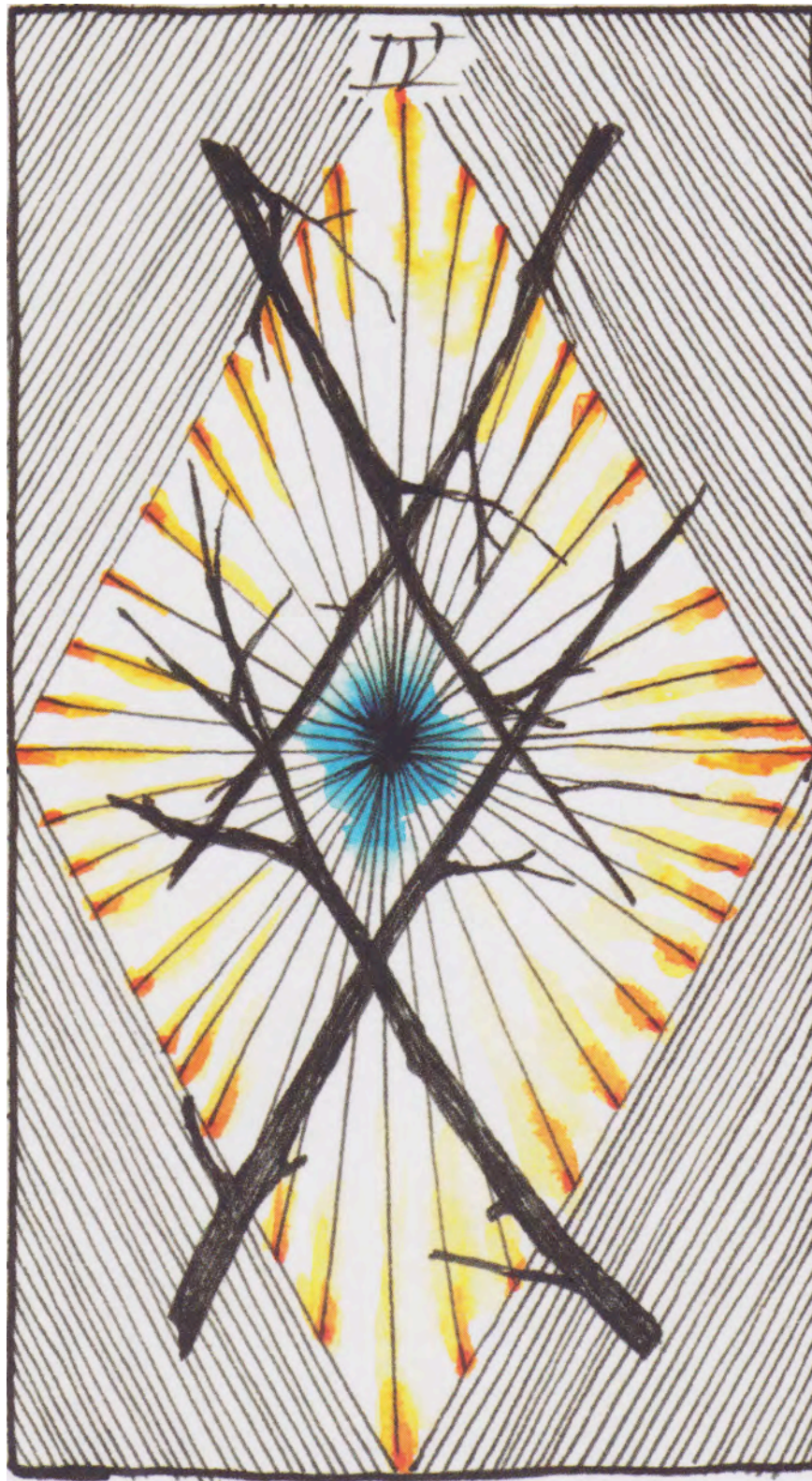


EXCERPTS FROM
NAME YOUR BIRD WITHOUT A GUN
A TAROT NOVEL
BY EMILY CARR

NAPOLEONS CANNONBALLS

15 Scenes from Les Voeux Du Paon



*You're disembarking now, I can see it. Maybe by telling you my story, you can better tell yours,
which is the only way to get home, by which I mean to get free of us.
~ Mary Karr*

A: (OR AS IN THE GERMAN, PARTING WITH THE UPPER)
king of pentacles

Go on: finish those years that might have belonged to someone else. You said you would. There is only one fate, & it is everywhere around you.

