

# LOOPED

by Sharon Bentley

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- *How's it going?*
- *Terrible!*
- *What's wrong?*
- *I'm saying things are terrible until 10:00.*
- *(to the waiter) An espresso. It's 10:05 now.*
- *Really? Then everything is alright.*

from *Masculin Féminin*

## **Exaggerations**

Harpo Marx once said, “Shut up  
and listen. You wanna fake smart?  
Quote me.”

Then he reached into his pocket  
and pulled out a candle  
burning at both ends.

Later we posed for a picture  
minus about nine hundred words.

I said “cheese” with my jaws  
clenched and tried to remember  
how I knew him.

## **The Flight Of The Phoenix**

I wondered, too, who would find the survivors  
in sand dunes like that when Jimmy Stewart  
crash-landed the plane? Were they on location?

Jimmy counted the bang of three Coffman cartridges.

'There ain't nothing wrong with that engine.'

That's when I dropped the popcorn on the floor and missed

the knowing look on Jimmy's face before he tried the last  
cartridge that started the engine of the makeshift plane.

I wanted to see the reactions of Peter Finch and Ernest Borgnine,

but I was on the floor picking up the popcorn.

I forgot that Ernest Borgnine died in the desert  
over an hour earlier, looking for water.

## Summer In Luverne, Alabama

Charles Phelps sat.

'KKRQ'

Shot grass and birds in the back  
lot, could shoot around

a pecan tree. His boy  
sat on a crate, sang

'100.7 FM The Fox, your classic rock station'  
under his hot breath

'Partly cloudy skies  
with a chance of rain'

The supper ham soaks in the bathtub.

*hmmhmm hmmhmm hmmhmm*

Carl Barnes walks past.

## **Spring**

what snaps winter  
into rosin for boughs

to play cold songs  
is what breaks

frozen considerations  
into slow moments

## **Vernal Equinox**

You accept my memory  
and remember saying  
“You are luckless,”  
and remember the loose dirt  
that muddied your cape’s hem.

## **Memento**

I poured concrete  
into the Mississippi  
back when a fish at your doorstep  
was a basket of posies  
and concrete boots  
were saviors.

Back when the source  
of it all was Lake Itasca,  
not the Big Bang.

I waded in it  
to cool my feet  
from the hot black top.

I needed one—  
a souvenir.  
Forget sno-globes  
and key chains.

A concrete river.  
What a fantastic mess.

## **Jesus Factory**

They all move  
when the Mould moves  
in the pile of lords  
on the factory floor.  
Outstretched arms tangle  
and bump side wounds.

## **In Your Favor**

The way you walk,  
your hips and lips,  
your chin remind  
me of Pol Pot,  
on a bad day,  
a beauty queen.

## American Opera

Ghost of a flea  
(animal life)  
rides a line,  
boundary between  
Porgy and Gershwin.

Center line,  
lines I mean  
(no passing)  
order curbs—  
crumble.

You have somewhere to go?  
It ain't necessarily so.

## **Nesting Doll**

Even when you know surprise—

What it must be like to be the penultimate one

## **Looped**

4    3    2    1

The ending and beginning  
matter when the loops  
weld together the outline  
of an odyssey through the grimy city

## **Shades**

How to manipulate  
three shades of blue  
into becoming green?  
I can't say. I just do it.  
A mendacious truth.

## **Recursive**

It is not the day I thought it was—  
a year ago today.

What happened that day  
was the mistake of thinking

it was the same day  
of the year before that.

## **‘S.O.S.’ Does Not Mean ‘Save Our Ship’**

Calm down  
and notice  
our emergency  
is televised

be still  
blink in morse  
code it out

## **Produce**

She smelled fried chicken.

Mangoes were in season.

So were clementines.

She tied a cherry stem  
into a knot with her tongue.

## **Etymology**

Zero

is

tight

rain

sound

some

thing—

no

thing

## **Photograph Of Girl With Brown Hair**

How did Eggleston  
make her ordinary hair  
radiate Prell and self-consciousness,  
the Hair Cuttery, boredom, and beauty  
all at once while waiting for his hotdog  
at a concession stand in Georgia?

## **I'm A Child Of It**

Stole a cola from the Amoco.  
Oh, and a car.  
Can't make blue any more real than that.  
Talking about wavelengths here.

And a synapse? It's just a space.  
A junction, a real one,  
where gods live and save  
Jesus save. Jesus saves.

Buzzing at the window,  
I know how to break them,  
Spot welds on pecan shells,  
I know how to crack them.

It's like chewing on leather.  
It never ends.



Ready, baby? Can't turn back.  
An easy ride, that welcome wagon.  
That's the car I stole.

## **Plaster Model Of The Sea**

Deprived sea

Throttled sea

A fingerprint—

Into the stiff sea

Pale and massy sea

## **Pacific Coast Highway Passenger Side**

(like when Hitchcock & I watch  
Mitch and Melanie drive away—)

& down  
the film strip pulls too  
fast too fast through  
the projector frameby  
framebyframe  
byframe

& empty reels

(—the birds have clearly won)

the sunglasses  
flicked ashes on  
the dashboard

SHARON BENTLEY attended the University of Iowa where she received a B.A. in English and Media Studies and an M.A.T. in English Education. She is also a graduate of the creative writing certificate program at the University of Chicago. This chapbook, *Looped*, is her first. She lives in Chicago, IL.

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