

## **Elsie's Attendant**

Calls this meeting  
To order, expects  
Our approval of  
The minutes; yes  
We voted, she  
Reminds us:  
Save the Cow!  
“The Cow is  
A sacred being,”  
She reads. As  
Per usual some-  
One objects: “I  
Think you said,  
‘Scared’: the cow  
Is a *scared* being.”  
Ahem. *It's a matter  
Of emphasis?* “My  
Therapist,” Elsie  
(Who's chairing)  
Confides, at this  
Juncture, “thinks  
I'm just not cut  
Out for this job!”  
None of us look  
At each other—  
We have no way  
Of knowing if she's  
Just, as they say,  
Taking the piss.  
Should we worry?  
“Sacred, scared,  
Scarred,” her bright  
Diarymaid titters,  
“*Being, peeing*...—  
What's the diff?”

## She Likes to Pee

Right in my yawp, insists  
I mime a middle-of-  
The-AZ-desert-thirst while  
Somehow spluttering  
Out the magic words: “O  
Golden guarantee of purity  
And freshness!” Cough. I  
Can do it (I was trained to),  
Because I have to, but  
I’ve hit a wall with the new  
Phrase she says she wants  
To hear us saying: “‘It’s  
Holy!’” That’s silly, I said,  
And, *Nope*. Then I refused  
To hold the meeting she  
Said I had to call, the one  
Where she and her favorite  
Could, as they said, “just  
Watch.” *Nope*. If I have to  
Suck up what she calls  
Her “capacity for a real  
Synthesis of others’  
Ideas,” if I have to act  
As if this is what ‘Building  
Consensus’ looks like,  
I can, of course (I thought  
I proved I can swallow  
Almost anything), but  
Lately I gag on the sour  
Mess she makes of what-  
Ever it is she takes in  
To squirt out. “‘How I  
Lost My Job But Kept  
My Self-Respect?’” This  
Isn’t that essay! *Tell you  
What*, I wish I’d said,  
*We’ll make a film  
For your delight, O  
Goddess, and put it  
Up on the web so  
Your fame spreads  
Farther even than  
Than this puddle:  
Farther even than*

*This puddle's reek.*

## The Golden Trickle

Down theory            Caught  
In a beaker            *full of the warm*  
*South* for analysis    another  
Drug

Test part of the endless background  
Check on-

Going collection        of doubts  
Wet "truth" is mostly

An excuse to slam the seat  
Back down on  
The head *lid*

Darling not *seat*

See she goes on  
Evoking hope            in spurts  
The promise

*You will get yours*

Contracts

And the leak

We'll inherit this mirth

## But

Elsie blinks her eyes to keep the tears back,  
“But...” she sighs, “But I stand for something  
Really good! I stand for freshness and purity  
And health and family values and happiness  
And innocence—what kind of sick  
Monster are you if you...don't *like* me?”  
Her head, the head I'm talking at, hangs  
In its circlet of flowers—at once bridal  
And funereal—on the plastic bottle (with  
Its sell-by date) like a hunting trophy;  
Maybe also like the unforgiving mirror  
In Walt Disney's *Snow White*. I'm not,  
Honestly, the Freshest of Them All  
Myself these days. *L see* I say, don't *cry*...

## **The Picture of Radical Doubt in the Dairy Industry**

(Nondisclosure Agreement)

Are there things I can't say here ways I can't say the things we've agreed there's no way to say are there tears in your eyes as you shush me the better to hear the words "land of the free / home of the brave" insisting again on your version as you force me to stand with one hand held over as if protecting my heart as you pull down the pale fog of what you say are "feelings" as you call in the suits the soldiers imagine they can both die for and still live to become someday hush I know you want me to listen first to you and then to this silence without me is it better it must be better everyone will be so free and brave if I just shut up and loving so loving so the hard gaze below the dark brim of the helmet behind the transparent riot shield will soften and glow to resemble the eyes of the goddess Elsie in all of her incarnations nude and laughing urging us all to indulge ourselves healthy and happy until there is nothing but the sound of joyful cows singing land of the beeves home of the saved everyone almost crying with happiness around their greasy burgers sniffing into the wadded paper napkins slurping cold milkshakes or soda and crying with love for the cows and the country where everything is so wonderful all the time except there's a lot—but it's treatable, absolutely—of depression not to mention pain but maybe if I just shut the fuck up bitch please shush quiet I said quiet stop talking or I will make you stop talking it will all be great again just like it was before *immediately*