From pickax clouds, pick a prefix—

(Deaf lilies; shattered cells of thunderhead.)

(The husband stands there: green, next to the ruins.)

(The broken buckeye, or open door.)

(It's all bones & lonely, & you hold it in your hands...)

Show & tell Liberty thinks Lord one image at a time please.

Green pain or forest stumps. The body like a balloon—

Fresh may I wake to/ what I have made—

The horizon staggers away, refuses.

Bluejays fly from torn signature & cellophane. Ants & sycamores go on eating air.

God appears then is gone. A storm passage in the strings lifts the radiolora from their habit of whorls. In his footsteps rose, & a drop of blue salt.

(He is never, himself—reborn

B: HUMAN ANATOMY
king of wands

Pouring the sky like milk through her ribs.

Imagine: under what loaded means in the heaven of having lived Liberty sprawled in street shine
grown fleshly. Curling up inside what hidden dimension.

Birds plummet past matchstick trees. Automobiles rusting, lopsided barns.

A cheerleader pops drunken wheelies in a cornfield.

Striped with the roots of trees you drive past a retrofitted three story farmhouse.

As white night broke apart like cotton... Not even remorsefully. Nor is love, nor the seed.

Who can you turn to?

Not God not the girl not the girlfriend, who suspects already you are plurally someone else.

Imagine the mess. The sack of the heart. My god: you need each other.

The truth is: you are passing through that doorway, you are turning the corner you dash toward her
but the wind is strong & the distance her death has been with you since the beginning—

C: THE LAW OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCE
queen of swords

That softly repeating plink, distant at first?

The rain's tower rises, & Liberty walks in a huge cathedral of hearing that has somehow entered her. Christ she begs show me the sun but gradually.

Be gentle when you teach me how to love again—

Her soul descends into her belly, vibrating like salted steel or a butterfly.

You're very good at lying she thinks.

Do I sound like a liar? You sound like you enjoy lying to women.

The mystery is how much no one remembers—)

Night turns on her blue heel: clean knots of cloud are tied & untied.

Short thunder pounds on her veins: down through memory slender up through the drug.

(Like a bird, & not the feather.)

There was this myth of marriage but it did not include us no matter she says how I tried to squeeze us in.

Her wet fingers line up at the edge of the world. The sun cracks the horizon of a red phrase.

A goldfish gulps the littered surface through its *oh*

& you being wind: answer nothing.

(Part of this is of course, the truth. Part of this is the lovers machine gun—

1: (ONE FRAMESTAINED OBLIGATION)
four of pentacles

Her silhouette gathers up hair, her breasts drop their fruit, a nipple shines through. Stop you think
stop/ right there.

But already in four oclock delirium Liberty undresses completely & for the first time you see her
naked.

(Does she not hurry ahead of the story sometimes.)

(Loves form, dear reader, remained a fragment.)

Is perhaps a fraction of flower—

Blue sequins, or a Eucharist stripe across the idea of Heaven.

Her ribs bare as she pulled the tee over her head, her hips curving slightly as she removes her
panties. You run your fingers along the line between tanned & virgin.

You count the ribs you will carry along & the ribs you will have to leave behind. It is like a prayer
whispering to you I am not empty, I am open.

Wasnt it. Wasnt it a shape & of your naming, was it not as good as its name. Sitting skinny on the
edge of punctuated scripture.

2: TWO BLADES ABOVE HOSANNAH
four of wands

You order spaghetti & white beer.

Liberty orders coffee, eats some of yours with a spoon.

Is it you or is it she says us.

Its us.

Yes she says but when the sparrows laugh at God.

Gathers up her hair for falling.

Like a duet in which there is no dominant gesture...

(*Try* not to fall in love.) It takes everything you have.

Ok.

Ok.

She orders Whoopie Pie, eats with knife & fork. Why not.

It takes forever.

Its a bad idea. Ok.

Ok.

(Something there. Something white under the words.) (A raked halo almost.) Now *you* are the
husbands rival

(—Something heartless torn from you: like laughter

3: TALK IT OVER WITH LIKEMINDED PEOPLE, YOU NEVER KNOW

two of pentacles

Liberty loved: champagne, cigarettes. The supernatural. Verbs. Cats. Abandoned farm implements & violent-coloured posters, which are destroying the landscape. Blue shadows turning from stag at the edge of interstate.

Dreamt of redemption but knows better than that too

Dont you dare she tells herself.

(Shed my skin, you know what I mean.) (Every hour of every day: the warp of love is everywhere.

