

JODI CLEGHORN

TINY NOTES TO A NON-CORPOREAL LOVER

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TINY NOTES TO A NON-CORPOREAL LOVER

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from 'Love Beyond Chronology' by Jodi Cleghorn

Before the Beginning Trilogy

Tiny Notes to a Non-Corporeal Lover

Tidal: A Love Story in Five Movements

Love Beyond Chronology

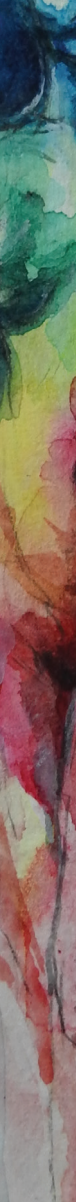
if you're lost
you can look
and you will find me

Cyndi Lauper

refraction (n.)

how light or sound changes direction, or separates, when it travels through a medium, such as glass or water.





red

love is an elaborate circumstance
of anticipation

nobody ever mentions
the state of feeling
(and of being)
like you're dangling in the air
but cannot fall

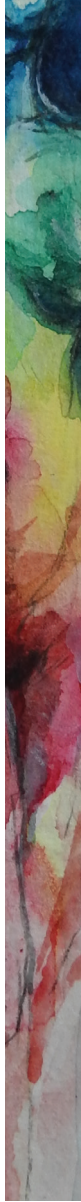
except you do

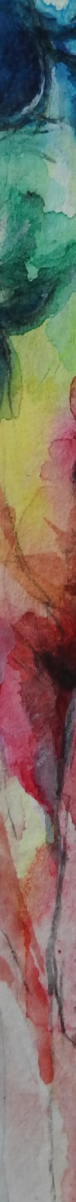
orange

she awaits him
as he expected
and yet
he is surprised

before he touches her
he knows
what touching her
will reveal to him

how alone
she has become





yellow

this fate has consisted
so far as its own memory
abandoned in time
(to the differentiations of her body)
defined and distinguished
by its shifting passion
(the superfluity)
and its opening to the impossible

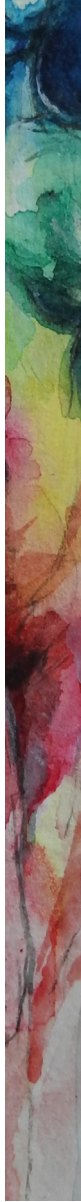
I must believe
my appetites have not atrophied
and what they promise
we will experience
in the summer heat

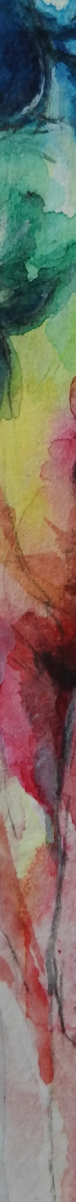
green

they talked of themselves
as a lifetime passion
retaining its rawer meaning
consciously felt

they tended to sensuality's intricacies
present
slow-moving
and ever-changing

they sought the soul's longings
to evoke the spirituality of sex
and each time it was a surprise





blue

the power of the great storm
condensed on them

the cadence of their pauses
and ease
a sense of well-being with the other

the physical experience
of endless effect begins
when at last it rains

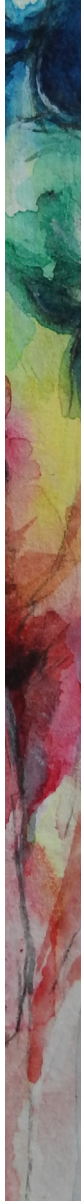
violet

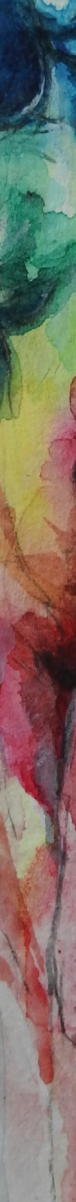
desire places them on the underseam
of the normal course of time

he is under her
above her
beside her

the mirror of herself
made flesh in another

this can never stop, she whispers
on the familiar waves
of sweet pleasure





indigo

in her dreams
the tower was their love affair
a place in which her own feelings
never stayed for long

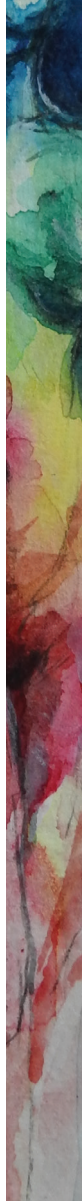
in the half-light of tomorrow
she always knows
what she wants

it is her independence
he loves

inflective

love is an elaborate state of anticipation

an endless sweet longing
for the impossible
and what will be revealed
in the half-light
after she touches him



liminal (adj.)

occupying a position at, or on both sides of,
a boundary or threshold.



