

Natalia Prusinska

## **Strange**

Strange bird

You are not mad.

You are mercury.

A seizure so compelling.

Natalia Prusinska

## Dry Orgasm

... and with that she entered a time in her life wholly devoted to consideration. This was neither in preparation for a decision, nor a means of making herself more interesting, but rather a way to break the routine, to convince herself, if briefly, that she could find herself deep in thought on an early morning bike ride ...

The truth is, she would have been equally as happy in a state of anoesis, drinking loosely with loose-minded people or having given herself up entirely to a cause like the advocacy of citrus plants, all because she had wanted to use the term hesperidium, though she had forgotten the word shortly after learning it and, despite having gone through the usual machinations, like looking through her internet history or asking literary friends for help, conducted countless Google searches with phrases like “term about lemons” or “word starting with H about sour fruit and things that make you push your lips together,” which would end, of course, in her bookmarking gardening blogs to build a DIY greenhouse and arguing with her wife over who would water the plants, until eventually she’d go into their smaller-than-imagined backyard and build the thing, not caring whether it raised the value of the home or if they’d ever use it ...

My mind, she said, works the way one would expect it to, when one is young and trying to make a point; it stalls continuously.

... She considered herself too prude a thinker to even flirt with determination.

... uneasy in moments of prolonged intimacy, like staying awake after taking NyQuil, she’d manage to push herself past sensory adaption to the body, finding herself wildly aware of its existence and her boredom, the peace that inspires anxiety; she

grabbed a car at 4 in the morning and called her long-distance girlfriend, waking her up to tell her she was lonely.

For the next few weeks she'd go on a cleanse, short of liquid diets and witch hazel. Cut out caffeine, chocolate, most dairy products. She'd check the mirror every four hours, ignoring her mother's calls, and trying apple cider vinegar to stop the inflammation, deciding, finally, to tell her girlfriend how he came inside her the night they had Thai food and drank two bottles of wine. Still later, she'd give in and order two bottles of witch hazel extract from Amazon, hoping to clear up her skin before the weekend.

She was nervous, too, that she'd felt relief at the possibility of change and so she thought of other ways to change, about going to church or packing up her books, re-evaluating the powers of laughter, epicureanism, the years of study and self-imposed regulation ... she exchanged her principles for popular wisdom: Make everyone like you. Enjoy yourself ruthlessly. Do not interrupt a good bottle of wine with a story about sexual assault.

Her mother and sister decided to visit. The night before, she'd dreamt she was in a plane crash. Her mother sat in the front row next to a child. She ran to the child when she felt the plane start to fall, and as she lifted up the lithe body, she turned to her dying mother, who looked at her, and said, "I knew you never loved me." She turned and jumped from the plane just as her mother died, and then the child ... They called to tell her they were parking. She nodded, and hung up. The three of them ate dinner at a Georgian restaurant and talked about their upcoming trip to Spain.

... She felt distracted again, unable to produce articles, the right words, "the"s and "a"s slipping into the gaps between parallel lines of thought. She thought in saccades, stringing thoughts like how her eyes string objects to keep the room whole. She grew anxious because of it. Years going by and nothing changing. It began sometime in college, and at first, she went to see an

ophthalmologist, explaining that her sight was incomplete or that the image was always blurred ...

She realized that she had tried to change with each passing year and made that, too, a static state; the stricture of impulse pushing her frictionless ... frustrated by her incontinence of imagination, she decided to busy her mind with sleep and easy T.V. ...