The sky is blue & the dead are coming back. Sequentially, like a cartoon or arrows or grammatical grace notes falling inside Mozart's holy heaven.

But what she thinks makes love "work"...

Am I alien to myself, or only now am I myself: this other woman, this irresponsible indecent other woman, of whom I am jealous, this woman without a destiny who differs on the surface from other women, but deep down is the same: full of secret misgivings & fits of jealousy.

Like a fugitive sparrow: unable to fly, or land.

Is it that I aspire to forget the stories I already know.

Or do I learn to forget.

1: SEX & THUMBTRACKS
six of pentacles

All day you carry on the experience of the television.

(For instance, from other points of view you will forget this is you. You will think I have chosen you. I. You. Who are every moment all of you beside me—

O remember! Liberty has been all this time in transit, she never had a self that wished—

As if she were alone (she is alone).

Your shadow turns, clockwise: ripped from your fists.

Jesus look at her straightening her skirt her flat belly drawing the light in smoke where the horizon wipes her forehead.

Already she is part of your story.

Dressed in sequins or burning with a green flame: her point of view removes its gloves.

Christ she prays in one syllable something like help, or *yes*.

How Lord she says does a body do when burning. Think: your ribs are moving like blame inside her. It seems gods punishment (no probably not)—

Put it simply: the flames let her know where each bone is.

(The Atlantic Ocean, which invites death.) (The woman he faithfully loved, toward death.)

Liberty holds all the birds in her hands.

2: OUR NONEUCLIDIAN FUTURES *seven of cups*

In her astonishment in flipflops a watch with a sunset & a palm tree Liberty answers the telephone
says *I*, attempts to find a more convenient form.

Her voice is like a carnation sucking water, sucking blue.

She drinks. Hello she says.

Yes she says like the lion of St. Mark, with liquid nonchalance—

We agree on the physics of the situation. It was something of fire on which God wrote.

But to live with human faithlessness—

Closing your remorse is already in on you.

You lean against the crenellations of the air conditioner.

Dandelions migrate in the bellies of beetles.

The drawback of being she says God was that he could not both be so & say so.

Whosoever she says—

(Here it is) (One leaf, treeless) (As if the page too were suffering)

(Till death do us part...)

She hangs up she turns to you. Her eyes are pale turquoise lightning to milk at the far edge.

...The story on the back of her head, neck: a caress. She is acceptable here.

Why cant you think there be time... just to swim for a while.

3: ALWAYS A VERB OR AT LEAST A GERUND
ten of pentacles

You drive past a gas station by the hospital & a radio blaring a gospel show. Bare fields purple
billboards & haunted dead trees.

Through your heart, which you keep open a cat slinks past as if little wings were on Libertys feet.

... Here on the edge of town a sparrow is lodged in an abandoned television & in both directions
the road thins & parts.

The stars make no sense at all. You are bitterly cold: everywhere.

A deer flickers & is gone. A stroke of lightning rubs the sunset.

Not unlike the amoeba, who live forever, her death is colloidal, suspended:

but what but what but

You downshift, motor shrapnel skitters the highway skyward.

Crows fly from the eye, exit the canvas where you placed her—

Spread out before you you know the end before you have remembered even the beginning: like the
shadow of a tree housing the soul of a nymph. There is opera, laughter, the fluted hill & rattling of cocktail
shakers. Toy castanets painted like planets—

4: EVERYTHING INTERESTING HAPPENS ON THE MOLECULAR LEVEL
three of pentacles

Next to you Liberty lays murderously a little while (bad tonight & bad last night & possibly bad tomorrow). In her pink thong she is perfect, she is consistent with the formula: warm blood, no gills, two pairs of hands, & a few hairs.

With a constellation of freckles on the nape of her neck & thin wisps of noun.

Elbows convinced of the consonants, hands *believing* a couple of buckeyes out past the 7Eleven. As now in *mine*, like warm moonshine. Or the rose on its sure way to self.

Because it is impossible, it comes to exist. (Inside *oh*, as a treadmill.) (The Beloved arrives.) (He steps out of the trees). Liberty thinks: there's peace here if I say nothing but *no*.

(Is this normal? There is no way to tell.

The sun rises to camera range. The black silhouette of a cat loses itself across the irresistible windowsill.

You fuck: dreamy, underwater.

Blood seeps between her loins. All her tendons tremolo. In arsenic parabola she inhales.

The past is redeemed, you are forgiven—

5: A PAGE STRAIGHT FROM GODS PLAN
ten of wands

Developments pan out & blacktop confronts pasture. Overgrowth & abandoned farm implements hem in your exhaust counters, the frame of corn & tree recedes.