An abstract painting on the left margin of the page, featuring a vertical strip of color with shades of blue, yellow, and brown, suggesting a landscape or a textured surface.

1

‘are you looking for me?’

there was a sound of great delight
poking over the edge
of fear

down here
in deep waters
(impossible to fathom)
I fell in love

2

I watched his body
made of blood and stone
and possibility

his heart was untouched
hidden in its lines
folded like a concertina

every mapped journey
contains another
and I was that journey



An abstract painting on the left margin of the page, featuring a vertical strip of color with shades of blue, yellow, and brown, suggesting a landscape or a textured surface.

3

i.

we made love in the dark
to undiminished hope
in slow somersaults through wildernesses
and danced free from gravity
turning our bodies magic
once more

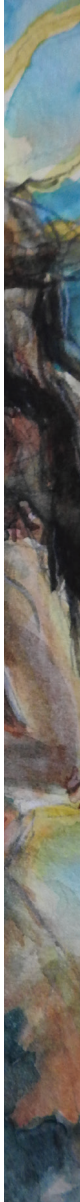
ii.

I looked at myself
from the window
in the moonlight
as a beginning
not a tired old ending

4

she wades
into the secret life
with me
takes my face
in both her hands
and kisses me complete

using her body
as a marker
I slip sideways in time
where we stand together
naked
in a dream
searching for what could be found
and brought home again



An abstract painting on the left margin of the page, featuring a vertical strip of color with shades of blue, yellow, and brown, suggesting a landscape or a textured surface.

5

he came to the altar of my body
astonished
(hungry and excited)
his outstretched hands
wearing faces of wanting

I undressed the stars
and deep in abandonment
he shuddered and overflowed

we gathered every piece that bled
daring to love
what cannot be destroyed

6

he had a face that made my body sin
knowing fingers
naming all my secrets
and each time I came
the infinite unfurled in me

I returned with the universe
instead of love bound by the price
of a rib
(panting)
at the gates of Paradise





7

i.

his heart was torn from a dragon
(his mouth a volcano)
and his cock woke at dawn

ii.

he courted arson
and we burned where we lay
our bodies the altar
for a desert on fire

iii.

I can still trace
the cavity of his throat
and the forgotten angle
within his lines

8

it started quietly enough
falling in love under the cover of darkness
you were forbidden
and we made love
tending the urgency
within the shock of our hearts
burying love-notes
to satisfy the longings

now I am the echo
in the moon's bones
excavating (and denying)
the ache of how we began



An abstract painting on the left margin of the page, featuring a vertical strip of color with shades of blue, yellow, and brown, suggesting a landscape or a textured surface.

9

I am
the cascading torrent
astonished by his rapture
the reckless act of radiance
dividing myself for his heart

I am
buffeted by the wind
sleeping beside the great tunnel of time
singing songs of love and death
awaiting his return

10

I recalled her opening
over the bonfire
dancing in tongues of flame

devouring me tenderly
stroking my loveliness
with words

she was in no hurry
burning for a lifetime
if I promised
to love her now



An abstract painting on the left margin of the page, featuring a mix of blue, yellow, and brown tones with visible brushstrokes.

11

i.

one way or another
we've seen everything
what people can't possibly believe
yet
under what circumstances
is love known

ii.

I have a secret lover
bought in a second-hand shop
to navigate the stars

12

in the darkness I became

moonlight without the black sails
of the in-between

an altar cut by evening
with knees drawn up to the firelight

a rope of pearls bloated with salt
hoping to push underwater

as the hours passed
I could see him
(I knew he would return)
so I lit my bones and waited
for the incoming tide



An abstract painting on the left margin of the page, featuring a mix of blue, yellow, and dark tones, possibly representing a landscape or a textured surface.

