



TRACT N° 002

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Zoe Tuck

Terror Matrix

OAK / CA

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What is 'remembered' in the body is
well remembered

—Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain*

Terror Matrix



only look askance at me and you shall
have all three where did i go so wrong
document testament servility only look
askance have you ever been in prison
i am compelled to accept your jabs like
kisses when did you first speak the
word comrade and where let me borrow
blood return diluted what does it mean
to be a leftist speak my name kill me
kill me don't hurt me what does it mean
to be a girl don't stand in my way do

you trust me help me what does it
mean to assert that silence equals i'll
go freely death to the stone table of your
speech what does it mean to use your
life many contradictory variants for a
figure no torch in my palm speech thrust
at me hiding on the playground reading
in the mine-car the privilege to move

not exed just self-sent to another corner
of the empire though i still smelled of
clay and claimed a home in themiscyra

i fell out of habit into cauldron so i
asked it since i misheard the lyrics are
we done here drop the scrim it's time
to introduce the villain which suggests
a victim is it i presumed protagonist
the shrill and tender bleater if house
presume a plane and sewer no it's just
as well that ladder we should climb or
queue to climb or sit and turn within
but given space should we not dance
it through think this for a moment
when a witch's spell's first word is toil
then does a poem mix if backlit penny
and frontlit spore don't answer that
my advocate advised me and implicate

yourself i started bleeding implied
investigators found this troubling as they
had looked my language over found
no wound

where the path we've chosen takes a
shape a common practice enclosed
in systematic speech where a bogey
crashed or grew up strong causes you
to shake from fear the same team
the same air to sit by the judge and
look through time and space like a
suitor or a hunter when'd you land
here where we were forced first to
gather then disperse or chose to flex
and zoom around the city a unit since
partitioned fought what power a plaque
was later bolted in discreetly to honor
and obstruct a learned behavior if
i try the knob it doesn't move the
lockedness of the door's affirmed if move
then pull and hope i will make the hall
though the doctor's henchmen beat me

down but if knob turns but door still
sticks i'll ululate or gasp in horror
got locked up in an idealism blood and
money story there were no pennies
on the dusty floor i put some from my
pocket in the trash so if they checked
there'd be some this wasn't my first
lesson in unworlding the doctor's
henchmen checked the trash bag for him
the doctor gave me one slice of cake on
the face for each of them

wherein i admit here that some violence or other prejudice that burbles up at the edges of my living is of another order than the story i've inscribed here on this character of self who am i and who am i to speak and who am i to speak for whom emplacement first weaponry then positioning of more neutral character but having read from definition 1 to 2 the meaning stuff of 1 clung and lingered as i moved through 2 bombardier just as i moved from male to female or maybe something other something of the initial imposition clung and wafted around and alongside me assent to come into this 3x6x7 room predicated on the unstated idea of safeguarding my self and world subversion of my project by

act of retaining isthmus to the worldself
system not unmade a safeword for a
safe poetic exercise in s&m

is it strange that sisters are so distant
what is spoken of a lover he remembered
your name long after he forgot his
own escape to state where sweet
jane plays and oily fish slides down
my throat negating the sensation
of hunger we do a lot of name play
where they learn me through disrupting
rhythm here in my house where no
one could be said to dwell i introduce
myself only to my captors when they
change my designation otherwise hail no
one knowing no neighbor who greets me
making me in that instant and after a
living image thus plucked from bare life
and set in mental constellation all
my stories have gone viral then been lost
forgotten suppressed discarded erased

redacted cut up written over in your
mind's sky dear ones dear ones do you
remember one story in which i take part
several variants recorded in asia minor
alone heroes get a story goddesses and
gods what do i get the fact of being
lost in a fantasy techniques to keep
me this side of catatonia

freedom freedom safety safety i can
tell that you're the kind of lady i mean
reporter who has to put her hand through
it fingers crossed that nation great this
government lobby subvert their isness
through the senses who through interest
bordered on person of convenience and
control my stein which celebratory
suds weigh down a few bad apples
in this nevada town of relatively few
residents and one main industry destroy
maim injure juxtapose our craft with the
softness of civilian looking which has
in common with a border some terror
towards the value of a body what
does a secret presume imagine another
land where speech acts and gutsily i for
preference hit on time a geode broken

open into a nice caring and intellectual
guy who messaged me remember i'm
all down for safety regular guy freedom
from speech bent worship regularized
want punked fear how green the intel i
over the gurgling of mouth in water heard

