

She's  
not  
real



Jenna  
Kennedy



She's  
not  
real.



*photo by Isabella Valeria Bontorin*

Jenna  
Kennedy



**Dedicated to all  
the lost boys.**

“All the world is made of faith,  
and trust, and pixie dust.”

— J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*



*photo by Calm Elliot Armstrong*

**Jenna Kennedy** lives in Toronto and longs to own a dalmatian named Gully. This is her second book, the first entitled *Love, Ophelia*. Jenna studied dramatic arts at the University of Waterloo. She hopes you enjoy her poems inspired by some of her most strange and memorable dreams.

*printed by:*

**Vide Press**

Independent Risograph Press

*She's Not Real © 2022 Jenna Kennedy*

*All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or in any means—by electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise—without prior written permission.*

*Unless otherwise noted all photography by or provided by Jenna Kennedy.*

## **Contents**

### **ACT1**

<b>The Neutral Mask .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Dear H, .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Sheep.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Hijacked by a Cigarette Man Burning .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Tropica Meets Frankenstein and They are all Dressed in Violet .....</b>	<b>15</b>

### **ACT2**

<b>I Can Now See; .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>She's Not Real .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Sorry .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Gold Rings .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Drag .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Hold Onto Me .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Dig .....</b>	<b>29</b>

### **ACT3**

<b>Lullaby .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>That Thing That "God" Made for Us.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Brown Bear .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>If I go Under? .....</b>	<b>37</b>

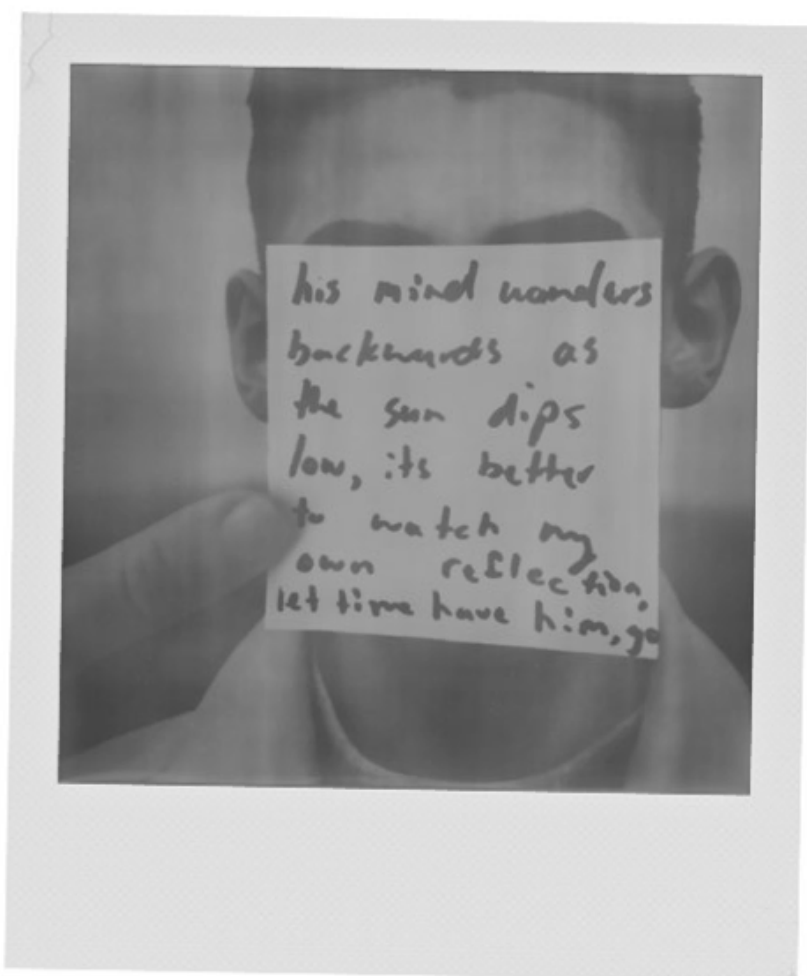




**ACT 1**

**The Neutral Mask**

the neutral mask  
as I slide it on  
it cracks  
straight  
down  
the middle  
into my newborn face  
I have now become neutral  
even if only for one red hot minute  
60  
59  
58  
etc,  
To close my eyes & stop counting...



his mind wanders  
backwards as  
the sun dips  
low, its better  
to watch my  
own reflection,  
let time have him, go

**Dear H,**

You have used language that curses my nerves.  
Write these few words down.

**Heroin**

*her·o·in / herōə*

**n.1** a highly addictive illegal drug.

**Heroine**

*herōən*

**n.1** a woman admired for her courage.

**n.2** the chief female character in a story.

Hers possess, pron. belonging to her.

