



Reliquary

A reliquary is a gilded, be-jeweled shrine; a portable temple to be carried through the streets on a saint's given feast day. The female body is also a temple—of pleasure and of vice—expected to bear the constant weight of the patriarchy's expectations. Dolls are tiny incorruptible saints; palatable toys that don't offend gentle sensibilities yet fetishize women and rely on traditional ideas of beauty.

The female saints in this show—Agatha, Juliana, Joan, Lucy, Mary—all experienced corporeal violence for their faith. They've been beheaded, tortured, silenced, had their eyes gouged out, and their breasts cut off for not bowing to the will of men.

This show began with a deep question. What does it mean to have faith? I'm used to questioning myself and art making and writing is a way to understand myself more deeply. I'd reconnected with my high school friend Kathleen—a progressive Catholic—after nearly 30 years and confessed to her I had no patron saint. I asked for her help in choosing one. The Marys (the Virgin and the Magdalene) besotted us both and we set out on quest to find them, determined to visit Italy in search of them. For this show, she's drawn tiny portraits of her favorite saints and designed the stained glass.

Faith to me is about constant questioning: What does it mean to find peace when our very existence is a battlefield? How do we maintain faith when history bends its hard body against us?

As it was with The Gospel of Mary, men's voices drown out women's. In reading the apocryphal stories of Mary Magdalene, I can't stop thinking about our modern struggles such as #metoo, #believewomen, #whyididntreport #cassandra. I aim to celebrate the humanity of these female saints and rewrite bedazzled versions of their stories.

Amen.



Saint Juliana (Calm Down)

A.D. 304--Nicomedia, Italy

Dear Diary:

My friends and I overheard the pagan emperors playing “Fuck Marry Kill” in the tavern as we crouched below the window. We didn’t have TV back in the third century so these were “very boring times.”

“Fuck Christ,” said the bearded one with brown teeth.

“Marry Mary,” said the young one laughing at his stupid joke.

“Kill them all,” said my fiancé.

These were bad times to be 14, a virgin, headstrong, and secretly Christian.

I refused to marry that pagan douche lord, especially because my father demanded I do so. “Screweth thou, Dad” I screamed. “I’m already baptized,” I yelled and slammed my bedroom door. “There’s no way I’m marrying that ape, Eleusius.”

Dad was super pissed. I’d never seen him so angry. He kicked down my door. Mother screamed and screamed. He beat me hard about my abdomen and my breasts and dragged me by the hair to Eleusius’ door.

Eleusius was drinking with his guy friends and seemed angry at being interrupted. I'll never forget that look in his eyes after I spat on him. Blind rage. He tied my arms and dragged me naked behind his horse through the hard-packed dirt streets. The gravel sanded the flesh from my buttocks after a quarter mile. I must have passed out from shock because the next thing I know I'm being strung up in the town square and my fiancé is holding a red-hot piece of steel close to my face before touching it to the fleshy part of my cheek. My skin melted off in sheets when he held it to my nose. It hurt like hell, but I smized at him with my best "fuck off" eyes.

"At the resurrection of the righteous, there won't exist burnings and wounds but only the soul," I said. "I prefer to have now the wounds of the body which are temporary, rather than the wounds of the soul which torture eternal."

Then he got insanely angry, called me a "Righteous bitch," and lopped off my head.

Thousands watched my torture and decapitation. The lookie-loos always turn out for a good ol' beheading, don't they? I think you guys call this going viral, don't you? Afterwards, nearly 700 people crowded into the local church for confession only to have their heads lopped off too because pagans. It was a bloodbath. I think you guys call it "getting canceled" now, right?

Soon after he beheaded me, Eleusius went to sea with his dudebros. None of them knew how to navigate a ship because they were drunk all the time, so they wrecked it on an island. Eleusius was so fat a lion surprised him during his nap, tearing his bloated stomach like a piñata and sending his guts bursting across the sand. His friends memorialized him by calling him The Tiger King because they didn't know the difference between a lion and a tiger.