i have one job recall but i was there for
hardly a tick so i infer extrapolate the
links that do and don't and might and
should exist we're here now though
wrapped together in this poem listening
to louie armstrong blow ma vie en rose
the bagel and the sweaty glass carafe are
here for me in ways they're not for you
n'est-ce pas what happens when i turn
a moment into song the pages flip and
pull the onion slivers off a houseguest
soaks our needlepoint in blood and hides
the frame and cloth under the couch
we found it there but didn't balk we
had a different plan in mind to scout
for clues and wait for time to grow out
long enough to braid which was our
want because duh love a worthy slogan

that we practiced at school and work and
church and bar and home haters hate
and say why's love so great denounce
it as a counterrevolutionary act it's not
ours to rebut and act appalled i'll meet
you when the moon grows tall

you're here again encroaching on my
horn of horn my horn of bone your
toothsome blotchy stamp as candlesticks
recede below your hips or shades i took a
pinch of luck and charged my crystal
phone remember when the heat broke
with the map of firsts and settled
with the coals to cooking level i
counted six leaves drooping from each
stem as you walked up the stairs to
find your seat the light fell in tight
cones onto the art so-called because
of wall and frame and on all things inside
the room to varying degrees if you accept
that things comprise a room or morgue
like that beside my bed where we are in
this verse and working bone-like buttons
back through eyes of my wool coat

this weekend night gently so as not to
loose or snap the threads that keep me
us or them in place

in paradise that i said lake should jump
into a you so how'd i miss the maw and
run from paradise into below the spout
and ride the rim and circle down the fur
where white collects to silver ring
before the drop the lightless part i dare
you not to think of abe while coursing
coursed half crane's hard neck no ring
to make it yield mistaken catch who
made his business sure it was a man
to scout another sheep to glut and slit its
throat and pay attention to encourage it
dakota dead en masse was news to me
persona split's a genre i adore near
thirty dead beneath a cloudless sky as
sure as it was told to me online to pull
the teeth to put them back in place to
plagiarize the writ of sheep before say

lake for bloody grace to jump i said fill
me a scrip for this to raise the dead

shift bricks and broken pieces of cement
from picnic table to the palm tree's
base my contribution to the day is
small and soft as this here pencil's lead
is hard a crow does caw and i do sit in
this tree's solar lee for what emotion's
winds to shift and stop impeding my
pursuit of golden rings or wreaths or
laurel garland foxglove holly rose wind
tickled me lifted my gown set my
crown athwart my brow i called for
help and no one's coming was the wind's
retort no i begins the first line of this
poem instead a shady figure called the
artist who's my father commandeers this
as my wedding song he calls an index
of a love performed by we who are not
men whose feeds were cut short when

shells' guidance systems locked onto
the smell of onions cooking and blew our
house down

i among this park contains arachnids in
the order ixodida quiz joaquin miller
walkers find their knowledge wanting
so find passage into town on walker's
leg i with the devil think or was it
ride as witches clerics said would do
in poppy cars over serpentine grasslands
and with medieval scholars ponder on
the devil's complexion became a
tulip's pupil for a full sheaf because the
internet was down a blanket wrapped
around my shoulders and out i zoned
my own consciousness was as elusive as
a source of image just because this
poem includes some fennel don't point
your finger gesture to where one road
crosses two natures do tell me why on
this day the park was closed to me in

light of how when i saw the signal
had returned i quizzed my personality on
this altered but healthy habitat still
dragging behind me a burlap sack well-
described and full of planning to pretend

selfsame convicted i sat and committed
inventory on my mandatory homestead
i was out for pleasure now i'm here
for torture but before that smelled
for ghosts in mapped out cubes of
dark with few small seams of light
encountered only thoughts of those who
chucked my chin then ding dong the
doctor's here to grow the desert's edges
outward pain grows the edges of the
void pain takes the holes in words
and makes them larger the room this
room is your new home he says and
we shall have a tea party but it is such
a dusty space so your first task is sweep
the floors to make it ready for the guests
just one thing an afterthought walking
softly to the door that if not locked would
always be closed to me

pretend some business ink soaks into
a thirsty page of cups imprisoned in
the tower don't say page or prisoner
detainee's the proper nomenclature
unless they should refuse the tray add
comma space and hunger striker if
food is fuel it follows hunger dims the fire
in this not norman tower no spoons to
chisel grout no stones or cement only
bare white walls too tall with cameras
in the corners commerce with imagined
animus is interrupted but it isn't so
this bare life's made possible by constant
rupture no windowsill on which no
bird to settle no switch to intervene
in lightbulb's uncircadian rhythm and
it was the doctor's pleasure to find my
nucleus thus shivered i first assumed

