



Evalyn Parry | Small Theatres

Disc 2, spoken word

Fourteen (for Dec 6th)

December 6th is a dark building that haunts me
a number I can't erase from my memory
with every year that passes, still a difficult day
a painful reminder; it's hard to know what to say
that hasn't already been said
about 14 women murdered, 14 women dead

and it was three years after December 6, 1989
when I laid eyes for the very first time
on L'Ecole Polytechnique
I was in my first year of university, it was "frosh" week
and my bus drove by the University of Montreal
I suddenly noticed the sign, and my skin began to crawl
as if suddenly fear had a location
even though I knew that was just an illusion
because what happened that day, and that Marc Lepin-rage
is not limited to one location, or one particular page in a history book.
It is not a news-item looked back in time
it's a wall to be scaled; it serves to remind
us of what it still means to be a woman in this world
where things may appear equal, but sisters, don't be fooled
Because somehow things just don't quite seem to be evening out
somehow, as a gender, it looks like we're still down and out
you can read the statistics for yourself
hundreds of women dying at the hands of their boyfriend or spouse each year
womens bodies farmed out, used up, disappeared
meanwhile waves of feminism have come crashing in to shore
and you'd think by now, we wouldn't be fighting anymore
But on December 6, 1989
there was an "f-word" stand-off. The men were ordered outside
14 women gave their lives
They hadn't signed up to be soldiers, they weren't trying to take sides
they just wanted to be engineers
And I know it's been a lot of years now
And I know violence can be random, and no life can be made safe
no matter how much national defence you muster or how much money you make
But among the world's poor, women are on the lowest rung
our work still under-valued, under-paid and never-done
across the world, our wages still reflecting less respect
earning a modest fraction of every male dollar
economically we're still "the weaker sex"
and you look around the world at the leaders of state
you'll notice only 15 percent of politicians are female
and you'll think you made a mistake
'cause you were under the impression that things were equal now
hasn't it been almost 100 years since women became "persons"
and got the vote in this nation?
But look around the world and you find anti-abortion legislation
you find genital mutilation
135 million girls and women who've undergone this violation
exploding rates of female HIV infection
and governments trying to stop over-population
making laws which encourage female infanticide

page 1

don't tell me Marc was just a madman
'cause this violence is still coming from the inside of our world
it is sanctioned, it continues, our work is not done
and there is still not enough control over who can buy a gun

14 reasons to remember:

14 reasons to mourn

14 reasons to be strong and proud, you were born a woman

One: You are smart
Two: You are tough
Three: You can organize
Four: You are enough
Five: You can listen
Six: You are loud
Seven: You can build a world where women are allowed
to be unafraid of who they are and what they do
Eight: Your sense of humour will carry you through
Nine: You can learn whatever you set your mind to
Ten: Your confidence is what makes you look great
Eleven: You're beautiful at every age, at any weight
Twelve: Your capacity to love is infinite
Thirteen: You know how to cry
Fourteen: You don't need a list to tell you why

so many reasons to remember

so many reasons to mourn

*there are so many reasons to be strong and proud
you were born a woman*

Once in a Blue Moon

Once in a Blue Moon, Minneapolis, Minnesota:
with my book and my pen and behind the counter
a girl with blue hair serves the java
and Ani Difranco provides the backdrop
of yet another alternative coffee shop
just like the one I worked at way back when
and we had her first album then,
the one with *both hands, now use both hands, oh no don't close your eyes:*
I am writing graffiti on your body, i am drawing the story of how hard we..

I find myself tight inside, a seatbelt of anxiety across my chest:
it's that perpetual drive to be the best,
but what can I say,
it's been an insecure day,
I'm feeling unsure of my edges,
I'm feeling unsure of what my own edge is
I'm feeling blunt and dull,
more of a spoon than a knife, more nap than nightlife,
and what kind of artist wants to be a ladle?
what kind of artist wants to be asleep at the table.
Not me of course.
I want to be the one splitting
the silence with my words
chopping convention with my axe...
I never sleep well these days, I never seem to relax
we're all trying so hard, me and my friends,
for that small slice of pie, those minor dividends
our face in the paper,
the end of being a waiter

the girl with the blue hair who is serving the coffee

page 2

is talking to a girl with orange hair about Ani:
orange hair says *I love this album*
yes, says blue hair, I think it's her best one
orange hair says *have you heard "revelling, reckoning"?*
Blue hair says *no*
orange hair says *oh, you should come over this weekend, and I'll play it for you*

outside the snow falling on the eves: inside, I sip my fairly traded tea-leaves
as orange hair and blue hair start talking about gender
outside the window, two cars collide in a fender-bender
the icy roads a slippery surprise,
a reminder of how fast one can slide, collide

