



KILLING THE MOON

Mabel, episode 15: Killing the Moon. In which there is little hope and less conclusion.

[INTRO:]

ANNA: – Anna Limon –

AUTOMATED FEMALE VOICE: – is not available. At the tone, please record your message.

[BEEP]

MABEL: Anna. Anna. Anna. Lovely Anna.

Leave me alone.

[BEEP]

[SINGING]

[BEEP]

Anna. I miss you. I miss your name inside my mouth and so I say it over and over. Anna, Anna. I will not spill a drop of it. I would never waste your name on anything of my own, not even a wound, not even to stifle the bleeding.

[BEEP]

[screaming, crying] Let me out! Let me out! Let me out!

[BEEP]

[WINDCHIMES]

I always thought the worst thing in the world was repetition. Being forced to do the same thing over and over again. This time as an insect. This time as a light bulb. This time as a flower, a mirror, a light shining upon a hill. Over and over. A phone call that goes unanswered. A message unheard. Do you ever hear me, Anna? Or is it only echoes and moonlight? Do you know who I am? Or are you only looking in the mirror? Like the rest of them? The dirt people? The people who can't even tell the real me from a doll, a mask? The people who can't even tell the goddamn difference be -

[BEEP]

Can't catch me. Can't catch me. [LAUGHING]

What are you? I know. What am I? I know. A bird perched on the edge of a knife. A black well of water. A fistful of blood. The rush of a thicket of briars. Golden antlers goring the sky. Every time you hear it I live in shades of earth and platinum. Every time I say it I grow stronger and bolder and brighter. Come find me. Come find me.

[BEEP]

[KNOCKING]

Anna. I think I figured it out. I remember those pictures of me. I remember how I looked. It was like I was nothing inside. Like the house of me was boarded up.

[KNOCKING STEADILY LOUDER]

I don't think I had a soul, Anna. I think that it -

[BEEP]

At night I hear you singing. Maybe it isn't you. Maybe it's only an echo coming down the hill to greet me in the hollow pit, in the firmament where I have built my nest and crouched. Wherever he has put me, it cannot be

solid. There is no grasp of mud and toil and substance. There is only air and light. There is only decoherence.

[BEEP]

[Fire; voices]

[BEEP]

There's nothing for you here. There's nothing for you in the house.

Don't. Don't. [SCREAMING] Leave me alone, Anna, please, please don't -

[BEEP]

[flooding noises]

When I was younger, I thought the girl in the mirror would devour my life. Knew that she would, someday. I was afraid of her. I knew she wasn't me. We talked about this, didn't we? Didn't we Anna? You and I, together? In the light, through shrieks and hums? How I was scared she would eat me? How I ruined every one of my grandmother's mirrors, over and over again, with paint, with perfume? There are pictures of me from when I was a child but they don't look like me. They're flat and stupid. My eyes aren't green in those pictures. I'm smiling but I look dead. Dead girl walking. If you peeled away my face there'd be only dust. I wasn't a real person then. I think I'm only barely real now.

I broke a mirror once. It's supposed to be bad luck. Everyone in the house freaked out on me, screamed, but I didn't care because I knew I was safer, I knew I had made myself safer through the blood on my hands, through the wreckage of all that silver. I was triumphant, I was victorious; I felt sated. I felt like the monster had been vanquished. Like I was killing the moon. Like I was killing her. Luna. The girl -

[BEEP]

Leave me alone, Anna. You have people there in the meat of the world. You have people who care about you. Who will miss you if you're gone. For me there is no one. A collection of images and ramblings, from a bundle of birch that was never me to begin with. It's always birch, they say - touch it to someone's head and they go mad, touch it to someone's heart and they die. I think love is like that. I think you touch someone's heart and they die a little. They become a different person.

I am different. I am not the same as I was. I run together like water, like moonlight, and every piece of me that refracts is nothing like the other. An infinitude of selves, all alone, always alone. I know you look for me in books and plants and the earth. I run down all your thoughts and I know what's inside you. I know you better than you know yourself, all hooks and curves and hidden passages. I hear everything from the walls, from the flowers. I know you better than you'll ever know me. Stop looking.

I am not a person any longer. I am a bower. There are vines wrapped around my ribcage. When I cough I can see the white flowers come out of my mouth. They open in moonlight and laugh at me but I am their owner. I tear them to pieces in the house. I leave a mess wherever I go.

Do you understand what I tell you, through the walls, through the radio? What were words, before I spoke to you? Did I speak at all? I know I used to sing. My voice would float up the hill and call back at me, mock me with its distance. With its linear sense of here to there. I was so angry at it. Come back here, I used to say, but it only laughed and laughed at me. Everything laughs at me here. Or at least it used to.

