

HOT NIGHT

Hot night, wet night
you've seen me before.
When the streets are
drenched and shimmering
with themselves, the
mangy souls that wan-
der & fascinate its
puddles, piles of
trash. Impersonal
street is a lover
to me—growling
thunder lightning
to flash and light
up 7th as a little
mangy boy weaves
towards me &
laughing couples
kiss the puddles
with intended
sex in bright
shirts. It could
be another city
but it's this
city where
I start
being alone
& alive bringing
my candles
in while
I go walking
in the rain.
I think I
need a bowie
knife, a
pistol, a squealing
horn. You've

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EILEEN MYLES: NOT ME: HOT NIGHT

seen me before
hardly ever as
charged up as
now at the
end of my
rope by a
window in
the rain. July
is full of
pleasance, things
that can be
pushed to
fill to the
end of
the summer where
no one's ever
surprised to
have made it
to September
when something
lives—the
culture made
inside. In July
I am filled
with the death
of the streets,
you've seen
me before—
you're a wit-
ness to the
death of
my innocence
which came
teetering here
without ap-
petite. If
anything lives
I have seen
it in the street & why

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EILEEN MYLES: NOT ME: HOT NIGHT

am I falling in love
now with the old
& the scabrous. Why
am I giving my
money away. Sunday
I photographed mounds
of trash, finally
turned the focus on
me, a portrait I
could accept. I
feel erotic, oddly
magnetic to the
death of things
emptily attracted
to the available
empty space,
a step, or
I will not tell
you where I've
been but I
do & do not
belong. When the
dawn begins
I'm blue & lonesome
give me twilight
then the night,
let me be lost
in the lonesome
place, the human
sea of no one.
Drivel passes from
the mouths of
babes, smart shirts
bopping along,
art faces california
faces, the proud
march of culture
in New York City
Man are we buzzed

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EILEEN MYLES NOT ME HOT NIGHT

the screaming pork-
chops on the 4th
of July, the
disintegration of
the Hell's Angels,
can be loved,
now there are
10, can be
inclusive now
I smell death
everywhere. I hardly
think it's in me though
it always has been
my baby blossom,
I hope I make
it through the night
unplanned, nothing
dazzles me now,
who's driving? God?
I don't believe in
God. New notebook
I'm scared. My
hand tries to fly
free, but it's my
life, not my
death. Make
an inventory of
your occupations
remember now
there is sugar
in your coffee
and the band
will catch
you if you
fall. Remember,
remember—what
were Hart Crane's
last words—you
read them in

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EILEEN MYLES NOT ME HOT NIGHT

the Strand. My
dear—I've simply
disgraced myself.
You know a
genius when you've
seen one, don't
you. I'm one.
Take a good look,
you've seen me
before. Don't
turn back. Isn't
it a famous image
of the end of
Love, the famous
ride on the ferry.
Departing from
Land the Love, the
famous prow parting
the water now
as I jab my hand
inside you now
and churn. My bike
falls apart. The chain
collapses, the brakes
stuck, the wheel
wiggles, taking in-
ventory of my
teeth if they do
not look like
they will make
the long haul
I will leave
with them. My
poetry is here
for the haul,
the lonely woman's
tool—we have
tools now, we
have words &

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EILEEN MYLES: NOT ME: HOT NIGHT

lists, we have
real tears now,
absence, rage &
missing you is
not possible in
the New York
rain because
your name
is caught between
the drops &
I might throw
up, I can't
because it is
not beautiful
& I'm a
ward of the
state. Silly
children in
hats, raving
junkies, so
what, discreet
children, bad
songs, where's
the art? My
drivel in
the rain, or
the la-la-
the tape. I have
no hope for
my culture now.
It prefers fictions
over journals, it
doesn't want
my lives so
I choose streets
like a billionaire,
prove my coffee
counts. I
pick up "you" like

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EILEEN MYLES: NOT ME: HOT NIGHT

my midnight
rattle I shake
at the devil
of the night
that does not
scare me. It's
true I've done
nothing right
but I'm driven
by the rainbows
of trash in
puddles, the
frames posters,
& windows, the
marked sidewalks,
stray shoes,
can you imagine
selling used magazines,
poetry books on
a blanket, click,
dividing my time
by the tables, the
walks, 27, going
oh, oh, what
pain I need
whiskey sex
and I get
it.

