

## DEAR SAUL WILLIAMS

By Marya Sea Kaminski

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### *Introduction*

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Marya Sea Kaminski and I am a work in progress.

Before I begin tonight, I want to let you know that I only came here for two reasons : to chew bubblegum and to kick some ass. And I’m all outta bubble gum.

No, seriously folks, I want you to know that usually when I find myself in a room full of people such as yourselves

with some words to say out loud,

I try to serve up equal parts humor and bitter truth.

But I must tell you my friends,

these have been some dark days

I’ve been making my way through.

So, nothing I have to say to you

is all that funny.

So, in homage to the gods of balance and joy,

I thought I’d start with a little joke:

What did the goldfish say when she swam into the brick wall?

Dam!

Thank you, thank you. Tip your barista.  
Alright folks, calm down now.

I wrote this piece last December  
after seeing Saul Williams perform downtown at Chop Suey.  
Anybody else catch that show?  
Anyways. That was about two months after my little brother committed suicide.  
And after Saul inspired me with all of his truth and philosophy,  
I went home and wrote him a letter.  
This is that.

*Dear Saul Williams*

dear saul williams  
in the name of  
one love  
and a pot of tea  
and the part of me  
longing to speak a truth  
that i cannot tell  
you said tonight  
only those who believe in death shall die  
and that some things must fall  
for others to rise.  
and i am only a pupil.  
with only two eyes.  
in the name of  
me.  
of the i.  
of the ego that must die  
to make way for  
what?  
is my question.  
my quest. young  
but wise.

dear saul williams,  
you've named your book  
a shotgun to the head.  
another  
fucking reminder of my brother  
adam  
and i am  
wrapped up in him  
and in bibles i skim  
job and peter, mary and paul  
i don't fall  
asleep

i weep  
my way into dreams  
that i hope will contain  
a name or a face  
some sort of trace  
of adam  
atom  
the building block of all that matters.  
i scatter  
vague memories  
and insist THERE MUST BE A REASON.

i try to recollect the name  
of one more degenerate  
who'll bum me one more last cigarette  
while i live  
to regret  
all the years i have spent  
indulging in these soft sciences  
while my days get harder  
and harder and harder  
i've been having lungs  
full of RAGE  
tightly wound mercurial  
punctuated with small, dull  
headaches  
violent tendencies traced  
to no consistent motive  
until some afternoon  
softly calls me  
bitch.  
asking, why so mad?  
what's you itch?  
and then it blows in.  
sad. ness.  
like an all-night thunderstorm.  
the pounding of rain  
on the roof  
leaking through eyes, nose, mouth  
the moisture  
only makes me want to  
sleep more.  
and wake up to some other day  
long ago and far before  
this rich man's war.  
will the world be enough  
to fill his pockets  
or stop him

from pulling said trigger  
on said morning  
without so much as a warning  
said.

while i lay in my bed  
and pull out my hair,  
already dead,  
over a phone call last week  
or a promise to keep or  
a misplaced receipt  
or a thousand heavy fleet  
ing pasts  
that do not last  
and don't add up  
to much of anything at all.

dear saul,  
i put my television in the closet today.  
it was making a mess  
of my character.  
carefuller of what i ingest.  
but i cannot rest  
in all of your truths.  
or all of the youths  
that lined round the block  
to talk  
through you set  
about politics they won't vote on  
quoting authors who wrote on  
pages they'll never read  
hopes they'll never heed.  
a shotgun to the head.  
i heard what you said.  
and i'll hear it again on mtv.

i understand these tales you weave  
the tools you wield  
trying to uncover the sedative shield  
of the local evening news.  
but i can't say that you know.  
or are able to show  
the reason for  
all this blood on my mother's kitchen floor.  
forgive me,  
but there is no precedent for  
death when she invites herself to breakfast  
at eight in the morning  
without so much as a warning.

i'll tell you  
about a shotgun to the head.  
i wasn't even out of bed.  
and i can't believe  
that THE EARTH DIDN'T OPEN AND SWALLOW ME  
recklessly  
that the birds didn't come crashing  
down out of the sky smashing  
windshields and still waters.  
i can't believe tidal waves  
didn't sweep through the midwest.  
i can't believe i could rest  
and breathe easily  
through the tremor of my brother's spirit leaving his body.  
and i can't believe the tide still comes in  
without him  
or his innocence.

i just don't see much sense  
in fighting  
for mighty truths  
that would allow me to lose  
so much everything.

i crown me king  
and perch on my thrown  
away letters and pages and loves.  
i cannot be here  
where i cannot see above  
all this awfulness.

dear saul, tell me this  
have you ever lived through a shotgun to the head?  
and had to crawl back into bed  
knowing  
THERE'S NO GOING BACK  
and there's nobody gonna rack  
the points that you've earned  
or the lessons you'll learn  
overandoverandoverandoverandover  
again.

oh, saul, my friend,  
bring me a prophet.  
and a thumb to stop it.  
the flood  
that's on its way.

i'm already sinking under its weight.  
and i anticipate  
a great escape.  
maybe i'll migrate with the birds  
somewhere warmer.  
or maybe i'll turn a corner  
and disappear  
long gone and outta here  
hitch-hiking backwards  
hoping FAITH might be going my way.