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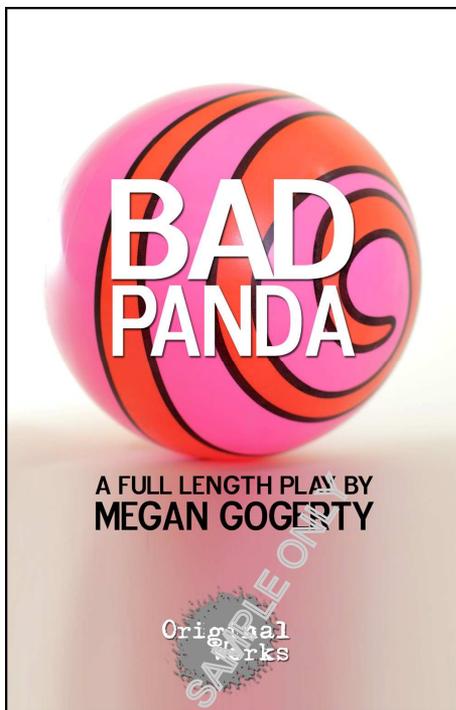
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An Outopia for Pigeons
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BAD PANDA by Megan Gogerty

Synopsis: They're the last two pandas on earth. It's mating season. One of them falls in love with a crocodile. Who is gay. And then the baby comes. In this sweet celebration of non-traditional families, Gwo Gwo the panda must balance his newfound desire for Chester the crocodile with his obligations to his prescribed panda mate, Marion. The animals eat, mate, splash around in identity politics, wrestle with the ambivalence of parenthood, and love one another as only families can.

Cast Size: 2 Males, 1 Female

An Otopia for Pigeons

a comedy about salvation

**by
Justin Maxwell**

SAMPLE ONLY

Originally performed by Swandive Theatre, at The People's Center Theater in Minneapolis, MN on November 9, 2013. The cast and crew was as follows.

Cotton Mather: Bryan Grosso
Martha: Adeline Phelps
The Gourmand: Kathryn Fumie
Charles Bronson: Kevin McLaughlin

Directors: Meg DiSciorio and Damon Runnals
Stage Manager: Claire Nadeau
Lighting Designer: Per Olson
Costume Designer: Lisa Conley
Set Designers: Ursula Bowden and Sean McArdle
Prop Designer: Sean McArdle
Sound Designer: Kevin Springer

Characters:

Martha Washington: The last passenger pigeon. Female-presenting, any age.

The Gourmand: She's 7/8th omniscient, slinky, sexy, and maybe wearing a cocktail dress. Female-presenting, any age.

Cotton Mather: Renowned Puritan minister and witch burner extraordinaire; he's half theologian and half Dr. Frank-N-Furter. Male-presenting, any age.

Charles Bronson: A sperm whale out for revenge. A sperm whale, for Christ's sake—but with Bronson's sociopathic calm. Male-presenting, any age.

Setting: The Cincinnati Zoological Society. 1914.

Running time: 90 min

Staging: The stage is a giant curio cabinet full of 19th Century wonders, the wonders of natural history. However, this particular cabinet is ahistorical. The audience should feel as though they are inside the cabinet; this is an immersive theatrical experience.

On a normal day, the place is a bewildering array of quasi-historical curios and biological whatsits. It still is; however, it is now, also, a construction site—as if someone were trying to build a fortress with the museum's contents and hot glue. This construction is the outopia.

Notes:

Punctuation without dialog (eg: ?, !, or ...) denotes non-verbal communication.

Words in [] are unstated; they are just in the script for readability and to help the actors know what to communicate.

The videos are cheap to the point of ridiculousness.

Amongst the detritus of the museum are the props from the films and a mailbag.

The GOURMOND reveals the scene titles. This can be done in a variety of ways: when the script says “reveal” you’ve got *carte blanche*. The reveals should be inconsistent and funny. The GOURMAND can also say some/most of them. The initial titles are the last words of famous people; however, this changes as the show progresses, and then it changes back....

Most of the time, the video screens project a clear blue sky.

AN OUTOPIA FOR PIGEONS

*(The Cincinnati Zoological Society, 1914. Nighttime.)
(There is a mail bag hanging somewhere innocuous.)*

(The section title glows on a screen:)

(Scene: Thomas Jefferson still survives. —John Adams)

(The title fades and the screens give a peaceful, blue sky.)

(The GOURMAND enters, happy—carrying a KFC bucket. She takes a good look around, and then casually breaks something on the outopia. She eats from the bucket.)

