

**h a u n t**

*Closing Comments*

by Rochele Gomez

*It is now nearly seven years since I paid my first visit to Tribtschen and I know of nothing to say to you on your birthday more than this: since that time, I have regularly celebrated my spiritual rebirth in May of each year. Since that meeting, you live and work in me as a drop of blood, but one which, most assuredly, was not in my system previous to that time. This new element that had its origin in you, incites me, makes me ashamed, encourages me, spurs me on and gives me no rest, so that I should almost feel inclined to be vexed with you for thus disquieting me, did I not feel that it is just this feeling of unrest that impels me and will eventually make of me a freer and better man.*

–Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Nietzsche-Wagner Correspondence*

I've been trying clothes on over and over again, deciding what suits me best. I cut my own bangs a couple of days ago. I wake up each morning with an acute hesitancy to get out of bed.

*If I must write, let me write of things I am too afraid to say.*

The pink trashcan in the bathroom is overflowing with tissues and Band-Aids. I can't bear to empty it because it is the most fascinating thing in my apartment. There are too many towels on the towel rack. A stranger took a shower the other day. I keep the used towel there to remind me that I am not alone.

*If I dedicate this to you, will you blush? Will you take off your shoe and fix your sock? Will you get on top of a table for a better view? Will you end every email with an X and an O? And what of the letters you write me; will they continue to be so beautiful they make me cry?*

The neighbors have four dogs. Each time they open the door, I can hear the little Chihuahuas rush out to the balcony to get some exercise. At night, I can hear my neighbor snoring. Only once I have heard them have sex.

*When it is done, where will I be? Who will I go to for help? I will build a fort that keeps me safe from the dark corners of my mind. Here I worry I won't make it and my passions will die young.*

In my bedroom there is a stack of books I moved from the living room. They've been sitting on the floor for a couple of weeks. My clothes accumulate on the black and white rug, creating a constellation of me.

*You used the word provocative. Will I continue to excite you, to provoke feelings of unrest?*

I gave in and got a haircut at Rudy's. She used clippers on my long hair. I thought maybe she would take my eyebrows off when trimming my bangs. She was pregnant and told me she was due in three weeks.

*What of my anxieties?*

I went to class this morning and my teacher told me I looked tired. The whole day I've been thinking about an old flame. I am tempted to text this person "hello, I was wondering if you ever think about me?" maybe with a picture of my boobs.

*You look at me and realize I am in my head trying to be aware of my body. I feel the fingernail filed down by the glass grinder, and the skin covering my hands penetrated by splinters made to bleed. My neuroses are sealed with drops of blood in the solitude of my studio where no one bears witness.*

I cut glass 'til midnight last night. I was scared the sound of the glass grinder was too loud for my neighbors, but I kept going because they torture me with their music. I also thought they might be used to noise since we live next to an auto body shop with an air compressor. Every twenty minutes it goes off from 8:30am-6:30pm, sometimes later, unless I complain.

*You asked me to pronounce Deleuze with my best French accent.*

The girl in the vintage store kept giving me clothes to try on. She didn't like the Emanuel Ungaro dress because it was too baggy. She gave me this tight red dress that showed every curve I owned. I told her I couldn't do it. She then gave me a beige baggy jumpsuit and told me to wear it with heels. I thought it made me look like a penguin.

*Critique is not a way of resisting. Critique is a way of delimiting, of being able to see the norm and stand outside of it. If you stand outside, you can see the rules.*

I take long drives that get me nowhere. I wear a seat belt so that it may save the life I have left. I am lulled by the sound of rushing cars. I am listening, hoping to apprehend the voice of you.

These feelings exist in my stomach: acid spinning around creating bubbles that won't let me sleep. I feel so much so fast my body reacts in ways I can't control. I sit on a couch clenching the ends of the cushions hoping you will understand.

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*Haunt Journal of Art*

Volume 1

2014

ISSN 2334-1165 (online)

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Funding provided by the Department of Art and the Claire Trevor School of the Arts at the University of California Irvine.

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