

## HOW GOD IS LIKE A TRUFFLE

Like a goat  
    in a stall  
with a thoroughbred,  
    a truffle sealed  
in a plastic  
    bag  
with a dozen eggs  
    or raw  
uncooked  
    rice. Like  
an apple slice  
    or piece  
of bread shut  
    away in an  
airtight container  
    with brown sugar—  
or a small  
    bowl of water  
placed next to  
    the hardened  
lump  
    and microwaved,  
my god  
    calms me,  
flavors me, restores  
    my softness. I tried  
to explain to  
    my husband  
about the love  
    animals have  
for each  
    other. How,  
at Christy's,  
    the donkey, Vinny,  
herds and  
    nibbles Love Bug,  
white pony who wears  
    an eye mask, who  
just returned from  
    cancer surgery. The  
two of them  
    in the sun.  
The donkey  
    nibbled my arm  
too, but

never bit. Don sat  
across from  
me in my room  
under a poster of van  
Gogh's *Yellow House*,  
his eyes  
at half-mast.  
He couldn't be  
less interested  
in my "sacred."

To be permeated  
with God,  
I sit with him. I keep  
a red zafu on  
the floor.

Take  
the waitlist  
letter for Lucy's  
college, I said  
to my husband  
and daughter  
this morning,  
place it  
in a sealed  
plastic bag  
with  
an apple core or  
dried flower,  
wait to open  
and there will  
be the acceptance  
you have been  
waiting for.

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## MY HOBBY NEEDED A HOBBY

My hobby needed a hobby you know how you get a dog and you have a dog and then Kurt says we need to get the dog a puppy the dog needs somebody

to play with her to teach and then you have a baby bossy baby needs a little baby and littler baby and then like you have a thing that you don't get paid

any money for it's like an art you do it for the love of it sooner or later though it gets you know it starts to make you nervous you get caught up

in politics it doesn't matter that there's not any money it's prestige rankings and who's up and who's down so that thing you were calling this

vocation the thing you did for art's sake you know you didn't want to get paid for because you loved it so much it was like you loved

the work it felt like play I mean you looked up after several hours you were so absorbed you didn't even know where the time went then it

gets onerous because this currency is being traded and you know it is starting to get heavy it starts to be as heavy as coins people even use expressions

like coin of the realm my stock went up or my stock went down or somebody or other didn't use their political capital all that kind of crap so now

your hobby your art needs a hobby that feels completely free and doesn't have anything to do with the buying and selling attaching your worth to some

chips or tokens markers or whatever so you've got to get a new free thing where you get completely absorbed and work feels like play well so I found

one my pet the pet little sister of my first pet is some horses well then I get to the stable forget about time waste like five hours at a pop after a few years

start wearing a watch but am not going to worry yet so I am washing off Berto the horse that I am helping to pay for but still it feels pretty free I don't

go to horse shows I'm like sixty-three years old people consider it a miracle that I'm even staying on which I'm barely doing my trainer and I spend half

the time gossiping to the point where we decide we probably have to go to lunch so I am washing Berto off and Berto is starting to squirm a little about

his pet out in the pasture he can just make out through the fence I can tell

he has a pet the horses all have buddies his pet is Vinny the donkey and when

I went to get him before my lesson he was chasing the red horses because  
he thought they were bothering Vinny he does tolerate Love Bug the white pony

though because Love Bug is Vinny's little brother his inseparable companion  
*his* familiar I go to get Berto he's in a herd of the black horses and one starts

to pin its ears and foment a little stampede but I yell my hateful yell and it stops  
and Berto walks peacefully to the gate with me he acts sometimes like I'm his buddy

which makes me shine all over never mind the transactional aspect the treats and  
carrots I'm loaded down with most of the time ban the word "transactional"

and also any consideration of the fantasy lovers mine and probably my husband's  
not exactly pets or little brothers the priest tonight said we each have an angel

this is really the first I'd heard of it and I started picturing my crush  
bathed in light oops no my angel I mean my real one though I don't think

it he she is my pet but more like I'm its I'm surrendered as somebody's distraction  
from their day job their support poodle crossing buddy safe space spice cake

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HIS CHEMIC BEAUTY

*Your chemic beauty burned my muscles through.*  
—William Empson

Oh I don't know,  
I'm just not that enthusiastic

about eating meat anymore,  
my husband says, and I think

what is the weird  
visceral pull for me, sucking

on bones of an animal that  
recently ran around a barnyard

in the sun. Creepy. Pleasurable. Viscous.  
I eat some red rubbery burst

blood vessels, think fleetingly of lethal bacteria,  
salmonella, etc. I wrestled it raw on a cutting board,

trying to remember to use the special  
polyethylene one for meat we got when

I was switched onto this diet  
from pesce-ovotarian.

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I stand between two cigarettes  
after the twelve-step meeting. Lucia's

and Raymond's. We're discussing  
Lucia's hypoglycemia. What they

had thought was gestational  
diabetes. I stand between two roses,

a man I loved once said. That's  
when I realized the woman on

the other side—Franny—was his new  
girlfriend. I was frigging glad I didn't

get a chance with him. It would have  
ruined my life! I saw him putting

a shine on eight-months-pregnant  
Lucia, too. She came in the next week

with her hair all clean and falling around  
her shoulders.

+ + +

I live my life between two  
injections, one on Friday morning,  
one on Monday. Which is not working too

well because each makes me sick.  
I'm not fairy-dancing down

Vegetarian Lane anymore.  
It's more like pan grease caramelized onions

and my mouth on the thigh bone  
of someone who may have struggled

against the knife. Cleaved between the chemo  
drug that "may cause lymphoma" and the

biologic that "may cause lymphoma,  
rare blood cancers, neurological problems,

MS, heart failure, and death." And if you happen  
to have some kind of sleeper

TB when you start taking the drug  
or are unwittingly exposed to it,

you're toast. What I mean is I can't  
make it down the list of side effects

to grogginess, faint nausea, dizziness,  
brain fog, and a shitty headache. I get

stuck midway in the catalog, the dense black print on the  
pharmacist's warning sheet before me.

Forget the inch-thick package insert! "Site irritation"—  
the least of my worries, right?

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I live my life between two roses, my husband  
and this other man. Or my husband  
as heterosexual and my husband as  
person with “homoerotic  
desires”—or the two injections, their  
toxins coming at me through a needle from  
two sides—I keep a chart of shot sites for each  
of my thighs—my elder daughter on  
the upswing or the downward  
plunge of her bipolar, or my would-be  
lover and his two would-be flowers. I gnaw  
the juicy bone of a recently  
running-around chicken, the stubborn sinew,  
blood vessels in my teeth, gristle. Hyper-  
plumped-up thigh meat I tear off with  
my cutting teeth, my incisors, but  
it was raised in “humane conditions” and  
done in “gently”  
with a head fake and a hatchet. I suck  
its fat its juice. It was between two roses.

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