Anyway, it's cool to look back on things and see how far women have come since the 300s. It's great to see women not getting shot by cops in their homes just for opening the door; or beaten to within an inch of their lives for wanting to go to school; or being killed by their partners; or bleeding out and dying from childbirth. Hashtag irony.

Bumble Profile

Feast Day: February 16

Zodiac Sign: Scorpio

Patron Saint: Sickness

One surprising thing about you: I have a winged devil I lead around by a chain

Favorite thing to do: Endure various tortures and fight dragons

Favorite Song: Julianna Calm Down (The Chicks, 2020)



The Gospel of Mary MAGAdalene

Oh, for Christ's sake will you look how the GOP is using me again for their piteous shame game? Can they *still* not handle the idea of the Madonna AND the whore? The concepts are *not* mutually exclusive.

Look at the evil they're holding up as a Madonna right now. Amy Coney Barrett? Well, I guess a handmaid on the Supreme Court next to those rapists makes sense in a perverted way, doesn't it? Kelly Anne Conway? Even her daughter is tweeting about what a terrible person she is. Ivanka? Meet your first female President if you American's can't vote her rapist father out and face your own damn racism.

I see things are largely the same here in the 21st Century. Who is this President who seems to love the word "pussy" yet has no idea what to actually do with one? Even his wife recoils at his touch and some days she looks like she's been wandering in the desert for years too. Too bad it hasn't taught her soul-less self a thing. The new Messiah, my ass! I'm here to tell you I'd never wash that man's feet with my hair.

Seriously, white women get your shit together.

Beware of men who sanctify motherhood. A mother with a baby is both a shield and a cudgel to these so-called men who claim to protect babies, while ripping them from their mothers and caging them like Harlow's Monkeys. Beware of Amy Coney Barrett and Ivanka, for they are falsehood and evil wrapped in outwardly appealing packages.

Back when I was around on earth, I wrote a book called *The Gospel of Mary*. Up here (even though the Virgin and Saint John tell me not too) I read the comments on Amazon sometimes and get angry. I was in the room, you see. I was at the table with Jesus. At his crucifixion. At his tomb. He told me things and I wrote them down. We trusted and loved each other. He kissed me on the _____. For that, they still call me a whore in the comments.

At first I thought Andrew and Peter were the decent ones: the #notallmen ones. I mean, at least they asked me what I thought about things. I know, I know, it's a very low bar. Women have been telling men hard truths every day and still they refuse to believe us.

"Say what you think concerning what she said," said Andrew. "For I do not believe that the Savior said this. For certainly these teachings are of other ideas."

Turns out brothers stick together. Bros before hoes, as the saying goes.

"... she discourses many times..." said Peter. *"Did he then speak secretly with a woman, in preference to us, and not openly?"* Peter said. *"Are we to turn back and all listen to her? Did he prefer her to us?"*

Peter was pretty angry that Jesus told me these things because I was a woman *"... for women are not worthy of life."* Peter deserved a pants-down spanking. To think, his is the rock they built the church upon.

My gospel is an erasure poem that begins; *"... Will the matter then be destroyed or not?"* We all know how it ends.

I hear you're still not listening to us. You should really read more books by women.

Reading List:

A Vindication of the Rights of Women, Mary Wollstonecraft

Sister Outsider, Audre Lorde

Feminism is for Everybody, Bell Hooks

We Should All Be Feminists, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Men Explain Things to Me, Rebecca Solnit

PS: If you replace one 'n' with a 'g' you get singer and not sinner. Imagine! I was one letter away from being Stevie Nicks.



Blind Faith
St. Lucy

I see you clearly. I do.

The eye is the lamp of the body. I carry mine everywhere, which means I can shine it into some very dark places. I've seen so many things I can't unsee.

I'm watching over you, lovely girl.

Do not listen to what men say. Watch their actions. Are they helpers or hoarders? Greed has a stink to it.

Men labeled me a fallen woman, but I didn't fall. I was pushed. I was dragged through the streets by teams of oxen. I was tortured. Men threw me into a brothel because they thought it would shame and humiliate me. What they'll never see is their own hypocrisy. But we see it clearly don't we, sisters?