And it's strange but it doesn't feel like that long since Ani arrived
on the scene,
but what is this now, album number 1??
I think I lost track sometime back in the late 90's,
after I heard her siren call,
and I took to writing my own songs, and now look at us all:
a movement of girls with our own guitars
criss-crossing the continent in our little cars
hoping not to be compared,
and today maybe I'm just scared
that the world doesn't need me, or any of my friends
and we'll all wind up working in a coffee shop again
listening to someone else's songs on the radio
instead of driving through the snow
to another gig,
hoping this will be our big
break, hoping ours will be the
once in a blue moon star
that skyrockets to the top.

You know I've seen these two girls before somewhere:
with their funky glasses and their chunky hair
and bell hooks books:
if I've seen them once, I've seen them a thousand times,
heard this conversation that runs along the same lines:
orange hair holds forth
about how she herself doesn't want to be filed on a shelf:
gender is fluid: she doesn't really feel a need to identify either way,
gender is just a construct, and being gay
is so much more than being a boy or a girl, being a woman or man,
and if Ani can get married, well then anyone can
surprise us: all that matters is what's inside us:
gender is fluid, they agree with authority,
as though this is the first time these things have ever been said,
like these are concepts they're inventing, not something they recently read

fluid, like liquid
like the tea that's in my cup
and I look down and I think: well for god's sake, drink up
this is identity I'm consuming,
this is the smell of gender, brewing:
the water that flows inside me:
my fluid, watery humanity

and I could tell blue hair, lately, I've taken to crying into my cup,
just crying gently, just to watch the cup fill back up,
art giving no points for imitation
leaving no choice but re-invention
and yes, Ms. Difranco, all your innovation is an inspiration
but now your album's over
and I can drink my tea

with no further challenge to my own artistic identity
thank god I never wanted to do the big band thing,
or I'd never have another peaceful cup of coffee again.

A phone rings: it's mine. I take it out of my bag
you say *how are you darling?*
I say *rung out like a wet rag?*
you say *oh, how did it go? How was the show?*
I say *I just don't know*
some days why I persist in pursuing
it seems all I'm doing is reheating, not brewing.
Well it's good to keep warm, you say, 'cause it's starting to snow
and here at home, it's 29 degrees below
I say, *I'm on my way; I'll be back soon*
I'm just on my way now
out of Once in a Blue Moon

Bottle This!

Let's just hold on before we go any farther
I want to take a little moment to talk about water

that liquid that you're holding, that bottle in your hand
you thought it was water you were drinking, not a corporate brand
you were thinking it was safer, cleaner, and better for your health.
but were you thinking about who profits from the wealth
of the public water that's been taken for free
and sold back to you for an exorbitant fee
listen my friends, listen up folks
Aquafina is Pepsi; Dansani is Coke
they're selling filtered tap water, and this is not a joke
these corporate giants buy water at a tax-free super-discount
then filter it five times and sell it back to you
for five thousand times the amount
that you pay for running water from your tap
and when I start thinking about that
my blood starts to boil, my head starts to spin
as I try to understand where to begin

that H2O: that bottle you just tossed
it represents garbage, safety and cost
water table depletion, which is all our loss
let's talk about land-fill: plastic bottles piled high
slowly decomposing, leaching toxins back into our water supply
furthermore, the more water bottles we buy
the more we send a signal to the powers that be
that we believe the fear that they're selling us about water safety.
we're swallowing the idea that good water isn't free
that of course one must pay for water of quality
meanwhile, beyond the periphery of our rich country
--where, incidentally, tap water is actually tested far more stringently
and more regularly than bottled water --
elsewhere, women walk farther and farther every day to find water for their families
a desert spreading rapidly
while we sit sipping on a billion dollar industry
they say water is the new oil, water is the new oil
and Canada's got it, so this war will come to our soil
but oil is a luxury: water a necessity
we're fighting over oil because we like to drive cars
because trucks must deliver, because we want to fly to mars
but a body can only live with out water for so long
water should not belong to anyone: it belongs to everyone
water must be public, water must be free

