

2-27-2015

Okay Cool No Smoking Love Pony

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DOI: 10.25148/etd.FI15032120

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

OKAY COOL NO SMOKING LOVE PONY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

CREATIVE WRITING

by

Annik Isabel Babinski

2015

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts and Sciences

This thesis, written by Annik Isabel Babinski, and entitled Okay Cool No Smoking Love Pony, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Nathaniel Cadle

Denise Duhamel

Campbell McGrath, Major Professor

Date of Defense: February 27, 2015

The thesis of Annik Isabel Babinski is approved.

Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts and Sciences

Dean Lakshmi N. Reddi
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2015

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DEDICATION

To my parents: Catherine Ann Adey and Marc Andrew Babinski.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the members of my committee, Campbell McGrath, Denise Duhamel and Nathaniel Cadle for the time, energy and expertise they lent to this project. I am grateful for my friends: Kelsie Aguilera, Estee Mazor, Christine Morando, Sarah Mason, Ashley M. Jones, Dawn Davies, Leenie Moore, Ulrike Pellisier, Rose Roher and Justin Bendell.

MM: “Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green. The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.” (Song of Solomon 1:16 KJV).

Many thanks to the editors of the journals that published versions of the following poems:

“Miami as Lover”—Salamander

“The Convention”—Salamander

“Wash Bucket”—Best New Poets 2014

“Hospital Oceanico”—Sink Review

“How to Get the Ghost Out of the Pool”—Cent Journal

“March Storm”—Transom Journal

“On MC Hammer’s Birthday” — The Puritan

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS
OKAY COOL NO SMOKING LOVE PONY

by

Annik Isabel Babinski

Florida International University, 2015

Miami, Florida

Professor Campbell McGrath, Major Professor

This poetry collection moves from the narrator's childhood in the marshes of Canada to her coming of age in a new, southern swamp in South Florida. Many of the poems use free verse as well as fairly recent poetic forms like the Golden Shovel and the Pecha Kucha. Others rely on wordplay and nonce forms. Influenced by Hector Veil Temperly, Matthew Zapruder, Dorothea Lasky, Laura Kasischke and Anne Carson, the poems often employ simple language in stream of consciousness, and oscillate between lyric and narrative. These poems are feverish creations inspired by the oracular tradition and induced by the psychic crush of modern life: depression of the body and mind, cultural paranoia, and the decline of nature. The reader is privy not only to the personal biography of the narrator, but also to the inner workings of the narrator's mind as it encounters and interprets the world.

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FAQ

I'm my own soccer mom

I've got my fam van

And my mom jeans

I'm my own wife

And my own husband

I'm my own baby

My own bathwater

I'm my own backyard

My own tandem bike

My own maid

My own chef and dietician

I'm my own gardener

My own personal shopper, personal trainer

I'm my own social network

My own meme

My own penpal

My own mistress

My own true love

I'm cooking my own books

I'm fleecing my own millions

I'm robbing myself blind
I'm never lonely in a crowd
I'm my own hero
I'm rescuing myself from the brink
I'm my own death threat
My own heart condition
My own anxiety
I'm my own epiphany
My own moon
And my own island
I've got a bridge
But you can't cross it

I WANTED TO FIND AMERICA

Driving long alone,
this first rest stop after the border
like an epiphany. The woman inside
sells me another phone card.
She is kind and calls me *Hon'*.
Road signs look more sure of themselves here,
so I load back into the car, feeling very fast.
It's raining hard in the mountains
and my wiper is broken.
My car keeps shaking on the downhills.
I think of dying in a different country.
I pray to god, the one on the money.
It's overcast and I'm driving by a river
where men are fishing
up to their knees in freedom.
I want to try that fish. I want
to buy a root beer and an Archie Comic.
I want to own a keychain covered in stars.

MIAMI AS LOVER

All through this black moon night

I've been woken by offers of sex

and the weeping chorus of balcony dogs.

I ask you to turn on the fan, to lift off the duvet,

but you refuse, telling me the names of your girlfriends

and all the books you've read lately.

I put on your shearling coat and empty its pockets.

I pummel you with mitten fists

until you cry out that you invented ironic,

before the Internet, you invented it!

I jump on you again.

I'm going to marry an American,

I tell you, *but it won't be you.*

MY GUY

I cut together my dream guy
from *Men's Health*. It was a challenge
because my guy isn't so into body
that he'd exist in *Men's Health*,
but I found a picture of a comedian
in a flannel shirt, so I scissored that out.

Next, I spotted a basketball player
from the 70s wearing Chuck Taylors,
and I carved around his feet.

My guy has seven hands:
one carries a mic,
one holds a paperback,
one pulls a navy backpack
because he's a multi-task-master-blaster.

Some hands stretch for me, and some hands hold me.

He has dark eyebrows, soft eyes, and several faces.

One smiles towards the picture of my face.

One stares directly at whoever looks into the collage.

One is looking into the distance over green water.

When I bought the *Men's Health*