

WHAT THE BOOKIES DO IN VEGAS

One thing that has been on mind, other than the moon and the blue sky,
is why I am not more famous?

I think fame is stupid but have wanted it for so long.
It's not even the money.

It's just that when I was in 4th grade
running around the playground screaming with my hair on fire,

I wanted people to notice me,
to pay attention to my long hair or short hair

or ripped jeans or tight ass jeans. But I was never smart enough.
My whole life I have pretended I was smart enough.

I am not that smart. It's something with how my head works.
It's like there is this cloud in my brain that does not let me understand complex thoughts.

Systematic thoughts. That's why I failed Spanish in 6th grade.
That's why when I lived in Italy, I could fake the accent great

but couldn't figure out, for the life of me, how to conjugate verbs.
Mi dispiache.

I can balance a check book, easy. Just addition and subtraction. But percentages. *Forgetaboutit.*
Till this day I can't fathom how the bookies do in Vegas what the bookies do in Vegas.

What I did understand, early on, was how to pass.
How to pass smart.

And the people who know me know that I am not
and I have just gotten in touch with this myself.

How absolutely dumb I am. Or, how vapid I feel when I am at a dinner party
while all my dinner party friends talk about the geopolitical situation in Ghana

and how it will affect shipping routes across the Pacific
which will, in turn, have an impact on not just U.S. inflation

but the global economy.
Somehow, these friends make links to climate change and the next presidential election

and I sit there like, Saddle up motherfuckers, can't we just hold hands and hug.

That's what I am smart at. Holding hands and hugging.

This does not bring me fame or maybe it brings me a certain kind of holding hands and hugging fame but, honestly, I am done with that.

I want to write a book about cultural appropriation like Paisly Redkal's brilliant *Appropriate A Provocation*, but again *forgetaboutit*.

I could never make sentences like her sentences.

She references Homer and Meredith and A Tribe Called Quest and Ovid and Ted Hughes

and Paul Simon and my God it's all so organic,
like she's making a salad with carrots and spring mix and scallions

and a dash of Haas Avocado. It's that kind of smart.
And I'm 56 years old and my mind is going in the other direction,

down the other side of the mountain, closer to oblivion,
and that cloud gets more cumulous and bulbous, and I want it to rain

because maybe if it does then I will be Freddie Mercury for a night,
standing in front of 500,000 people with a microphone

and we'll all be singing *Somebody To Love*,
because he wrote it for everyone,

because a long time ago he heard Maria Callas sing something operatic
and knew that he wanted to be a conduit and damn

it did not matter that he had an overbite,
he knew that if he got it fixed it would mess up his voice

and that was the most brilliant thing ever,
that he didn't get it fixed one bit.