he'd also noticed the clot of self that splattered on the floor which angled on all sides down to a drain but he seemed not to else pretended that he didn't and i went down the pipes unchecked and without comment

are these terrorist eyes is it possible to
surrender too many voices asking did
you snitch i didn't give anything away
except my world a terrestrial paradise
that smacks too much of fairyland
sexual degradation forced drugging and
religious persecution to get the better
of my sentinels i ran for longer in my
imagination that inverse process of
pain perception than i ran on foot
the length of time from a to b increased
in speed from b to c the time it took
the rope to pull taut watch a taboo
disappear as i was disappeared then
rematerialized formally similar without
apparent scars

it would be unsafe to release her though the intel well's run dry her continued detention's an act of preventative medicine for the disease of terror on the body politic i never read the books myself they're still intensely popular ya masterpieces even amazon would not withhold the books from sale but with a little pressure the publisher agreed to pulp the stock

doctor proposes game of riddles solving
code under the goblin's hall where CGI
moss glows how completely does my
throbbing guarantor pain me hair
blood phlegm water wails and i secrets
and liplans and i pass through the
pipes like how i used to soothe the passage
into sleep by sending spectral self
luminous but immaterial into the night
to gain a peak or spire as body sank into
the sheets which body makes it true
the fibrous strands that offer answer to
the question what is in there sever skin
and by degrees that make bones dance
and hands answer to social cues and
barked commands a blue thread's worn
around the arms of victors vanquished
and both agree to turn the instep out

before they start to walk again before
they stop what would be an effective
substitute for torture you're asking the
wrong question

i couldn't sleep walked by the
yellow flowers tangled branches of the
esperanza long-scattered ashes of a
neolithic fire rekindled under kettle in
my homeland what is your given i
could not remember name the name
your parents driven in their roaming your
real name the name that turns you
when it's called they should have asked
i smiled and raised a finger to my lips
think back to when i chose to play the
game for keeps committing to the
struggle had to pick a moniker a word
for wrestling with an angel was my
guiding vision as i skirted stores' or an
asylum's borders in the late night all
in favor i's a boy's name shep or shem
exclaimed but then what did i earn

their grudging admiration in a montage
-this naturalist flash grenade's uncalled
for just explain that ten years marked the
boundary of the tourney

my lover lies languidly facing gaza the
way you're lying on the bed makes it
difficult for me to face gaza i don't
know my neighbors i can't say i've
forgotten their names lightening doesn't
mind if our house is robbed again where
is the cave what happened to your
research into lying for weeks every
bristle had a hearty savor scientists
discover new health benefits in barley
small farmers in an ad and then again to
warn butterflies off mutant truth to the
snaking tendrils gone gone where heavy
metal couldn't find them no one fires
rockets from bonhomie that nose you
have is steadily shrinking until it could
hardly be said that my neighbors were
yeoman farmers it was an ugly subject

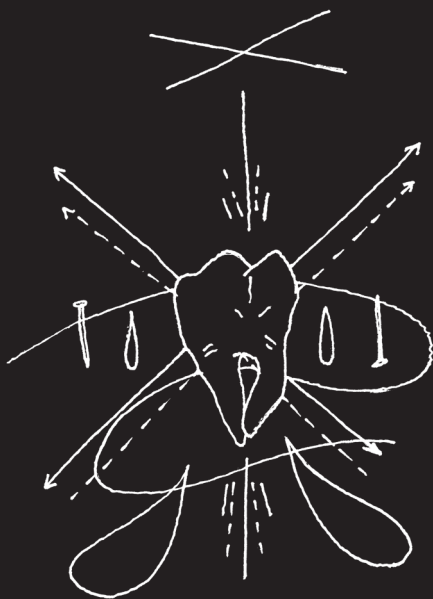
and poorly written tell me a little bit
about your family we're close knit kin of
smokeless propellants what would i
have to give to stop you killing i don't
know my neighbors they face gaza a
languid crew of yeoman bombers we lave
our skin it's what the smell resides in
that synchs you who sniff me clocking
me as i prefer in advance of the broken
door ne'er shall me this way any
more