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EILEEN MYLES NOT ME HOT NIGHT

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EILEEN MYLES NOT ME PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

Maybe you don't
like me. I like
the hairless look.
That's why I
buy tweezers. My
emotions are so
laughable. That's
why I like Tosca.
Spongey blue
earphones get
crammed in
and I bounce
along the asphalt
path watching
the bars of yellow
& blue bounce
in the waters
even east of
FDR. I am
an American.
I am a
true American
poet. I use
multi-strike
cartridges in
my Smith Corona
word processor &
I bash those
words out like
I'm playing
tennis. I bought
so many groceries
today. I deserve
it. The energy
flags & lifts all
night. It comes

on brighter. I
buy Peter Pan
peanut butter so
I can steam
off the
label for my
nephew Nate
who will get
a watch when
he has five.
And I've wanted
this brand all
my life. I
buy drinks at
the bar. One
for me one
for Tim. I
like things though
I don't know
what kind of
thing I am.
All my friends
are coming
and going. I
want to stand
up in America
and say this
is my job,
saying this. Say
I bought enough
things in my
life, or today.
I brought you
a book. You
didn't like it.
I bought a
slice of pizza
it was good.
I bought a

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EILEEN WYLES NOT ME PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

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EILEEN WYLES NOT ME PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

diet coke
My life has
meaning because
I will die some
day. I know
that. I bought
people magazine.
I do not care
how awful
Yoko Ono is
or was. It
should not be
said in print
like that. It
is mean. We
all think we
are the best
& the only one.
That's why I
can't sleep. We
all think we
invented every
thing & then
got shut out.
We all feel
like God dying
on the cross.
Everyday it
is so hot this
summer. I
shudder if
you ask me
if I'm working.
I can hardly
swim. I
can hardly
hold my head
up in the
morning & drink

my first cup.
& then I am
lucky. It
comes over me
an uncontrollable
wave of joy.
I am alive.
I am living
in the life
I used to
come home &
look at at
lunch & wish
that I could
hold. I have
held it so
long it is
moldy. I am
no longer new.
I am old.
Everything is
old. The
planet is
old. & there's
no way to get
rid of all this
plastic. & we're
shooting the
shit into space.
I used to
want to
go into
space. For
what? To
see all this
garbage floating
by. More
than half
the people

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EILEEN MYLES NOT ME PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

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EILEEN MYLES NOT ME PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

on my planet
are slaves
because they
are female.
It's true.
We get
pushed
around. We
don't know how
to fight. Or
if we do we're
called bitches.
Which is an
angry dog.
It's somehow
dirtier than
a dog. A
bitch in heat.
And if you
talk about
it people
say oh are
you a fem-
inist. Which
means are
you whiney &
out of date.
Are you a
loser? Don't
talk about
it. Everything
will be really
okay if you
don't talk
There aren't
as many rich
& famous
women or
female artists

because their
work isn't
good enough
& if you talk
about it your
work is
probably not
good enough
either so
don't talk
about it. It
sounds like
a witch hunt
to me.

It takes one
to know one
Bitch, a
whiney com-
plaining female
artist. Ugh.
Wow. Thank
god I'm
too successful
to talk about
that. I'm
one of the
few women
who are
taken
seriously.