clean water should not be a commodity
to be bought and sold on the open market
which pits those who can afford it against those in need
water is a human right, not a luxury
water is a human right, not a luxury
let's talk about India, let's talk about Africa
let's talk about China, and right here, at home in North America
let's talk about the watershed, and the aquifers
let's talk about Walkerton and Native reserves
this matter is urgent, it requires our attention
it demands immediate public intervention.
if we're going to be paying, it should be for water from our tap
ensuring it remains reliable, clean and safe, so that
we can take a container, fill it again and again
fill our bodies with the water we need and then
leave enough for our neighbours, enough for the farmers
enough for the future, our sons and our daughters
that's the blood of the earth in that bottle right there
a resource we have no choice but to share
before you buy another bottle and down what's in there
you've gotta think about what you drink
think (think) about what you drink
maybe I'm preaching to the choir, to the converted masses
the concerned and conscience, the educated classes
but even you, out there, who already know everything I've said
how many times does convenience win out instead
of what you know is right, and what you know what you should do
you know ignoring the facts doesn't make them less true
you've gotta think (think) about what you drink
you've gotta think (think) about what you drink
tell your friend, tell your neighbour, write a letter to your leader
it is never true that there is nothing you can do
water is must be public, water must be free
water is a human right, not a luxury!
think about what you drink
think (think) about what you drink
think (think) about what you drink

The Anne in My Mind

I'm afraid my choice is not very original
I searched my bookshelf, trying to be intellectual
obscure, unique, a book that no one else would find
I searched my heart and the far reaches of my mind
but in truth, for me, no other book compares
and it all comes down to the colour of hair

we are a small percentage of the population, we red-heads
Our options for role models are quite limited
L'il orphan Annie never quite made the cut
since comic books and movies never quite filled me up
like the pages of a novel, so I find myself stuck
when it comes to my favourite, no one else quite measures up

to LM Montgomery's famous creation
Anne of Green Gables, my literary heroine
Favourite means I've read it over and over
it stands up to the test of time, I own the hard cover
and I've worn it thin
I know how it ends and I know how it all begins

with Mrs. Rachel Lynde,
sitting on her porch in Avonlea,

watching Matthew Cuthbert driving the horse and buggy
he's going to the train station, down at White Sands *
He thinks he's getting a boy, but instead, he gets Anne,
Anne of Green Gables...
Anne with an E.
Anne of Green Gables, who was a little bit like me...

Well she was a writer
she had a bad temper
She believed in kindred spirits
Anne and Diana were just like me and Norah
Freckles, we both have freckles
she loved pink frilly dresses but no one would ever give her one
she was an orphan,
well alright, I was never an orphan
but some days I wished I was one
it would have been so romantic
to be like
The Anne in my mind...

And maybe you saw the TV movie
Sullivan Entertainment auditioned me for the role you know,
It's true. (No, really, it's true.)
Well, Megan Follows was great,
but no actor can ever replicate
the Anne in my mind...

And once, in University,
I was in the musical,
the casting a mystery
I played Marilla.
I guess they didn't see
that I was just like Anne,
and Anne was just like me
Anne of Green Gables,
Anne with an E
Anne of Green Gables,
who was a little bit like me
The Anne in my mind...

Love in the Greater Toronto Area Takes Public Transportation

i *The Yonge/University Line*

We begin our journey
at Mount Pleasant and Eglinton
walking from school to the subway station
me and my grade 10 crush, circa 1987
he was in grade 11
and his name was Mason

as we walk and we talk
I feel my words start to flutter
like my language is melting
my sentences butter
I wish he would slip a word my way
I wish I could think of something smart to say
or if I could, or if he would
just say something
about where this might be going
where is my love going

Looks like it's going underground

We reach Young and Eglinton
and this is where I go down
to get on the train
to ride downtown

ii. *Southbound Platform*

There are still landmarks I ride by everyday
that remind me who I used to be
Davisville Subway
now this is the stop that remains in my memory
the place I would always get off to go and see
my grade nine heart throb, Tom with whom eventually
I became good friends and the crush kinda died away
and several years later he came out to me as gay

He was the first, and he must have thought he set a trend
'Cause later all the girls he ever dated became lesbians
including me
but that's another story and anyway

iii. *We're not there yet*

We're only at
St. Clair station which was the location of the first time
I went out with Mason
it was a grade 10 movie
at Yonge and St. Clair
couldn't tell you what the film was, all I remember about being there
is gathering the courage
to slip my hand (which held my heart, bared)
into his hand,
which lay on the arm rest we shared

After the movie our hands go
their separate ways
into pockets
leaving me perplexed about what to say.