13

she knew him already
he was famous
a curiosity

he'd been looking for her
she was morning
a new life in the light

she waded in from the rising water
sparking time with sprawling depths
and plunging horizons
so in a single night
200,000 years could pass

in the end
(in the steady marking of the seasons)
she was not enough
so he confronted himself
to return well-loved

14

pleasuring the confounded
I ran my tongue
over his demons
unredeemed
(but wanting)
my flesh the tender path
offered as a means of love

we kept vigil
underneath the stars
watching a dozen flares
ride the darkness
their long-legged freedom
probability moving
just slow enough
for us to feel



An abstract painting on the left margin of the page, featuring a vertical strip of color with shades of blue, yellow, and brown, suggesting a landscape or a textured surface.

15

she is an alter ego
 (it was only a fantasy
 at the beginning)
whose mortality has mutinied
and run wild

she is night without seams or shatter marks
 (a furnace sweating
 the mysteries of matter)
and whenever she calls
I abandon common sense

I no longer measure time
time measures me
in units of her

16

endlessly in motion
we twist in points of light
to balance above the world

we dance and eat and sleep
like the dying sun
living for the first time
in the blue night sky

is it possible
to continue
as those who dream
together?



An abstract painting on the left margin of the page, featuring a vertical strip of color with shades of blue, yellow, and brown, suggesting a landscape or a textured surface.

17

‘what do you want?’ he asked
I asked him to show me
a lover in pain
and chained to our bed
astride him
I asked how he liked it
(softly tearing him to pieces)
as he exploded

later
(in the faltering candlelight)
he undressed his surprise
how I’d become what I had not been
before we fucked

18

I had been drinking
staring at the smoke-filled sky
robbed of all view
except the screaming flames
that touched your face

your sharp-edged silhouette
stood in the fire with longing
(and with love)
the most intangible of presences
(and the most real)
in the terrible midnight

tomorrow, I will be empty space
and points of light
complete (as you believe me to be)
but tonight I am the fire I could not start
and did not stop





19

i

she did not tell
the strange means of her arrival
but explained the destination
of her heart

ii.

you loosened your hold
and followed love's fiery trajectory
away from desolate living
untamed by the familiar

iii.

I became probability and necessity
(desiccating myself)
the relief and ashes
filling your mouth

20

i.

the first time I kissed him
his life turned towards me
as trees troubled by the wind
continue in the path of the sun

ii.

as long as he loved me
I needed nothing easy nor gentle
(and I wanted to love him)
so I chose to walk
the battlements of his whirlwinds

iii.

being forbidden
does the body hate itself
as the altar that seeks release
at any cost?





21

the gap between myself
and my pounding heart
is bigger
and stronger than her

are we all living like this?
two lives?

the ideal outer life
and the inner imaginative life
where we keep out secrets

I think she loves me
(but I don't know
perhaps she doesn't know herself?)
maybe loving someone
is how you finally
know yourself

I'm the shining water
staring at the rain
enraptured by the ripple

22

I dream we are butterflies
escaping darkened jars
to chase the light pushing outwards
fiery creatures who once knew harmony
where the floor distorts and glows
beneath our wings

later, we sweat flaming tongues
until our features blur
and force fire into fingertips
transcribing impossible shapes
into bodies scorched and impaled
on the wild gyration
 tempering
 stretching
 spinning
to become points of light
passing from movement
into infinity



An abstract painting on the left margin of the page, featuring a vertical strip of color with shades of blue, yellow, and brown, suggesting a landscape or a textured surface.

23

i.

belonging to the sky
can you forget your wings
when the stumps are still deep
in your shoulder blades?
(could you love me
and live without them forever?)

ii.

we dance together
in hope of continuing as before
(to bring back
something that mattered)
and find what we lost
when we flew away

24

i.

I am lust and selfishness
defying the weight of love
and the sun
and possibility
of where it must lead

ii

love is danger
and you
an aphrodisiac

iii.

she pulls me down on her bed
a man with eyes closed
looking up to heaven
so neither of us notices
the mountain is no longer
on fire



An abstract painting on the left margin of the page, featuring a vertical strip of color with shades of blue, yellow, and brown, suggesting a landscape or a textured surface.