The other
thing that
happens if
you complain
is they
think you're
a lesbian. Who's

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EILEEN MYLES NOT ME PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

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EILEEN MYLES NOT ME PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

that angry
complaining lesbian.
Ever get yelled
at in the
street by
a man—
you, you
lesbian. Ev-
eryone laughs.
Just the
word «Dyke»
is funny.
& you are
a lesbian.
Which ruins
everything. No
one can
take it seriously
now. No
one wants
to even hear
about it.
Some people
get off on
it. The
girls are
fooling around
with each
others' pussys
until a man
comes around.
Climax. But
if a man
never comes
around—
what do they
just fool
around with
each other's

pussy
forever. What
do you think
God looks
like. Will
I know when
I die. Will
God know
I'm major
whatever I
am. Can
I trust
in that
love coming
down the
pike getting
larger and
larger till
I come
silently
into
the moment
I'm
standing
in.

HOW I WROTE CERTAIN OF MY POEMS

In the summer the city seems like a big rotten museum, or an empty abandoned culture where no one lives anymore which suits me just fine. For me the holiday weekends in the summer are the kind of wreck for which I feel like the ideal narrator—so being in the city for the 4th of July weekend was kind of a set up for this poem. The city's outsides look like your insides if you're feeling that way. I was. My «love» life was a mess. Someone old was around and so was someone new, and I felt that was also immediately bound to be old. She had no place for me. I could see it. I didn't even know if she was in the city or not that weekend. I told Alice Notley about my situation and she said it sounds like you're getting ready for a major work.

Ten years ago I wrote a poem called «Romantic Pain.» At the time I was doing a lot of speed, I was in love & was writing a pamphlet for Franklin Library about the life of Hart Crane. Michael Lally was the editor & he was giving these great maddening jobs to all the poets. I read a biography of Crane (*Voyager*), his letters and his poems. I became him. I wandered around Manhattan that year in flowing coats, being mournfully Crane. I was 27. I rode the Staten Island Ferry one night & it spawned that poem for me.

I repeated that trip last summer, emulating myself at last. I made New York into Disneyland on the Fourth of July weekend, taking all the rides of my life. I live on 3rd St. and I attended the Hell's Angels block party. I felt like my life had been turned into an amusement park. It was awful. My favorite film-maker is Fellini. I wasn't necessarily ready to kill myself but everything I looked at made me think about death. Crane's line, «My Dear, I've simply disgraced myself» was uttered to Peggy Cowley just before he neatly placed his raincoat on the boat rail & hopped over it

somewhere between New York and Cuba never to be seen again.

I tried to get an agent of late. She told me they were really into fiction these days, that's the market. You kind of write like a Journalist, like maybe...I hope you don't consider this an insult, maybe Jill Johnston. I love Jill Johnston—that's no insult. I don't get this fiction thing, though. I really don't. They want their rides polished, is that it? I'm starting to write plays now so I can see invention from that point of view. But I don't make up much, she's probably right. I don't think most poets do. Even Blake was really there.

There's a line in this poem (Hot Night) I'd like to explain. «...I can't / because it is not beautiful / & I'm a ward of the / state.» I meant the state of beauty. I'm a ward of the state of beauty. Even as it rots & corrupts (Love) I still have to watch. I shot a roll of film that weekend. I was with a friend, Katie Cooper, a painter, & I took pictures of particularly vivid fireplugs, piles piles piles of shit and garbage because I guess they don't clean the city on holiday weekends & due to the absence of people the real peeling state of the East Village was some kind of Sistine Chapel I thought. It was really gorgeous, like «Bye Bye Love».

There's a welter of «you»s in this work, the most poetic being the «I / pick up <you> like / my midnight / rattle I shake at the devil / of the night / that does not/scare me... / Quotes always remind me of John Ashbery who practically invented them, I believe. Here I'm addressing my romantic obsession and the gesture or the whole performance of writing a poem.

The easiest you is the «Hot night, wet night / you've seen me before./» Addressing the environment, we know that. Later, «there is sugar / in your coffee / and the band / will catch / you if you/fall.../» This «you» is the poet and, happily, something is reassur-

ing her. Just preceding this the poet had been doing a little dance about whether there was a god or not and resolved that there was a «new notebook» and that would have to do. But something does begin to speak to her at at this point, «Make an inventory of / your occupations./» It functions like a god, a big watcher, and it's doing the addressing now.

