

Why Teeny's Hair?

I don't remember quite when I stumbled upon the chord sequence that constitutes the structure of this song, but it was long before I found an appropriate theme to write the lyrics around.

There is an O. Henry "Gift of the Magi" quality to Teeny Duchamp's donation of her beautiful tresses to the construction of her husband's creation. I think this sentimental association works well with the melody to the benefit of a song I am very happy to have written.

Swirling around in the lyrics are references to Apollinaire, Gertrude Stein, and fuck it, I'll just go through the whole god damned thing verse by verse. This really is a rare opportunity to do this sort of thing. No kidding, really...

It begins...

*Teeny's hair
Falls down gently to her shoulders
She doesn't look any older
Than she did when she was young"*

click to enlarge



Figure 1

Marcel Duchamp,
Given: 1. The
Waterfall, 2. The
Illuminating Gas, 1946-66

Okay, here's the scoop: "Teeny" is "Teeny" but "she" is not "Teeny". "She" is the mannequin in Philly. *Etant Donnes*. (Fig. 1)

There is a room
Filled with the stolen Mona Lisas
Di Milo's broken pieces
That's where the pictures are hung"

M.D.'s early champion, Guillaume Apollinaire, was a suspect in the disappearance of the *Mona Lisa* before the war. The best way I can describe this "room" is to say that it is the imagination. A space seen by the mind's eye. "The pictures" are, of course, the works that are not only imagined, but brought to realization.

"When he arrives
All of the men with badges trust him
Take a Spanish door through customs
It's no crime, it is no crime"

This is my idea of what it could have been like traveling to New York from Cadaques with the "Spanish door" M.D. acquired for the outside of *Etant Donnes*.

"Ascending the stairs
Where you accept the Legion of Honor

*And the mark of Cain is upon her
For all time, yes for all time"*

Obviously Marcel did not ever receive the award mentioned, but, he did become famous—"mark of Cain"—and pigeonholed as a Cubist because of the scandal in New York over his *"Nude Descending a Staircase"*. And to make things rhyme, which by doing so pisses off all of the racist Bob Mould fans who criticize me for paying attention to the way words sound, and not coming off like a self-hating, sexist Ezra Pound wannabe, I have referred to M.D. as "her". I know he was a he. Most of the time I mean.

*"Take my knights away
Sweep all my horses off of the table
Show me strategies if you're able
Show me how the game can be played"*

This verse is about chess. It sounds kinda sexy though, doesn't it? The line "Show me strategies if you're able" could be about artistic strategies also; if you replace the word "horses" with "expectations" it means much.

*"We go to the place
Where all the re-named roses gather
And the bearded ladies lather
To be shaved, oh to be shaved..."*

A Rose by any other other name would smell as sweet. And of course, Rose is a Rose is a Rose is a Rose...What if rose is eros? Rrose? (Fig. 2) Marcel "re-named" himself Rrose. "Bearded ladies" are in reference to *"L.H.O.O.Q."* and *"L.H.O.O.Q.RASEE (SHAVED)"*. (Fig. 3) Also what else in the

story is shaved? Hairless? I'll let you folks come up with that answer. If you ever run into me somewhere, say the answer to me and I'll buy you a Seven-Up.

Thank you.

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- Figure 2
Man Ray, Rose Sélavy, 1921
- Figure 3
Marcel Duchamp, *L.H.O.O.Q. Shaved*, 1965

download QuickTime Player



" Grant Hart, "Teeny's Hair," in *GOOD NEWS FOR MODERN MAN*" (1999)

Figs. 1-3

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