

NATHANIEL MACKEY

Anaphylactic Aria

— “*mu*” ninety-seventh part—

The abandoned girl stood in line
or went online, unclear which, the
abandoned one we all had been
or
would be. “To’ve been so real
and so soon over no joke,” she
kept repeating, a barracuda’s
hooked mouth, oracular, howling
could
a fish’s mouth howl... Distant
muse, distant music, distance muse
and music, song heard from a dis-
tance whose words we barely made
out.
Skin came up, as did *hair*, *draped*
interstice, *hallowed backside*, *midriff*,
thigh... It wasn’t music so much as
what
wasn’t said we heard sung. Synaes-
thetic husk, curvature. Seen-said vesture.
Redress... An odd song it was, all fret,
fidg-
et, the abandoned girl happy even so. We
all were, we had phones we could talk
to, abject tale again sweet in the telling,
tale
we dialed up, talk we called alchemy,
ruse we resorted to... We were lead
and she was gold and vice versa, gold a
low whisper, high wind, bent whisper, a
siren
gold almost was. The Insofar-I sound it
was, hers if not ours, hers were it ours to
say but she said otherwise... Stood in
line
or went online, she couldn’t say which
nor could we, bump run as one with be-
neficence, fuzz luminosity we’d heard about
had
come... The far sound was the one we lis-
tened for, not so much heard as heard of, solace
up ahead or so it seemed or somewhat was,
forever and again soon-come. We saw we’d
stay
extolling sonic rescue, sound we heard we’d
hear,
heard it say we
saw

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Less a netherworld than a nonworld
the far wall she stood online at...
Thread was on the box, all fidget, fret,
a Hofriyati two-step, a hotfoot minuet...
Death
had caught her ear we saw, whispered
it among ourselves, we the barracuda's
mouth hooked again, choristers against
our will... The abandoned girl made us
wish
we were young again. We dreamt of
gold and a kind of grape we'd never
seen before, everything in the dream
the
dreamer we'd heard, dream or no dream
we'd heard... A seen-said refrain we
couldn't hear kept at us, refrain she staked
her
story on, a reach we took it to be. Golden
bones lay on each plate as we broke bread.
These too we took to be a reach... Dreamt a
dream kept at arm's length, dreamt it even
so,
dream dreamt pulled away from, the aban-
doned girl's abject wont. Everything seen the
seer
time was, recess turned
inside
out

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The abandoned girl had come aboard
back when, thumbed a ride on the edge
of the road, hopped in, wearied us with

tales

of disarray. Uninhabited angel all over
again, we dared reflect, the story of the
story our story, recess turned inside out

it

turned out... The abandoned girl de-
manded a name, laughed at each name
we offered, the abandoned boy had
done the same. An emotional abstract it

ap-

peared she set out to be or to arrive at,
insisted he did too. What were we, she
kept asking, band, clan, country, planet,

Low

Forest lunglessness, what, she kept insisting,
she wanted to know... Absolute orphan
all over again, we dared reflect. Made-up
amends got us nowhere, we who'd have

been

hers had she asked... What we were we too
wanted to know. Band, clan, country, planet,
Low Forest lunglessness. Rub, anaesthetic

re-

frain, blunt recurrence, costume exfoliant,
fey restraint. The list, we insisted, went on...

Rock chipped at we might've been, make-
believe lineage, no deep need to be there.

Had

the abandoned girl and the abandoned
boy been twins we'd have passed out, each
the other's asymptotic scout we saw they

were...

Yet to learn, as we were, death's lesson, deep
inside identity's den, made-up descent,
the abandoned girl sang abandonment,

tight

strings' tautolodic run,
self-taught

Again we were in God-is-Gun
country. The abandoned girl pointed
out we were there. She'd woken
up with the world in her face we
were
told, on a screen she'd seen crowds
bombed and shot... Glass wall,
glass transport it came to. The
aban-
doned girl the abandoned boy,
chemical stomach under it all, his
her collapsing church first and
for-
ever, each the other's ricochet
we heard, said we saw... Beadwork
told
and retold, thumbing rosary... Rubbed
inner skin's antithesis. Sad animal
caught
up in
thought

The abandoned girl and the
abandoned boy stood rib to
rib debating whose hurt
worse,
in line or gone online,
unclear which... Far rampart
the wall they stood at, grown of
late to become onward add-on,
arith-
metic salvo, ythmic fence...
Asthmatic. Diaphragmatic... Of
late budged inward as though
a
brass quintet blew
taps