After that heightened state things restore themselves to normal, only the «I» is kind of empowered now, challenging. It kind of crows at the you: «You know a / genius when you've / seen one, don't / you. I'm one./ Take a good look, / you've seen me / before. Don't / turn back.../» I think the pronouns have a real wrestling match here, the «I» pushing the you against the wall. A funny moment occurs: «I'm one.» The pronouns merge, the «I» by bullying the you has gathered its forces, is a genius, won't turn back.

«(M)issing you is / not possible in / the New York / rain because / your name / is caught between / the drops.../» is chiefly romantic, talking to the obsession, the gone lover. I guess she's everywhere's there's nothing.

The process of the poem, the performance of it I mentioned, is central to an impression I have that life is a rehearsal for the poem, or the final moment of spiritual revelation. I literally stepped out of my house that night, feeling a poem coming on. Incidentally, it hadn't started raining yet, so I wasn't alone in being ready to burst. I was universally pent up. I had done my research, pretty unconsciously, celebrating the mood I was in. Taking the ferry, watching the Angels, then the explosion of rain and light made it absolutely necessary to go in the dell on 6th street and buy a notebook and pen. I went over to Yaffa and wrote it looking out the window. I haven't changed a thing. The band in the poem is the music in the restaurant and it's their coffee and everything, and naturally I left big tip.

I've had this feeling before—of going out to get a poem, like hunting. The night that comes to mind is the night I wrote the earlier poem. I felt «...erotic, oddly / magnetic...» like photographic paper. As I walked I was recording the details, I was the details, I was the poem.

I am obsessed with culture. It's my mental community, what configuration of art and art makers I belong with. Alone, I'm the culture of one. I've got my paintings, heroes, cult movies,—any person who lives alone knows the situation of feeling like some kind of private museum. But, I also want to address my culture (some new, larger one out there which I suspect exists) which I begin by making work which violates the hermetic nature of my own museum—as a friendly gesture towards the people who might recognize me. I mean exhibitionistic work, really.

I was in the wreck of one culture the night I was writing this poem. All the monuments lay scattered around: the person I loved, the poet I was ten years ago, the kinds of things that were central then to my life. It's impossible to say anything new about the East Village changing, that wreck, though my most startling experience recently was when I turned a corner on my bike early one evening and **didn't** recognize any of the stores and **didn't** know where I was. Even Little Ricky's now asks to check your bag. I walked out angry but I'm sure I'll be back because I've never been able to buy trendy postcards right downstairs before.

—Fall, '87

Walter Myles

Now I'm just praying that the phone doesn't ring
I'll just unplug
and leave the chocolate bar in my pocket
explaining the performance of god to Joan
as if she needs it
the silver card case slipping out of my
ass pocket the same ass that was calling somebody
as it was walking up the stairs
the city retained its luridity
tonight and all day like the floor of my apartment
retains the shit stains of Walter Myles
dog I loved for three weeks and three days
uttering his name secretly greeting
Nike in the street
hello Nike (Walter Myles) giving me his best dumb
grin
if I don't pick up shit early on in a poem
they won't think I love them
anymore when really I pee in the tub
I wanted to be carried so I took a train
thinking of Chloe wandering around under the earth
like Frank O'Hara on the beach

thinking of Akilah lying down it seems shocking
she died with Judith Butler on her mind
but we don't really know
the house I lived in is gone
the house I'm living in is always changing
I carry a tiny dog coat in my pocket
in my dream the opportunity to sing with the Beatles
was coming up inserting my band into theirs
and ours was chiefly composed of red
or redness. I propose we all jump into the water
that beach right down there and enthusiastically
I woke up. How could being just a little bit more
dogless be the source of all the rooms
changing in my house. Suggesting
we just plunge in. I knew I was off the charts by
announcing
my dream. Two women do that and all the men
walk away. Is that what Aristophanes meant
worse than not having sex with them I start talking
about having sex with myself loving my own
mind. If heterosexuality means anything
other than me denying the existence of my own
dream I'd like to hear about that something
else and call that love. I call that war.
Years of silent repression of female dreaming
women looking like men but dreaming
they're women inside other women dreaming
that. What are men dreaming except that all women
are stupid and loving them. If you're dreaming
something different