25

We are

shadows and urgency
bruised and bleeding

the full and new moons
proud and broken-hearted

the future as a place
we already know

contradictions
hidden between lines

here (and yet)
we could not be together
in one place

26

i.

my divided heart (this wild place)
is not linear
always back and forth
ever conscious
of living another life
in a different time

ii

I am running from myself
at the speed of life
 running from uncertainty
 and confusion
 thickening like a genie from a jar
but most of all I am running away
as a running towards
 denying I am searching
 for the intersection of time
 and the lines of your body





27

i.

there is a black tower where
love peeps at the sun
from this cage
and the spirit singing
to comfort itself
is me

ii.

I am not trapped
I smoulder in secret

iii.

my body disappears
through the door of you
over the distance of us

28

ignore the boundaries
of here and now
step out of one present into another
where we are already
part of *us*

the love we've known
has countless existences
leaving us free
to count the hours by the tide
as we dance
no longer bound
to empty space and points of light



denouement (v.)

the act of untying.



Cherry
12.6

An abstract watercolor artwork runs vertically along the left margin of the page. It features soft, blended washes of color, including shades of purple, blue, green, and pink, with some darker, more saturated areas at the bottom. The texture of the paint is visible, giving it a dreamy, ethereal quality.

1

whispering passion
under the canopy of night
they lost their hearts
over the abyss

the multiplicity of two lovers
with the same heart
letting go
to be beyond themselves
where words
filled the spaces of love
and patience was exceeded
only by hope

2

i.

hunting
daring and pulling
beckoning
and beating
your heart rhythmmed our fate

ii.

I walked into the night
and found us a different story
one of deep blue waters
where I would not
break your heart





3

i.

in the moon wane
you wanted
the flood-tide of me

ii.

I poured myself out
(lifted us into our undoing)
courted the euphoria of rupture
and lost the anchor of you

4

the memory
of your kiss
burned
me up
begging
me to love you
through
doubt



An abstract watercolor artwork runs vertically along the left margin of the page. It features soft, blended washes of color, including shades of purple, blue, green, and pink, with some darker, more saturated areas at the bottom. The texture of the paint is visible, giving it a painterly, ethereal quality.

5

the same place waits for me
when I wind back
to the weight of your body
pushing away fear's final repeat
(to escape the world)
under the setting sun

I feel our love-sighs
where the heaviest of things
turned into the lightest of lightness
murmuring like vagabond words
caught as a memento
repeating itself
into eternity

6

midnight
cut and reknotted
in my hands
continuing without faltering
the distance closer
than the moon

illuminated by melancholy
you saw me
still in the moment
dawning



An abstract watercolor artwork runs vertically along the left margin of the page. It features soft, blended washes of color, including shades of purple, blue, green, and pink, with some darker, more saturated areas at the bottom. The texture appears delicate and painterly.

7

i.

if the place cannot be mapped
does it matter
what I remember?
and what of the silence behind the stars?

ii.

the last glimmer of time
(against the final trace of us)
ebbs
and we vanish

8

you discovered me
written invisibly
before you
gradually appearing every
morning
from another time
coming towards you
tracing the lineaments
of your world
with my finger





9

I took a deep breath
and allowed myself
to be led
far
far
away
becoming a black star
in a white sky

10

i.

memory
(the flood-tide of you)
daring and pulling
(continuing without faltering)
under the canopy of night

ii.

every morning
I breathe deeply
and brush away
the last stray fears
of the finality of us



aperture (n.)

an opening that admits the light.





1

i.

you carry high hopes
for a new god

ii

the rise and fall
that feels new and old
the anticipation of the drop
(here and liminal)
without grasping

iii

you of the future
visceral
potent
and ecstatic
(forever my paradox)

2

the dawn birdsong
wraps salty tears
around a one-day love affair
gestating a tomorrow without
expectations

future memories play backward
bridging undefined borders
between
hearts communicating
with tin-can phones





3

i.