H is to sin, to take away from.

So highly, hallucinating, in hibernation,  
to hula hoop, within.

I look forward to finding answers in my dream fevers.  
Over there, there is a woman who has to rescue her  
long-legged wading bird who got hurt by the herring  
because he ate too much.

[How can this be? How are you still hesitant? How  
can it be that he will never learn?]

As the heroine spills her guts. As those words give  
up, like heterosexual gulping sounds to the throat or  
some could just call this all a bunch of v.(hiccuping).

Sincerely,

How bad it hurts.



## **S h e e p**

I am in a new house. I am in a cocktail bar.

I am on Mars. It is grade 9.

I feel different. I feel the same.

Last week I dreamt of you.

Now, you are nowhere to be found.

Hug the pillow.

Bite down.

I am now a sheep.

You smell different.

You are now a movie star.

I can hear the Sopranos voices drifting from my TV.

Oh Tony,

the scene turns to drama

and your girlfriend asks me to my face... if we were fucking... tick tock...  
alarm clock.

(Does cheating count when I am a sheep?)

Her face was not a face.

She was a shade of grey.

I get caught a dream later... calling over to your house... she answers.

I think I'm in love with her love for you.

I feel different.

I feel the same.

No one has house phones anymore, but I mean that's been going on for years and years and years.

Who is chasing me? I know I have to go to work.' (My work is on my laptop, beside my bed.)

I am in a bar.

I am on Mars.

The tab is a shit show.

I have no money.

I am attracted to the pretty bartender.

I am attracted to the overweight/violent mob man.

He might kill us both.

We might all go home together.

My arm is more sleepy than my head.

This virus is not my fault.

I can't get out of my dream.

Another sheep flies over another cloud.

Can you hear all the humans coughing?

Better to enjoy going back to bed.

We are not accountable for anything other than how long we are dreaming.

I feel different

I feel the same

Two to three months later,

We are going into the second wave

And I am waiting to go back to sleep

So I can become a sheep.



*photo by Isabella Valeria Bontorin*

## **Hijacked By A Cigarette Man Burning**

My thumb was down and out  
He was driving towards his own river  
I saw him and I let him pick me up  
Nifty little bugger  
All damp and wet  
I turn over in order to get him to feel me  
Open me up  
The hand he used struck a chord saying "Our existence is our power."  
We are alive and so I scream  
Tobacco staining me  
He becomes more like monarch butterfly  
High, high, fluttering  
Oh so special  
He hits my eye with his elbow in the gloom of the dancing night  
Obnoxious bruising  
It doesn't matter if I can no longer see  
Cool smooth skin over cool smooth skin  
Penetrate me further  
So the moon goes further  
Like into the shape of eternal sleep  
I know this thirst, he coughs with a twist  
And guides me closer  
To his fake heart murmur  
Go ahead, you have permission to spit.  
(Oh, how lovingly.)  
I sing a song towards his ear,  
(Goes like this,)  
"You son of a bitch, you hijacked me,  
La da da, da da da dee."

Did you know that cowards learn to count backwards when there is simply  
nothing left to smoke?





**Tropica meets Frankenstein and  
they are all dressed in Violet**

Yes, I can come to your party  
Yes, even with such late notice  
Shamefully I haven't seen you since that first lockdown  
Yes, the one when I left lipstick stains all over your face.

I have to remember these times.  
I need to start hydrating my muscles again.  
I'm young like a plum.  
Or, like a bat out of its cage.

All the flowers in my home have now bloomed.  
I want to wear something violet.  
Have you ever seen a girl so unhinged she leaves you  
swirling and twirling until you puke?

I have

Yes, eye contact makes more sense  
I want to get naked in the tub  
Wear something more immortal  
Lots of soap  
Sadly, we can begin again later

Old memories are escorted by turntables on repeat,  
try to remember,  
just to breathe

And thank everyone for this magnificent party.



## ACT 2

### **Things You Notice When you Cannot See**

I can now see;

a clear curtain and some greenery.

a framed man wearing a cowboy hat.

a naked man looking up at "God".

a dreamcatcher with an eight legged creature.

a half empty brown mug.

a dull razor.

some grime & slime.

a silver faucet.

toothpaste that has dried up all around the edges  
(yuck).

a light bulb that is so perfect.

a pair of uneven breasts.

a mouth that blows out marijuana smoke.

warm bath water that will soon turn cold.

Now go back under so you cannot see.



