

# natalie louise tombasco

## OUT OF THE FLUORESCENT WOODS

into the bravaverse & i'm a drakean dreamgirl  
like *sweatpants, hair tied, chillin' with no make-up on*  
and a culty skincare routine to exfoliate

the seven-to-nine grind off — ah, me!  
i will not check my email i will not check  
my email bc it places one in a deep funk

of “rhetorical situations” & “discourse communities,”  
the supervisor who doesn't speak “take a beat & circle  
back” & i'm omw for a snacky snack in the dark

as i switch the brain button to airplane mode,  
untouchable, thank the heavens this flight  
has more than a biscoff // o blue bathrobe

o 1-2-3 blue cheese olives o wednesday night:  
your meager reprieve from totalitarian oligarchy,  
from dwindling real-world resources & i nosedive

off the sofa into a parallel world two martinis deep,  
somewhere beyond cyberspace & Besties,  
i'm untethered, unhinged, a three-dimensional avatar

thriving on the esoteric scrolling reddit gossip,  
zara's leather hotpants, munchausen syndrome  
by proxy — aren't i a triple threat?

## ALLOW ME TO CONSTRUCT A TIME - STEP

into the green screen of my very own living room  
with a replicant camera crew & a bioengineered dog  
that the shelter fashionably described as “more

pomeranian than pomeranian” & sometimes i can tell  
the difference like when its electric tongue pants wildly  
to a glitch during a confessional session & that makes me

s-a-d, but who am i to say? i can barely wrap my mind  
around wavelengths & sometimes, especially after eating  
an entire gluten-free pizza, i become soooOo disappointed

in myself that i resemble magritte’s “not to be reproduced”  
& other times i speak in air quotes like a pantomime of myself  
like “o mission statement o wednesday night o housewifery:

to me, they are blakean archetypes, botoxed humanoids  
in the microcosm of different gated environments  
as ladies who lunch in the heterotopia of a looking glass

that reiterates, *damn you fine, or at least, a solid six*  
& when i hear gloria steinem criticize you for being  
‘a minstrel show for women,’ i’m like wow, glor —

how second-wave of you as if i’m not watching this  
for research purposes as one may costume in a bunny suit  
at hugh’s & when i speak of names you’ve never heard of,

just pretend i’m frank o’hara with grace, joan, leroi, etc etc.  
bc pandemic & these are technical friendships  
& when i talktalktalk of housewife lore, let’s remember

clarissa dalloway bought flora and bernadette mayer  
catalogued her daughter’s tantrum in a library  
as if she were ulysses or something & when i plot out

the bravo cosmology, i see half-fabulous, half-desperate,  
middle-aged me awaiting in a yard globe, except poor”

## NEW ORLEANS, BACKWOODS

I'm in too deep voodoo of tangled roots      knee-deep in Atchafalaya sutra  
submerged in superstition & sweet basin      like the little baby hidden  
in king cake      beignets & gin fizz & Bloody Mary cures  
deep in the messianic muck of brackish waters      I walk with a celery stalk  
O Crowdaddy      baptise me here in cymbal & snare      woodcocks  
throaty as Billie      & bliss-seeking spoonbills go pink for tupelo      cypress stumps  
the rain that plays terrapin like a drum      jive & drink  
as if the world's gonna end but never does      so deep in creepers  
& displacement      I am a subterranean swamp thing  
longed for reeds      great egret      vulturous for a place to do me dirty  
rice & po' boy      a boy who hinges like a cottonmouth  
wider than the Gulf      with the need to keep me  
like Eurydice somewhere on Magazine Street