

SEASONAL

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KRON VOLLMER



SEASONAL

BY KRON VOLLMER

FOREWORD BY KAREN PITTELMAN

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Secret Airport

Limited Run Books, on the Fly

Artist Statement and Acknowledgements:

I'm at the point in my life where my demons and bad habits collaborate on projects. That's how I embarked upon a two-year endeavor to cultivate a sensitivity to the seasons, despite the little I see of the natural world. *Seasonal* is one of the results. During the project, I recorded things I saw everyday in my environment, along with text, heard or overheard. At the end of the project I boiled down the documentation of each month to its quintessence.

In releasing *Seasonal* with Secret Airport, I hope to inspire others to feel (and perhaps record) the effects of the seasons, fleeting and circular, however they play out.

Everything you are about to read is true, and presented pretty much as it happened in 2016—with one exception: I only drive a convertible through the streets of Tehran in my dreams. To protect the innocent and the guilty, I have changed (or anonymized) most of the names. However, I have not altered any of the dialogue.

I extend deep gratitude to Karen Pittelman, my muse, for writing the Foreword and inspiring me to release this to the world. More thanks and gratitude are due to my additional muses, Donald Lee and Mita Ghosal. Thank you also to Molly M. Ginty and Heather Tenzer for their support and to Manassa Hany, always.



Kron Vollmer Teaches Me the Secret of Life

by Karen Pittelman

The first time we meet,
you've been forced to flee your apartment
due to carbon monoxide poisoning—

But not before choosing
the month's signature color
and then grabbing
only clothes that match
so as to remain stylish in exile.

You peer at me
from under a regal fur hat
and say:
Do you think there is nothing to be done?

There is never
nothing to be done.

First of all,
there is dancing.
The way the arc of a wrist
can lift even
the heaviest flesh.

There is Barbara Streisand
and the specific holidays
on which one should
honor her.

If these borders
are not the right borders,
then declare your own.

Issue a new national currency,
set your own rate of exchange.

Attend to the tiny mysteries:

The TV switching on by itself
to your favorite film,

The butterflies mistaking your
father's bright golf pants
for flowers.

Choose a wig
to keep your look timeless.

Plot a lifetime eyeglass plan
for ever-larger frames
until your whole face fits
behind enormous lenses.

If it is winter,
be crowned in this fur cap.

If it is spring,
we will swirl
in novelty print skirts.

And if you are starving,
there is always the forest

Where we must learn
to forage for delight,

Where even the deadliest mushroom
may also be exquisite.

Karen Pittelman is good at sad songs and eating french fries by the ocean. She is terrible at drinking and reading a map. Above all, she loves cookies, but should not be permitted to eat too many or things might get out of control.

Winter

January: Bad Photoshop
February: Optics

Spring

March: Irish Goodbye
April: Choking Hazard
May: Soft Rock

Summer

June: Sculpture
July: Deadstock
August: Vaporware

Fall

September: The Killing Tongs
October: Ménage
November: Post Its

Coda: Winter

December: Crowds



January: Bad Photoshop

for Donald Lee

You are wearing a suit and holding a mouse
You will check each box within the allotted time
Each person will add to it, tissue by tissue

Until it is too big to lock in the filing cabinet each night.

Cobblestones, long shadows, Squires and Squares,
the invisible hand over the Xerox machine, waving, beaconing, blurring
A circuitous route of doubling and excising
shaky lines that lead to jumbo size Wanted posters
a ceramic Penguin wearing a muffler is super-glued to a desk

Until it is too big to be refrigerated.

Christmas Trees molting in plastic bags beside blackened ice
Monsters, all the monsters from Revelations
The digging, the digging, the scratching sounds
Someone says another nor'easter, someone forwards a video of a panda

Until it is too big for The Whitney.

All your Google queries will appear on your monogrammed stationary
as soon as you think them:

What to do with flat champagne?
Stephane Grappelli
What is incentive compensation?
High Fashion Clown, images
Weather
von meinem besten freund
Dative, grammatische
Sargeant's Madame X, images
Groundhog's Day
Groundhog's Day Movie
Weather
Inspiriert von meinem schrafsten Kritiker
German Grammar review
Quick German Grammar review
German Grammar Accusative Case
Inspiriert oder begesitert
Weather
Time Loop
Weather

Casual Loop
Mark Twain's The Awful German Language
Barbra Streisand white camellias
Barbra Streisand white flowers
Unicorn, images

Until it is so big that we throw it away.

February: Optics

High above, between pillars and rosettes, is an erotic Zodiac.