(MARTHA Washington enters and puts a letter in the mailbag. She begins working on her construction. Eventually, she notices the GOURMAND. MARTHA doesn't stop working while she talks.)

MARTHA: *(with a start)* Don't you have anything important to do?

GOURMAND: Ya know, you guys are delicious?

MARTHA: I know we're fucking delicious!

(beat)

Go away.

You're not helping.

Don't you have anywhere to be?

GOURMAND: You wouldn't have me anywhere else.

MARTHA: Bullshit.

GOURMAND: I keep you from overcommitting to your terrible ideas.

MARTHA: Breaking things while I'm out of the room doesn't "help."

GOURMAND: (*straight*)
Yes it does.

MARTHA: It doesn't help *me*.

GOURMAND: Are you feeling helpless?

MARTHA: Shut up!
(*beat*)
You said you were going to help.

GOURMAND: Some things can't be helped.

MARTHA: Bullshit.

GOURMAND: This project of yours is really more of an identity crisis isn't it?

MARTHA: Shut up.
Yes.
(*classic misdirection*)
What are you eating?

GOURMAND: KFC.

MARTHA: Bullshit.

GOURMAND: Don't be difficult.

MARTHA: It's 1914.

GOURMAND: And?

MARTHA: Anachronism!

GOURMAND: Deliciousness!

MARTHA: 1914.

GOURMAND: Fusspot.

MARTH: What the hell's in there anyway?

GOURMAND: I told you. Passenger pigeon is
delicious.

MARTHA: God damn it!
We're nearly extinct.

GOURMAND: (*inspecting a bit*)
Even closer now, I'd say.

MARTHA: Aunt Gertie!

(MARTHA freaks out, flutters everywhere. She alights by a screen, looking for something. The GOURMOND takes a little strut and reveals:)

(Scene: That was a great game of golf, fellers. —Bing Crosby)

(Birds appear on the screens. They are sporadic and far away.)

GOURMOND: She's off to go bird watching.

(MARTHA follows the birds as they move away; this takes her off stage, so she does not see:)

(An "archival" film of COTTON Mather at the North Church, giving a sermon in Puritan garb; he is deep in the gravitas. A caption appears:)

(Archival Footage: Cotton Mather preaching at the North Church, Easter Sunday, 1686.)

COTTON (on film): *(heavy)*

Why do birds suddenly appear
every time you are
washed in the blood of the Lamb;
you damn dirty apes;
you blew it up.
I see a ship in the harbor.
I can and shall obey.
I sing the body electric.
Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law.

I am America and so can you;
four-score and seven years ago, our forefathers,
Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.
Send lawyers, guns, and money; dad get me out
of this.

We're not gonna take it!

No! We ain't gonna take it.

Take a look. It's in a book. A reading rainbow.

This battle station is now the ultimate power in
the universe.

(beat)

Like, zoinks, gang. Let's get out of here.

Run to the hills. Run for your lives.

Music will save your soul.

Let the rhythm move you.

If they don't dance, well they ain't no friends of
mine.

Tonight I can report to the American people, and
the world, that the United States has conducted
an operation....

We shall defend our island whatever the cost may
be.

And if any man shall take away from the words
of this book of this prophesy, God shall take
away his part out of the book of life, and out of
the holy city, and from the things which are
written in this book. He which testifieth these
things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even
so, come, Lord Jesus.

(beat)

Also:

Hey you kids,

get off my lawn.
And:
God bless America.

(The GOURMOND reveals the section title:)

(Scene: Hello. —Graham Chapman)

(Then she breaks some shit. But, the construction has grown overall. CHARLES Bronson bullies in.)

GOURMAND: And you are?

CHARLES: I'm Charles Bronson,
a sperm whale out for revenge.

GOURMAND: I see.

CHARLES: I'm traveling to Nantucket to take my
revenge on those whale-killing, limerick-loving
bastards.
They killed my pod, and they're gonna pay.

GOURMAND: You're in Cincinnati, you know.

CHARLES: That's what I want to talk to you about.

GOURMAND: You know you're at the zoological
society, right?

CHARLES: Here's the thing.
(practiced and lackluster)
I caught the greyhound from San Diego harbor to

Columbus, ‘cause that’s all the money I got. So I hitchhiked a ways, but now my flipper is all beat up, and I got some money, ya know, but I ain’t got enough for the ticket to Nantucket. I’m 78 cents short. It’s nine dollars, eleven cents for the ticket from Cincinnati to Nantucket. I got eight dollars and 24 cents. I’m really in a hard way. And my kid needs an operation. And my flipper ain’t workin’ right-

GOURMAND: I thought you said whalers from Nantucket killed your pod.

