

From: Liz

Before Lacan decided that *das Ding*  
existed somewhere beyond the  
signified, a middle-aged man in Macy's  
third floor lady's room sucking a  
woman who had just bought a dozen  
white t-shirts for her brother-in-law.

As if narrative really began with Homer.

As if *le* and *la* were less definite articles  
and more an efficient way way to  
immerse yourself in semi-solid duck fat.

In my mid-thirties I ended up in a group text  
with my college roommate's father  
and a woman who was writing a biography  
of Debbie Reynolds.

Every time I tried steering the conversation  
towards Liz's cleavage, he would bring up  
the article he had read in *Field and Stream*  
about seventeenth century French realist cinema.

*The day I lost my stash of notebooks  
about the history of the Xerox machine.*

*A picture of the boy I dated in high school  
who, while he knew all of Keats, was  
a bit of an over-thruster.*

*“At least you didn’t make the mistake  
of believing the  
ability to construct a really tight  
narrative is any sort of substitute for  
giving good head. You  
know, that’s what did your mother in.”*

Last night in bed when you told me you still had  
some nuts left in your bag, and that  
all I had to do was ask.

*If I said “transhistorical” right this very second  
would you come back with “meet me in  
the supply closet at 7?”*

Some of the men I’ve done have later admitted  
they were traumatized when they found  
my collection of Acropolis snow globes  
in the towel closet.

“No, I don’t think my sometimes preferring  
you semi-hard has anything to do with  
my feelings about lyric poetry but

Has everything to do with the fact that you can’t  
talk about your mother’s God  
damn Tupperware collection without using the  
word “vitate” at least once.”

“Here”, said the middle-aged woman I made eye contact with one cold February morning. She was leaning against the door reading a ten year old edition of the *Financial Times*. When the train stopped, I asked her to get off with me and demanded she tell me everything she knew about the relationship between my husband’s undescended left testicle and vulgate of southern Italy immediately after the first War.

What I remember most about my childhood was my mother’s desperate attempts to break free from the strangle hold of positivism.

No matter how many times in a day I piss, I’m always stuck in that soft semantic space between the German I remember from college and my desire to write a poem in which Cavafy finally throws the “I” down the toilet and replaces it a Campari with soda.

My flight didn’t originate in Cleveland.  
My flight didn’t originate in Barcelona.  
My flight didn’t originate in Athens.  
My flight didn’t originate in Seattle.  
My flight didn’t originate in Minsk.  
My flight didn’t originate in Amsterdam.  
My flight didn’t originate in Shanghai.  
My flight didn’t originate in Chicago.  
My flight didn’t originate in Anchorage.  
My flight didn’t originate in Istanbul.  
My flight didn’t originate in Houston.  
My flight didn’t originate in Brussels.

My flight didn't originate in Kyoto.  
My flight didn't originate in Prague.  
My flight didn't originate in Boca.  
My flight didn't originate in Boston.  
My flight didn't originate in Belgrade.  
My flight didn't originate in Melbourne.  
My flight didn't originate in Berlin.  
My flight didn't originate in London.  
My flight didn't originate in Palermo.  
My flight didn't originate in LA.  
My flight didn't originate in Rome.  
My flight didn't originate in Tehran.  
My flight didn't originate in Lahore.  
My flight didn't originate in San Jose.  
My flight didn't originate in Orange County.  
My flight didn't originate in Bogota.  
My flight didn't originate in Cairo.  
My flight didn't originate in Detroit.  
My flight didn't originate in Cape Town.  
My flight didn't originate in Lagos.

Back when partial nudity  
was still not allowed on  
network TV, I decided to  
peel off all the wallpaper  
in my kitchen. I thought for  
sure I'd find something  
interesting underneath.

A slab of leftover rack  
of lamb, a little wrist corsage  
with a few lilies of the valley  
surrounding a tiny pink  
nipple of a carnation, the  
history of masochism in

Hungary I'd been  
meaning to read, or at the  
very least, a bit of, what  
used to be known of, as  
"loose language.

This morning I was all set to  
listen to *Lohengrin*.  
The whole thing from beginning  
to end. But instead I got down  
on the bedroom floor.  
Looked real close in the  
closet mirror and  
was shocked to see that  
after 53 years, up  
inside my body  
was nothing but more body.

“Why is your narrator  
constantly fingering herself?”  
asked a guy named Randy  
one night during  
my writing group’s COVID  
Zoom meetings.

If you got up in the middle of  
the night and took a block  
of feta out of the fridge  
and set it out on the counter, when  
you go back into the kitchen  
in the morning, it will still  
be a block of feta, and the  
relationship between the  
signifier and the signified  
will still be as fucked as it  
was before the Second World War.