

WHAT IT
MEANS
WHEN YOU
DREAMS

A to Z

Vilde Bjerke Torset

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of the abominable in the mirror

in your dream an abscess blocks the abbey
but you are adam and eve
and your AK-47 spouts albatrosses
like altar boys in animal skins
the phone rings—goes straight to the answering machine
an angel has left a message
something about sex with androids

in your reality a problem has been accumulating
and your last chance for a fresh start terrifies you
and you're young enough to know better
now you get warnings in the mail
from the hitman you hired
telling you to delete all social media
or die trying

there is bone inside the bullet

your dream repeats itself

about a friend borrowing your teeth
about a bee in your ear serenading
about burning alive in a sandcastle
about the brussels sprouts flowering
about confessions in a bog
about a boat sinking on land
about something like a bet
about the beans conspiring

it all means the same
it all could come true

and call out for a chainsaw

it means your evil twin munching cotton balls

they are a chicken, of course, taunting you with coded
caws

while spitting in your face (gross, frothy chunks)

a person you know but don't is there but isn't

there is urgency, like a need to urinate, but nothing happens

— things you don't understand upset you

like the child wearing the bird costume

and the way they cheer at the yellow void

and you feel rested in the morning

doors are closing and opening

if dreaming of dough represents childish hunger
or something boring, with potential, wanting to be sick

and dreaming of your doppelganger means splitting the self
when realising you did something bad and killed a pet

a doppelganger made of dough suggests rebirth or delivery
like memory foam taking your cast, making you new

what should you do?

clean its diapers and wash your sheets with dye

then wait and see

you are being chased by an elephant

dropping an eel in a dream means you have problems holding on to things

dreaming you are in an eating contest suggests you are lacking a social life (but training in a dream is pointless)

seeing or buying earmuffs, earplugs, earwax, or eardrops in a dream indicates ignorance

seeing an egret in a dream refers to a co-dependent relationship, possibly with a bird

seeing broken earrings in a dream suggests someone is talking about you (you probably know who)

dreaming that you can bend the earth signifies your ability to control your surroundings when it matters the least

dreaming of an elderly person with two new front baby teeth refers to the cycle of life

dreaming about easter suggests that the worst is over

all your friends are frogs

fish represent unconscious thoughts, says the first frog,
things you may notice but don't fully understand

i think you mean subconscious, says the second frog

i knew a fish once, adds the third frog, *boring girl*

a subtle awareness, the first frog continues, *insights that
elude you*

like fireflies, says the third frog

so the fish is like a firefly, the second frog concludes

not quite, says the first frog, *a fish is a fish*

good point, agrees the third frog

fireflies represent feelings that inspire you, the first frog
explains, *but never let you know personally*

the feelings don't let you know, asks the second frog

i think i'm hungry, says the third frog

of grain, gangrene, and gladiators

to dream of grain: feelings of being a good person
grains of sand represent the need for meaning

example: a woman dreamed of scooping grains into a sick
lion's mouth. in waking life, she worked in a hospice
and spent her days telling the dying they were good
people

to dream of gangrene: resisting helplessness
gangrene of the guts means self-reflective thoughts
disgusting you

example: a boy dreamed of losing both legs to gangrene. in
waking life, he was in a foreign country where he didn't
speak the language, scared by the human sacrifice

to dream of gladiators: a sense of deep bloodlust
a gladiator victorious is a sign of moving up the food chain

example: a girl dreamed of being in a life-threatening
game with gladiators, wielding a fork. in waking life,
she was furious her sister always got the biggest piece
of cake

how to spell heimlich manoeuvre

this letter in a dream is symbolic of balance
two sides supporting each other in parallel
capitalisation as architecture, timber
the first rung of a hieroglyph



or worse, keeling over the last rung
then breaking your heel on the way down
means finding something to hold on to

every insect has a secret

it's what you swallowed before going to bed
as you turn on the tap, brushing your teeth
one of its legs stuck between your molars

it crawls under covers with you

it avoids inspection

it's purer than industry

it doesn't take a stand on incest

it knows what's better

it holds contradiction by the neck

it would eat its own insides if it could reach them

on waking there are spots, aches, smudges
mixed with the gunk in the corner of your eye
it pumps its wings then bites you goodbye

joan of arc wears your face

it's itchy, the dimples and pimples
and nose hair and eyelashes
tickle your cheeks incessantly
o to scratch the itch
that slashes softly, softly
but the brat is busy with faith and wars
hearing voices and rallying troops
and you're only a face

on waking you remember, you feel your cheeks, and
wonder what it means
when you were too busy itching to eavesdrop on God's
instructions

of a triptych of kernels

- they have things in common with most things
- and the three, what were they like?
- they didn't look very similar
- but they were the same?
- they were like each other
- did they seem connected?
- they could be
- and they mean things?
- they mean what they are, i think
- they mean what they are, and then what?
- then nothing, i couldn't tell, they were just like most things
- most things don't mean anything

you're doing laundry

things to consider:

the owner of the laundry signifies your thoughts' origins
is the laundry yours? if not, is it definitely human?

its composition can say something about your prejudices
is it separated? did you do this yourself?

any visible stains or smells are subconscious symbols
does the underwear smell? is that blood or tomato juice?

the place is indicative of your attitude to change
do you know where you are? do you feel safe?

the nature of the laundry defines your personality
is it a uniform? a bedsheet? soft toys? eggshell?

