Lady Elaine, Lancelot's Baby-Momma, Meeting Guinevere at the Employee Picnic

Your Majesty, even your side dish brings his own side dish to the picnic. We met at some mouth:

a tunnel, a river.

He was post-atomic; I was pre-hipster. Lance looked like a man love-sorrowed and book-sick, a man who needs

a drink, that's all.

I had a fancy chalice, and he was awed. It was the waning of the oil age.

It was dopamine runs over the oil sheik

in the crosswalk

of the reward pathway. We piled cigarette butts on the sidewalk

negotiating with Cornerboy for a little

enchantment, a chance

to outfox our constant selves.

We did our limbic thrust in the dark

of a downtown bower and he couldn't tell

the two of us apart.

What man can? He couldn't even figure out the condom. It was all wham! bam! baby! I was like

—woah!

you call *that* neurobiology's reward? Still, I'll take *mother of* over *mirror of* any old day. I'll take another deviled egg.

¹ first appeared in *Kenyon Review Online* (Spring 2013)

Guinevere, Meeting Lancelot at the Walters Art Gallery

Between mummies and saint's reliquaries, I hand you my liver in a canopic jar. You give me a gilded scrap of fingerbone in an NPR tote. We duck

under doorway slogans. *To virtue, add knowledge*. Ha! –we snort at that one. And then, as a redhead sways by: *Through such variety is nature beautiful*.

You gesture to an illuminated manuscript and say: *ink clings*. Meaning, of course, me. I wince under a wooden saint, holding his own head, dodge your eyes under

a marble madonna, baby god tugging her breast long, then pretend I'm intent on the butterflies of Maryland, the Baltimore Checkerspot and others, named for our

moods—Sleepy Orange, Northern Pearly-Eye, Clouded Sulphur—while you handle a learned astronomer's lens:

Look at all I can draw close. Meaning, not me, but other

bodies, unbound by gravity. I demand my liver back, but you pin me against the glass, say it's time we left, say I'm being ridiculous. But the butterflies splayed beneath me

have long, tubular hearts and lack livers. They taste with their feet, hear with their wings, have no need for variety. The only color a butterfly sees: red.

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² first appeared in *Jabberwock Review* (Summer 2012)

Lancelot Questions the Clairvoyant

I've read sheep livers and intuited the yolk of an unblemished egg. I've dusted off

my planchette and began again: Spirits, what should I do? Dress? Strip? Head west?

Mystifying Oracle Ouija answers: Yes. No. Yes. Did I tell you I signed the addendum? Shaved

my neck. Paid in full, three months early. Petitioned the City Directors. Ginny said no more door-to-door

troubadours, no more serenades dedicated over the airwaves. She said *go fuck Elaine*.

Madame Sosostris, what do you make of this? I filled out the forms. I signed the addendum.

I sweated through the exam. I was told I was suited, I was sought after. Madame, please stop

alchemizing antibiotics—that sinus infection, still? – and soothsay. Tell me if dying is just rewinding back

to when I could carry my twelve-gauge on the streetcar and no one blinked, back to when

mom and dad slept in separate beds, and under the basement's single bulb,

Mystifying Oracle Ouija trembled in her eggshell negligee: Yes. Yes. Yes.

³ first appeared in *Kenyon Review Online* (Spring 2013)