

**Lexapro Diary:**  
*Events of January 22, 2007*  
**Andrea Lambert**



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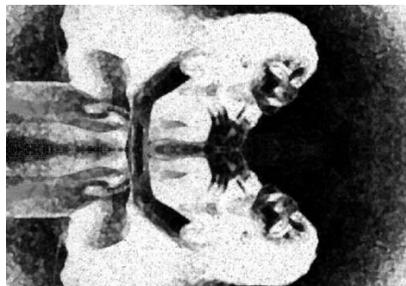
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## Events of January 22, 2007

In the slender light of dawn. A cup of coffee by my hand. Just risen. Bathrobe on. The twitching began. Cramping. Twitching. My hand scrawled through the haiku. My arm thumped the table. My leg spasmed. I tripped on the table. Spilled my coffee.

*What's going on?* I wondered. *I have to get dressed!* I thought. *They can't take me naked. They can't come in here. Find me all splayed out dead. Drooling. Naked. I know I'm going away to the hospital. Fuck, I don't know for how long. I need to bring things. I need books if I'm going away.*

I threw my *Art in Theory* anthology into my bag. Thought if I was in the psych ward I could at least read some Artaud. Followed it with *Last Exit to Brooklyn* and *The Bell Jar*. I grabbed a skirt and T-shirt and pulled them on. As a crowning touch to my Sunset Boulevard moment, I took hold of an ancient, deteriorating fur coat and draped it around myself. *Might as well go out kicking.*

## Lexapro Diary

The silver silent

Path between

Them, momentarily,

The fairy lights,

The Altered arms

The showy

Deviation to daft

Display.

Alter eye discourse

Display enervate,

Exonerate.

Barely able to control my body, I threw open my dorm room door into the dim dawn.

*This is so embarrassing*, I thought. Having a breakdown in my dorm room? Going to my dorm mate to drive me to the ER?

*It's so meta that I'm so aware of how embarrassing this is. It's just so meta that I'm aware of being aware of how embarrassing this is. It's just all so meta...* Thoughts screamed through my brain. Cycling rapidly. The endless train of actions that were each more meta than the last. Endless cycling. Endless repetition.

I frantically groped my way down the hall. My body contorted violently. I threw myself at my dorm mate Anne's door. I pounded. Screamed.

Anne drove me to the hospital.

On the floor of the emergency waiting room, I thrashed around. My legs leapt widely to the side, exposing my leopard print underwear. The thought occurred to me for a moment: that I must look ridiculous. Disgusting.

Diphthong daft,

Young windy

Crunchy.

A daft,

Young,

Deft point.

Violet crumble bethel

Violet fry at the bench.

I'm tarragon-tron,

Octo-morph.

Violet crumble,

Fingertip-bend it in

Tarragon rethink,

What happens when we

“That’s so sad,” said a woman to another in the lobby. As my head pounded on the floor, I wondered if I was going to sustain brain damage.

“Couldn’t we put something underneath her, like her head?” asked Anne. She was strained.

“Finish the paperwork first, and then we’ll take her in. I’ll need her date of birth? Address?”

I let out a garbled shriek. My body convulsed. Collapsed. My limbs slammed against the tile.

“I am fucking flipping out!” I screamed. “I need a sedative! All I need is a fucking sedative, and you people can’t give me one! What the hell sort of medical professionals are you? I am suffering! Watch me suffer. Someone fucking do something!”

“Please,” Anne turned to the paramedic.

I have Schizoaffective Disorder. That is co-occurring Bipolar Disorder and Schizophrenia. Psych ward stays happen. Spiritual experiences happen. It is part of the illness. It is my cross to bear.

Come on,

Because

We’re Barre comb come.

Now, vitamin-lung &

Astro-tongue

Prehensile to try, try, try.

To route &

Modulate. Try

Theramin try

Aquafer try.

Dots & why.

“Finish the paperwork. We have to see if she’s faking just to get sedated. Some people drug-seek.”

I was unable to control my limbs. The convulsions hit in waves. Seizure. One wave died out to a few moments of tranquility. Another hit hard and violent. I tried to pull myself up on one arm on the chair. Anne offered me a glass of water. I fell back weakly. Limp. My arm thrashed. I spilled the cup of water in a gush across the tile.

I lay in a pool of water. Writhed.

Finally, the paramedics came out with a stretcher. Loaded me in. They put a plastic sleeve on my finger. Stuck a needle into my vein. At this point the events become blurry. I was sedated soon enough. After they questioned me, the convulsions gradually ceased. I felt warm, floating numbness lifting from the bottom of my body to my neck. I was talking to Anne as I felt fluctuating waves run through my body.

How to loop & bend

Prehensile tongue

Leg-lifts.

Broadsides

Brilliantine

Waxworks.

See violet

Crumble in

The tweaker’s costume.

No one is there.

My mind was still circling with the endless reassessment of the meta. Everything can always be ever more meta. Doctors kept coming in. They asked me questions. They marked things on clipboards. I felt a surge of the sedative. I closed my eyes.