You do not have flowers growing out of your veins. You do not have to be stuck in the dark corner of some room, some mind, some garden left to rot and fester. Sometimes I don't like you, Anna, because you can leave anytime you want and you don't. Why don't you? Why don't you just leave? Why can't you just leave me alone, leave me alone, leave me alone -

[BEEP]

Anna. Anna, I think I conjured you, fearless Anna, loyal Anna, Anna-with-the-flute-in-your-throat. I think I wrote you out of the fog and sea. Out of the blackrock. Out of myself. Does that make you more real than I am? Or less?

I can remember things from before. Before this, before you. Before I was melody suspended in starlight. I remember the ocean, how roaring it always was, how it was colder than I expected but I'd dive in anyway. I remember getting lost in the mountains. I remember the awfulness of school, how I'd distract myself by counting bird after bird. I remember that I liked sweets enough to use them as a reward system for myself; this stack of shortbread if Mabel is good, this pile of charred crust if Mabel is bad. I don't think it worked. I remember eating a lot of sweets. I think. I think these things are real. I grasp too roughly these shreds of normalcy and now they're all

bloodied and I can't tell. I'm just some girl, I say over and over. There's nothing so peculiar about me that it couldn't be recreated.

Or maybe I'm just lying to myself again. I am never very good at that for long. It always catches up. It's faster than I am.

She took me out of school after a while. My grandmother. There were too many *incidents*. I don't remember a lot of this, to be honest. I know it happened but I can't feel it. It's like looking at pictures in fairytale books and knowing their shape, knowing that deep inside something in it belongs to you, but you can't prove it. You can never prove it. There's only drawings. Anyway. They took me out of school and put me somewhere else where I could be - creative, they called it. I created a font of blood. Ha! Isn't that funny, Anna? Everything's so funny now.

In this other school I learned physics. I learned that nothing in this universe is what you think it is, that worlds can be stacked on top of one another like layers of cream in a cake, that there is nothing that can truly be destroyed, that a thing can be both inside out and right side in at the same time. Like a Klein bottle. It's just math, the simplest thing in the world. I am like that. Inside out and right side in, the flora of my organs searching for sunlight while the voice of me screams in the hollow earth. Your body is the way it's supposed to be, Anna. Everything is put into its place. I cannot shuffle around your purple heart to make room for larkspur. I can't wrap your bones in jasmine.

Anyway. Every time you say *physics*, someone else has to say, Oh, but what about that cat, the one in the box? That story isn't what anyone thinks it is, either. It's all a joke, like when people say ooh, there's a number haunting us, or oh, what if the Matrix is real? Idiots. It's just something boring people tell themselves when they want to seem clever or interesting but their chest is only full of old newspaper and bottle caps and they have nothing else to pull out. Most people are like that. Not you. There's a lot of interesting things inside you.

But this is a joke to me too. The walls. The endless trap of it. I prowl them endlessly and they are always changed, here. They never know if the cat's alive or dead. You have to take your guess on faith. Doubt comes more naturally to me.

Listen: I never used to eat meat. I never used to step on insects. It would make me cry. A lot of things make me cry, make me wobble, but that kind of meaningless death, it is unimaginable cruelty. For all my carelessness, I can't

be that wanton in my death. Even in my own imagination, even for a joke, I would say, Don't tell me. Don't tell me what's inside the box. I don't want to know.

Anna. Don't open the box. I am alive and I am dead and that is the only answer. You don't want to know any other world. You can't. You will kill me twice over. I always thought the worst thing in the world was repetition. I can't die more than I already have.

He is so angry. I think he must always be angry, since he does not know what he really wants. Does he love the cage? Does he love the bird? Does he love them both equally, or not at all? What is worse than love, love that makes you swallow poison and chokes your insides like flowers? Love that makes you go mad and lost and kills you all at once? At what point is love itself a cage, only a way of binding, the yoke we all pull around each other to keep ourselves tied to a place, an idea, a moment in time? Anna, sweet Anna, good Anna, do you want to put a chain around my neck, too?

OUTRO:

Mabel is produced by Becca De La Rosa; this episode was guest-written by Luna Thorne. The voice of Mabel Martin is [censored]. The voice of Anna Limon is Becca De La Rosa. The music in this episode was by Ars Sonor, Vicnet, Shadows on the Snow, The Owl, Rebecca Foon, Absolutus, Blear Moon, and (morse), and all of it is available to download on the Free Music Archive at freemusicarchive.org. For more information about Mabel, including a full tracklist and transcript for each episode, visit us online at mabelpodcast.com or on Twitter @podcastmabel. Do you want to pledge your allegiance to the girl in the mirror? Check out our Redbubble store – the link is now on our website.