



# Lyrics for Moth Broth's *I, A FLYING CRAB*

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## YOUR TOENAIL (A SPELL)

A spell to draw you near,  
etched into hardwood floors  
with a silver knife,

a five-pointed star,  
a circle drawn around.

Your toenail clippings, a feather  
a puddle, a candle,  
a clump of dirt  
a feather, a puddle.

Flight, and floating, and  
flame, and forest,  
your toenail,  
a spell.

The stars listen, silent.  
Pick up the blade and kiss it.  
Pierce the palm, and then  
let it leak (again).

As above, so below.

Your toenail clippings, a feather  
a puddle, a candle,  
a clump of dirt  
a feather, a puddle.

[INTERLUDE]

Your toenail clippings, a feather  
a puddle, a candle,  
a clump of dirt  
a feather, a puddle.

Flight, and floating, and  
flame, and forest,  
your toenail,  
a spell.

A moat of blood, a pentacle  
flooded (scratched into the floor).  
The stars whisper  
(once more), the door

creaks, opens, shuts.

## CRAWL INSIDE THE YAM

Fuzzy bug and humble,  
you'll fall into place,  
cheek bone  
against shoulder blade

I am the elephant yam  
flower tossing

the stench  
of rotting flesh,  
my aura, my perfume

[INTERLUDE]

Crawl inside the witch of the forest  
and climb,  
futile,  
her waxy walls.

You'll emerge the very next night  
covered in pollen

then seek  
the sweet  
scent of her dead skin.

Crawl inside the yam.

## SILVER IF HE'S FREE

At dusk, I dreamed I caught the silver carp,  
and then I set him free.

The hazy sun pierced through  
the dying trees  
and on the Schuylkill's shore.

I stood there on the bow and  
waved to you;  
you wore a white fur—  
a dewy white fur coat.

Sundown the moon  
glows dusty gold!  
Midnight the moon  
shines ashy white!

The bow pushed through a field  
of jellyfish  
as big as dancing lions.

The carp, on full moons, sheds his  
silver scales  
like floating treasure coins.

We traced their trail right to the  
silver carp,  
and then we caught him,  
and then we pulled him up.

Sundown the moon  
glows dusty gold!  
Midnight the moon  
shines ashy white!

We filled a bathtub with the sea  
so that our treasure fish could breathe.  
The silver carp looked up at me,  
said he's only silver if he's free.

We heaved the carp over the  
starboard side  
but kept a scale for luck.

At dusk I dreamed I caught the  
silver carp  
and brought him back to you,

but you, yourself, are much too  
far away:  
a silver, slender—  
an almost-captured dream.

Sundown the moon  
glows dusty gold!  
Midnight the moon  
shines ashy white!  
Sundown the moon  
glows dusty gold!  
Midnight the moon  
shines ashy white!

## FAIRY QUEEN

I saw Fairy while I drove last Sunday night:  
through the trees, a faint white glow,  
white glow that beckoned even as it wavered,  
the fae queen flashing favor.

Far beyond my red light, past Harford road  
and blocks of boarded homes, she called.  
She, called the May fair queen (it seems), invited.  
Dry leaves in me ignited.

Like the phantom bells of Ys that toll  
from spires that have long sunken,  
what is fallow, Faerie Queen, make whole,  
frozen as I sit here at this junction—

My chest screamed at me, "Goddammit  
(drive forth),  
lightly so as not to rouse the  
(engine),  
like a boat without a paddle."

This was not the first time she'd called to me.  
I sat indecisive again.  
Again, I felt swift wings beneath my rib cage  
like finches on a rampage.

Yes, I felt the urge to glide straight through the veil,  
thin between this world and the next,  
but next I knew, I was turning left on Harford,  
away from what she'd conjured.

Like the phantom bells of Ys that toll  
from spires that have long sunken,  
what is fallow, Faerie Queen, make whole,  
frozen as I sit here at this junction—

My bones screamed at me, "Goddammit  
(go back),  
quickly so the May queen knows you  
(mean it),"  
But, then, I was sure the moment  
(had passed),  
Anyway, I had an early  
(morning),  
Won't she call again when it's  
(convenient)?

Or will magic call again for  
(no one)?

# SCRYBABY

Saltwater, smoky quartz bowl,  
garnet pendulum swinging above  
like a drop of blood  
on a silver chain.

A message from the goddess:  
your broccoli is overcooking,  
its green, sunless gaze  
scorching the side  
of the iron pan.

Male tears plop against the sea foam  
in the scrying bowl: salt against salt.  
When we crossed the ocean,  
I wasn't in the water, but you were.  
I hovered two feet above the waves  
While your head bobbed up,  
then bobbed down.

Inhale, exhale, sing:  
"Your mouth is smaller  
when you wear a helmet. "  
Wings beat up, beat down—  
touch me, I'll turn to wax,  
hold me I'll hurt me.  
Inhale, exhale, sing:  
"Your mouth is smaller  
when you wear a helmet,  
wear a helmet, wear a helmet. "

I, a flying crab, was a-  
fraid to breach the surface of the sea.  
I, a flying crab, poured  
waterfalls over your head.

Wings beat up, beat down—  
touch me, I'll turn to wax,  
hold me I'll hurt me.  
Inhale, exhale, sing:  
"Your mouth is smaller  
when you wear a helmet."  
Wings beat up, beat down—  
touch me, I'll turn to wax,  
hold me I'll hurt me,  
me I'll hurt me,  
wear a helmet, wear a helmet!

