

THE
ARCHIVIST'S LOG OF
INTERPERSONAL EXPERIMENTS



STEPHANIE ANDERSON



The Archivist's Log of Interpersonal Experiments

Loving the Astronaut

You always return with your epidermis sheening silver. Must you insist on eating ice-cream in bed? It's too much for my medium-sized American heart.

Thumb-Wrestling the Bureaucrat

The only time I've won at sport, ever. We writhe, wince and I take home the dimes. He simply has no head for the small joust.

Locating the Cartographer's Apprentice

I ducked into the store for some smokes; you disappeared. I understand you found and followed a fault-line—but this uncharted territory's too vast for your *ad hoc* navigation.

Admiring the Ditch-Digger

He jack-hammers all day, refusing to explain the holes. Even sleeping, I hear him sifting in the back yard. *For unearthing fossils? Burying records?* My mute simply rinses his hands—oh, his hands!

Excising the Exterminator

Some creepers can't be poisoned;
some crawlers scuttle under sills.
Sir, please evacuate your sprays.
I have my own brand of advantage.

Drinking with the Francophile

You always order the *Côtes du Rhône*,
sniffing at my flute of sparkling wine.
What's so bad about Napa? *Mon Dieu*
your fantasies are over-seas.

Vacationing with the Glassblower

I should've known when I found lathes
in the trunk. While I scan the turf
for sharks he wanders the shore
in cover-alls, filling small vials, lighting fires.

Abetting the Headhunter

I thought soul-matter would be less opaque.
He labels the tannins, teaches me to shrink—
but won't let me track or trap. He says the community
is at stake. In bed I burrow under several pillows.

Cobabiting with the Ichthyologist

First, just a bluegill. Then some shiners.
Next a darting quillback. But honey,
I draw the line at the African lungfish
and I never really wanted the waterbed.

Handling the Juggler

He is liable to start without warning.
Pick your public appearances carefully.
Do not over-excite. Scheduled practice
required. (Rhythm and frequency may vary.)

Bickering with the Kiln-Stoker

Fine, I know nothing of real heat
and my clothes aren't covered
in coal-dust.

But sometimes a girl
needs to amble in the snow alone.

Kissing the Literalist

No, I didn't mean
dance or *give-take*.
I meant *green apple*.
I meant *lighted window*.

Riding Sidecar with the Motorcyclist

It's not really the leather, though I admit
it helps. Neither is it chrome. I purr
next to this '74 Honda, arms stiff,
cheeks rouged and wind-whipped.

Seducing the Naturalist

No polish on these toes,
no plucked brows here.

Think of me as your thistle,
worry-lined and tangled.

Questioning the Occultist

But what of my expected birth date versus
the actual hour? And where Orion emerged?
At first transmuting was enough . . . Now
my eyes are not sated by sparkling things.

Missing the Painter

You left your linseed and raw umber;
a smear of ultramarine on the sink's drain.
Each morning I frame the scene and prep
the canvas. But your brush is gone for good.

Rebuffing the Quarterback

What did you expect, some huddle
in the game-plan? A pass and a down?
Sorry sir, this ain't no dynasty—I'll watch
but never play.

Stop calling me.

Star-Gazing with the Radiologist

He places the radiometer and readies his
angstroms. *Bodies are always being penetrated,*
he explains. *By solar, direct or obscure?* I ask.
What about gammas releasing? And diffusion?

Pleading with the Spelunker

Damn it. Put on your helmet and wetsuit,
agoraphobe. Will our anxieties
ever align? I claw inside the paint shed,
light-headed and nerved as you descend.

Leaving the Telepath

It's no longer a relief,
the unspoken. Every moment
my guilt engorges. Your wary
eyes are wounded foxes.

Fantasizing about the Ukulele Player

Of course his fingers are lithe.
What really slays me, though,
are his heel-taps; the way he signals
me to thwack the tambourine.

Waltzing with the Visionary

When he stumbles, one can be sure
that he has momentarily left our
circle of senses. It must be tiring.
I hold up his head until he recovers.

Exploring with the Welder

You're always seeking out bridges, examining
 how ore is made molten and hinged.
Tenuous arching makes me tense. I'd like
 to lie in a field—see no steel in the sky.

