

Excerpt: PORTRAITS

How many decoys can I muster?

How many mes shall I throw at you and make you

Believe what you see?

I can tell you how many... but, hey...I can change that, too.

I sit

I watch

I listen and I breathe...

There is a house with a fence.

Behind it, a neat garden with beautiful hydrangeas.

Around the perimeter of the garden,

A clothesline, knotted with little white flags, is suspended 10 inches

Above the ground.

The flags dance in the wind.

Frayed, ragged strips torn from worn cotton sheets.

They entice the birds in search of food and, so easily, so cruelly Frighten them
away with their taunting.

Little white flags flapping and flailing unpredictably with each sudden gust.

An unfair negotiation

An unequal match for ultimately, the master manipulator

The wind

Is Unseen

Unknown.

At the mercy...Forever...at the mercy...

This exhausting ritual, this dance of enticement and fear goes on and on until the
birds end up hungry, defeated and fly away.

From an attic window, from way above... a bird's eye view

I Sit

I Watch

I Listen

A shaded someone who, even when the sun is shining, sits in the

Dark

A little girl skips about, wildly, inside me...

Wants to play

Frisky

Out of control

Frightens me

So, I sit and I breathe

I breathe her down until the

Quiet comes... Calms

Sit

Watch

Listen

Breathe

...

I wore a bustier and a tiara

Waist slim

Legs

Shapely

Knees

Ever smooth

Skin

Silken

Soft

From rose petals and oil

Alone

Before the mirror

I posed

Naughty poses

Guilty secret

Someone's fantasy

Practicing

I was ready...I was willing...I was nineteen

Ssh!

Behind the screen

Only behind the screen

Shy

Don't look at me

See me

Are you watching?

I peeked

You were watching

Silk and scanty lace

Scented...clinging...falling

Hardly moving

Uncovering

Me

Watching

You

The more you see me the more I see myself

We hid from them
The ones who loved you first
I was older
Tempress
They called me
Not of your world
We made our own world
With perfume and sweat
When we danced
On that night
Our first night
You knelt
Took my hand
You twirled me
You moved me
Not knowing where you would take me
Not caring
Aloft
In your arms
Where did the ground go?
You were strong
You elevated me to royalty
Princess was fine
I didn't want to rule

We ran away and defied them all
Risky business
We kept running...moving...dreaming...dancing
Less and less now
Too much energy to run from your world

From the ones who loved you first

Escape

Take me

Take me

To Coney Island

Carousel

Beautiful...ancient...soothing rhythm

Some ups

Some downs

An over painted whore

Who still knows how to show you a good time

Stay with me... here

See me

Are you watching?

I peeked

You were crying

We go round and round

I'm on this side

Where are you?

Where are you?

I am scarred

You did that

Not malice

Just neglect

These are my tears

They don't fall from my eyes

They are my interior design

These are Me's
The Me I agreed to be
Me in disguise
The Me I always wanted to be
The Me I've yet to be
Me dreaming
This is no longer Me

I live here...
And here...
And here...
And here...
This is my home

You moved on
I am still moved
Moving

How old am I?
No matter
Long ago
I ceased to recognize the reflection in the glass

Alone
Still posing
Still practicing

In this place
I will always be your dream