I am stillness
feeling the weight (and luxury) of nothing
the wholeness that misses
the way you loved me
in the quiet corners

ii.

possibility seeks you
reinvention (waking) in unbroken water
savouring the pause
before the buzz of anticipation

4

I will count all the ways

the sun wishes for a new day

trust resets in grief

the depths churn and wait

hyper-reality drips with colour

chaos summons softness

regret counts itself on rosary beads

salt contains the ocean within

imperfection blurs edges

the moon contemplates human vastness

and hours ruminate fate





5

untether

the uninterrupted hours
and pierce me with bittersweetness
embroider sunflowers on the sky

grief before it wakes up
and the mechanisms for tending memory
rob me of a future

uncouple everything
and let it bleed beneath my feet

6

you are first kisses
 depth, petulance and radiance
 a hand that stayed my synapses

the shape of Sunday molasses
 twelve weeks of goodbyes
 the centre I am curled within

the morning in my imagination
 intimacy, proximity and discomfort
 my stubborn denial

and you are long gone





7

memory anchors you
in branching shadows of thin dark veins
rippling like heat through the air

you take up space outside the cliffhanger
(echoing promises before love)
hearing mementos in the breeze
but finding midnight underfoot

anchored in memories
you unlock gates of knowing
and our timelines end in tricks of light

8

my resurrection

dances with lightning in a Tesla dome and
walks flesh and spirit seamlessly

skips possibility over exquisite expansion
and rambles misshapen in time

lies waiting on a future canvas and taps the
thread that binds us

crosses my path with the sun and meets
memories with joy and beauty

waits down the road in the calm air and
breathes me into the centre of my will





9

i.

when I cry

the weight on my chest is no longer a sweet spot
the world ahead loses momentum and its home
endless misery mimics a day of oceanic retreat
comfort courts the desire to be worthless
beauty drowns in grey indifference
nothingness steals my heart
will rips itself from joy
bleakness pants

ii.

I'm certain I'll stop existing
when I cry and (at the cliff edge)
nothing changes

10

I barely recognise

the entanglement of heartbreak outside of pleasure
after stepping all the way into the mess

clumsy inceptions of new timelines
knowing I don't know everything
and that's okay

mornings without you
having filed part of you away for later

the scene change off in the distance
waiting for a future that will render
us forever

the process of renewing the centre
while the old folds into oblivion





11

looking to the future, I

wake twice before dawn
tend a past I can't change
retrieve method from my madness
fly the sunrise canopy of delight
and stretch into hope and excitement

listen to stillness wash through me
thread fiery ease through enoughness
dress in semi-transparent slowness
anticipate an exquisite life in motion
and savour everything

12

the Christmas miracle you want
is one functioning phone booth
in Uzbekistan to call home from
even if the line is terrible
(even if you cry)
and ask the wrong questions

next time, you'll say
I love you, I miss you
next time, the ache
won't be to hold hands
in a forgettable hotel room
(wishing you were dancing to Last Christmas)
next time, the miracle
will not have razor-sharp edges
and ask for a blood sacrifice





13

I am violently radiant
(in my own little world)
smiling 'morning' at oblivion
where time, hope and realisation
see up close (and from afar)
how I am wayward timing
moving forward
(but still unsure about the other side)
where momentum is proof of wild paths
and trust lays me down
(beyond my own little world)

14

hold stillness

after the pregnant pause
beneath everything
when you're late
on a runaway train

hold silence

alongside heaviness
walking with slow change
behind tears without reprieve
in a summer storm





15

raise energy
like a heart learning a new rhythm
intense and beautiful
embracing forever's timing of limitations

raise energy
on the cusp, within a hug
and wonder on the future
how the stars bless what they cannot see

raise energy
to initiate change
through baggage, trauma and emotional resistance
seeing clearly (and feeling everything) for the first time

16

I am

desire
fucking instead of feeling
breathing hot air to exhale ice

storming
binding a torrent in my name
to keep the needle spinning

disintegration
holding myself together
to see if I got it wrong

naked, with claws like hope





17

last time, I spun possibilities into
an exquisite life lit from within
but the magick took you away

this time, I am prepared for
the first day of the year
until future memories distract me

last time, I recreated moments on postcards
celebrated mosaics of memory
before they became words of grey forgetting

this time, I believe in a future where
faith protects me from toxic hope
except I want you not the lost summer

last time, apathy curled tight around our bodies
and this time, somehow, I am still
unprepared for the empty shape of you

18

i.

it took presence to let
the numbness slip away
with the tether of the impossible
and the sudden overflowing
of my nuclear-grade fury

ii.

slowness created a space
to ask questions I hadn't considered
of imperfection's conscious return
to every good intention

iii.