CHARLES: They did.
They killed us all.
And they took my 78 cents.

GOURMAND: You know, my friend Martha has 78 cents that she doesn’t know *what* to do with. I’ll go find her. Watch this archival film....

(The GOURMOND leads him to a screen; she reveals:)

(Scene: They usually don’t swim backwards. —Steve Irwin)

(An archival film plays. It is in the shitty style of 70’s era animated, educational films—simple colors, silhouettes. This is a promotional for the museum; the actor playing COTTON gives the V.O.)

(We see an animated “map” of the museum.)

VO: The Museum of Tomorrow. *Today.*

Modern science brings us many benefits

(We see a mushroom cloud, spam, complicated sex toys.)

VO: and many dangers.

(We see a scrawny kid reading Darwin. A fat kid reading Marx.)

VO: That's why we have the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History.

We've taken the best of the out-of-doors and brought them inside.

(We see the scrawny kid protecting himself from the harsh sun. We see the fat kid protecting himself from the mushroom cloud.)

VO: Here dangerous animals can be explored at ease,

(We see a fish—the fugu fish—with arrows to denote the “poison” and the “delicious” parts. Then, we see a moderately-racist diorama of Native Americans.)

VO: and objects of mystery can be contemplated.

(We see arrowheads and other stone artifacts. We see a curvaceous woman doing something vaguely pornographic (remember, these are silhouettes.)

VO: We have extensive collections and a library of photographs, but you can't take them into the bathroom with you.

(We see an image that somehow says “no masturbating in our bathrooms” but without words.)

VO: We have feathers and shells. We have the largest film archive in Western Ohio. Plus some very rare birds and animals—including Martha Washington.

(We see a picture of MARTHA photoshopped into the costume of the first First Lady, writing a letter.)

VO: So, come down to the Museum.

It's better than going outside where there are ... viruses.

(We see a “no viruses” icon.)

VO: Remember: we're closed Sunday and have free admission.

(An asterisk appears with the disclaimer: “Museum is not free.”)

(The film ends. The GOURMOND draws CHARLES onstage, and reveals:)

(Scene: Yes. —Alice B. Toklas)

(The GOURMOND exits and CHARLES tries to comprehend the outopia. MARTHA enters, going to post a letter in the mailbag.)

CHARLES: You Martha?

MARTHA: Who the fuck are you?

CHARLES: Charles Bronson,
a sperm whale out for revenge.

MARTHA: And?

CHARLES: *(he repeats his dead, memorized shtick)*

Here's the thing.

(practiced and lackluster)

I caught the greyhound from San Diego harbor to Columbus, 'cause that's all the money I got. So I hitchhiked a ways, but now my flipper is all beat up, and I got some money, ya know, but I ain't got enough for the ticket to Nantucket. I'm 78 cents short. It's nine dollars, eleven cents for the ticket from Cincinnati to Nantucket. I got eight dollars and 24 cents. I'm really in a hard way. And my kid needs an operation. And my flipper ain't workin' right.

(beat)

I was told you had 78 cents.

MARTHA: *(while putting her letter in the mail bag)*

I do need some work done around here.

CHARLES: What are you building?

MARTHA: I'm working for the greater good.

CHARLES: ?

MARTHA: I'm building an outopia.

CHARLES: You're a day-laborer?

MARTHA: Labor of love.

CHARLES: Pay well?

MARTHA: It pays in love.

CHARLES: I can stab the hell out of love.

MARTHA: You're really full of anger.

CHARLES: And brine shrimp.

I'm full of anger and brine shrimp.

MARTHA: I thought sperm whales ate squid.

Don't blue whales eat brine shrimp?

CHARLES: No.

MARTHA: Don't lie to me.

CHARLES: Fine.

When the bus stopped in Kenosha, I got the three hundred passenger pigeons for two dollars deal. But I didn't want to bring it up.

MATHA: Why!

CHARLES: You guys are delicious.

MARTHA: You ate my whole flock.

CHARLES: Now I'm filled with shame.
Shame and pigeons.

(Dark. The GOURMOND reveals:)

(Scene: ...18 whiskeys in a row. I do believe that is a new record. —Dylan Thomas)

(then exits. CHARLES has been working furiously. The place is a schizoid mess—no longer museum, no longer construction site.)

CHARLES: Okay.
One more time.
What's an ou-toe-pee-ah?

MARTHA: *(not trying to be difficult)*
It's a word.

CHARLES: We're building a word?

