

Candice Lin

United States, born 1979

The Blueness

2021

Digital video; color, sound; 4:30 min.

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Gift of the artist and François Ghebaly, 2022

Video Transcript

[Crickets chirping.]

[Faint sounds of music with vocals and voices talking and laughing.]

[Door creaking and shutting.]

The flesh lumps called me WG, short for White-n-Gray, but you coulda also called me Blue-Green on account of the heterochromia, my striking eyes, that no one could resist.

I lived on that vomit-stained porch for eleven years, though I roamed for the first nine. The cafeteria got better the longer I stayed. Sometimes they even had goat milk shakes in the summer and chicken paté. The guy on the corner would break out a pack of hot dogs now and then.

I had my lives. I saw the rise and fall of Tormatun, aka Gray-n-White, not to be mistaken for me, White-n-Gray, but he had a

fluffy bib of white fur that his fat neck—his fat gray neck—just sank into like your typical football bully. And he ruled the block from years one to three, but old Bushy Tail eventually triumphed, and he had to go.

The little priss who was my nephew, always in a tuxedo—the genderqueer one—I liked him more when he was tiny and I could hump his ass into submission. He had that whole house but still liked to come and hang out on my porch and sniff the piles that were left for the ants.

Every night when the flesh lumps were sound asleep, I'd hear the whirring sound of the spaceships coming down, and they would unload the boxes made out of glycerin bioplastic that melted into the asphalt. Inside were things that looked like coyotes, but they were inhabited by parasitic robots that controlled them, and they roamed the Altadena streets, not looking for opossums or cats or anything, but for data. Data. One time Skilz, my opossum buddy, mistook a real coyote for a glycerin coyote, and he almost got ate. I ran in and gave it the ole one-two, and after that he was indebted to me for half of a life. I was a good debtor, though; I always shared a leftover ant-covered pile with him now and then. Sometimes gave 'em to the glycerin coyotes, too.

The night I disappeared, the flesh lumps across the way were playing their noodly dad music, and the other house was blasting some of theirs; it was like battle of the bands. I saw the tail end of Whoody—the one they call Bright Orange, who I made babies with in the spring. And I thought, “Now what is she doing going

under that fence?” So, I upped and followed her. Down dark there was not the usual rosemary and aster shrub, not even the bin-bin line with the skunk smell-smells, but a whole different kinda paneling. It was soft like a new moss that pushed back under one’s feets and dark-dark like the moonless light when the streetlamp flickers off. Strange, I thought. “Whoody,” I called, but she gave no meow, just crickets.

[Crickets chirping.]

Then shit called—my shit—and I had to answer because that’s the way of shits usually. You know, like if you’re like me, and you’ve had gut troubles for the last many years—all those hot dogs, they were good though, you know. Uh, you gotta go when it says you gotta go. So, I hunched up over a soft, mossy spot—there was no cover to hide in—and I let the shit ripple through my spine. Felt like a tube of uncooked sausage would never end; that shit just kept on coming, kept on coming. I swear it was minutes, minutes of sausage. Then I turned to pinch the tip off, and I looked over my shoulder, and I saw that the shit wasn’t shit but was a worm god. He had a top hat and a deck of cards, and he said, “Pick one, pick one, pick one,” so I picked one. It was the nine of hearts. Woulda gotta coulda gotta a king, but he said, “Yep, one, two, three, four, fix, six, seven, eight, nine, nine lives. Time’s up.” And he opened his jaw, his mouth, his huge maw that had no hinge—coulda swallowed a Buick in there—and uhh, last I saw were his fine-tooth comb teeth.

I was surprised it was the nine of hearts, though. Coulda been the nine of spades. But this last year was a year of love, and I was loved and I did love, my life.

[Crickets chirping, voice singing.]