and the mattress fills with marrow

“dissonance / (if you are interested) / leads to discovery”
william carlos williams

the jump from one point
on the circle to the next
is not a mean dream
as you try to translate
what your meat won't understand
taken from this medicine
when setting ship from your brow
and the not named meeting of edges
as gaps between chronicled states
of rest mines in every creak
it evens out the slippery indentations
of slumbered memory

with non-rapid eyeball movement

OR, BE STILL O SEE ORB: THE 3 STAGES

1.
between beings and not being
a light fading and high amplitude theta waves
2.
breathing and heart rate are regular
surroundings aren't
rhythmic brain wave activity (sleep spindles)
body temperature drops
3.
breathing slows, tissue grows and repairs
hormones are dispersed
deep, slow delta waves
there is sleepwalking and bedwetting
there are no dreams

of old things and their shapes

there are parallels* if you let yourself see them
examples:

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| anaesthetising an ogre | to abandon an oil platform |
| to impregnate an oracle | into brain damage obedience |
| with one's favourite dentures | from an orchestra rehearsing |
| a number flogged out of orbit | omniscient opinionators |
| of chopped onion tears | over the feverish body |

* may cause dependency, wrinkles, blisters, clotting, sadism, duplications,
and blind spots

but it's a puzzle

extracts from your dream journal:

a parrot giving you statements to classify

a pregnancy test telling you off

a pendulum is attached to your earlobes

a paper man reading you the bad news

a paramedic falling in love

a park only for the dumb

a princess eating nails to stay thin

a possum who's a spy

a poster showing your face when guilty

a pie recipe with extinct ingredients

a possibility of coming home

a palm reading done by a monkey

a poor person doing you a favour

somewhere there is an answer

it's the answer to e v e r y t h i n g

you don't know this

of a live broadcast quiz

[as the questions are handed out, a timer is set]

what goes between quicksand?

how do you qualify roosting?

what is the name of one quiet?

where is a quantum print?

how many are queenly heads?

what is a quesadilla code for?

during which quest is the epilogue?

what is the plural quantity?

what year did land the quark?

where is the end of a quarry?

who did quails occupy?

when did the first quarrel take place?

who spawned the quidnuncs?

what is the genus of quisling?

what is the opposite of quadrilateral?

what is quite named after?

what a road is

(weather + maintenance)ⁿ = problem – solution

ground filling
————— = unpopular advice
directionality

roadkill ≈ failure ≈ not having a spare

curb = Δ consequence

swollen toes = Δ focus

foothold ≥ crossroads

a shark gives birth to sheep

the shark¹ is stranded

the sheep² will follow

the sea³ is quiet

¹ “The Thing cannot be described—there is no language for such abysses of shrieking and immemorial lunacy, such eldritch contradictions of all matter, force, and cosmic order. A mountain walked or stumbled.” H. P. Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu* (Penguin Classics, 1999), p. 167.

² Mostly, I could tell, I made him feel uncomfortable. He didn’t understand me, and he was sort of holding it against me. I felt the urge to reassure him that I was like everybody else, just like everybody else.” Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, (A.A. Knopf, 1988), p. 66.

³ “Horror is something perfectly natural: the mind’s emptiness. A thought is taking shape, then suddenly it notices that there is nothing more to think.” Peter Handke, *A Sorrow Beyond Dreams* (Pushkin Press, 2006), p. 78.

of a tadpole in a teacup

tadpoles represent something in your life
being impossibly avoidant
like gelatinous tail sperm groupthink
where there's never just one
going shimmy shake like a nursery or an ass troll
or a living egg learning how to swim
next to mean neighbour boys

a teacup means a desire to settle down
in the face of difficulty
the approach of a 3rd degree spit ratio
to a non-committal adversary
extorting or exchanging with legal permission
for agreements reached, like a special time
set aside for nose picking

it's vikings versus vampires

in your dream the vultures are calling you home
but you are marching to battle with vegetables
and your veal has a mind of its own
like vermin on a conga line
the vessel is perched to tip—fleas determine the way
then a shot is fired by the vet
and the days of vertebrates are over

in your reality your mind is infected
and you don't know which thoughts are yours
and you've seen far worse for far less
now you're hiding under a rock in your garden
waiting for your owners
to stop calling

of warts and waterlilies

it means what you dig for with a scissor

it means why the chamber pot broke

it means what grows in your footprints

it means how roots also need care

it means what wasn't cancelled after all

it means who you wouldn't step on

it means why the water is still

it means what the doctor ordered

it means why your shoes don't fit others

x marks a spot

*there are two meanings
they are mutually exclusive, and equally unavoidable
flicking a coin will decide which is yours*

A.

means the end goal
gives permission to steal
like a coupon for grave diggers
is the difference between IKEA or LEGO

or

B.

means a dead end
gives permission to start over
like turning it off and on again
is the difference between here and now

of the yellowing horizon

[...]

Wednesday, May 8th

A dust cloud hides the sun. Birds
with rodent teeth and signs of summer.

[...]

Monday, October 21st

The boat splits and bananas flood
the seas. Some of them are fish.

[...]

Thursday, November 1st

An expedition into The Egg of Time.
Yolk smells bad but brings youth.

[...]

Saturday, January 23rd

The cell is bare, except a blind
canary. At any moment it might sing.

[...]

Monday, July 17th

There's a wood. An army of bees
blocks way out. No sign of rain.

[...]

but remember zero

your sleep is a zoo for night and day thought

your zoo is a night and day for thought sleep

your day thought is a zoo and sleep for night

your night sleep is a day for thought and zoo

your thought is a night for sleep and zoo day

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