

RYAN NORMAN



**I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A
BOND GIRL**

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I always wanted to be a Bond Girl

My head breaks waves, but the water
rolls under itself, curls

into the sand like tiny fists
that bead up my chest, pounding

pearls of light.
That water drip, crystalline shatter spilling

down my torso.
Am I a Bond Girl now?

My hips check the surf, foam
crawls up my back. I run

my hand through my hair and the sun
flares your lens. Is this slow-motion

for you, too? The sea grabs my waist.
Are you still watching?

Same dance, different bodies

The slick streets lit up under
every step, as the streetlamps

illuminated our dance floor on
old cobbles worn over time by tired soles

rounding edges of quarried stone
carefully placed in interlocking tight

streets built for carriages to carry
loads in a coastal town. Yet we

spun, carrying each other, one flourish
at a time, our hands sliding into

familiar places, as we danced the
same dance, different bodies.

How to dispose of a dead body

Most people would think getting rid of a dead body is difficult, or, at the very least, inconvenient. It is both those things, but don't get discouraged! You can get through this with just your determination and body mechanics. Now, the body is going to be very floppy, this is optimal for disposal. Don't let it get hard. There are many techniques to choose from. You can hide it in plain sight: throw sunglasses on a corpse, a hat, prop it against the wall. The Drunk Tourist. Throw it into an ocean (also known as the Drunk Tourist). If you have the cover of dark, roll the body behind a dumpster. This is known as the Drunk Tourist.

Soothsayer

I watched you there, underneath dawn's golden drip, wondering how you didn't drown in your sleep as the light flooded in. First across your eyes, a rich mask depuffing the bloat of last night's consumption; then leaking down your nose past your mouth. I watched the sun's heavy hand grasp your throat, yet you went on sleeping in our tiny tent, and didn't so much as come up for air. And I was drowning again, at your feet; the 6 am dew dripping on my forehead.

It was best to let you sleep, I would come to find out some months later. Count your breaths, settle into them like they were my own. A belly rises in rhythm for a count of 7—lucky for me I learned. But your family said I soothed you, so a belly can sink for a count of 5. Without the soothing, you spat burning coals at our feet; and I wasn't relieved to know it wasn't just me on fire. You taught me to roll until the flames died. And they did. But I could no longer soothe myself while you burned in the sun.

It's nights like those, where we swallowed the burn until the stars fell on top of us; where your naked ambitions eroded under river's wet carvings, blank marble chiseled into blank flesh; the whooping cheers and whistles silent under river's roar. And I read the moon's full face, just a soothsayer for a night. And I swiped my reflection in the water, knowing how fraudulent that grin would be in golden light.

Quiver

I dance to dodge
a barrage of bourbon forged

salvos expertly aimed.
Every syllable a direct hit

bloodying emotions, soft tissue damaged,
scarring over itself, forming keloids.

My self-worth expertly flayed
by your saber tongue;

Yet I cradle your head,
coo you calm,

into peaceful slumber.
Your eyes, amnesia blue, guide you

to fetch me tea
at sunrise.

I hide my cheeks, tear stained,
to save you from

your truth.
Down for days

counting arrows, questioning why love
is so sharp—you flash your

bright white incisors.
My flesh quivers, so you pull me close.

Is that even your real name?

I held you there, unconscious
in a pool
of your own blood. It smelled
of a debt paid. I wondered how

much more blood you owed. I
wondered if they knew that I'd fallen
for a lie. Some numbers disguised
as a man. 007. James Bond.
If that's your real name.

I can see your heart-
beat in your neck. The way the light
illuminates it just right, the slow march
of death approaching. But I know
now, this isn't paradise.
You'll burn bright.

Bond on a beach

The sea is flat and clear; I see you rise
out of the water, face to the sun,
the water tense across your eyes. A liquid bubble
popping on your crown, the drip

taking a lazy stroll down your
shoulders and torso.

It's like you're moving in
slow-motion,

the ripples from your drip form
placid concentric waves from your
hips. The sun flares my lens, but I'm still
watching you with one eye.

Whispers

You take your martini dry
but your kisses sloppy drunk

in the shadow of a legacy
pushing our secret into tobacco stained
walls

painted by smoke and fire
that burns on the way down

despite the breeze
that blows harder than sneaking in dark
places

like teenagers, star-crossed, whispering a name
in a mouth never so sweet.

License to kill

I'm in love with a killer, with a killer
body. But he's got a license
to kill and he's not afraid to

use it. To use me. Use me?
Use me. Has it come to this?
Have I become his again?

We walk through porticos
and keyholes to secret beaches.
Gather the sun on the Riviera, make love

again. Because I'm in love, but not with any-
body else. I've changed my plans.
I'm not coming home.

Sailing

Sail into your smile,
tilted starboard
in the summer wind:
I saw the moon's reflection.

Champagne bubbles kiss
my moon-rimmed crown
at the bow, I drop down
in prostration.

The continuation of daily
worship, devotion unchallenged
by salient, administered self-reflection—
Fawning over

a forearm pricked with your stick and poke,
numbed by constant attention:
a salve stronger than love
left me ink stained.

POV: James Bond's gun

There's nothing happier than me, warmed
between your coarse palms. Your fingers
slide down my metal barrel, as one slips

below and gently taps at my trigger.
We stare down the lane,
gazes locked on a target. Am I sweating,
or are you?
Squeeze a little tighter. I need the pressure

before I can release the smoke
from my barrel.

Prey

Blind and bound to your
stone altar, a screaming prey
for your consumption—
circling like a vulture
to feast on this carrion.

POV: The Dead Guy

What bothers me the most is how I sat crouched in this villa for hours waiting for Bond to arrive. His fancy double breasted suit jacket. Yeah, dude. You really look like you're on vacation. And really? You're just gonna leave my body there against the wall? Sunglasses. Great. Now I look like a cool dead guy. Thanks for that, asshole! He's walking away. He can't hear me.

Bond tells all

It's not easy being a double o. Wearing fine Italian designer suits, driving decked out Aston Martins, just to watch it all ripped apart by bullets. You'd never guess, given my lavish lifestyle as an agent that I'm a homebody. There's nothing I would rather do than sit at home with my cat and watch him soak up sun beams. I've been known to go to the local animal shelter and hug a kitten. What kind of killer do you think I am? That's just my job. I don't suppose you enter data on your holiday. There's nothing cozier than sitting at my desk with a cat purring in the small of my back. I wish I could take him on missions. He'd be fine.

Skyfall

This old house carries dust in
secret halls. Rifles line my walls.
In the Highlands I sit on traps.

My halls a maze, this isn't a game
anymore. This old house carries
secrets. A fortress for a family
with no shared blood

except the blood they spill.
My floors soak their DNA 'til
it becomes my own. This old house

carries a torch to light
canons. I fire back.