You know the one, flesh tones a taut panoply of panty hose samples. And your sign is the randyest. Scorpions impregnating water carriers, goats going down on virgins, lions doing something or other with scales. All composites of naked human forms, tiny. You have to squint, but there they are.

In the distance, the sound of tugboats and bells. Here and there, a hawk unearthing exquisite corpses in the birch copse. This is seen reflected in a mirror that covers the left wall. It's so clean, you only know it's there because of the seams. And because you see yourself so disoriented.

Repeat pattern: a table of merch. Your name in cursive on t-shirts and key chains. Your secret emblem is included. Is it a—

I have created a wall of head shots, all faces for radio, sun-faded, loose in their frames. Signed in all their hands: *love to you, good luck to you, best wishes, reach for the stars, live for tomorrow, keep on truckin'*. Each one is different. But then you catch a duplicate, where the pattern repeats.

Another repeat pattern (on wallpaper): orangutans in a wheelbarrow, hands over feet, almost human.

I've created a cut-out of myself in Plexiglas. You hardly know she's there. She knows that listening is the better part of acting. She could be supportive. She could be a coffee table. She is better than me. I will leave her when I go.

Red damask, satiny here, velvety there. On patrician walls behind Bronzinos. When the museum guard looks a way, you take a lick. Yes, just like frosting. And it stains your mouth.

In the halls are photos of poppies, the same genus as those that surround the Emerald City. They are so scratch and sniff, but worn thin, almost erased. You smell only dish soap and spoil your nail art besides.

You tread on dust bunnies snarled with hair that dance in the corners. So many have passed through these halls, and we've only been open 24 hours.

I created a VHS tape for when I needed to see the sky. Nothing will play it anymore. So I hold it in my hands and think of meringue. Now I carpet my bedroom with silver balloons and skydive.

The last room has a video feed of the first room, you see yourself walking in, looking up and squinting.

When Mozart made amendments to his music, he made the added notes smaller and smaller until they fit in whatever space remained, revisions in miniature. Ants on the staff. And it almost looks like he never altered a note.

This is just a step and repeat, a backdrop for another photo of you.



March: Irish Goodbye

My secret, secret church,
she whispered in a cocktail bar draped for mourning.

I opened a hole in a book and climbed in:
that red on white that catches in your throat
that flying of the Japanese Flag
that blood that brings the polar bear into focus
that Donner Party Special.

Albert seized up over St Louis:
that retching in the oxygen mask
that blinking .
They've cleared an aisle saying:
we're gonna have to carry this one.

When she answers the door,
she has no idea who we are.

Well, hello, she says laughing, Dolly,
you're something something,
Dolly,
something something,
Dolly,
you're still—

April: Choking Hazard

The opposite of
these kid gloves on my feet
is the car driving
over potholed roads.

The opposite of sticker shock
is the thimble of chicken broth
coquettish on a green velvet tray.

The opposite of
the email sent to your boss
is the gondola prow moving through dark water
in a jaunty hat.

In a rain of somnolence, I stand with my mouth open
catching flower petals.

May: Soft Rock

Call the leather bar and leave a message saying:

I can't talk right now,
I'm covered in honey and red ants.
I'm riding a clown bike in an electrical storm.
I'm in a bathtub filled with milk,
women in evening gowns are beating me with baguettes.
I've just slathered on a rejuvenating face mask
and don't want to crack it.

We pioneers of past
are prisoners of the future
and scapegoats of the now

Say these things while under the lustful eyes of official
portraits. Come-hither administrators all:
Men, men, men, full-length, full-frontal in suits
(all look like Tom Selleck).

Back to the rendezvous point, i.e., the leather bar:

If you really want to make money, says the man in
the pith helmet, you can't be squeamish, the highest
performing stocks are private prisons. And you say, no, no,
no--that can't be right. It's not an abstraction. You burn
others for fuel. He doesn't even look sheepish.

A vast seaweed-covered creature shuffles in
without language or jockstrap. My hands are very dirty, it
says, and here it is petted.

She promises the deepest sleep and has me faint into her
arms while Houdini pops out of a box, chains rattling. And
as I go down to the floor, there is a zipper where my mouth
should be.

When I awake the hand imprinted on my thigh is my own.



June: Sculpture

Strawberry Solitaire Ritual
Upon Zodiac Rock (thrice blessed)

Beneath this acne-scarred moon
with earnest and serious poses,
I invoke the goddess,
Martha Graham,
who appears,
and curses me out
for losing heart and getting fat.

Go get them!, she commands,
but I can't tell the difference between
Noguchi sculptures and ordinary stones
all bear the same marks as the moon.