tell me your dreams about that. I am doomed to love
you that's for sure. Because you laugh when I say
to a man a woman is just a throne
turned upside down. A repository of his kingliness.
My kingliness does not require a throne
It is a throne. I love you because of your similar self
love and it makes me laugh. Perhaps I can have some
chocolate
while this is going on. It will not break the spell.
I no longer live in the site of tremendous
dog fights. Certainly I could be kinder.
Black Swan was a moral film. Wouldn't you say.
I am a giant fan of Darren Aronofsky
who has the name of a dentist
and whose films are fountains of power
fountains of gender
I dreamed that Judith Butler once suggested my
girlfriend liked my
phallus better than hers.
This is true apropos Akilah's death.
It turned out my girlfriend was much more in love with
her own phallus than anyone knew. In one film he was
madly counting
in another he tore the refrigerator apart
jumped into blackness
jumped into white. What else do you want a movie
to do. If I had the time I'd make a film. "It gets worse"
that's what I'd call it. If he can lie so can I.
Cause there's nothing better than knowing so
much. Seeing that look in her eyes.

Bright days wandering around the block
with a dog. Breaking out. Tossing some water into a pot
and putting in so much
cereal not knowing what the formula is. We dare it.
How long will I be boiling chicken
it's a little red inside. The dream is the perfect object
because you only can imagine its contours
you're scraping along its curves like a giant woman
lying outside. She is enormous naked and you are blind
but if you just stay with her perimeter, no her mounds
leading you higher and higher, her awesome
neck so sensitive
her ear, no ear has
ever been less constructed to hear but to allow
the midgets of myth to tickle, to bite and gnaw
if you can extrapolate some meanings from
this. Like those people who wound up going to parties
either dressed like Gertrude Stein
or Susan. She was just a big ole man
who went to Harvard.
I mean they probably burned the witches
right there before the lynching began
same tree. Stupidly at Jill's memorial I began discussing
the publication
of her letters with Ingrid. What was I thinning.
That's right. The k is missing. Small ghostly dog
wrapped in a sheet. Eyes glimmering.
Everyone grinned when I went back to the restaurant
and picked
my silver card case off the floor. The name is Paladin.

Never say anything bad about anyone from
HARVARD. That obsesses me. How could you say
anything
good or is that just implied. The one more thing was
single moms
and there was another thing. You're losing the dream
all the time. That's why we love it. I thought it was the
dream
that was both vulgar and important. It is the search.
So he sent a letter to the addresses of each of the women
who had died. The exact address. And that was enough.
You are waiting for somebody timeless
but everything only happens inside
time. One envelope in the pile has a stamp
and you CAN find it. That she got a grant for being a
poet
doesn't mean that she's
one and you're not. You'll get a donut too.
But what was it. Janine spoke about writing so much
and so fast that
it wasn't writing at all. The most beautiful thing I ever
heard.
You can see the pages in the light
every day. Notebooks full of that stuff. The blonde girl
writing. Her passion pouring
on the page. And we can't read it. That was her dream. To
be doing
that. Smiling years later and telling us her crime. Utterly
unreadable. No text at all, just script. Pure sex
sweat, effort, time. She said just to live here, to have all of
you

around me now. Just the fact
that it gets cold again. It makes me hungry.
There's nothing wrong with that.
Climbing all over her naked bod. He was the man tied
up
and they were small. And it's interesting that he also
proposed eating babies. I mean why not.
Say she raised them to kill them. I say they lived to die.
We watch them dying here, whether we go
to the ceremony or not.
That a king learned to speak
somehow is not such
a wonderful thing.
That a woman learned
to die
is.