A forest burns. The syllables brush her wrists triceps spine & are like phosphorous. & Liberty: a plucked cello. A bridge that punctuates the clouds. A long white dress (not knees) balancing teacups. As night broke apart like cotton...

Tucked in your pocket her pulse is giving off soft pencils.

Some people she says, want to lift you up & some are like crawdads, they just want to drag you down. She is wearing hibiscus earrings, a striped sundress. Mourning doves, or parrots. She has goodlooking buttocks, & is sitting in the sun.

In college she had learned to sleep alone.

She had learned celibacy. Then she had learned to love one man at a time. Then she had been married. No before & no after. No *how* leaning like a wave, but left blank

(Fill it in!)

(She hangs laundry briskly shaken between buckeyes.)

(White, with plastic clothespins.) (Knocks half inches of strawberry wine cooler back like whiskey.) (Knowing it wont do any good she carves his initials in buckeye.) (Lies with the Bible on her stomach & falls asleep with all the lights on...)

6: PARTING WITH THE LOWER CASE
nine of wands

A paperscrap wobbles on the windowsill

—Like a picnic blanket or a shed wedding dress. Black butterflies shift & flap. Somewhere between
5 am & the next day Liberty is thinking

—Again & again about the shock of being seen.

Your fingers sample left then right. Her body shuffles but her mind stays put all her ribs go the
wrong way. Hot or not either you're angels or not.

(no I) (no edge) (no—) (no edge)

Your voice slides. Your voice, is animal.

Meanwhile on the television at large there are occurrences.

Girl guides, dying baby turtles, tarantulas in harness, a fleet of ships, miniature horses &
Vietnamese potbellied pigs.

A Midwestern truck stop rumbles towards the plains. Flames stream across the screen like hair...

Slides off the world into one hundred feet of her limit. It seems to Liberty she has only to make
some simple movement—(a swimmers) & find herself right back on top...

(You are breathing her back it is true wait for her. Tell her what to do—or else does she panic—

7: (LIKE A BIRD, & NOT THE FEATHER)
two of wands

Hollereyed the moon tries on gas station, soda machine, locked toilet, linedried bedsheets, a caterpillar fording yard dirt.

A naked buckeye in torn bandage. In one glass juice, whiskey in another. Photons fall. The radio talks back. She is laughing, her head thrust, one hand on her forehead using each word like lovers: with a transparent heart that hides nothing from her ribs.

She takes one breath after another. Bare syllables collect like water over her breasts like the hinges of a dream, turning. He is gone. Liberty cannot, after so many years understand her hunger for a man she barely knows.

(Wasnt that the flash of a match: over cubed ice, cantaloupe.)

(The just enough-ness impulse that would keep her breathing. (If Christ is love & flies from whence?) The black silhouette of a cat rearranges itself on a road that loses itself in landscape.

A couplet makes a stab in the dark.

(Why not why.) (Tell the truth or Ill jump.)

Lord it is so easy: to say someone loved you. Pawned himself, limb after. Pulled his spent pronoun through. Light, at his back.

8: HOSANNAH
eight of pentacles

You have had your go at love & now Liberty is gentle distant & dreaming backwards.

With tiny hand & charred heart, the clock hums: two thirty. *Did I? Did I?*

What hands can topless angels of the sonnet world. Would you choose (the cowboy heart attack American fleshly). Your hand slips a warm shadow across her beautiful hair, small high buttocks, thighs.

Without their violins cicadas head for the woods little bracelets of fact/ practice *yes, no.*

Birds fly across her exposed chest & down one arm: a black decrescendo.

Or an arc, whose fluted bones...

Is it love? is it hope? a dead cat? a kiss that scorched your ribs? You cant quite remember...

On the spun backward wings of your pride her conscience breaks, like a ship.

Hard at it: threw away the knife & the dream. (As if.) Freed from death. She is reversed.

But your heart keeps singing: in beautiful equation.

9: STRAIGHT NO CHASER
nine of pentacles

That's how Liberty rolls; she likes to put her spin on things

(Roll down the wheat.)

(Roll down the corn.) (Behind that clump of memory that holds the clouds up.)

(As the God he ten counts back from.)

(I will not. I will not. Yes, on my own.)

In literature she says as sometimes in life its fun to be manipulated by a pretty girl.

The wound is proof you have been & indeed continue to be, "got."

