

M E T A P H Y S I C K S



C Y N T H I A Z A R I N

I Metaphysick for the New Year

If Love would have her way with us
 she'd bind us lip to brow and brow
to knee, and wind a lariat
 of leaves about Love's moment that
in it holds all time. But you
 and I are sick of love. The year
has turned. My heart, where nothing sat –
 a wreath Love bound, that by our will
 will prove a collar or a crown.

II A Week Later

If as we'd thought: once monthly thus
for three decades, this twelve-month near
 used up our quote of days, and squared
that dozen though the year, a hoop,
 swerved summer – zero sum, that season's
 integer, when lost we pared
then doubled nought as if to reckon
 absence out of air. As if minus
 made Love's quotient disappear.

III Mid-January

“Indeed it is the first day again and again of everything”
In deed each day is made anew –
 Time's gaze in time turns trespass true;

Love's tempered arrows hit and miss
 and hit their mark, and prick out words
 the blind by touch can read. For when
 a bird touch down upon a pond's blue
 eye, by concentric rings its iris
 widens. Time, sit by Love's side.
 The night unfolds tomorrow's news.

IV To Herself, Dimly

These verses that you write, what mean
 you by them? Love not chatter needs
 as swans bemoaneth not more white
 to bleach their plumes but beg instead
 a pond where they might preen. Smirking,
 you purport: she makes her own, for
 sturdy craft whose bowsprits export
 spume. But Love regards not shirking.
 On her own heart she feeds.

V A Game of Chess

A board atilt between two chairs.
 How long, Love asks, has this gone on?
 In dream patois will mimics whim –
 the Queen remits her bracelets, viziers,
 wits, and pawns her heart to colonize
 the King, who retreating draws in air
 a triad now become a square.
 On which he sits. Radiant, Love
 pulls that throne from under him.

VI Riddle

Cat fur on end means a back up;
 two crossed sticks may coax a flame;
 smoke can blind or make Love fly away
 though ardor magicks smoke to fog

and Love to Fool, who remarks not
 an unmade bed when Folly says:
 lie down on it. The pussy willow's
 rune is spring. Now spell your name –
 wert gone (but stay!) in winter's pillow.

VII Jupiter in Retrograde

The end of winter's transit moon
 brings woe. So does a horse, bedazzled,
 stay its trot, else run too hot
 and called cantankerous. Make not
 a twelve-month filly walk too soon –
 vexed, her legs will buckle under.
 Love bends a knee and bids the muzzle
 graze; better fat abed then skint
 abroad, lest hurry put asunder.

VIII Talking About It

Hip, instep, knee, wishbone – bewitched.
 And every molecule sequined
 until Love's skin becomes a suit
 of scales, each note a star that singing
 makes no sound but breathing says –
nota bene: there, and there, as musing,
 Love makes of touch a pretty lute –
 nerve, my own, and tender pitch.

IX Months later

As if Love's heart run out of air
 so as my heart too high would speak
 so that my sleeve now a white flag
 that which simple made unstuck – flags
 at the chase. I thought I was other
 than I am. My busking hat? To
 my betters, whose petitions wreak
 more havoc than I bring to bear.

X Anatomy

If you court heartbreak you may marry
 it. Love balks, protests, grieves, tarries –
 The long way round a slip-knot noose,
 no hanging, but had a heart ankle,
 wrist, knee (for though it be a living
 thing it does not walk, live, coo) –
 Wrong. These many limbs in traction.
 For the heart do sup, cry, sleep, rankle.

XI Cathexis

If I could take my heart by stealth
 and place it in my heel, so that
 my ribs might make a belfry where
 Love's bell might forge anew a tongue –
 and then by walking so repair
 the newborn changeling to brute health
 I'd whistle as I walked the route –
 or that's the tale I tell myself.

XII Burn

A dozen makes it come out right
 but as a stone thrown in a pool
 makes rings that perfect do not touch
 so Love, exhausted, makes her rule –
 enough. But truth, restrained, unspools
 and spills. Hot water burn upon my breast
 makes manifest my heart's remit,
 and my foot lame, where it was put.

Coda

Folly, to think rhyme could make stand
 that at which Love throws up its hands.