

Six Choices from *Sonnets from the Brazilian*

1.  
Liebestod's old as being blue  
as Hitchcock's kiss-me-kill-  
you's, as the spooky thrill  
of God's "Guess who!"  
He could sneak up, I knew,  
but not on me: I'd had my fill  
of testosterone, took the Pill,  
fucked a guy or two  
like research,  
worked so hard to understand.  
As if. Why rehearse  
so long? Why plan?  
Time could reverse  
inside your hand.

10.  
So it's like the lilac and daffodils, crocus  
and oak tree that blossom in warm rainy weather  
whatever  
we do when we focus  
on one another, that locus  
of pleasure.  
It's pure  
hocus-pocus,  
what happens now,  
and you do what I ask you to, honey,  
but wow,

how you do it to me!  
I don't know how,  
but my feet just warm right up. See?

15.  
I broke out of the bell jar before we met  
and sampled some of summer's pride—  
enough to keep you satisfied  
anyway, though I'm no athlete yet.  
Sometimes what you don't see is what you get,  
but as long as I'm always along for the ride  
whoever you're picturing from inside  
I can handle as part of the bet:  
and, yes, when the lights are dim  
the same bet's on for me,  
imagining him or him  
from movies or memory:  
but wherever in dreams I swim  
you are always the wine-dark sea.

17.  
It's not an event of life, you know,  
so we don't have to deal with our own, except  
companions have fallen away or stepped  
from edges of air into what? below  
& we've promised to help preserve their glow-  
ing work a little longer, swept

their fragments between soft covers, kept  
them shining a few days more . . . Show  
me what songs you wrote last month,  
last minute, pulled here & there  
by commuter trains full of unth-  
ought-of simplicities, mending wear & tear,  
explicit in love & desire, the one th-  
ing that still makes me stop & stare.

26.

Cartoon superheroes moved me first  
& it didn't matter if they were alive:  
the cute guy on *Fireball XL5*  
was a puppet, & not the worst  
of my crushes by any means. How I cursed  
my bad luck at not being virtual! Babe, I've  
got to tell you: as I waited for you to arrive  
in my life to love me, I rehearsed  
lines & moves with circus rock-n-roll guys,  
an alien, a spaceman, & a cowboy,  
Asian kings & movie superspies.  
But there's real glamour on your brow, boy,  
& if you find me beautiful & wise  
it's because you hold me now, boy.

27.

I used to envision Eurydice as pissed  
off by Orpheus's failed attempt  
at rescue, as if she had dreamt  
that never again being kissed  
was a good thing; who knows what I missed  
in that story! But when you tempt  
me back to life, my whole world's exempt  
from rage, boredom, loneliness—that list  
of dark feelings we call the blues.  
You sing me up out of there: I stand  
not exactly in air but on your shoes  
as you levitate. We rise hand in hand,  
face to face, and choose  
this life in which to land.