Alison Strub

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Lillian and Fred have appeared in the following journals: *Gigantic Sequins*, *Tenderloin*, *Salt Hill*. 
Lillian, I like your dress as black as soot and your perfumed wrists. I like how your candle smells. The wine glows golden, glows as your hand picks up the lobster. It glows as your hand shakes the salt. Lillian, tell me. Lillian, tell me. How do you remember the table, when the meal is gone?

Fred says my dreams about getting my tonsils out and having my hair stroked means that I am going to accomplish something great today. Fred says I look so nice today. Fred says I’m so unique. Fred says he wants to sleep with me, but he really shouldn’t. Fred says I have a peculiar heart.
Lillian, Tammy Wynette sings to you. Gag me. Gag me with a spoon. Lillian, why do you open your mouth when your ideas are so weird? Keep crouching alone on the settee, when you could be cleaning the candlewax gathering dust on your favorite dish. I’m sorry. I’m just so pissed off today.

Fred says my dream that the right side of my bed was candy and that the left side was cake means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on cathartic and hypnotic methods and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, let me show you the new fashionable fabrics: there’s chevron and chambray. Oh, Lillian you don’t even care. Your eyes are glazed, your tissue crumpling in your hand. You just read your moisturizer ingredients over and over again and what does it do: it makes you ageless.

Fred says my bad dream about a lady dressed in 49 dresses means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on autodidactic studies and its painstaking procedure and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, I love your new furniture. The curtains and hangings are just to your taste. The semi-grand piano fits the space well. The shelf of books covers all the subjects I care about. Lillian, I really came here for a story. I really came here to not hate myself. Lillian, I don’t want your tea gown of vivid green.

Fred says my dream that I stood on top of a cross on a steeple and couldn’t figure out how to get down means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on systematic representation and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, You’re so sad today, because you read a book that ended sadly. Your white tablecloth is sprinkled with drops of red wine. Does that upset you, too? Is that wine from last night, Lillian? Are those crumbs from last night, Lillian? What flavor of cookie did you eat, what flavor of sorbet?

Fred says my dream about trading my engagement ring for a jukebox means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on symptoms of unconscious mental life and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, what do you think are your amiable qualities? You always ignored the Sabbath. You are always bewitching, although you spend most days cyberloafing. Your chalice collection is pedantic, but you’re good for many things. You need just need to Swiffer more. Keep working on that.

Fred says my dream about the zoo means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on valuable and illuminating unpermitted expressions of the unconscious mind and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, I dreamt you were a soot black eagle soaring through the sky. I apologize for calling you a fucking airhead. I liked what you had to say about slippers, and that woman who was just a tad overdressed. And I will try to use the phrase “Thank Heaven” more. Anything to please you. You’re all I have.

Fred says my dream about skipping from mountain top to mountain top means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on aphoristic expressions and body language and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, good god, you’re pretty. Is it that new moisturizer you’re using? I need to get some. Lillian, tell me. Lillian tell me, Lillian, tell me a story. Yes, a gory one. How about one about Jeffrey Dahmer, how about the one about Charles Manson? Oh yes, you tell it all so well.

Fred says my dream about getting my feet wet in the rain means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on the abolishment of amnesias and involuntary thoughts and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, I am sorry. Please don’t be mad at me. Maybe it was jealousy. Yes, I know you don’t try to flaunt it all in my face. Yes, I know I shouldn’t have mentioned subjects that might have upset you, as your guest. I will use the phrase “I think so,” more, rather than “I know.” I will subvert myself.

Fred says my dream about tramps, cats, dogs, and water means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on resistances and blockages that can scarcely be overcome and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, I love your sable and your solemnity. I love reading your love notes from men. Your arrangements of silk, satin, and velvet flowers are genius. Just genius. Tell me, Lillian, how did you develop and perfect your hobbies? Tell me Lillian, are there any dreams you can’t accomplish?

Fred says my dream about playing ball means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on maladies, melancholies, and happiness of many years duration and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, the piece of cold veal was carved with a delicate sense of prudence, each piece weighing exactly an ounce. You even cut up the bread. But, Lillian, your dark, close room made me uncomfortable. Can things ever be the same, Lillian, even if they haven’t changed?

Fred says my dream about an avalanche that came down on me but didn’t hurt me means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on unconscious wish impulses and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, I recommend mohair, which comes in black and is waterproof. You always buy the best of everything, the choicest cut, Lillian. There is always a tumbler of water set just in case I come over. Is there anything more pleasurable than spending the day with an intimate friend?

Fred says my dream about living inside a machine with an angel means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on concealment, disguise, flattery, and symbolism and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, you are entrapped in your own baubles and jewels. I don’t want to buy any more Mary Kay, I don’t want to. I don’t want to buy any more Avon. Okay, I’ll look at the online catalogue. Yes, I’m sure there is something I need. The rest of the room is dark. Glow screen, glow. Glow the endless internet.