Even though every day after school
we rehearse a play
where we are in love
and we kiss on stage
here we have no script printed on a page

iv. *To get to Roselawn Avenue, take the Avenue Road Bus
several stops past Eglinton*

I went over to Mason's house once
he lived in North Toronto
with his super-nice parents
and a big white poodle
his mom was really sweet to me
like she thought we were together
I wondered secretly
what he had told her
since he never told me anything
he showed me his guitar, and I tried to act normal
like I wasn't dying inside to be his date to the formal
but he never asked, and I didn't either
so I took the bus home, and that night I lay there
imagining all the conversations
we should have had

v. *Today in therapy we talk about my dad*

vi. *The heart of the city*

It smells like hotdogs
at the corner of Bloor and Yonge
we've been waiting half an hour
for the night bus to come

when I last stood here
on the corner of three am
I think was sixteen, but here we are again
now we're nearly 30
and Mason stands beside me
clean cut and good looking as if he'd never
tied me up in knots, made my knees quiver
but tonight it's just the cold
that makes me shiver
sure, we've been drinking
though I only had two beers
it's enough to make me honest tonight, it appears

*let me tell you, I say
how I felt all those years ago,
when we were in high school
and had to kiss in that show
we were acting in,
oh god, do you even know
how much I liked you,
how I longed for you to tell me
you liked me too
oh, he says, yeah, well I did really like you -
I guess I just never really knew what to do*

a man asks me for change
and we both turn to him hastily
relieved, perhaps, that he can look away from me.

vii. *The Night Bus*

When it finally comes, we let it drive by
we're eating hot dogs from the vendor
and we're still talking about why

he says *I guess you were
the first in what's become a long line of
me trying to find
my way
in that relationship landmine
it's full of self-doubt and
mis-communications and
look, I'm still single
and you're a part of the lesbian nation
What is it with all the girls we went to school with, anyway?
was it something in the air or in the water fountains
or something I said
I know I turn molehill's into mountains,
but tell me as my friend now
tell me honestly
it is something that I said or did -
was it me?*

No, it wasn't you. All I know is, Mason
we couldn't ever seem to have

this conversation
And I didn't really know yet much about love
and I was waiting to find out who I was
and I hoped someone could answer
a few of those questions
like would anyone ever like me
as "more than a friend"
And it's not that I'm no longer
attracted to men
it's just that true love found me
and she is a woman.

viii. The Bloor Danforth Line, above ground, westbound

When the night bus comes again
he gets on and I get on my bike
the bus lurches away, and I ride into the night
I live at Bloor and Dufferin
which isn't very close by
but the streets are dead, I don't stop for red
and the blocks fly by

There is a light on in the bedroom,
which tells me
maybe she's still up
a light in my heart
tells me tonight
maybe I've grown up.

My "Swedish" "Roommates"

Ivar and Sten, Ivar and Sten:
I feel like I'm living with big Swedish men
in my bedroom and bathroom and kitchen and den:
my burly companions, Ivar and Sten.

Klinga and Omar, Duktig and Benn,
My home is so organized since they moved in,
and I never get lonely because I've got them,
they're quiet and stable, old Duktig and Benn.

Maybe you've had a roommate that make your life rough,
who doesn't pay phone bills or messes your stuff,
or plays heavy metal and parades in the buff,
who finally drives you to say, "that's enough"

What you need is a Billy, a Joel or a Snigg,
A responsible roomie who isn't a pig,
a Blista, a Klinte, a Kimbo, a Vink,
who don't dirty dishes or block up the sink.

There's a place you can get them, wherever you are,
whatever your standards, they'll raise the bar:
all you need is some cash, some muscles, a car
(since getting there's always a little bit far).

The fellows you'll find there are all pretty tame,
'common sense' is their motto and though they are plain,
and all of them look kind of the same,
you have to admit, they have marvellous names!

Antonius, Fennomen, Skrissel and Gotte,
Angby and Grillby and Bonde and Sot,

Narvik and Almivik, Timra and Smolt,
Agam and Anton and Bertby and Boalt.

Abo and Eneby, Oslo and Chadde:
they are the best room mates that I've ever had!
They don't tie up the phone lines, or mess up the pad,
they just stand where I set them, my Oslo and Chadde.

Well, sure they've got problems, just like me and you,
on rare occasions, they're missing a screw.
So you go back to the store, and then what you do
is wait in a line for an hour or two.

Well, alright, so it's not just ONE line up: first you have to fill in a form, then line up to order the missing screw, and then you wait in line to pick up the screw and then you wait in another line to pay for it, and THEN you have to try and find your car in the parking lot the size of 7 football fields...but that's the system that keeps the prices so low, don'tcha know? And anyway, let's face it, what would you rather spend your time doing: combing the classifieds, hoping to find that perfect roommate, or eating Swedish meatballs while you pick out your new friends from a catalogue?

Jutis and Slugis and Sacha and Pax,
Sure with regular roommates, you don't pay a tax
But these roommate come with instructional facts,
and if you don't like them, you just take them back!

www.evalynparry.com ©2007 Evalyn Parry / SOCAN