

Tim Minchin, Storm

Inner North London, top floor flat
All white walls, white carpet, white cat
Rice paper partitions
Modern art and ambition
The host's a physician
Bright bloke, has his own practice
His girlfriend's an actress
An old mate of ours from home
And they're always great fun
So to dinner we've come

The fifth guest is an unknown
The hosts have just thrown
Us together for a favour
Cause this girl's just arrived from Australia
And has moved to North London
And she's the sister of someone
Or has some connection

As we make introductions
I'm struck by her beauty
She's irrefutably fair
With dark eyes and dark hair
But as she sits
I admit I'm a little bit wary
Because I notice the tip of the wing of a fairy
Tattooed on that popular area
Just above the derrière
And when she says "I'm Sagittarian"
I confess a pigeonhole starts to form
And is immediately filled with pigeon
When she says her name is Storm

Conversation is initially bright and lighthearted
But it's not long before Storm gets started:
"You can't know anything
Knowledge is merely opinion"
She opines, over her Cabernet Sauvignon
Vis-à-vis
Some unhippily
Empirical comment made by me

"Not a good start", I think
We're only on pre-dinner drinks
And across the room, my wife
Widens her eyes
Silently begs me: "Be nice"
A matrimonial warning
Not worth ignoring
So I resist the urge to ask Storm
Whether knowledge is so loose-weave
Of a morning
When deciding whether to leave
Her apartment by the front door
Or the window on her second floor

The food is delicious and Storm
Whilst avoiding all meat
Happily sits and eats
While the good doctor slightly pissedly
Holds court on some anachronistic aspect of medical history
When Storm suddenly insists:
"But the human body is a mystery!
Science just falls in a hole

When it tries to explain the nature of the soul"

My hostess throws me a glance
She, like my wife, knows there's a chance
That I'll be off on one of my rare but fun rants
But I shan't, my lips are sealed
I just want to enjoy the meal
And although Storm is starting to get my goat
I have no intention of rocking the boat
Although it's becoming a bit of a wrestle
Because - like her meteorological namesake
Storm has no such concerns for our vessel:

"Pharmaceutical companies are the enemy
They promote drug dependency
At the cost of the natural remedies
That are all our bodies need
They are immoral and driven by greed
Why take drugs
When herbs can solve it?
Why use chemicals
When homeopathic solvents
Can resolve it?
I think it's time we all return to live
With natural medical alternatives"

And try as I like
A small crack appears
In my diplomacy dyke
"By definition," I begin
"Alternative Medicine," I continue
"Has either not been proved to work
Or been proved not to work
Do you know what they call alternative medicine
That's been proved to work?
Medicine"

"So you don't believe
In any natural remedies?"

"On the contrary, Storm; actually:
Before I came to tea
I took a remedy
Derived from the bark of a willow tree
A painkiller that's virtually side-effect free
It's got a weird name
Darling, what was it again?
Maspirin?
Baspirin?
Oh yes, aspirin!
Which I paid about a buck for
Down at the local drugstore"

The debate briefly abates
As my hosts collect plates
But when they return with desserts
Storm pertly asserts

"Shakespeare said it first:
There are more things in heaven and earth
Than exist in your philosophy
Science is just how we're trained to look at reality
It doesn't explain love or spirituality
How does science explain psychics?
Auras, the afterlife, the power of prayer?"

I'm becoming aware
That I'm staring
I'm like a rabbit suddenly trapped
In the blinding headlights of vacuous crap
Maybe it's the Hamlet she just misquoted
Or the fifth glass of wine I just quaffed
But my diplomacy dyke groans
And the arsehole held back by its stones
Can be held back no more:

"Look, Storm, sorry, I don't mean to bore ya
But there's no such thing as an aura!
Reading auras is like reading minds
Or tea leaves, or star signs, or meridian lines
These people aren't plying a skill
They're either lying or mentally ill!
Same goes for people who claim they can hear God's demands
Or spiritual healers who think they've got magic hands

"By the way
Why do we think it's okay
For people to pretend they can talk to the dead?
Isn't that totally fucked in the head
Lying to some crying woman whose child has died
And telling her you're in touch with the other side?
I think that's fundamentally sick
Do we need to clarify here that there's no such thing as a psychic?

"What, are we fucking two?
Do we actually think that Horton heard a Who?
Do we still believe that Santa brings us gifts?
That Michael Jackson didn't have facelifts?
Are we still so stunned by circus tricks
That we think that the dead would
Wanna talk to pricks
Like John Edward?"

Storm, to her credit, despite my derision
Keeps firing off clichés with startling precision
Like a sniper using bollocks for ammunition

"You're so sure of your position
But you're just closed-minded
I think you'll find
That your faith in science and tests
Is just as blind
As the faith of any fundamentalist"

"Wow, that's a good point, let me think for a bit...
Oh wait, my mistake, that's absolute bullshit
Science adjusts its views based on what's observed
Faith is the denial of observation so that belief can be preserved
If you show me that, say, homeopathy works
Then I will change my mind
I will spin on a fucking dime
I'll be as embarrassed as hell
Yet I will run through the streets yelling
'It's a miracle! Take physics and bin it!
Water has memory!
And whilst its memory of a long lost drop of onion juice seems infinite
It somehow forgets all the poo it's had in it!

"You show me that it works and how it works
And when I've recovered from the shock

I will take a compass and carve 'Fancy That' on the side of my cock!"

Everyone is just staring now
But I'm pretty pissed and I've dug this far down
So I figure, in for a penny, in for a pound:

"Life is full of mysteries, yeah
But there are answers out there
And they won't be found
By people sitting around
Looking serious
And saying 'Isn't life mysterious?'
Let's sit here and hope
Let's call up the fucking Pope
Let's go watch Oprah
Interview Deepak Chopra

"If you wanna watch telly, you should watch Scooby Doo
That show was so cool
Because every time there was a church with a ghoul
Or a ghost in a school
They looked beneath the mask and what was inside?
The fucking janitor or the dude who ran the waterslide
Because throughout history
Every mystery
Ever solved has turned out to be
Not magic

"Does the idea that there might be knowledge
Frighten you?
Does the idea that one afternoon
On Wiki-fucking-pedia might enlighten you
Frighten you?
Does the notion that there may not be a supernatural
So blow your hippy noodle
That you would rather just stand in the fog
Of your inability to Google?

"Isn't this enough?
Just this world?

"Just this beautiful, complex
Wonderfully unfathomable, natural world?
How does it so fail to hold our attention
That we have to diminish it with the invention
Of cheap, man-made myths and monsters?
If you're so into your Shakespeare
Lend me your ear:
To gild refined gold, to paint the lily
To throw perfume on the violet is just fucking silly
Or something like that
Or what about Satchmo?!
I see trees of green
Red roses too
And fine, if you wish to
Glorify Krishna and Vishnu
In a post-colonial, condescending
Bottled-up and labeled kind of way
Then whatever, that's okay
But here's what gives me a hard-on:
I am a tiny, insignificant, ignorant bit of carbon
I have one life, and it is short
And unimportant
But thanks to recent scientific advances
I get to live twice as long

As my great great great great uncles and aunts
Twice as long to live this life of mine
Twice as long to love this wife of mine
Twice as many years of friends and wine
Of sharing curries and getting shitty
At good-looking hippies
With fairies on their spines
And butterflies on their titties

"And if perchance I have offended
Think but this and all is mended:
We'd as well be 10 minutes back in time
For all the chance you'll change your mind"