(Turn right.) (God rocks backward & the angels comfort him with needles.)

Picture Liberty spinning so fast that (like the blades of an electric fan) her arms disappear.

(This is one way to write zero.)

A small thigh in your left hand. (It could also be a child.)

Waltz Liberty says come let's waltz.

Brought down from heaven, the blue stars Galileo drew are shining on the rocks.

(Every verb has a tense, it must take place in time.)

(Yet there are ways to elide these laws.) (Never say goodbye who would not know—

God is taken up with other things for example gunpowder.

(How any story is finally about the lengths the mind will carry it to, to explain what the body
already knows.)

LES VOEUX DU PAON APPARATUS

The idea for naming the Court Cards came from Jacques de Longuyon's "Les Voeux du Paon ("The Vows of the Peacock"), in which the poet describes the Nine Worthies: a collection of heroic figures from various legendary pasts. The Kings were Caesar, Charlemagne, David, & Alexander, to honour the four major European empires. The queens were Rachel, Judith, Pallas, & Argine. The pages were Roland, La Hire, Ogier, & Lancelot. In the Napoleon's Cannonball's spread, the King of Pentacles is thus Alexander, the King of Swords is David, & the Page of Cups is La Hire.

Rachel Pollock's Court Card Confrontation takes up this strategy; it is "a unique spread for dealing with a difficult person in your life." Following her instructions in *Tarot Wisdom: Spiritual Teachings and Deeper Meanings*, we consciously look at the Court Cards & choose the three that seem to best answer:

1. Who am I most in conflict with?
2. Who am I around that person?
3. What aspect of myself does not get expressed when I am around that person?

We set the three cards down in a row: A B C. Then, as Pollock directs, we mix the Major Arcana. We choose at random, face down, one card for each of the three Court Cards to answer:

- A. What kind of energy do you get from this person?
- B. What issues does this person trigger in you?
- C. What truth remains hidden in the situation?

We lay these below the Court Cards: A B C
 1 2 3

Finally, we mix the Minor Arcana, & lay three rows of three underneath the Major Arcana.

Like so: A B C (Court Cards)
 1 2 3 (Major Arcana)
 1 2 3 (Minor Arcana)
 4 5 6
 7 8 9

According to Pollock, the Minor Arcana answer these questions:

1. How does this person behave with you?
2. How do you behave in this situation?
3. What do you not do (not stay calm, not express anger, etc)?
4. What does this person trigger in you?
5. How did you help create the situation?
6. How do you resist change?
7. How can you protect yourself within the situation?
8. How can you change the situation?
9. How can you change yourself?



There are no alibis. This is one way of getting at what's under what Liberty keeps trying to keep out.

DEAR READERS, DEAR FORTUNE SEEKERS,

2010 was a white-hot, sultry summer; I had just finished my PhD or I was about to finish my PhD, I was writer-in-residence at the Jack Kerouac House in Orlando, Florida; because I was falling in love with a painter from New Mexico I was writing a Tarot novel; I had a folding bike, a MacBook air, the cat named Dirt, & 50 pounds of personal belongings & for the first time since I embarked on a PhD in poetry, I was free—

To write or not, to read Agatha Christie's romance novels, to tour South Florida in a burgundy '83 economy van, to Wite Out a tattered paperback copy of Sylvia Plath's *Ariel* &, using clippings from vintage *Better Homes & Gardens* collage *the weights of heaven* on top of what used to be poetry; to build a writing nest, which in its first incarnation involved a few throw pillows, some potted plants, some super-hero figurines, a photograph of the writer as a soon-to-be sunburnt divorcee with a snapping turtle, &—from an MFA colleague, fabulous fiction writer, & new mother I'd recently reacquainted myself with—a set of Elvis magnets, a clay owl, & a miniature Tarot deck...

~

The first thing you should know is that I am working with a singular memory & a single season: summer. The second thing you should know is that I was writing, or I was trying to write, a murder mystery. It would be a romance, & the dead man would have vanished in a tragic & also possibly fortuitous accident, like a practice flight before an airshow in Detroit, & quickly this became a metaphysical mystery with over- & under-tones of Stein. No body, possibly no murder, a cast of grieving suspects...

The third thing you should know is that the Tarot is a fortunate accident. I was alone, I had no one & nothing, but a black cat & a tiny, ridiculous red bike; after half a decade years of self-initiated exile, of dreaming of these three things—writing my dissertation, publishing my first book, moving to Florida—I was combing the sea from my beautiful, salty uncut hair the water so blue I think I must be dead—

~

This is where I'm writing *Name Your Bird Without A Gun* from: a slow sloppy world with flamingoes, pineapple palm, & giant bamboo looking scarcely real. I am a stranger here, folding myself into sleep invisible each nightfall returning to my tender impossible love for a painter who is becoming already something of the immortal beloved...