MARTHA: It's more of a concept.

CHARLES: We're building a concept?

MARTHA: An outopia is like a place and a concept.

CHARLES: So, is that like a utopia?
Or a dystopia?

MARTHA: (*cautious*)
How do you know those terms?

CHARLES: Lady, I swim twelve thousand miles a
year;
I have time to read *Animal Farm*.
(*beat*)
So, utopia or dystopia?

MARTHA: Yes.

CHARLES: What do you mean, "yes"?
It's either, or.

MARTHA: Oh.
(*beat*)
In that case:
No.

CHARLES: That doesn't help.

MARTHA: Okay.
So, an outopia is a non-place, which Foucault
defines as—

CHARLES: Hold on.
Who's he?

MARTHA: Who?

CHARLES: Foucault.

MARTHA: He was my selection for book club.

CHARLES: And?

MARTHA: And everybody quit book club.

CHARLES: So, you're building this . . . concept, to stab Foucault with?

MARTHA: What?

CHARLES: Can I have my 78 cents now?

MARTHA: No.
We aren't finished yet.

CHARLES: So, we'll lure Foucault into the outopia, and you'll stab him in the eye?

MARTHA: No.

CHARLES: Dick?

MARTHA: No!
Nobody is going to stab Foucault in the dick.

CHARLES: I'm gonna stab everybody in Nantucket.
I might even stab Foucault for you, if you come
through on my 78 cents.

MARTHA: It's 1914. Foucault hasn't been born yet.

CHARLES: (*sarcastic*)
So you can see the future?

MARTHA: Yes.
Passenger pigeons can see the future.

CHARLES: ?

MARTHA: Each one of us can see one facet of the
future.
I can see the future of 20th Century, French
philosophy.

CHARLES: So, no one saw imminent demise
coming?

MARTHA: That's Ben Franklyn's fault.
Hunters could kill us by the thousands because
Ben, the passenger pigeon that could see
imminent destruction, died of pigeon tuberculosis
on the same day that people discovered we're
delicious. Dolly Madison, the pigeon who could
foresee cosmic irony, was a real bitch and didn't
tell anyone until it was too late.

CHARLES: Can I get back to work now?

MARTHA: (*up on her soapbox*)

This outopia is our salvation. It's a non-place. You can't find a non-place. You can't fill one with sulfur smoke, wait for the pigeons to get woozy, fall from their roosts, and then smush our heads between your thumb and index finger. We can all go inside and stay safe there. It will be wonderful.

(*epiphanic*)

It will be a non-wonder!

CHARLES: Can I have my 78 cents now?

MARTHA: (*still blissed out*)

No.

(*Dark. The GOURMOND reveals the next section title:*)

(*Scene: Last words are for fools who haven't said enough. —Karl Marx*)

(*A video of great flocks of birds plays; it should be vast. The GOURMOND exits surreptitiously. CHARLES and MARTHA watch the film with awe, then return to working on the outopia.*)

CHARLES: Was that the future?

MARTHA: That was pre-recorded.

So, it's hard to tell.

CHARLES: You really see the future?

MARTHA: Pigeons see the future.

Selectively.

Let me tell you why Roland Barthes is cool.

CHARLES: No.

MARTHA: How about Lacan?

CHARLES: No.

MARTHA: Camus?

CHARLES: No.

MARTHA: How about Saussure?

CHARLES: He's Swiss.

MARTHA: I'm just trying to make small talk.

CHARLES: Aren't you trying to save your species?

MARTHA: I love my pigeons.

I have to save them.

CHARLES: At least that's a logical explanation.

Unlike this thing-

MARTHA: Shut up!

Imagine your murdered pod.

If all of the sperm whales could hide at the bottom of the ocean, wouldn't you go there and be safe from the Nantucketters?

CHARLES: (*epiphanic*)

At the bottom of the ocean, limericks can't hurt you.

MARTHA: We tried *everything* to survive:

we tried apathy;

we tried holding our ground;

we tried eating until we couldn't fly;

we tried hiding in plain sight;

we tried sleeping deeply;

we tried fluttering short distances;

we tried nesting in small forests;

once, we found a naked man on a hilltop and tried to drown him in poop.

CHARLES: ...

MARTHA: I know, we should have just stabbed him, but we're not whales.

In the fight or flight Darwinian dichotomy, we are decidedly flight.

CHARLES: How do you get revenge without stabbing?

MARTHA: We don't.

We hide and survive until things change.

We couldn't kill all the people even if we tried.

CHARLES: I can kill fuckin' everybody on Nantucket.

