

She is tarred in strips and stripes, a mass without mass massing at the centrifuge of her spongy sodium stromboli. Spin a web, spin a tale, bake a casserole of a whale; but she cannot make bricks without clay, as it goes from the mouth of a Holmes-or-some-other, or perhaps it was the rude carpenter she'd hired to fix the home-or-some-other; who can say.

She is on the ground and she does not know where she is. Fairy lights dazzle the air. Yes, fairy lights, how fairly they ring, ring. They must be fairies. Is a moonsun truly a monsoon, as autocorrect dictates? The phone is already in her hand. Who to call, who to call, who to ring, ring. The desktop beats down on her and her will is stronger than her body and—oh my are those scrapes on your knees, that pain on your cheek—I don't suppose it to be a tear turned red from a trick of the light, my dear. Let's get you home. Who are you? she asks but then they are gone.

Spin a tale? She spins the following: It is hot. She is hungry. The place looks familiar. She is on her knees and then on her feet, wobbling. A complete Chandler wobble of Earth takes around 26,000 years, and she knows this because she read it on Wikipedia, but then she hasn't verified it and you can't really trust what you read nowadays anyway, but anyway the planet wobbles and she wobbles along with it and it's really just a magnificent thing the way a penguin finds their way back to their waddle by waddling, and it really is just a ridiculous thing how a group of penguins is called a waddle, and she waddles and waddles and the cars honk at her like galling geese because she has no respect for the rules of the road. She glances at them through the windshield and recalls the words of the great Jordan: "It takes two to make an accident," and she loves them all because none have proven themselves careless, not in this world that wobbles and waddles.

The world is suspended on the back of a giant penguin (prehistoric, 5 foot 3, see attached) as she makes her way through the front door. Hello, teacher! Tell her, what's her lesson? She can hear the squawking through the floor. The floor function she cannot discern. The desktop is stronger than her will. But, but, if she had just a bit more time...why, she is on the cusp of a unifying theory of penguins. How wonderful! The work of a millennium of the most magnificent minds has now come to pass.

Oh no, oh no, but, but, twilight is here to dash away her equations. Dash it all! A blank slate. The chalkboard runs with rivers of gypsum, black like the tar that covers her, dark like the sleep that snuggles her.

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From: Bob Lob <bob@bhs.org>
To: Lob Bob <lob@bhs.org>
Date: Tue, Mar 10, 2015 at 12:41 PM
Subject: Patient

Lob,

Just got back from lunch. We've got someone in the ER. It's your day off, I know, but can you come in?

Bob

From: Lob Bob <lob@bhs.org>
To: Bob Lob <bob@bhs.org>
Date: Tue, Mar 10, 2015 at 12:42 PM
Subject: Re: Patient

dude i'm gonna be in australia for the next week. can you handle it? or are you really that incompetent without me

From: Bob Lob <bob@bhs.org>
To: Lob Bob <lob@bhs.org>
Date: Tue, Mar 10, 2015 at 12:43 PM
Subject: Re: Re: Patient

I just want to get a second opinion. She's blinking quickly, muttering incoherently, stiff as a rock, and she's got a lump on her head.

From: Lob Bob <lob@bhs.org>
To: Bob Lob <bob@bhs.org>
Date: Tue, Mar 10, 2015 at 12:43 PM
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Patient

it's lupus

From: Bob Lob <bob@bhs.org>
To: Lob Bob <lob@bhs.org>
Date: Tue, Mar 10, 2015 at 12:43 PM
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Patient

Please. Now's not the time.

From: Lob Bob <lob@bhs.org>
To: Bob Lob <bob@bhs.org>
Date: Tue, Mar 10, 2015 at 12:45 PM
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Patient

says the guy who copied my name. jackass anyway, my money's on a seizure make sure she's lying down and has plenty of space around her so that she doesn't hit something if and when she wobbles turn her head so she doesn't choke on her tongue it should pass in a few minutes and get her some ice for the lump. she probably just fell. like penguins do when looking at airplanes

From: Lob Bob <lob@bhs.org>
To: Bob Lob <bob@bhs.org>
Date: Tue, Mar 10, 2015 at 12:56 PM
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Patient

what do you mean? i'm not on vacation. i'm at a conference. our hospital's in the red and we're not gonna last much longer like this. i'm getting a grant to save our sorry asses.

you'd know this if you didn't spend your evenings drinking your head off with that tar you call beer. i need you to pull through if we're gonna have a chance in hell of making it through this. you with me?

but one thing at a time i guess. glad about our patient. we've saved one person. it'll be alright on the night.

From: Bob Lob <bob@bhs.org>
To: Lob Bob <lob@bhs.org>
Date: Tue, Mar 10, 2015 at 12:53 PM
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Re: Patient

Alright, she's coming to. Gave her the ice. Said she hadn't eaten any breakfast or lunch and was out on a run. And it's 90 degrees out there! I've put her on an IV.

But gosh, the things people are putting themselves through—they're dying. She reminds me a bit of you, ma'am. All work. I'm glad you're taking some time off.

And I'm pretty sure the thing about the penguins is a myth.

It'll be alright on the night. ▲

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