

ALDABRA ISLAND

AMY LINGAFELTER

What are these clothes I'm wearing?
Versions of leather and paper,
with no real notice to no one,
then all of a sudden it's skin,
and there's a list of places I've been,
building, car, building,
great green jungle,
put this in the paper about me:

*she gave them some broccoli without any bread,
whispered too loudly and left them for dead*

onion pancake make-up,
and I've got a disorder that lives,
I've got a quarter for laundry,
fabric: a likely story,
bleach: my new best friend,
wife beaters: my things are violent,
and it's not that I'm surprised
by the faces assembled before me,
or the things they say about me,
a carnival of drills,
a house, a Dodge, a school,
it pays to be specific:

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tuxedo, Aldabra, tuxedo,
I hunted and smelled and heard.
I ran the motion offense
inside the formal wear store.
And I never went nowhere,
except here and there and there,
Aldabra: full of danger,
plants: I've eaten them all,
poisoned: I freaking waited,
and waited and waited and waited,
for a hundred years, a coco-de-mer,
a body that floats in the water,

because me and the giant tortoise
are always vying for attention,
skin and skinned and skinny,
a shell of our former selves.
My face, my tools, my goal.
A series of random events
and my clothes and crags and sense.
It was a short list.
Put this in the paper about me:
perhaps I lay eggs for gentlemen,
but nobody never made me swim
or stole my clothes or clipped my wing
or fouled me hard
or clubbed my head or ate my arm
or told me to write or wrote my obit
or charged me a toll,
no matter where I went.