

As The World Burns

I.

we were looking for facts in Lisa Grimaldi's grimoire
such opulence, she pressed pearls between the pages &
now they fluttered down to my the floor of my apartment

nestled between mice and glitter, crumbs and twine
you scooped them up quickly, your arm pressing against my knee
we used to pray to Martha Stewart

(cooking was never our strongest endeavor)
*goddess Martha, grant us this moment of culinary perfection
make us blessed, help us not die*

cooking avocados in the deep fryer we receipt scammed our way to
Lisa Grimaldi kidnapped and was kidnapped
who was the man that she hit in the head with a brick

possibly killed?
Lisa Grimaldi smuggled stolen artwork through her fur coat store
Rembrandts in mink stoles, oil paint matting red fur

would of made Louise Bourgeois smile
Tom carved <3 LISA into an oak when he was 19
later, when he was 50, he would leave Lisa

for a woman who was 23
good thing Lisa had already left him
in the background of every scene we could see her scheming

her thought bubbles censored out by 20th century TV
there used to be a women's reform school in Tecumseh
called Girls Town, where women my age were locked

in basement cellars for two weeks at a time
& assaulted by their male guards
the reason we need Feminist City is because of Girls Town

when those women disappeared, their sisters
always kept the porchlight on

II.

we are surprised when Lisa never dies
on As the World Turns
my mother and I used to watch it together

while folding laundry no less
other women's husbands fall into comas or get cancer
they tend to do pretty constantly in TV world

& Lisa is there, supportive
but also just has this side eyed look about her
like, so, what?

Lisa would never have been caught dead in the Blue
Ridge Mountains, but if she ever did
she would have been friends with my great-grandmother Lulie

Lulie's husband Reggie committed suicide during the Great Depression
so she raised eight children alone in those mountains
she got by on a bathtub production of moonshine

because she hated doing rich people's laundry
after her goiter was removed, Lulie
became less shy and was a proud woman

dressed up Sunday every day with
beads covering her soft scarred neck
I can't tell you how the Feminist City will come about

but it will have a great moat, are moats illegal?
maybe now, but it won't matter then
Lisa will be the bouncer, the cyclopean wall will be like the Weeping Wall,

but instead of all our sad petitions of a former life
we will 3D print out the dicks of all the men we had to suck to pay rent
all those awful text messages grafted into our minds

and we will stick them into the cracks, fortifying our walls
neatly, haphazardly, you'll see
or no walls, whatever. Lisa and I both agree "there are good guys"

though sometimes we overhear them talking about
our "jacket with the naked militant space babes on the back" &
"maybe it isn't appropriate for work but it *is* pretty cool"

Lisa seems to be everywhere with me
50 years of being broadcast out into the Universe
gives her this flitting ghost bitch quality

people will try and make you feel bad for being such a cunt
for being a demanding girlfriend to multiple boyfriends
for criticizing criticism for spreading lifesaving gossip

for stealing whatever you need
for only using your camera to take selfies
but let Lisa tell you this:

being a cunt is super satisfying

III.

I saw Lisa at a riot once
I peered through the flares, stupid cop candles,
saw her standing there

decked out in a black velor tracksuit, huge sunglasses
she was wearing Sketchers Shape-Ups even though
I know she collected money in the joint lawsuit against them

Lisa was incognito but she winked at me
I saw her order three men to push a dumpster into the street
then light it on fire by dropping a Virginia Super Slim into it so casually

she didn't want to take care of her son, so
she shipped him off to military school
the producers give in and SORAS him

so he is a baby in 1961 but by 1970 he has already graduated college
and fought in the Vietnam War
and been twice married

Lisa just has that power
it was Lisa that shot the boy with arrows
for looking at her through the trees

maybe she was trying to tell us
that a good place for feminists is the forest
but I have so many friends leaving the city

to start land projects that this feels passe
I have no interest in growing onions
or growing anything

or dirt or
we'll see

IV.

Lisa Grimaldi gave me my first pap smear
an older academic I should never have been fucking
took off his condom without asking

I noticed but didn't say anything
I felt like a bad feminist,
like maybe that card could be revoked

but Lisa gets it
she stuck a plastic brush all the way up into my cervix
twisting it felt like the pain of tectonic plates moving

we had to draw my blood and I couldn't stop nervously laughing
she put her hands out, palms up, and I put my hands on top of hers,
thinking she was going to give me an AIDS-Or-No-AIDS palm reading

by looking at my lifeline
but she cackled, and said she just wanted my papers
Lisa Grimaldi holding a syringe over me

Lisa Grimaldi cutting my hair and then offering me free tanning
*you look sick. Pale. I'm training this other girl
if you want to come in and it will be free*

Lisa always had spare tampons, midols, tarot readings
Lisa could be counted on to pick you up when you needed it
drop you off when you just had to leave

Lisa offered me her couch, Lisa said she liked my writing when
I was only 18

V.

Back to the grimoire, yes it was you and me
sharing a too small loveseat
your head between your legs, the book was open,

your baby hairs creeping over the braid I plaited
which was flipped over your head
how should we start?

you closed your eyes, fanned through the pages
suddenly stopped
pointed your finger, opened your eyes

there was Lisa Grimaldi