It is the summer of big utopian lonely thinking paradisiacal. My body is all tanned meat, carefree & compliant, the future a bright drunk shadow on the horizon waving like something promised then forgotten—

~

The world—*this heartbreaking beauty, the saving core of reality, that will go on, when there is no heart left to break for it*—is doomed, they say. Liberty moves through it, as a fish. Breaking & entering my dreams like some desperate, beautiful thief. The story goes ahead of her. Yes this is the way the world begins/the word begins...

I am 29. I have a brand-new PhD. I am taking off my wedding ring. I am putting my marriage in a BandAid box I am putting on a facemask and looking at the baffled guileless heart of the sea, this lavish fiction—

You see how easy it is, how *necessary*, that I should turn to the Tarot, that there should be not one story but many stories, which is a maneuver borrowed from Proust: the text offers a series of possible narratives, many of them incompatible, all of them plausible enough, none of them anointed above the others as the definitively real one, all of them, in at least one possible world, true. The freedom to escape the story you are telling, & return to it...

~

It's three or four or five o'clock in the morning in my head. I will be in love with G—forever & that is why we can never be together. It's shabby & exotic an extravagant bargain with Fortune in the shimmering spectacular amorous neverending daylight Liberty commits to hurrying after it, alive—

I'm afraid but I keep coming back because I know it must be done—because as my favorite Florida author Joy Williams writes *beauty should be menacing & slightly out of control* (that's what makes it so beautiful); because we *do* need to be startled back into Life, transmuted & disturbed; because there is still value in as Emily Dickinson coaxes: *believing & disbelieving a hundred times an hour*—because love is a *verb*, it changes it can & must because people change...

~

Now it's 2015, I have an office with a nameplate & a cat named Dirt who wishes I was home more often. I live in the Cascade Mountains & it's winter, or it's about to be winter, or it was just winter &, as I prepare for those long months of hibernation, I find myself compelled to nest. I'm thinking Christmas lights &/or orchids, a Japanese screen with tigers, a cut glass vase with a single yellow rose, a mail box in the shape of a shoe, a houseplant an Orangutan could get lost in...

This world is doomed, they say. Screw that tonight: out just beyond the ponderosa pines, the new year is mowing the caldera & I am thinking about spontaneous inner space, I am newly divorced I still love G—& I must have loved my husband, too. Like Midas' golden touch, a simple wish conjures up a reality that was all along potential—

(How any story is about the lengths the mind will carry a tale to, to explain what the body knows already...)

~

This is where I'm writing from—in Central Oregon in the town formerly known as Farewell Bend in a nest called Spontaneous Inner Space while twilight unwinds through the mountains, the snow is slipping into window, the one Hart Crane wrote about in “Fear,” the window on which licks the night, &—dear Readers & Fortune-seekers—I invite you to read *Name Your Bird Without A Gun* not so much as a novel as a field of (novel) possibilities: an invitation (as in romance) to exercise choice.

Love & Rockets, MLE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Court Card Confrontation is Rachel Pollock's creation. You can read more about it in her marvelous tome *Tarot Wisdom: Spiritual Teachings and Deeper Meanings*. Purchase yours from your local bookseller today!

The images of the Tarot are from Kim Krans' amazing Wild Unknown Tarot deck. Purchase yours at thewildunknown.com today!

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Emily Carr is a poet & her redeeming qualities include:

- a) is a math prodigy
- b) has a cat named Dirt
- c) was a Tri-Delt & a member of Marching Mizzou
- d) is a lifelong vegetarian who was raised on a cattle ranch & makes perfect bacon
- e) bats left, throws right
- f) doesn't believe in sunscreen
- j) talks like a valley girl from Missouri & might be Southern
- k) is considering getting a pet rat to scare away the suitors
- l) orders of the kids menu whenever possible
- m) was followed home twice by a dog named Natalie Portman
- n) moved to L.A. for five days in 2012
- o) is using glitter to see into space more clearly

Her second book of poetry, *13 ways of happily: books 1 & 2*, was the winner of the 2009 New Measures Poetry prize. *whosoever has let a minotaur enter them or a sonnet*—, a collection of prose poem fairy tales, is forthcoming from McSweeney's in August 2015.