Kitchen counter, compost heap,  
molehills in winter,  
blackened green, melt into me,  
melt into me

I'll sink.

# MATERNAL WORM INSTINCT

Slippy, muddy, grey-green ground, I  
tied a knot around the squirm-hole;  
they are not to flap away,  
their bodies soft like rusty clay.

(Worm mama!)

Fortune favors squirmy tricksters;  
some of us have lost our Lesters,  
and our babies, and our eggies,  
all my babies, all my eggies.

All but one: Julian!  
All but one!

[INTERLUDE]

Other squirmers write and wriggle,  
in the dusty red crepuscule  
after rain, but I don't join them—  
dewy dust and grain, anoint them!

(Worm mama!)

Set my snares when the light-disk hides,  
and Julian will curl like tide.  
Flappers, I am waiting for you!  
Villians, I am waiting for you!

I won't lose Julian!  
I won't lose!

Plucking fur from forty peaches,  
shells in pits from black-sand beaches,  
keep flappers from my wriggling baby.

Squirming twice around the squirm-hole:  
once for smells of monarch wings,  
once for oils from rattle stings.

[INTERLUDE]

Three slinks to the pepper farm,  
jalapeños under worm arms,  
keep my squirmy safe from harm.

Slinking down the silk-squirm hill,  
visits to the stickiest web,  
rot-head from the millipede,  
we'll drink the flappers while they bleed!

Feather puddles quench our thirst, and  
coiny rubbles fill our fists, and  
in the moon haze under marsh brush  
we both shut our seeing-globes,

dreaming already, thinking of  
CrysTal Bugz!

# SUMMER COUNTRY

Summer country floods with sea.  
Bog and forest overflow—  
Mabon's Eve.

Through the mirror pool you see  
rupture of the path you thought  
was to be.

Midwinter he'll find you,  
gold snakes to remind you  
the lives you lived before still bind you.

Victim of your husband's will,  
bruises coat your goosebumped arms—  
Saturn's chill.

But if your vision's proven real  
someone else is meant for you,  
by Fortune's wheel

Midwinter he'll find you,  
gold snakes to remind you,  
the lives you lived before still bind you

Ancient islands sinking!  
Crone of the Old Religion!  
Death knell ring!

Clouds crash through the hills like waves.  
Tired of awaiting fate—  
Fortune's slave.

You seek him in the spirit plane  
Give your husband up to him:  
Captor slain.

Midwinter you take him.  
Hands trembling, you make him  
sire of the once and future

king

# BABA YAGA

The rising cloud pulls you upwards.  
The orphan, drowned, pulls you backwards,  
your bony legs bent, twists your footfalls,  
and bleeds your words, wakes your woes,  
eats your birds, and buries your toes.

Once a maiden, twice a bride,  
thrice a widow, desert dried.  
Like the lizard that swims in the sea,  
your salty sneezes shake the trees.

The icy breeze smells like Russians;  
it gives a wheeze, pulls the slush in  
and whines like a wolf, sounds like nothing  
you've ever heard, howls in waves,  
sirens, curdled—it sings of your ways.

Once a grapefruit, twice the tree,  
thrice a milky mystery.  
Like the chimney from under the earth,  
your anger is an island's birth.

In the dripping tomb, you stir a stew  
that spills in starry strands.  
In the balmy room, it's only you  
and your six hands.

[INTERLUDE]

They bring you crowns, only to leave you.  
The brave boys bow when they need you,  
but never to stay. Still, they heed you  
and feed your spells, steal your sieves,  
mask your smells with lavender leaves.

Once the jury, twice the accused,  
thrice the judge in scarlet hues.  
Like the death plague that comes to the ball,  
your dance can bring a kingdom's fall.

In the dripping tomb, you stir a stew  
that spills in starry strands.  
In the balmy room, it's only you  
and your six hands.

# QUITE LEISURELY FROM THE DISASTER

Have you ever stood  
in the midst  
of a locust swarm?

Buzzing white wings stained  
like dirty doves,  
angels of appetite and plague,

jaws click-clicking for (any)  
trace of remaining green  
like a hungry cloud.

The penguin flails in the jaws of the seal,  
violent orgy of frothing surf and sand.  
More penguins watch calmly from the beach;  
with mouths to feed, they turn away.

Beast to beast there is  
no altruism—

humans to the earth,  
teeth gnashing,  
demons of  
wreckage  
and greed.

[Spoken]: And we, on the backs of  
another species' extinction,  
and another, another, another,  
drive our own selves to the same fate,  
eating green pasture after green pasture,  
teeth gnashing in a cloud of hunger

taking—

the whole world with us

# I SEND U A GHOST

*(original poem by Linda Vilhjálmsdóttir  
& translated from Icelandic)*

I send you a ghost,  
I send you a—

Drop of blood, splinter of bone,  
patch of skin, lock of hair.  
Drop of blood, splinter of bone,  
patch of skin, lock of hair.  
Drop of blood, splinter of bone!

I send you a ghost,  
I send you a ghost,  
I send you a ghost.

Fracture of a nail, dust from a fire  
that started last year but went out this year.  
Fracture of a nail, dust from a fire  
that started last year but went out this year.

I send you a ghost,  
I send you a ghost,  
I send you a ghost.

I send you a ghost,  
I send you a ghost,  
I send you a ghost.

[INTERLUDE]

I send you a ghost,  
I send you a ghost,  
I send you a ghost.