Fred says my dream about my friends jogging outside means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on emotional atonement and the widest extent of eroticism and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, I don’t think you are pregnant. I really don’t. Did you take your pill on time? Did you have unprotected sex? Well, then I am sure you are not pregnant. Okay, but I don’t think we should trust the girls online. I don’t think we need to go to CVS to get Plan B. Lillian, trust me, you’re fine.

Fred says my dream about riding horses and fairies flying through the air means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on respectful sympathy with the neurotic and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, the staircase was steep. Your navel was exposed as you pulled the shirt over your head. A little comfort would be nice, a long cozy chat to disperse all my fears. I don’t read anymore. I don’t check the news anymore. I am sorry, I haven’t been watching it, I don’t know what’s going on.

Fred says my dream about falling into a big hole means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on transference phantasies and later expressions of impulses and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, wear a skein of scarlet silk around your neck tied with nine knots. Well, of course this is witchcraft. How else can I change our lives? How do I defriend this person on Facebook? How do I decline a friend request from my boss and not get in trouble? How can I look at your LinkedIn?

Fred says my dream about me and a boy going for a joy ride in a car we couldn’t stop means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on analytic breaking down of inhibitions and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, I want to eat every burger. Or every French fry. Or every chicken nugget. Or drink every shake. Or eat every Happy Meal until I am happy. Will you do this with me? Great. Let’s go down the street to the newly renovated one. We can eat until the breakfast menu becomes the lunch menu.

Fred says my dream about flowers and myself means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on sublimation of intimate and prolonged doubt and subordination of sympathies and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, I will take that harsh toke and call it delightful. Do you think I will marry a doctor? My vase is full of flowers. Let’s guess when the final bud will burst into a flower. Let’s dance and not be in such a desperate hurry. I love so many things: diamonds and pearls, amethyst and gold.

Fred says my dream about playing peekaboo with some strange men means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on free movable craving for love and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, so what if I am a chocoholic who does the nasty, who says eat shit and die, whose boy pal kind of sucks, who has a cow, who spends all my time at the mall, who listens to new wave, who pencils you in, who overuses the suffix o-rama. If I am awful then you probably are, too.

Fred says my dream about going to a music show with Santa Claus means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on catalytic ferment in psychological processes and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, I hear the sound of many quarreling cats and they are all yours. Lillian, I’d love to have that one sit on my lap. I’ll just lint roll its fur off me later. Lillian, your cat is lovely and this tea is so fragrant. Is it jasmine? Is this the nicest cat you have? Do you have a nicer cat? Which cat is your meanest cat?

Fred says my dream about the one time I had a clock and then it broke means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on insignificance and the guilt of arbitrariness and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, I don’t want to be another lost woman. What even is a lost woman? I Oxicleaned the handkerchiefs we bought at the flea market that were rust stained and now they are beautiful and they make me happier than most things. I think I have been misusing the phrase lost woman.

Fred says my dream about starting a fire and jumping out a window means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on a new kind of pathological psychic product and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, you always have the best hats and I love your new one, but I have bigger concerns. I don’t want Google to know what I Googled when I was 12. I don’t want Google to know what I Googled when I was 14. I don’t want Google to know what I Googled when I was 16.

Fred says my dream about eight girls that all had to sleep in one bed means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on treatments through the existence of transference and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, does the internet disappear if I turn off cookies? Why do I have to turn off my cell phone on a plane? Why do I have to turn off my cell phone ever? What is moral turpitude and what does it have to do with me? Is beauty relevant? Is beauty moral? Are questions answered?

Fred says my dream about a black cape means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on the important and indispensable factor which is far too readily forgotten and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, is the world dead? Is the world hopeless? Lillian, here are the things that will keep us alive today: tartlets, tomato butter, cream from a socially responsible farm, a Kelly green cardigan, jade plants, a box of lotion-infused tissues, a bottle of Vos water, and an Ikea Malm desk.

Fred says my dream about the penny I lost under my pillow means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on retrogressions into firmly convinced superfluousness and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this.
Lillian, how can the coffee be so aromatic but also so bitter? The soup is about to boil over. I am busy unscrewing the cap of my new lotion and smelling the floral scent so I can’t help you. A new star is in the sky. Isn’t it clever to discover so small a star? Isn’t it nice to grow so tired of the moon?

Fred says my dream about people means I am going to accomplish something great today. He says he has been reading up on the most important etiological factors and is sufficiently versed on the subject. He says we are going to work on this. He says we have so many things to work on.
Alison Strub is a student of the internet. She lives in Virginia. She has a dog she loves. She likes receiving postcards in the mail. She received her MFA at George Mason University. Her poems have appeared in many fine journals. If you would like to send her a postcard or read more of her poems, she can be reached via Google search.