There's a phrase I'm sure you've heard. "Men are afraid women will laugh at them, women are afraid men will kill them." We laughed behind their backs, yet they killed us anyway after using our bodies.

The irony is that what killed me made us stronger.

We bonded in that brothel. No shame: only sisterhood.

"If now, against my will, you cause me to be polluted, a twofold purity will be gloriously imputed to me. You cannot bend my will to your purpose; whatever you do to my body, that cannot happen to me."

I will be your eyes, my dear.

I will be your light through this winter of darkness.

Let our will be unbent forever.

Let me see the things you cannot yet see.



The Story of Joan of Arc in Emojis







**Transcript of the Interrogation of Agatha of Sicily
The Year of our Lord 251**

JUDGE Quintianus: This morning we continue our hearing on the matter of Agatha vs. Quintianus, Governor of Sicily. We will hear from two witnesses, Agatha of Sicily and Quintianus, an important man who wants to marry her.

Thanks, of course, to both Agatha and Quintianus for accepting our committee's invitation to testify and also thank them for their volunteering to testify before we even invited.

JUDGE Q: Both Agatha and Quintianus have been through a terrible couple weeks. They and their families have received vile threats. What they have endured ought to be considered by all of us as unacceptable and a poor reflection on the state of civility in our democracy. So I want to apologize to you both for the way you've been treated. And I intend, hopefully, for today's hearing to be safe, comfortable and dignified for both of our witnesses. I hope my colleagues will join me in this effort of a show of civility. With that said, I lament that this hearing — how this hearing has come about.

JUDGE Q: State your name and age for the court

My name is Agatha. I am 15 years old from a noble family.

JUDGE Q: What is the nature of your crime?:

I am a virgin. I have promised myself to God, but you desire my body in marriage and my wealth in your pockets.

I have no interest in marrying you and I would also like pockets in all my dresses.

JUDGE Q: What did you have in your possession when the police stopped you?

Faith. I had faith in my possession and also my virginity

JUDGE Q: Am I to understand that you will be representing yourself in these proceedings?

Yes, your honor.

JUDGE Q: If you have a prepared statement, read it now.

Agatha: You moved on me and failed. You did try to fuck me. You moved on me like a bitch, but you couldn't get there. You said, "You've got the big phony tits and everything. You've totally changed your look."

You could have used some Tic Tacs. You said you could do anything. Then you tried to grab me by the pussy.

JUDGE Q: I order you to be seated.

[Since Quintianus is acting as the judge, he is represented by four lawyers, including his head lawyer, Rudy Guiliani]

JUDGE Q: Please state your name and age for the court:

Guiliani: Your name is Quintianus, Governor of Sicily. You're 45 years old.

JUDGE Q: What is the nature of my crime?

Guiliani: Your honor, my client pleads the fifth.

JUDGE Q: State for the court how this woman is to blame for my crimes.

Giuliani: Boobs. Pussy. Boobs. Pussy. Boobs. Pussy. Boobs. Pussy. Boobs. Pussy.
Boobs. Pussy. Tits. Ass. Tits. Ass. Tits. Ass. Tits. Ass. Tits. Ass. Tits. Ass. Tits. Ass.

JUDGE Q: State her crimes.

Giuliani: Agatha. Your crimes include virginity, piety to God as a Christian, and rejecting Quintanius' proposal of marriage.

JUDGE Q: Agatha, how do you plead.

Agatha: Not guilty.

JUDGE Q: You are sentenced to the following punishments:

To be repeatedly raped in a brothel
To be stretched on a rack
To be torn with iron hooks
To be burned with torches
To be whipped
To have your breasts cut off with pincers
To burn on a bed of coals

JUDGE Q: Do you have any words you would like to enter into the court record? If so state them now:

Agatha: *"Cruel man, have you forgotten your mother and the breast that nourished you, that you dare to mutilate me this way?"*

Also, fuck you.

* this transcript follows the form and borrows some of the direct verbiage from the [transcript of the Brett Kavanaugh and Dr. Christine Blasey Ford hearings](#).