



COMIC TIMING

Holly Pester

I went to Ilford on my own
walked up a dual carriageway
to McDonald's for a cup of tea and a think then
went back to the clinic with half a blueberry muffin
in my pocket
I was handed a white laminated
square with a number on it
I will be called by the number not
by my name I lied
on the form that asked if there was anyone
at home my Uber arrived
as the cramps started
I was told to be home within one hour
the journey time was 45 minutes
I felt nauseous
breathed slowly
the driver talked about ratings
he liked chatty and punctual passengers
he once gave a married couple no stars
when the man hit the woman
I felt dizzy we drove past his house
that's my house
he looked up my ratings and said I was
above average
you must be a nice person maybe
normally more chatty
I tried to sound lovely
said I was unwell in a weak
voice he joked I would get no stars
if I was sick
I go through my to-do list
to clean an Airbnb
I do it for money
I am a bad maid to industry's heart muscle
there was one night between guests
I had a plan lie down
with the TV on
eat a Marks & Spencer cottage pie
sleep on the sofa wake up
change the bedding
go back to the big cold house I live in and feel

treated
I knew
what to expect from
the last time the pain got
acute on a two-hour arc
I had had a hot bath
I had sat by the bath like a bird
and held
a bundle in my hand
poked about for a god or a plan
what survives a day?
but this time there was no build
up there was no flight
the pain stayed still from the clinic
to the brown
and honourable sofa
not getting easier or worse
I did not
feel anything passing through me
but the room was dark and
around me
I woke up at 7 a.m.
took some painkillers and finished cleaning
I left the key and got the bus
still bleeding a
bit still on the brink
of a big pain but going nowhere
my housemate was having a party
I was very tired but she
is out of sync and soulful
I needed to be dressed and nice
I made a bowl of beetroot
puree and hummus
I made a simple butter pastry
grated cheese
into it twisted the dough into sticks
they snapped in the oven but
smelt delicious for the people
I greeted them alone
didn't know any of them
the pain stayed still I smelt real
leaned on the counter and decided
to drink
some of my friends arrived
I behaved normally
my good friend quietly asked me
to stop being cruel to her
I was very disturbed
told her I didn't feel well
I followed smokers worried about
my good friend's feelings until
I found her in the middle
of some laughing doing
an impression of a cat
scratching a pole

her movements in a black
and white skirt
were comedic
and expert
she moved like a clown she
swung the lower half of her body
left-to-right she upped her arms
stopped to look at the room
through her hair then carried
on clowns invent new grace
for limbs out of ungraceful
lines in the room
I think I was mid-verb
like my friend I said to my head
I am mid-verb
maybe I have become the verb
I am not having
I am
abortive was the last thing I
thought before falling onto
the purple and inhabited bed
face down we have to feel
everything in our stomach
ache is tempo
I have seem millions of films
I get it
or there is no story only comedy
but my friend has clowned the time
her skirt is so stripy
I am reading it now
a difference between being
scanned for a future
or past material
for latency or tendency
I am very interested in this and I
am interested in the catch of the bed
which idea is homeless?
what is surplus connection to poetry what is the
rushed little examinations on a screen out of view
screened from me the nurse
confirms she can see a vaguer noun
something like a burn
there is not a thing but time read
translated where there might be form
it is there or a picture of noise
not like a construct
of the noise like a head it's this
way up
he is waving
creatively
at the elaborate
so it is just legibility or esoteric
reading styles
the matter
is not interpreted it is agile
easily switches between verb and noun

I could be creative but
I am beginning
to think stuck linguistically
awkward to material or reality
cannot have
have to be
timely nothing has changed
I need to find my friend
the cat the clown so
she can tell me the time
she has animation to give
I went to Ilford alone
was handed a pink laminated square
a staff was inserted I felt
hungry time was coming out slowly
I shouldn't have expected it to happen all at once
but I was told to expect it to happen all at once
they held up the staff
red for someone
I feel like a comedy
that's probably a lot of it there
it's still going on

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