

Eileen Myles  
PUPPET, POET, BLOODSUCKER

EILEEN: I asked my puppets to help me generate this text. They are variously a body-less woman (Bedelia), a cool young guy (Montgomery) Dad (Oscar), a ghost (Casper), and a crocodile (Crocky) who in fact speaks for all creatures.

With this team I am tasked, as poet, to evaluate the labors and the enchantments and deviations of RM. What are they, a corporate logo, a gang of sucks.

MONTGOMERY: Nah I like where they are at. The floors are the color of blood. Brownish dried blood. That's hot, like a spooky nightclub and we are inside that body, chomping away. I would like to lose consciousness in this mess. I would like to wake up on a giant pillow in a bloody town, getting blown.

BEDELIA: Son that is gross. You have no genitals and yet you lie down in a dream of them. I who have no body, no cunt and no hands can only sing. I will happily roll around in the fine crocheted bedspread with articulated sores, the tri-partite bites of the little baby demon whose insides I will be subsumed in once I surrender myself to being wrapped in this circulatory dream of tiny penetrations, extraction of my puppet juice, the voluptuous entrada to the dream...

OSCAR: Hey Sor Juana don't embarrass us by trying to charm these folks with your bathroom Spanish. You exactly know the words for "trash", (Basura) "entrance" (Entrada) and "exit" (Salida), Look Out! (Cuidado) "men" (Hombres) and "women" (Damas).

BEDELIA: (sings)

Basura! Entrada! Salida! Cuidado! Hombres! Damas!

Are you even listening? Here's what else I want. I want the finger of RM to poke the dirty bedspread of their own art and with that covered finger fill the cardboard hole of my head so that their body will become my body, their arm will be my mount and I will go to the opening on their arm greeting people, singing how are you, how are you...how do you like my art?

CROCKY (arising) I can hardly bring myself away from the greater consequences of my threatened environment, I can hardly pull myself from the waters of the east river my current symbolic abode where I share habitat with eels and blackfish, bluefish, carp and catfish, shad, goldfish, porgy, smelt, striped bass, flounder, oyster toadfish and of course white perch. Dolphins too. Do you understand about fish and marine life in general in water that we are always in bed? We don't dream about waking up getting blown. We are getting blown all day long. It feels good to be a fish, or a crock. It used to be real dirty down there. Only eels could do it. Screw around in it. Down in those dirty desecrated waters of New York. And there used to be a big ass pond in the middle of Chinatown and Little Italy. Did you know that. But people threw their poop, their animal carcasses, their trash till the thing was packed - too filthy for a filthy world. Today we of the marine zone of Manhatta Island thrive on the flapping dead leaves that make their way, slithering, urged on by breezes and rainstorms into the water to give us radiant salt and minerals but now they are chopping down the trees, listen I can hear them now...

CASPER: Isn't that Chekhov?

BEDELIA: I am so impressed by your education.

CASPER: I got a MA in continental philosophy at Sul Ross, in Alpine, Texas. All of you, Eileen too, c'mon, just come in close cause I have an idea. We've been pretty obsessed, let's be frank with the confiscation of public lands in New York. But we want to be respectful - in a disrespectful libidinous way with our cohorts here, RM. So how can we bring our issues to interface with this . . . ambitious infinitesimal constructivist blood bath of their art. I think the answer is clear. Who are the bloodsuckers right now at this moment in 2022 in New York?

I think we all know the answer.

PUPPETS IN UNISON: POLITICIANS!

OSCAR: Righteo. Politicians. So we got a circulatory device in this show...

OSCAR: Reminds me of a train set I once had as a kid.

CASPER: Spare us the melancholy, Father. I think what we need to do is attach some stakes to this what do they call it garment conveyer and jam some bloodied politicians' heads right onto those stakes and let those babies roll.

MONTGOMERY: Will there be music in the show cause that would be very powerful. I suggest ELO. Right? Can you imagine "Evil Woman" cascading through the blood red halls of the Swiss institute and the mask-like face of Carlina Rivera, our betraying city councilor, in utter shock as her head festoons the uh garment conveyer. And I think we should get an actual DeBlasio (corpse) and a dummy DeBlasio and put them on two of the bed bug rocking toys and make them face each other for eternity...

BEDELIA: I think RM is only up for the month. I'll check. But it's definitely not like Dante's inferno, as in forever.

OSCAR: I have some bedbug stories.

MONTGOMERY: of course you do, Dad.