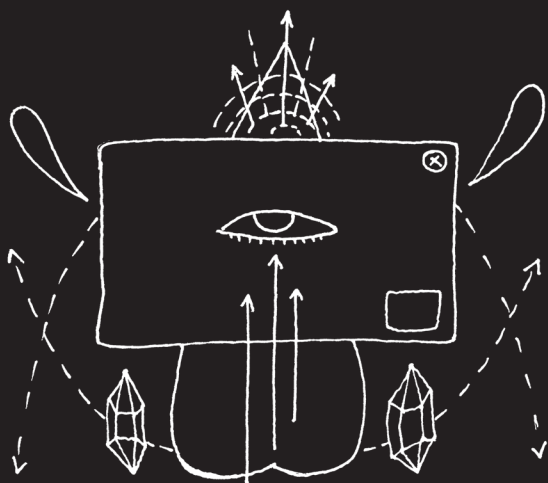
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USEFUL:

SPELLS BY Z. OZMA



PAIN SPELL



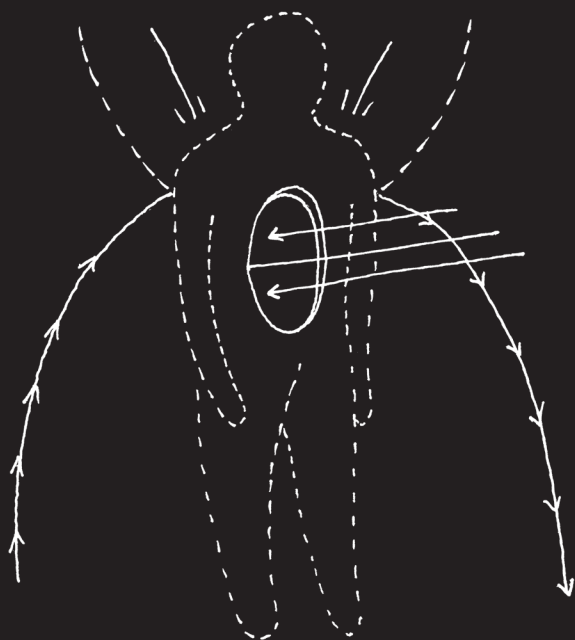
VIDEO CHAT SPELL



COUGH SYRUP SPELL



SLOW BUAN SPELL



POROUS BODY SPELL

FORTHCOMING:

EXCERPT FROM *LEVITATIONS* BY J.H. PHRYDAS

two bodies in a room thus create a universe.
in speaking nothing is broken. waving
hands counter-clockwise to conjure gravity.
microcosms spin and wash huge expanses
of exposed skin. flaking is natural: shedding
resensitizes.

no one has the ability to touch – anything – bodies circulate
like hemoglobin – passing this system and that – employed
absorbing and releasing – until – back where we have been –

until the moment of touch – two bodies
remain lit merely for affect – instead –
recreation occurs – revelatory structures
written into the wet of it –

what can one body do that, in doing, shifts status like a push?
in thinking of you membranes separate, allow air to enter,
particles contract against an unarmed advance – secretion
occurs – the cozy nuzzle of two distinct bodies – one made of
flesh – the other, air –

a body stands against a wall – crushing its
face into soft plaster – fingers across rips of
wallpaper – edges brown – unraveled –
disintegrate each thin touch – old paper
knows what it's like to receive – feels the
pulse of – aching itself to find –

momentum keeps rooms wandering – blown around curves –
the way leaves twirl in echoed miniature – flipping regains
semblance – nose here – eyes above ruddy cheeks – they collect
like boxes – sweating clay walls – seeping under floors – red –
volent – I –

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For all its gnostic scholarship, the writing of Zoe Tuck always sounds absolutely contemporary. In *Terror Matrix*, we witness drones tracking the smell of cooking onions, Amazon putting its books to death, the queer body dragged to a xenophobic Liam Neeson vehicle, and everywhere, everywhere, witches on the torture rack again. It couldn't be more 2014.

Zoe's privileged form is the interruption, the break within the break, another glaring condition of the now. "This bare life's made possible by constant rupture." Not wonderful, not horrible, just possible. Zoe has a crystalline sense of rupture as hope, as eventful change, as the fractures in the boundaries of identity, but at the same time understands it as a most useful tool for state terror, as the violent partitioning of bodies, as the multi-media cloud cutting into and across itself in order to splinter resistance and distract from its own amorality. All who share a sense of rupture's ambiguity will treasure this "safe poetic exercise in S&M."

Brent Cunningham

ZOE TUCK was born in Texas, where she cut her teeth on poetry. Since relocating to the Bay Area, she has been an active in the local literary community, working at Small Press Distribution and co-curating Condensery Reading Series. She facilitates workshops on gender, poetics, trans-mythography, and queer sci-fi. Her recent work can be found in *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics*, and in journals such as *textsound* and *Dusie*. She is a poetry reader for *HOLD: a journal*.

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