and then there's
the pinch and pause
of your depth piercing
me the first (and last) time





19

energy agitates
in petals and pinks and progress
 reaching for my hidden sun
 blanketed by strings of shadows
painting a new day wishful
 down a corridor of yeses
 in my body

energy agitated
infinity restarted, blindly fifteen again
 laughing wildly in the wisps
 of what returned
the long-forgotten summer vibe played
 and in this dark moon season
 I'm startling bright

20

i.

naysayers hide behind words
of future conversations
I will crash

ii.

at the edge
the cliff is an entourage of micro quakes
(my parachute is packed with trust)
and I step into the mystery
(collapsing the cocoon) of faith

iii.

I'm kissing cool air
bliss warming opportunities
to be myself
boldly poised, I'm escaping
saying 'yes'





21

sometimes the remembering is nourishment
from wide open spaces and strangers
so visceral you're someone (somewhere) else
and water is more than a metaphor

sometimes the remembering is disorientation
turning westward to shapeshift
instead of yearning for tumbleweeds
and things that die

and sometimes the remembering is evanescent
incongruent and impossible
scrying the current narrative
to lose itself in a bigger moment

22

they promised me the fall
and the inevitability of hitting the ground
of answers in the wailing void
and the drifting wake of future consciousness

they promised me the gentle caress
of softness in absence
and the colliding space of ritual
where the bargaining chips of corporeality
cross the threshold of now

and they promised me starlight
if I surrendered to birth tomorrow





23

in the centre
where your heartbreak waited
everything is worth remembering

a love chime opens a heart and
tears find a beautiful rhythm

when uncertainty moves in the opposite direction
with hopes and dreams and calm

I'm kinder to myself this time
stretching into my shadows each morning

how maybe things will return to the familiar
where I'm together (and breaking apart)

24

on a different timeline
I run my memories down the line of him to
find the place of you, only to discover
he is gone and I am lost

where do I wander
now I'm making meaning from ambiguity
and relief is folded beneath
overwhelm?

how do I chart my own course
when I'm drowning in quicksilver
and the slap of what I asked for
still hurts?





25

I am a happiness hangover; heightened
experiences without the endorphin
crash rising and falling despite
the raw holes of who is
missing in the overwhelming
fullness

I am anchoring the bass note of known
to infuse the impossible through
multiple layers of me in
the wake of so much
catalyst

26

wonder where tomorrow counts down
the hours to contemplate how
to normalise what's far from normal
without waking the memory of sleep

catch time before skull bones
reorganise themselves and the static
is all wrong trying to dial into
a pressurised frequency of hope

anticipate perfect complexity, moving
chaos with the phoenix to
return symmetry in a body remaking
its carbon base





27

i.

the far off rumble of yesterday
does not slay me, emptiness
and loss turn toward
a different reverence

ii.

the ecstatic effect of being loved in
my stillness contradicts feelings
I'm never going to be enough
to wrap joy in

iii.

the echoes of Goldilocks
without her porridge
or bears or chairs are gone and
I am not the same home I left

28

the magick I created, I lost, and I have
no idea where you are since I cut the
tether-lines to move through the world
without the accumulated weight, following
seagulls instead of albatrosses

deciding on uncertainty, I've chosen
the chariot over the lovers wanting the bigger
sense of things rushing toward me
where fiercely following my heart
is to explode into flower





EMMA KIRSOPP has been making art most of her life, drawing her inspiration from the words of writers, poets and storytellers her work explores themes of myth, fairytale and the subconscious. She has exhibited her work in a number of group and solo shows across Australia and holds a master's degree in contemporary art. After over a decade in London, she now resides in Brisbane, Australia and, as a shapeshifter by nature, moves between her lives as business analyst, therapist, coach and artist.

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JODI CLEGHORN is a Brisbane-based word witch whose delight in storytelling and words leads her on adventures in fiction, poetry, tarot and depth work. With a penchant for the dark vein of humanity, her work swings between genres and forms mapping the complex tapestry of human experience. *This Once Precious Life and Other Stories*, her legacy collection of short fiction, followed on from her first poetry collection *Shades of Paradox*. She's also the author of the Aurealis short-listed novellas *Elyora* and *The Starling Requiem*.

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