BEDELIA: Let him talk Honey. I feel a little bad for the guy. Don't you feel that the father's reign of terror of over. He doesn't know what to do. He's only looking back.

CASPER: That's cause there's no future. We believe in an ecstatic present.

MONTGOMERY: (dancing) We certainly do!

BEDELIA: Listen I am not hitched to this man. I never was. I think we just don't really need to grind the patriarchy down into a fine salt and then crush it with the soles of our boots into the ground wherever and whenever. It's easier just to let him blather. Tell us Honey.

OSCAR: Eileen can help. Eileen doesn't seem to mind telling the same stories over and over.

EILEEN: Thanks Oscar. I'm taking that from you because I made you. You're like my shabby fucked-up paper mache 63-year-old son. The one thing I want to say about bedbugs is there is always an underlining objection. I don't know if I've ever truly "had" bedbugs. But I feel like there was very often an ulterior overwhelming urge to purge that in fact preceded the infestation.

OSCAR: Are you saying that bedbugs aren't real? RM for example seems to be offering at least one very certifiable...

EILEEN: I know bedbugs are real. Maybe I'm lying. But I know there is this other part, sort of a "thank god they have bedbugs cause now I can throw them out, or their stuff..."

OSCAR: I think you are really undermining my story. I am nothing but your witness. You made me but I absorbed you. A puppet is holding your memory. Doesn't everyone use puppets as just another kind of telling. Let me do my work! I will confine the account to the bedbug you saw in 2010 climbing across your pillow in Butte, Montana. And you were travelling with her who really had them bad as a kid so for her nothing could be worse.

EILEEN: We washed everything.

OSCAR: Yes you did. And then you got to the rental in Missoula. It was very particular. You were living in the house of a woman, that lawyer, who had rented it out to you for the semester and now she was living in the basement.

EILEEN: Of her own house! It had to be horrible.

OSCAR: Yes she hated your guts. And how much more horrible to see those little plastic bags out on the porch of frozen clothes strangely sitting out there in the very cold air.

EILEEN: What could she have thought we were doing? We were waiting out the bedbugs. She must have known.

OSCAR: How was the trip she asked. And then before you left she offered to do your wills.

EILEEN: She wanted us dead!

CASPER: I want to get back to the politicians' heads on the uh garment conveyer. Who else do we want?

CROCKY: All of them. I am not a violent creature but the constant horse trading of the political class in New York City and globally and the strategic looking away and the complete absence of fellow feeling all the while posing...

BEDELIA: Smiling. Always smiling. So this is fantastic. A red and green revolution. Blood. I think we are activating this show, by repurposing the soft beautiful bedspread into become my opening night gown, and the sweet fuckery of it, establishing a literal connection between the very hand of RM and my own New York and international coming out into the art world...

MONTGOMERY: (excitedly) and that invocation of blood becoming so all-encompassing when Harvey, the do-nothing neighborhood assemblyman, Corey Johnson, the snarky sell-out, much touted gay son of a union man, former speaker of the city council, and Carol Maloney, the obsolescent state Senator, her blonde hair stiff with blood, Jamie Torres Springer, human vampire, real estate developer embedded in public service, blood dripping off his fangs, yes, yay!

BEDELIA: I think the governor, Kathy Hochul, she's such a fraud..

CASPER: and Brannan! The punk rock city councilor. He would be gritting his teeth, but blood would be brown and thick and dried in the cervices of his perpetual grimace...

MONTGOMERY: And the music. Puddles of blood on the floor. And at the opening, as soon as the uh garment conveyor starts to churn and everyone sees the heads coming around smiling, I want to blast:

It's a livin' thing  
It's a terrible thing to lose  
It's a givin' thing  
What a terrible thing to lose

BEDELIA: Right! Fucking blood suckers.

CROCKY: Enemies of all creatures

BEDELIA: And Oscar! At the opening I think you should tell ALL your bed bug stories to DeBlasio. He'll be a captive audience.

MONTGOMERY: (chuckling) Cause he'll be strapped into his bed bug chair.

CASPER: That was actually a play by Vladimir Mayakovsky.

BEDELIA: Genius! Bed Bug Chair?

CASPER: No "The Bed Bug". It was about an irrelevant man.

OSCAR: How will I know which is the real DeBlasio and which is the dummy.

BEDELIA: You won't! The dummy might have better posture.

MONTGOMERY: The dummy might have more people talking to him.

OSCAR: Good I hate a crowd.

MONTGOMERY: (sings) higher and higher, baby...!