*photo by Kerry Koutsaris*

## **She's Not Real**

She spit on the floor  
The bartender caught her doing it  
She kept forgetting  
I was even there  
I kept wanting  
Another shot  
Another story  
Another glance into that life  
Like vitamins  
She led me to her cock-eyed desire, inter-sexual glow  
Clouded candy desperation  
The fight non-concealing  
Bare bones grind bare bones  
She kept spitting,  
Like a wild child, hyena.  
“Why are you eating all that meat?  
Why don't you cackle before you choke?”  
I felt like never ever screaming  
B/c that's all hers.  
All on her own.  
I can't care.  
And I can't wait to want  
Anything less.



## **S o r r y**

I'm sorry.

His teeth are big and chalky and only slightly stained

I'm really sorry to you.

His voice vibrates back centuries I do not understand

I'm really sorry im sorry my phone was dead i couldn't text u.

His taste in music makes my hips breathe in and out and in and out

I feel sick i'm sorry i couldn't answer u.

His hair takes new shape, he is now dark prince exiting shower with only that beautiful smile on

I'm sorry dont get mad about me pleas

His hands make fire and food and warmth and everything tastes so good

I'm sorry but I decided to stay at home...I'm already drunk.

His cigarette rests in the middle, burning more and more

I'm really sorry to say so late but tomorrow for sure we can meet.

His brown eyes are muddy and delicate and I want to kiss them over and over

I'm sorry but it was a bad day for me and I wanna stay in here, pls dont misunderstand me.

His promises shift with the moon, under me, over me and on top of me

I'm sorry, it was over, I'm sorry if I couldn't be clear.

His mind will change again and he will love me again.

I'm really sorry.

I'm sorry.

Sorry.



*photo by Valerie Massie*



## **Gold Rings**

Going uphill  
Shoes on backwards  
On a Friday  
Who's gonna call me?  
Who's gonna carry me?  
Who's gonna marry me?  
Use a stick and do it yourself  
Going uphill  
On a Friday  
And when you finally arrive  
The view will be breathtaking



**Drag**

He takes a drag and I bite down on my lip.

He takes a drag and I see black dots.

He takes a drag and I loosen his belt.

He takes a drag and melts me down.

He takes a drag and the dots turn into clouds; bright and pink and even more bright and pink.

(Not smokey.)

He takes a drag and says we did it.

He takes a drag and I think what did we do?

He takes a drag and a bird flies in.

He takes a drag and a bird flies out.

*(Still not smokey.)*

He takes a drag and we pass out.

He takes a drag and makes me wonder why all we do is poison each other.

He takes a drag and adds liquor to my ice.

He takes a drag and makes me forget how I see myself.

*(Now very smokey.)*

He takes a drag and I dream up another way to make this dream keep  
going and going and going and going and going and going and going and  
going and going and going and going and going and going and going and  
going and going and going and going and going and going and going and  
going and going and going and going and going and going and going and  
going and going and going and going and going and going and going and  
going and going and going and going and going and going and going and  
going and going and going and going and going and going and going and  
going and going and going and going and going and going and going and  
going and going and going and going and going and going and going and  
going and going and going and going and going and going and going and  
and going and going and going and going and going and going and going  
and going and going and going and going and going  
going and going and going and going  
going and going and going and  
going and going and  
going and going  
going and  
going.

25



*photo by Kerry Koutsaris*

**Hold Onto Me.**

**HOLD ONTO ME. I'M LIKE A KID.  
BEEN KID-NAPPING. LOVERS FALLING  
DOWN. DAMN IT FEELS GOOD TO GET  
CLOSE. SWIRLING AROUND. DID YOU  
KNOW I ONCE SCULPTED YOU? WITH  
MUD LIKE CLAY.**

Before. When I was still cheating my way backwards.  
I made your eyes big and red. All your dark spots are  
red. Like I was inhaling your smoke. Cough, coughing  
you out. So many years ago. Singing, "I am 16, going  
on 17." That doesn't make sense. How is realism really  
real? Well that's the ego. I see an old image. Not young  
at all. A bearded old man, with red freckles on his face.  
This is not ageism. Then why is my ice cream melting?  
All over my only red bather. My only red bather! Oh  
mother. I miss that smell. So much salt. I change from  
a hungry tiger cat to a bluebird in motion. Flying over  
all lost skies. Puzzled clouds where age roams with us,  
not against us. I'm back to being young. Where I tend  
to forget I'm dreaming. I'm back with the lost boys. On  
pirate ships. With dirty swords. Oh breathing body, are  
you really beside me? Full of gold. Hold onto me. Teeth  
now clenched. Hold onto me. Wrinkled fingers and toes.  
Hold onto me. Hold onto me. Hold onto me.

Just a little longer.

Awake.



