

# Joanna Newsom, Monkey and Bear

Down in the green hay  
Where monkey and bear usually lay  
They woke from a stable-boy's cry  
He said; someone come quick!  
The horses got loose, got grass-sick!  
They'll founder! Fain, they'll die  
What is now known by the sorrel and the roan?  
By the chestnut, and the bay, and the gelding grey?  
It is: stay by the gate you are given  
And remain in your place, for your season  
And had the overfed dead but listened  
To that high-fence, horse-sense, wisdom...  
Did you hear that, Bear? Said monkey  
We'll get out of here, fair and square  
They've left the gate open wide!  
So  
My bride  
Here is my hand, where is your paw?  
Try and understand my plan, Ursala  
My heart is a furnace  
Full of love that's just, and earnest  
Now; you know that we must unlearn this  
Allegiance to a life of service  
And no longer answer to that heartless  
Hay-monger, nor be his accomplice  
(that charlatan, with artless hustling!)  
But; Ursala, we've got to eat something  
And earn our keep, while still within  
The borders of the land that man has girded  
(all double-bolted and tight-fisted!)  
Until we reach the open country  
A-steeped in milk and honey  
Will you keep your fancy clothes on, for me?  
Can you bear a little longer to wear that leash?  
My love, I swear by the air I breathe:  
Sooner or later, you'll bare your teeth  
But for now, just dance, darling  
C'mon, will you dance, my darling?  
Darling, there's a place for us  
Can we go, before I turn to dust?  
Oh my darling, there's a place for us  
Oh darling  
C'mon will you dance, my darling?  
Oh, the hills are groaning with excess  
Like a table ceaselessly being set  
Oh my darling, we will get there yet  
They trooped past the guards,  
Past the coops, and the fields, and the farmyards  
All night, till finally:  
The space they gained grew  
Much farther than the stone that bear threw  
To mark where they'd stop for tea  
But walk a little faster  
And don't look backwards  
Your feast is to the East, which lies a little past the pasture  
When the blackbirds hear tea whistling, they rise and clap  
And their applause caws the kettle black  
And we can't have none of that!  
Move along, Bear; there, there; that's that  
Though cast in plaster  
Our Ursala's heart beat faster  
Than monkey's ever will  
But still;  
They have got to pay the bills

Hadn't they?  
That is what the monkey'd say  
So, with the courage of a clown, or a cur  
Or a kite, jerking tight at its tether  
In her dun-brown gown of fur  
And her jerkin' of swansdown and leather  
Bear would sway on her hind legs;  
The organ would grind dregs of song, for the pleasure  
Of the children, who'd shriek  
Throwing coins at her feet  
Then recoiling in terror  
Sing, dance, darling  
C'mon, will you dance, my darling?  
Oh darling, there's a place for us  
Can we go, before I turn to dust?  
Oh my darling, there's a place for us  
Oh darling  
C'mon, will you dance, my darling?  
You keep your eyes fixed on the highest hill  
Where you'll ever-after eat your fill  
Oh my darling, dear, mine  
If you dance  
Dance, darling, and I love you still  
Deep in the night  
Shone a weak and miserly light  
Where the monkey shouldered his lamp  
Someone had told him  
The bear had been wandering  
A fair piece away from where they were camped  
Someone had told him  
The bear'd been sneaking away  
To the seaside caverns, to bathe  
And the thought troubled the monkey  
For he was afraid of spelunking down in those caves  
Also afraid what the village people would say  
If they saw the bear in that state;  
Lolling and splashing obscenely  
Well, it seemed irrational, really; washing that face  
Washing that matted and flea-bit pelt  
In some sea-spit-shine, old kelp dripping with brine  
But monkey just laughed, and he muttered;  
When she comes back, Ursula will be bursting with pride  
Till I jump up!  
Saying: you've been rolling in muck!  
Saying: you smell of garbage and grime!  
But far out  
Far out  
By now  
By now  
Far out, by now, Bear ploughed  
'Cause she would not drown:  
First the outside-legs of the bear  
Up and fell down, in the water, like knobby garters  
Then the outside-arms of the bear  
Fell off, as easy as if sloughed from boiled tomatoes  
Low'red in a genteel curtsy  
Bear shed the mantle of her diluvian shoulders;  
And, with a sigh,  
She allowed the burden of belly to drop like an apron full of boulders  
If you could hold up her threadbare  
Coat to the light where it's worn translucent in places  
You'd see spots where  
Almost every night of the year Bear had been mending suspending that baseness  
Now her coat drags through the water  
Bagging, with a life's-worth of hunger, limitless minnows;

In the magnetic embrace  
Balletic and glacial of Bear's insatiable shadow;  
Left there!  
Left there!  
When Bear left Bear  
Left there!  
Left there!  
When Bear stepped clear of Bear  
Sooner or later you'll bury your teeth