slept here.

LULU: She spat on the floor and rubbed her left thumb in the spit until the spit disappeared. The puffy old dame told me I'd have to give them money if I wanted to sleep there. Since I was tired, I gave them money.

They wanted all my money so I could wake up in the morning.

The young girl handed me an oversized plastic motel key. She told me I could sleep in the archbishop's room, a holy room.

Through The Rooms

LULU: I was following the young girl up some stairs.

At the top of the stairs was a long dark hallway. Rooms branched off of the hallway. As we passed by each room, I had to look inside, I had to see, but I didn't know why I had to look.

The first room was the room of childhood:

When I was a child. My parents owned a summer house by the Atlantic Ocean. I would spend my days playing on the beach. A number of us—girls—formed a gang. Our purpose was to tease boys our age either by kissing them (mentally killing them) or by burying them in sand (physically killing them). The boys were weaker than us.

On this beach, a woman, who is sitting on a fat woman's lap, is looking down at an ear-ringed man. The ear-ringed man smiles and hands the first woman a fish. The first woman thanks him for the fish.

I am sleeping on the top of an ocean full of monsters, of double-fish. On top of a headless man, a man who is only his sexuality, who's lying on one double-fish, a woman sits. She sits on him; she is a pirate. I am lying on top of the ocean of monsters, but I'm safe because I'm on a ship. When I was a child, I wanted to be a pirate.

YOUNG GIRL: This isn't the archbishop's room.

LULU: The second room was the womb of art:

An artist, who's a man, is sitting on the floor and holding an easel or a mirror. He can only stare at what he sees. All he sees are women.

To his left, a woman wearing silvery armor is standing in absolutely calm water. Behind her a male corpse's legs are sticking out from the calm water. In front of her a young woman whose tits are lovely and who's wearing a slight pink slip is holding the black oar upward: Either butch or fem, the women the artist sees are warriors.

Behind the pirates, the men do the more menial work: rowing and flute-playing.

The women the artist sees on his right are all enslaved or imprisoned: A woman who's a mother is sitting locked up in a tiny bird-cage. Big-beaked bird is guarding her. This cage rocks on a row-boat on the same sea as the pirate sea. I see. Another woman, in front of the row-boat, is crawling dog-fashion out of the sea on to a sliver of sand or security. Because all men are above women, a lowly hotel valet bearing a king's crown on a silver platter is riding the bitch.

Are women pirates or slaves? According to whom?

On no side, from no perspective, do women and men mutually see each other or mutually act with each other. Art, also, is fetishism.

I left behind all that I had known, I have left behind all that I know, so I go into the room of my death:

The top half of this room is a mirror of its bottom half. The bottom half

is pale yellow, pale and dark green, and violet-blue; the top half is pale yellow and violet-blue deepening into dark blue.

In the middle of the floor, my mother lies in a coffin, in the non-possibility that is death. The skin of her face is bright green; her hair is yellow; her mouth and eyes are open in a scream.

Around her coffin are lots of flowers.

To the left of this coffin either a doctor or a butcher or a doctor who is really a butcher is standing over his patient who's a woman, just like my mother. My mother is adjusting her stocking—she always wore a white garter belt and sheer silk stockings. I remember. Since in this world men and women have nothing to do with each other, my mother isn't looking at her own doctor.

My mother used to take dexadrine so she could diet and then valium and librium to come down from the dex.

To the right of this coffin a naked woman is sitting on a dark blue-purple fish-face. Just as the doctor and his female patient didn't pay any attention to each other, men-fish and women who're fucking each other don't have anything to do with each other.

My dead, my suicided mother's mouth is shaped in a scream!

The reverse of this floor or life is the ceiling or land of death. In death, right is left and up is down.

In death three black tuxedoed men, the preacher men, sing and swing; they have lots of aspects, many faces; they don't have to say what they mean, cause they don't mean: they sing. Having more than one face and one set of eyes, the minstrels see each thing from all sorts of perspectives: in death there is no more human judgment, no more human moralism. Sing! Don't just look, Lulu: sing!

Now a walrus-like-head whose eyes are red is giving head, I mean, what is the mean, is sitting on the non-existent head of two fishy tales. Near him and/or her, a white pussy is an angel. My pussy has a hard orange cock, when it gets hard, and he blows his horn. Oh, Lord, mama! He's blowing his music right out!

Two purple something-or-other's are, snakelike, wrapping themselves around the self, for each one is a self unto its oneness or selfishness. The self might be a bird; the self might be the unnamable spirit; the self might be me: the self might be language. Sing!

My mother's mouth is open in a scream. I will sing!

THE YOUNG GIRL: This isn't the archbishop's room.

LULU: Then we came to the fourth room. The room was empty. The gypsy girl left me alone.

I couldn't see anything.

Inside The Room

LULU: I knew that, in order to make it to the morning, to light to sunshine, I would have to go to sleep.

I couldn't go to sleep. I was face-to-face with myself. I was face-to-face with my hideousness. I had to see my characteristics. I was deeply

bored. I wanted to run away, into having no mentality, but there was nowhere to run.

I was stuck with myself: some hideous, because known, blackness.

I hate solitude!

I sat down on the bed. There was nowhere to run: suicide wasn't possible because my mother had committed suicide. I had to sit on the bed.

I had no choice: I had to see. My eyes became accustomed to the darkness.

I saw a window. I saw that I was sitting on a huge bed. Attached to this bed, above my head, was a canopy. I saw a wardrobe so huge it had been made for a giant. It could be that humans are giants.

Something was the matter.

How did I know something was the matter? I didn't see anything that should have frightened me. What is this act of seeing? Is it just physical seeing?

I grew more and more frightened. I hated myself the more I became frightened:

Rapists were going to get me.

I had no friends.

Stop it. Calm yourself down because there absolutely is nobody who is going to take care of you. Just look:

I walked over to the window. The window was barred from the inside. I looked under the bed. Nothing. I walked over to the huge wardrobe. It had two large swinging doors. When I pried one door open by my fingernails, a dead body fell on top of me as if it wanted me.

I was looking into his face, his eyes. They were dead. I screamed.

I wondered if they were going to kill me. I was face-to-face with my fears; with death; my fears now were real. I had to act.

I wanted to disappear, I wanted to escape. I have never wanted any pain, any world which includes pain to be real. But if I am to survive it doesn't matter what I want, it matters if I can do what I have to. I opened my eyes and looked at the corpse.

Neither his body nor his clothes showed signs of violence and he was too big, a sailor, to have been slain without a struggle. I looked even more closely at the dead sailor who was next to me:

Since there were no clues to what had happened on his body or clothing, like a lover I looked into his eyes. Dead men say nothing. He had nothing to say to me.

What good is love which dies?

Truly, there is nothing.

In despair and fear I sat back down on the bed. I was so wrapped up in helplessness and fear, in nihilism: I didn't see anything.

With a last attempt of the will, I looked up. The bishop's canopy, lowering, was almost touching the top of my head. As I rolled off the bed, on to the dead sailor, the murderous canopy crushed into its ground and cracked.

Again I was looking fully into the sailor's face.

I quickly took his clothes off him, rolled them into a rope, and lowered

myself through the now unbarred window.
As soon as I reached ground, I ran to the sea.

6. To See The Sea

(Continued from 5. Lulu is standing in front of the ocean.)

LULU: Now I must find others who are, like me, pirates journeying from place to place, who knowing only change and the true responsibilities that come from such knowing sing to and with each other.
Now I am going to travel.

Excerpted from Don Quixote by Kathy Acker. Copyright © 1986. Published by Grove Press. All rights reserved.

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