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—
足够 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 glowing 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.