In a purloined proscenium, we stage a piece in which
we move the tides (it can be done, using seashells and bones)
for an audience of rats.

Oh, grow a chignon, Martha shouts at me.
And I do, round and hard as the moon.

I run through every park each with a production of *Much
Ado About Nothing* in progress, each set during World War
I. And each time, I catch the repudiation of Hero at the altar,
in the dappled, dappled light of ancient trees refracted polka
dots from the moon's sister.

A consortium of soloists hide me
in the long shadows of statues
where baby owls have taken refuge,
their eyes reflect the moon.

This is Beaucamp-Feuillette.
It is a map, but you might be holding it upside down

to find:
a late maypole
a clock tower
your own face wreathed with linden blossoms and fireflies
and the skull in the rising moon, laughing.

July: Deadstock

You love old fonts, each letter its own somersault, though some are dot matrix.

You have wallpapered a cookie tin and fit everything inside. The Eames chair, the Calder mobile. Immaculate. You live there during your 30 minute lunch hour.

The totem poles vanished from the square. No more guardian eagles. Only the concrete tree remains, and the Nullipara, her head a burning ski resort. She is on the phone, saying the appropriate things.

On the marble steps of dusk, another one, green wings stiff, inert. There is a plague killing dragonflies. But it only leaves one dead outside your office each night. (Perhaps what you do each day kills them.)

Leave it to the vermin and the fire, Marsha Havisham reads from the teleprompter, leave these corpses to the triple-action cleansing of the great Agni.

You went to college with her. You wonder how her hair got so cascadey. Whether she had work done. And why each day depletes you, yet feeds Marsha. After all, you're the same age.

The Nullipara, though she plays the organ, has only a limited sphere of influence. There, there, she often says, which means she can only show you where to rip up the black and white tiles to find the *Unterführung*. This could be a cavern supported by white rattan mushrooms, flecked with mirrors. An inverted fruit stand, or a foxhole palace where stag beetles push weeds and broken glass up through the sidewalk cracks.

August: Vaporware

Palace of blue neon, pagoda of brown glass
modeled on an airport, called Eurotrash (affectionately)
now punctured by the electric teeth
open to the sky, ragged
more empty than on its first birthday,
but the elevators can still lift you up
up and up, like the end of Willy Wonka
right through this roof.

An aerial view of a city gone not feral, but residential
morph into a drone, pigeon-shaped
realistic enough to avoid ruining the view
realistic enough to work like a UPS truck.

In these sunglasses, I'm a dead ringer for Simone Simon.

I've got a typewriter that drives like an accordion,
carved from sandalwood, its perfumed heart
beats the rhythm section when played.
I've got an onyx, tail-finned convertible
that's two blocks long and runs on amethyst and quartz crystals.
I drive through the streets of Tehran,
top down, passing jalopies that run on honey,
gelatinous bubbles, in big glass tanks in the rear-view mirror.

I've got a wooden iPhone that makes love to a redwood tree
each time I turn it on.

I bought the building, every brick
that's what you have to do when you are a time traveler
because you never know what you'll come back to.

I wanted Satie, or second choice,
Smooth Operator, Sade
but instead I received a stock photo of a family.
If I could, I would give it negative stars.



September: Bakar Deluxe

Bring me the killing tongs
Say, *Tiocfaidh ár lá*, but with a shrug
Watch each knot in the pine wood floor
turn into an insect.

Each cut-out has a view of the crevasse. These pines, this moon, as seen through a nickelodeon. Balconies in a theater, plays in progress in each one. First, the lovers (singing show tunes), next, a family (party balloons), and finally two men in handcuffs and a policeman on a cell phone. Someone behind me says, I have a knife in my pocket. I wonder if he too is only rehearsing, or quoting from a movie.

Bring me the killing tongs
Say, *uh huh*, but make it sound like you are listening
Anyone who sees the ritual is a collaborator
(even the police).

There was a fight, two against one in the pagoda. And even as it happened, two other men re-enacted it by the chain link fence. First he went like this, then like this, they jab and block, play within a play. Before a massive painting of a river crossing, I take close up photos of the ice flows, until they are squiggles of light blue, not even cold.

Reach for the killing tongs
Say, *Iraultza ala hil*, but this time sarcastically
in a velveteen hotel lobby, soaking wet.

Zodiac Rock has been taken by secret societies. These children turn their backs to the moon and stare into hand mirrors.

These jewel encrusted walls are all just painted on. These aquariums are stocked with faux piranha and the gaming rooms are empty. In painters' pants, I stencil golden stags on red walls for an army of dancing bears. Giraffes are having their hair done, and scrolling on their phones.

