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first edition

Published with the assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council

Canada Council
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Conseil des Arts
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

We acknowledge the Government of Canada through the Ontario Book Publishers Tax Credit program and through the Ontario Book Initiative.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION

Hartman, Jill, 1974-

A painted elephant / Jill Hartman.

ISBN 1-55245-117-8

I.Title.

PS8565.A6679P34 2003

C811'.54

C2003-902061-4

PR9199.3.H34895P34 2003

Chapter I

Introducing Myself, THE LONELY
DUTCH ELEPHANT. My Arrival and
Debarcation. Also, a True Report of My
Heroic Escape from the Zoo, in which
I learn the Importance of Stealth

a rubenesque grasp of the figure

rudimentary grasp of the language

grapple, rubric a grapnel, three-fluked hook

adumbration of the elephant's debarkation

... The Roman god of the sea emerges with his myrmidons; protectors of the Queen on her voyage, they celebrate her arrival. All flows together in swirling movement: heaven and earth, history and allegory. These celebrants are of the present, not of some golden age of the past; it is an enchanted realm where myth and reality become one ...

ta-dum
te deum
chants and incense, tridents

the front of the crate is prised off and our heroine blinks the oil slick on the surface of the water reflects an iridescence in the region of her forehead, an auratic sense of the decorative (the oil slick left out of popular representations of the event)

Roof-hopping elephant startles residents

BY LORRAINE SMART, CALGARY

It's not Christmas and it wasn't Rudolph, but a four-legged escapee had people craning their necks Tuesday as it bounced from roof to roof during a dash for freedom from the Calgary Zoo.

The zoo's rugged terrain proved too tame for the rambunctious Indian elephant, who arrived in Calgary only three weeks ago on loan from the Amsterdam Zoo. She was being held in quarantine at the zoo's animal health centre in an outside pen when she bolted from the enclosure and scampered through south-east neighbourhoods until animal control officers were able to lasso the animal and take her home.

Many people were startled to see an exotic animal on city streets. Truck driver Patrick Jones thought he'd seen it all until he spotted the elephant running nearby while he was driving on Blackfoot Trail.

'I drive a truck for a living,' said Jones, 'and I've seen a lot of things on the highway, but no elephants. The guy in front of me almost smoked him. I was wondering what was going on.'

Pete D'Amico was enjoying a peaceful lunch in the kitchen of his 8th Street SE home when he glanced out the window and saw the elephant on the sidewalk. He said he thought it was a deer and called his wife.

To escape, the elephant leaped over a three-metre fence. 'It's really incredible that something like an elephant got out of this corral,' said zoo spokeswoman Trish Martin-Hanlon. 'This was sort of a fluke situation. But elephants are a lot more agile than is commonly thought.' An elephant is potentially capable of jumping four metres or about twelve feet.

'People were saying it jumped on to eight-foot roofs – it is a large animal,' said animal control dispatcher Paul Richardson, who fielded dozens of calls about a large animal on the loose. Callers also reported seeing everything from a moose to a very large cow. 'We weren't sure what it was at first,' said Sholter, 'but it was first spotted right by the zoo. That's why we figured it was from there.' Sholter notified the zoo, but officials there didn't know it was missing. 'They told me they do a count every morning,' said Sholter. 'I told them they'd better count again.'

The elephant was caught in an alley in the 500 block of 9th Avenue SE with a lasso. A tranquilizer gun was not needed and the animal was not harmed when it was captured after one p.m. The animal appears uninjured, but will be monitored over the next few days for stress on its muscles, Martin-Hanlon said. The elephant will join the other elephants in the zoo's collection after the thirty-day quarantine.

what i didn't see:

a box of speculaatjes
pairs of cherubic dutch children holding hands
a lonely elephant eats out tonight
dressed up restaurant indonesia
(these anachronistic etiquettes, a
pirouette silhouetted against
the whetting of your appetite
the fulfillment of all desire)
ginger cinnamon cookies
 real butter
 no preservative

Roy Kiyooka:

*the Behemoth of Speech: the absolute truth of
those huge white tusks curving in the moon-light marsh
...
on the / tusk of a dream i beheld the Elephant on the promenade:
his inflamed ear thrums the mammalian silences*

her ambulatory circumnavigation of an imaginary landscape
her post-colonial muse
her speculative fiction

elephant's relevant relation to this space
(bright colours dry her skin irritate
the sensitive mucous membrane)
permeable and irreversible sybaritism of her syllables
sugary system whereby:
a sultan becomes a sultana
raisins and syllabub a syllepsis and a tasty communion
for non-christians but not vegans, teetotallers
or those on a fat-restricted diet

i didn't see:

her waving her
the pearls in her ears
a silk purse and
painted skin: dark red lines: moments of jugular (in)decision
feeding on satsumas, sumatran rinds
gentle nervous candied ginger
empty paper bags, discarded valentines.

'what is this-ness'

a cupped hand coddles the red egg of the eclipse
cloud cover, obscure and vague, shapes
crocodiles a cunning grace

without looking:

she looks back. a third eye
quite useless, badly lit
blinking neon for a change
promenades with her pal
chummy midnight amble
a scrummy satisfaction, satiation
amorphous amethysts of thought:
amorous ambiguities
an annulment of sentiment
annapurna circuit, anaphora, ferrous

take my dictionary to task

Jack Spicer:

Others pick up words from the streets, from their bars, from their offices and display them proudly in their poems as if they were shouting, 'See what I have collected from the American language. Look at my butterflies, my stamps, my old shoes!' What does one do with all this crap? ... the perfect poem has an infinitely small vocabulary.

an iteratively small syllabary
one might almost characterize it as a 'zoo'
the lonely dutch elephant still swears in her mother tongue, still
wears her native costume
less valuable than precious
less real than not, than thought or thot
malayalam pig latin in 'this' 'imaginary' 'place'

what i thought was only a dream:

not butterflies but moths
her stamp of approval
not a tusk but a full, round moon
(chased by red eclipse moon dogs)

not shoes but footprints
shadows imprints snow
angels and a bitter integration
of the real

profligate phraseology, courting language
moon procuress for a delicate design
a proficiency with figures
a chronology

and desert