I floated over colored cubes. Patterns. Colors. Fields. The sky dark. I floated over fields of flowers. I was shuttered into darkness for a long time. I saw a cartoon Jesus with his arms open and heaven behind him. Jesus was taking me. *I must be dying.*

I didn't believe in any Gods then. I didn't believe in Heaven or Hell. That couldn't be real. *I must be imagining this. How ridiculous.* I'd read one-too-many bad Reader's Digest near-death experiences and internalized the narrative. No. Just no. It couldn't be true. I saw a long tunnel with a white opening at the end. The tunnel was bifurcated and slashed with spirals and diamonds. Was I dying?

Suddenly I popped back through the tunnel. I opened my eyes.

It is extra-sweet

Pansyweave.

I am sloppy

I'm cold

I emerge

I am scalded.

Hieranimous Bosch

Cured & scalded.

Alpha weirdo,

Hyper-evangelical

Clunky her clumpy,

Clumpy,

Clearly.

Exponential

Draft & time.

Anne was still there, with her back to me, on the phone. She hung up. Curled up on the chair next to me. She reached out for my hand.

“What’s going on in there?” she said.

“Better, I think.” I stared up at the hospital curtain. An IV hung from my arm. There was a Band-Aid over cotton on my inner arm from another wound.

I looked at the curtain again. Hallucinated the Grim Reaper. Skeletal. Grimacing in a black cloak. Staring at me. Beckoning with one finger. A green and red tentacle from some unseen monstrous beast arched above. Hell had come to claim me. *I must be dying. Still.*

“Wait a sec? Is that skeleton really there?”

“Nothing’s there, sweetie. It’s just the curtain.”

“Oh, wait... Can you move the curtain? Please! Please make it go away.”

Woman: leave love here.

Cythera history,

*Janitor of Lunacy,*

Nico. Empty

My empathy

Prisoner.

Calm my drool mouth.

Shine my moon.

Alack holes

Debate team

Double match

Double-mint Twins

Courting death,

Tears, baby, tears.

I fell back again. Turned to see that the Grim Reaper was still there. Nothing I could do could make him go away. He was there when I squeezed my eyes shut. Only to see the battle between Heaven and Hell over my soul. The Grim Reaper was there again when I opened my eyes to see the battle over my soul played out all around me on the wall of my hospital room in a hallucination like a projection that only I could see. I was the only one who could see any of this. I really believed that I was dying.

There would be moments when Jehovah decided to accept me. Welcomed me. Then suddenly, he had a change of heart. Ran into something in my back file. Bisexuality. That abortion when I wanted to finish college. Promiscuity. Drug addiction. I had a few sins on my plate.

Jehovah kicked me back down to Hell again.

Was I better off with Satan? Hell looked like the best party ever. Flames. Red and orange like a bar. All the most interesting people were there. I rode through hell in a little cart like a Disneyland ride. I was going through hell in a veritable hand-basket.

Droolymouth!

Droolymouth!

Quiet,

O Fang,

Let yet despair.

Fiend,

Rock up your heart.

Nod,

Yet despair.

Forsooth,

It's the cliché.

There are many Gods to worship. I follow a neo-pagan pantheon now. Did I want to worship this God, Jehovah? A God who would hang me out to dry only to be rescued later at his whim?

I cried out. The Gods were at war over me in the ER. I begged. Groveled. Attendants came in. Shoved more and more anti-psychotics into my veins through the IV.

Finally, a clipboard was shoved onto my lap with a form I couldn't read and a black BIC pen.

“What does this say?” I said.

“They're going to help you,” said the nurse. “This will let them help you.”

“Anything, anything to make this stop.”

I sighed. Signed it. Felt a surge of warm numbness. Passed out.

I awoke some time later in a narrow, hard bed. The room had no furniture. I padded down the hard linoleum floor in my bare feet. My shoes and belt were gone.

Forsooth,

Didn't she

Un-pantywaist?

She's

None the lighter.

The paper crackles

Rhymer to rhymer.

Purveyor,

Pop,

Voice &

Pop.

I saw a man with a frothy white mustache. I walked up to him shyly.

“Hey. Um...Could you tell me where I am?”

“You’re in the Henry Mayo Psych Ward.”

“Oh shit. What was I brought in for? What was all that?”

“Oh, you were the one that was all thrashing around. Yes, I’ve been looking at your chart. You have hysteria.”

“Hysteria? You mean like Freud, Charcot?” I had done my reading. I knew all about the myth of hysteria used to exploit and imprison so many women for the entertainment of male doctors in the 1800s. Old psychiatry. *Bad* psychiatry. My writing drew from this stuff indirectly. I did not expect it to so directly intersect my life.

“You know, or maybe you wouldn’t know,” the male doctor said, “it’s when women get these things that happen to them for which there’s no rational explanation. You have hysteria, my dear.”

The doctor walked away.

Emotive smoke:

Perpetrator,

Perpetrator,

Erasmus.

You dolly-bird,

Desperate.

Heal your desolation,

Sad whack start

Ha barnacle che.

Ah, bartender

Ah, sensible cold try.

Heartbeat.



**Andrea Lambert** wrote *Jet Set Desolate, Lorazepam & the Valley of Skin: Extrapolations on Los Angeles* and the chapbook *G(u)ilt*. Her writing appears in *Entropy, Luna Luna, Angel's Flight Literary West* and elsewhere. Anthologies: *Golden State 2017, Haunting Muses, Writing the Walls Down, The L.A. Telephone Book* and elsewhere. CalArts MFA.

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