I grip the killing tongs
saying, *Strong Enough For a Man*
but Made for a Woman,
this time with enough feeling
to make eggs stand on end
and tie a red ribbon around the glistening killing tongs.

October: Ménage

The phantom trio of muted alpenhorns (mostly).
Slim and nude in the cameo (unless they are on speaker phone).
The rest is done by percussion, say perhaps,
a goat (a far off bell),
an ancestral village (up where it is freezing).

The inflated past and the grimy future (left and right),
two hands that work together to sound like a piano.
Boots scramble for purchase when ice-climbing a pole
of peeling paint. Those red Swiss Flags (so many of them) white
crosses, grave markers. There are no passengers, he says, despite the
luggage.

Clementine crawls out of the drain, hard shell, six dainty legs,
proud of her rhinestone collar.
She sings the Palmetto Tango
and forms the third trio: Him, me and her.

There's nothing there, he says (because he doesn't hear it).

I receive a letter by registered mail stating that I am deceased;
I keep it in my smirking ancestor shrine. Because I have inherited
this bed, hewn from granite but soft and round as a woman's ass
where I Joan-of-Arc all night long, setting off the alarm (unheeded)
littering the beach with scorched starfish and smoke.

There is no trace, she says, though I point to the Yeti
footprints.

There is no roof, she says, no proclamation and still-borns
litter your window ledges.

The ambulance, I tell her, is my brass band.
The cracked walls are earth,
and the slippers lined up beside the door are blood.

There is an invisible pentagram scratched into this
floor.

There is a salt water crater where I am reborn on
Tuesdays. There is a clearing where I sacrifice silk to the
polyester gods.

And besides:

a ghost whose moustache is a time machine;
a lion who guards the Sriracha;
and a raptor, named Sherry Gantzenwelt, who
does my bidding.

But there's no air, she says.

But why don't you fix it?, asks the Menarchita, self-
righteous as young girls are.

A piece of twine (red and white) extends the temple to areas
only known in blueprints.

November: Post -Its

You have very little time. Feel that wind?
Feel the tines of its silver-plated serving fork?

At mouse-level, you know.
All the fairy doors come un-glued from floorboards with a pop.
The portal is closed, you're gonna be stuck here.

How to Fix a Broken Zipper
You will need
2 cheek swabs (one from a friend, one from a stranger)
a bandana
a paving stone sculpted by time and seagulls to resemble
a human face

Recite something that rhymes.
Promise yourself that you will never be servile.
Stand up very straight when you do this
curl your hair into figa signs.

Back in the *Unterführung*, sigils are everywhere
drawn by commuters on stolen office supplies, guarded by
a moist-eyed man. Candy-colored incantations stick to the
white tiles but those legs will only walk to the museum.

Hum the song that was the number one hit
during the week of your birth. (If you don't know what it was,
use *Copacabana*.)

And feel your coat turn into a sail to push you, very slowly,
along across a horizonless sheet of ice.



December: Crowds

A cardinal in the center of a circle of sparrows,
this place is protected by a sword
by a fleur de lis
by snapping fingers
by no-smoking signs.

I'm wearing the pants.
There are no women here on Joan of Arc Island.
I'm Marlene-Dietriching,
my song is a puff of smoke.

The powder-blue tuxedos hold me up
beside the anti-gravity monuments.
There, among the pine and holly is a river of pennies,
a dash of blood, a wounded antler.

We sing from the chest:
No More Tears (the fine print)
trumpets and roses, my mariachis resonate.
We're going to lift the tenor up
from under the boardwalk
and he's going high.

I give a fake name to the New York Times
to enter the pipe dream cathedral
candle in my hand,
Latin on my lips.



Notes

Bad Photoshop:

von meinem besten freund: (German) from my best friend

Dative, grammatische: (German) Dative Case, grammar

Inspiriert von meinem schrafsten Kritiker: (German) Inspired by my harshest critics

Inspiriert oder begesitert: (German) inspired or enthused

Sculpture:

Beaucamp-Feuillette: a notation system for baroque dance steps, developed in the 1680's.

Deadstock: (and also Post Its)

Unterführung: (German) an underground pedestrian walkway.

Bakar Deluxe:

Tiocfaidh ár la: (Irish) Our day will come. (An IRA slogan)

Iraultza ala hil: (Basque) Revolution or death. (An ETA slogan)

Kron Vollmer is one of the many pseudonyms of Kron Vollmer.
(www.kronvollmer.com)

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