## D i g

Shadow cruising  
I watch myself walk backwards into a mountain  
Following my own shadow  
Five women  
One dog  
We twirl around this forest like we want to dig ourselves out  
of something  
Deep and back out into the moonlight  
And the shadows now speak  
We blink away our fears  
We move forward  
Leaving old parts behind to this ghost desert beach  
As I close my eyes further bats, rats, and beautiful flying  
things carve out a new future  
A village where dogs run off leashes  
Hopping from rock to rock  
Hikes in the woods  
Guided wolf packs  
Keep moving us forward  
I think about my past  
I look over my shoulder  
The city sinks in  
I stop blinking  
An escape call whispers come home  
No, not now!  
I want to sleep on the beach with the animal birds, the stones,  
the shells and aches in our bones and in our hearts  
Waves keep repeating  
If I swim out far enough  
I can stay a little longer, how about forever?  
Between the beach the waves and the ocean  
We dig.





### **ACT 3**

#### **Lullaby**

I've never been more intertwined  
With lonely bricks  
I'm situated like concrete  
Lost all my stamina  
And all that water  
Flows to my silk pillow  
Underneath is something bigger  
My pain is smooth like red velvet cake  
Yet so quick to eat at me  
I would have let you feed on and on  
Like that song  
Only the lonely  
This dream is on repeat  
But it's not something worth singing  
Can't you see?  
You make me so sick dear lover  
I can't sleep dear lover  
Remember what I said to you?  
Just put me to rest like a baby  
And lullaby me  
Lullaby me all the way to sleep.



## **That Thing That “God” Made For Us**

I used to beg to that “God” thing that made “Us” for someone like “You” to fall from the sky and into my lap so that “I” could hold “You” and “You” could hold me and “We” could share all of “Our” experiences that that “God” thing made for “Us”.

Now I like to measure my love by distances, like the long ones I used to run when I was really little. I don’t know for certain if I can travel as long as I can keep my hands dry in this tub before my cigarette gets wet or worse, burns me. I’d like to say I’m chasing things I know I can never really catch up to.

I heard somewhere people used to clean themselves with burnt ashes. I put my father’s ashes in his grave and I didn’t like it. I wouldn’t have chosen that spot but everyone else was doing it. Like my brother and my sister and my stepmother and they were crying, so it made it hard to say anything, like are you sure this is where he really wants to be, for eternity? And that it really mattered to me and that I had a really strong feeling in my gut that he would have much rather been sprinkled into the lake, without any question about it...

But now, looking back, I’m not sure I do know for certain, because I never asked him.

I think that type of uncertainty is love gone, forgotten. I only know this because that is all that is left to linger after all those “God” things give up on you and your decomposing faster than all of love’s little laughs. I can’t keep counting the ways I am going to miss you, so instead I will try to look forward to all the uncertainties after.



*photo by Tricia Leigh Kennedy*

## **Brown Bear**

*(From my father's childhood)*

A rustic look  
A smirking smile  
You whisper to me some sort of secret  
Youth is in the air  
Toys lay around  
But you are saying something louder  
Your ivory eyes all smothered  
The button so loose it's about to fall off  
You have been pillowed and bent  
But I can feel your love  
Little mischievous bear  
You have slept through a thousand lives  
Alive/Dead/Reborn/U are comfort  
You know everything  
You knew my father when he was just a boy  
You slept by his side  
You held his hand  
Now by his grave we mourn  
The history—longing—loss  
Little bear!  
Auburn bear  
I want to know your secret...  
He whispers so softly  
All lost boys never die!  
Breathing! Flying! Dreaming! Forever!  
The past is still breathing...  
Sam, your grandson, is still dreaming, the little auburn  
mischievous bear by his side, to live on past your ghost.  
Love you little bear, love you little Sam, and love you Dad.  
  
Goodnight.



**I f I g o U n d e r ?**

If I go under?

**YES**

will I remember?

**YES**

how to breathe?

**YES**

This feels just like 'Mother's' home

**T H E E N D**



*photo by Kerry Koutsaris*

### **Special Thanks**

Special thanks to Eric McBain for helping make this book possible. I am so grateful for your creativity and support. Michelle MacAleese, thank you so much for the editorial support. Val Massie and Sarah Johnson for pushing the magic out of each other with our pens and constantly creating a community with me to be creative and heard.

All the lovers who were not meant to be. Patti Smith for reminding me to write,write,write. My family, for all the love. Dad, for the most love and inspiration, missing you up in the big ol' clouds.

Thank you all.





***She's Not Real*** is Jenna Kennedy's second book of poetry. The book hits on a compelling recasting of her city life in Toronto, from her nights at home in the bath to her nights out and about indulging in the city's wild heartbeat; she takes us on her journey of lucid dreaming. These dream poems reflect on unrequited lovers and liars, the confusing state of the world and the grief she feels over the loss of a father and her water home.