

Barbara Hamby

MILLENNIUM RAVE

Let us go mad, my darlings, with news, information, facts,
the concupiscence of catastrophe, the evil thrill

of our present dilemma, the bright confederacy of all
that can go wrong, the bombs, my beauties, the grenades,

the undetonated chaos packed tight inside everyone
like Mae West in her cantilevered whale-bone corset.

The buzz has it that our time is up, the rumble
is that no one cares, but the inside skinny betrays life

as robust with a kind of queasy charisma,
mean and attractive at the same moment,

like your no-good boyfriend who is Galahad
asleep, Quasimodo the rest of the time.

Let's storm the citadel of our own stupidity,
because this is gospel, my little shih-tzus,

this is a telegram from Mount Olympus,
we are sailing on the Titanic, dressed to the nines,

doing the two-step, the tango, the soft shoe,
popping corks of Veuve Clicquot, and why not?

The iceberg cometh, the seas are rough,
hallelujah, a mighty fortress is our God.

Let us rhapsodize, my little pedal pushers,
over Gershwin, over Callas, over Blind Lemon Jefferson,

over boogie woogie, big band, Bartók, the blues.
Get out your bicycle, Herr Wittgenstein,

roll out your Lincoln, Mr. Kafka, you handsome
shivering hunk of paranoia and nerves.

Let's take a ride, Vincent, through the starry night,
in your rattletrap, in your rickshaw, in your acid yellow

1957 Chevy Deluxe with the convertible top.
Let's dish the dirt, my little birds of prey,

I have a bottle of gin but find adultery monotonous,
ditto incest. I want a story with magic, lemon zest,

a wedding cake of a story with plenty of butter
and sugar and eggs because I have a sweet tooth,

a black hole, a predilection for scandal and sandals,
sling backs in silver and gold. Come to me, my little

stool pigeons, spill the beans to Auntie Em, Uncle Walt
is out in the barn doing God knows what, but I have the whiff

of something juicy and you, my little blabbermouths,
are just the ones to clue me in because you'd double-cross

your grandmother for a kick in the ass from someone
who doesn't give a fig for you. Ucello, you old bird brain,

where is your perspective now, your mathematics, your converging
lines? I'm in a twitter, my sweets, in a flutter, a twist.

You hippogriff, Gorgon, Minotaur mounting a flailing virgin,
don't pussyfoot around with me, Pablo, I'm on to you,

you fink, you spy, squawk all you want, while I continue
my rumba with the infinite, my mambo with the spheres,

because I have a tip, a glimmer, an inkling, and while
the night remains dark and injurious, I will rave on.