

Lydia Lunch Death Defied by a Thousand Cuts from Will Work for Drugs

I was born surrounded by Death. My mother miscarried before me, after me and I was born choking the life out of my dead twin. When I was six my grandmother, a cruel Sicilian witch, died in bed while sleeping next to me. For years afterwards I was chased through the basement by her evil apparition's heinous cackle. My mother was surrounded by Death too. Eleven brothers and sisters, only three of whom lived to see adulthood. Pneumonia, tuberculosis, cancer, diabetes. Stroke. A sick brood indeed. Rotten fruit doesn't fall far from the tree.

I spent my formative years in the town where future Hillside Strangler Kenneth Bianchi conducted his first experiments in lust killings. Month after month the lurid details of his latest victim, always a preadolescent girl my age, would be splashed across the evening news or the front page of the daily paper, grid marking the map of bodies I was convinced I was next to join.

Years later I survived Richard Ramirez, the Night Stalker, by three blocks. Although at the time, in the advanced stages of a sick addiction to adrenaline and the endless possibility of Death's black magnetism, I felt as if I had already spent many a new moon subjugated to the crazed killer's unique charisma. Ricky never knew me, but I felt as if we were dating.

By nature I am death-defiant. I have survived illnesses which have killed lesser mortals. Burst appendix, engorged lymph nodes, and an undetected and unwanted ectopic pregnancy, which exploded, filling my body with poisoned blood. Septicemia. E. coli.

I woke up while being butchered on an operating table, the surgeon's vicious scalpel like a rotary saw slicing me open when the anesthetic wore off. I came to surrounded by blinding white light, which was in fact, no not the light, but the fluorescent overheads, which I seemed to float eye-level with in a semi-coma of indescribable pain . . . silently screeching and beseeching every god, goddess and demon that I thought worthy of summoning, as I begged for Death, begged for relief, begged to be set free from what I assumed was Hell's ultimate punishment: eternal, unceasing, unrelenting physical pain.

I have been stabbed in the gut an eighth of an inch short of pancreatic poisoning. I have been forced into the desert by a Manson wannabe whose idea of True Romance was blood stains in the sun-bleached sand.

I have been smashed in the head with a Heineken bottle with such brute force it

broke. I spent a charming weekend with a drifter who was arrested three days later and charged with cannibalism.

I have been held hostage in snowy woods by a Dennis Hopper look-alike holding a sawed-off shotgun to my left temple, demanding to be told horrible fairy tales detailing a dozen ways in which I would murder my sisters.

I've been on two transatlantic flights which were stalled on European runways for hours while bomb-sniffing dogs were sent through the luggage hold to retrieve deadly explosives. And that was in the early 1980s.

I taunted Death, and Death taunted back. But like a lover who sweet-talks you with endless promises of fantastic potential but always comes up short in the pants, you eventually grow bored with possibility. And the attraction you once swooned with now sours and leaves you cold. Besides, Death is forever. Life, no matter how much you torture yourself or allow others to pick up the pillory and nail you to a post, is goddamn short. Shit . . . sea turtles live longer.

I'm grateful for every minute I'm still alive. I've been granted numerous stays of execution. I courted Death who always wins in the end, but truly I wanted LIFE. I wanted TO LIVE. In the Extreme. I wanted experiences, which would force me to truly appreciate everything. I wanted to take nothing for granted.

A friend once said "Shut the fuck up. You've got it made . . . you've had everything you ever wanted. All the sex you could stomach, all the drugs you could consume, cool friends who worshiped you. What more do you want?" And that's just it. I WANT MORE. MORE OF EVERYTHING. MORE SEX, MORE DRUGS, MORE GUNS. MORE MONEY.

I want to glut on everything this bastard planet has to offer before the Prince of Thieves sneaks in to hostage me back to Death's Other Kingdom, and you better believe I WON'T GO QUIETLY. I WILL DIE AS I HAVE LIVED, KICKING AND SCREAMING WILDLY AGAINST THE VOID.

To create is in a sense to cheat Death. To leave a skid mark. To shit in the face of history. To confront mortality with a middle finger raised in the air, knowing full well that Death will eventually dispose of this body, but it will not be able to completely bury all the incriminating evidence that this art terrorist plans to leave behind.