Camping with the Xenophobe

After all this cacophony
and crowd—string of articulation
and character—I needed some
hermitage.

Is he even here?

Lying to the Yodeler

Yes, the ski-lift enhances
your polished hollers.
Again, please,
crescendo again.

Retiring with the Zookeeper

Back-to-back, his bear-musk lulls
and knits together sleep. Cradles
my mind's circus. Tent me here
awhile, in the shadow of his shoulder.

About the Author

Stephanie Anderson enjoys most activities that leave her air or water-borne. She is the author of the chapbook *In the Particular Particular* (New Michigan Press, autumn 2006).

The phrase "medium-sized American heart" in "Loving the Astronaut" is taken from a National song called "Looking for Astronauts."

Selections from *The Archivist's Log of Interpersonal Experiments* have previously appeared in *Painted Bride Quarterly*.

Colophon

The Archivist's Log of Interpersonal Experiments was published in an edition of 50 copies in July 2006.

Text is in Garamond. Cover titles in Brela.

Paper is Pegasus Digital.

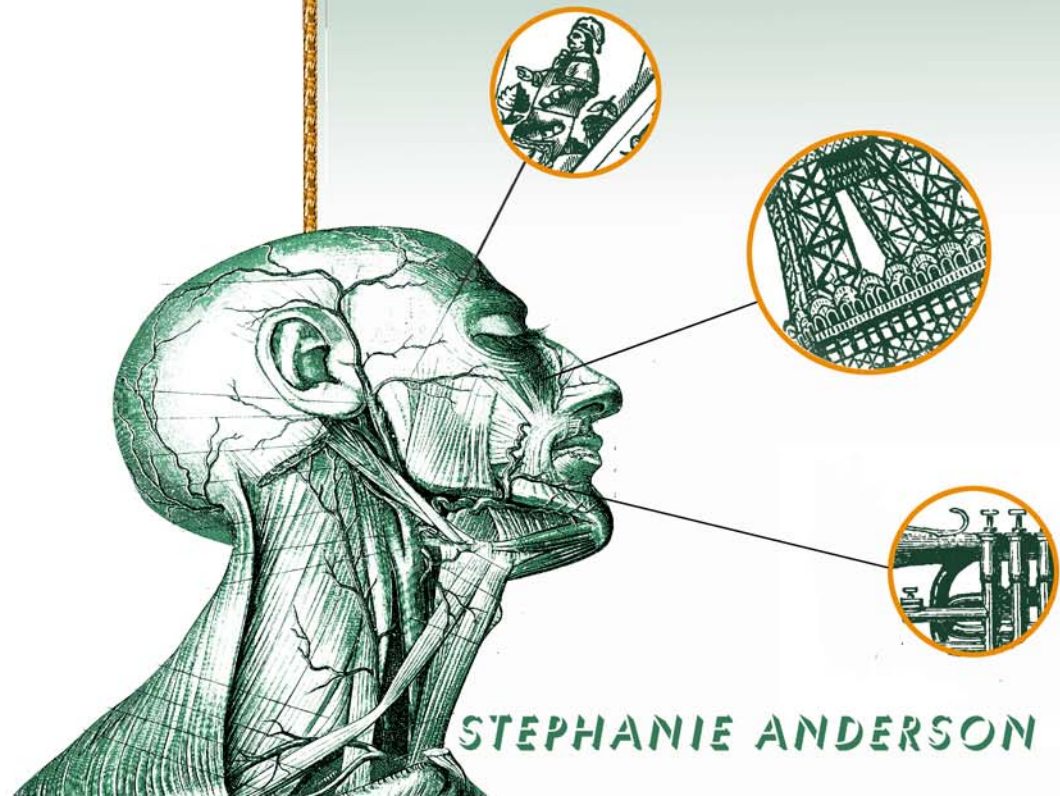
BIG GAME BOOKS
Washington, D.C.

TINY SIDE #3



BIG GAME BOOKS

THE
ARCHIVIST'S LOG OF
INTERPERSONAL EXPERIMENTS



STEPHANIE ANDERSON