from *Freedom and Prostitution*

*By*  Cassandra Troyan  August 8, 2019

Poetry
If you are a prostitute of the 21st century
metaphors are not enough
delusions
the girl who works
who is she,
always convincing
convincing in capital
You are the whore on his yacht
he asks you to shoot him up with heroin
and you comply
pay for all profitable demeanors
which means disposability
detracts your image from
all the decorating cameras
as “law does not ignore the bed”

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To die tonight, to die in this bed—

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The horror of a dead man’s tongue in your mouth
pieces of his cheek flesh slough off in ribbons
The participles nut chunks like taste buds
string cheese always a cheese
a sour fermentation

The dead man loves how unbearable it is to open your mouth to his
How the decay comes rushing in
gagging you
He loves most that you must love it
you are paid to love it in all its grotesqueness
How good you are at it
How you revel in your ability
to eroticize abjection the greatest pleasures
delivered from the sickest chores

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How in 30 minutes he will cum on your chest
and this will all be over
as you are left in a luxury hotel suite
stack of cash on the bedside table
How the rest of the day is yours
and tomorrow
    and the day after that
in your sudden freedom

How you make it rain
and roll around on the bed
the scent of fresh currency
    as blue green gold reflects
against your skin
    in the fading daylight

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Or the days when it is too much
you are almost crying
you are holding back tears
as you fantasize about his death
    to get you through
    to get him off
    to get you off
and remember
that you can do almost anything
    for an hour

You are holding back tears but you do not regret this
You do not want to be saved
You want the end of work not the end of sex
As one woman's death is another's survival

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Fucking means nothing until you reside in its absence
refuse its meaning, religiously

Scoring it, calcifying its lack
Get beaten for it
Drugged for it
Paid for it
Make a life of it

You hate no woman who has found herself in the hustle
discovered talent in the slime
dealing, stripping, fucking
constantly redefining the bottom of everything

“Thus, I am leaving you to your own devices on this bed. I am going out, and once again I will write on the door so that, as you exit, you may perhaps recall the dreams you will have pursued on this bed.”

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Fantasies of harm and the form it gives to desire—you question this. To drink from deleterious power and ask *what can you make of me, this wreckage of attachment*? Which pieces of your body reject the rest of your body? How is your body in conflict with your own politics? To stage a total revolt, completely unimpressed by social barbarity.

The body that eats its body
The body that protects the body with a shimmering bark
The body that grows hooves now
The body that cries out
The body that refuses to die

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You got cancer
You became sick
You killed yourself
You quit drinking
You became a hermit
You became a leper
You had both your breasts removed
You had your reproductive organs removed
You became a junkie
You became homeless
You started using
You quit using
You turned to the streets
You became a prostitute
You became a student
You declared bankruptcy
You blamed yourself
You became a mother
You became a widow
You became an orphan
You became a criminal
You became a prisoner
You became a fantasy

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Your body under the body of the dead man
You imagine he is a giant spider
liquefying your vitality and sucking it from you

You tie him to the bed and tell him he can’t touch you
but you ride his face instead
his moustache
a spider that you erase your cunt with
scratching it out
thrust by thrust
in these moments when you love it
for the love of fucking and
for getting paid
the lightness you feel
in this unremorseful joy
is the finest scam
anyone can ever commit
it is with this feeling
that you go out into the night
looking for a place to sleep
for food for a fix
or a flying stack of cash
that he says flows from your pussy
draining his bank account
and his cum

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You laugh and in the background the chorus of sex workers calls out to say:

To fuck is to win / the joke’s on him

When the dead man tells you meeting you is the best thing that has ever happened to him and he means it. The horror and tenderness you feel are not a contradiction but the culmination of a life’s work.

“The presumption that she is a whore is a metaphysical presumption: a presumption that underlies the system of reality in which she lives. A whore cannot be raped, only used. A whore by nature cannot be forced to whore—only revealed through circumstance to be the whore she is.”
She wants you to believe this. She keeps repeating herself as she tries to pull you from the lure of the chorus.

_Every story is the same because it is not / you sought the cause and lost the plot_

You took away a heft of generalities, yet you learned nothing, you broke nothing as your body ached transference. Your body releasing you from your hatred, your nature, your inability to complete the task both reaffirming and releasing in its pleasurable rejection as in the end, the joke’s still on him.

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“The whore has a nature that chooses prostitution. She should be punished for her nature, which determines her choice and which exists independent of any social or economic necessity.”

You believe women were made to be punished, but there is no such thing as a woman—it can only be assumed, the limits of violence held within this category, woman.

The terror of being blamed for this violence, when it goes beyond the typical assumptions of “asking for it.” When it is seen as a fetish, a proclivity, a pathological trait marked in your nature. You cannot save a whore from herself, you can only see that she recuperates and fulfills the patterns graphed onto her, regardless of what she says.

The destruction of a body. A white body. A brown body. A black body. A body reconstituting its own glue, its own insatiable labors in a contract with foes that holds you beyond choice. Afterwards you discover your mistake, as you believed you were a woman but you were actually the spider all along—and in this—is a type of freedom.

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I’m just like realizing things I’m on mushrooms in chinatown house sitting with K // i’m 24 today and i’m mostly orange now / I moved to new york to find control but keep repeating the soft succession of flowery notes / in this dying city i am good at repetitions _ kissing the soft earth _ try...

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I think a lot about Kenny “Sky” Walker who rocked the cradle in the 1989 dunk contest it fizzled without much meaning but it mattered to me in 2017 I got dumped in a swamp I think I wasn’t what I seemed I tried to remember I got eaten alive by mosquitos in 1989 having smashed my st...

**from Atopia II**
Cassandra Troyan is a writer whose work explores the terror of becoming female at the intersections of gender, historical violence, sex work, and capital. They are the author of several books and chapbooks of poetry, most recently *KILL MANUAL* (Artifice Books, 2014) and *A Theory in Tears (ANNOTATIONS & CASES FOR FREEDOM & PROSTITUTION)* (Kenning Editions, 2016). Originally from Columbus, Ohio, they currently live in southern Sweden and teach creative/critical writing practices in the Department of Design at Linnaeus University. [www.onemurderleadstoanother.com](http://www.onemurderleadstoanother.com)