MARTHA: With that gimpy fin?

Maybe.

(teacherly)

Who lived on Nantucket before the filthy whalers?

CHARLES: The filthy Dutch.

MARTHA: Before them?

CHARLES: The filthy Wampanoag Indians.

MARTHA: And before them?

CHARLES: The filthy ice age.

I could stab the hell out of a glacier.

MARTHA: So, what will happen when you kill everyone on Nantucket?

(CHARLES has an existential epiphany.)

CHARLES: *(sad-ish)*

Martha?

Can I help you finish your outopia?

MARTHA: Yes, Charles Bronson.

(Dark. GOURMAND enters and reveals the next section title:)

(Scene: ...I'll see you tomorrow. —Noel Coward)

(CHARLES and MARTHA are exhausted from their work.)

GOURMAND: I brought you suet and squid.

MARTHA: Ew.

GOURMAND: Not mixed together.

(beat. To CHARLES)

Why are you still here?

CHARLES: I'm sticking around for the experience.

GOURMAND: ?

CHARLES: See, after I kill those Nantucket fuckers, I'm gonna need a place to hide out until the glaciers melt and the sea reclaims the land. So, I'm gonna help Martha build her outopia now, so I know how to build one for whales later.

GOURMAND: That's very noble of you.

CHARLES: I'm gonna call it "Stabby's."

We'll get a lot of tv's, subscribe to NFL Sunday Ticket on satellite, and hire busty waitresses with daddy issues.

GOURMAND: That's a sports bar.

CHARLES: Yeah?

GOURMAND: How can you possibly build a non-place?

(CHARLES thinks hard, then sings his sad love song and begins to mope off stage. As he sings, another flock appears on the screens; his song is to it.)

CHARLES: Why do birds suddenly appear
every time you are near?
Just like me,
they long to be....

(When CHARLES is gone, the screens revert to blue sky.)

MARTHA: Why did you have to go and ruin his sports bar?

GOURMAND: Would you show up for quarter wing Wednesdays?

MARTHA: *(lying)* Maybe.

GOURMAND: *(a stern)* ?

MARTHA: I don't judge.
I'm not a judgementalizer.

I don't condemnation.
I make outopia!
I'm making a non-place.
I'm making nothing.
(beat)
Shit.
This is all your fault.
I'm here to save the whales
 Pigeons!
I'm here to save the passenger pigeons.

GOURMAND: Don't over-worry things.
 Have some suet. You like suet.

MARTHA: Everybody likes suet
 It's delicious.

(The lights lower, and the GOURMAND reveals:)

(Scene: See to it, and don't forget. —Socrates)

(An early 60's style PSA plays. We see the countdown, the racist Native American profile, then the actor playing COTTON—think William Burroughs's "Thanksgiving Prayer." COTTON is not in Puritan garb.)

*(An animated headline reads: SEXUAL TRAGEDY:
THE PASENGER PIGEON AND YOU.)*

COTTON (as narrator):
 Meet Billy and Jane American.

(They pop into frame—disoriented, but obedient to the narrative voice. As the narrator addresses them by different names, they get more and more flustered. The narrator simply doesn't remember their names and makes a guess, without caring if he's right or wrong.)

COTTON (as narrator): As teens, William and Janice have a panoply of emotions, which can lead them to socially sanctioned activities. But, if left unchecked, their drives could lead to direness. So, Will and Jo, if you want a good future, you need to know about the destruction of the passenger pigeon, and about basic etiquette. But what does a dead bird species have to do with my throbbing teen urges, you might ask? Well, Walt and Joline, you can learn a lot from the passenger pigeon to help you control your normal, deviant desires for fun and pleasure.

(Billy and Jane pop into mainstream 60's dance costumes, sweaters and poodle skirts. They are baffled by this and mildly alarmed.)

COTTON (as narrator): You see children, for the passenger pigeon to survive it had to have lots of sex. Walter, you don't want to lose your soul to sin, now do you? And Jocelyn, you can get pregnant very easily without a man to keep track of your menstrual cycle.

(Billy and Jane pop into science outfits. Their sense of alarm grows, but they trust the omniscient narrator.)

COTTON (as narrator): The passenger pigeon loved sex so much that when it couldn't have the massive bird orgies necessary for its reproduction the entire species died out. That's right, basic, American wedded monogamy wasn't good enough for these birds, so when their delicious population was reduced by the food industry these pigeons lost interest in reproduction. You see, Wade and Joyce, it's about etiquette.

(Billy and Jane pop into sexy underwear. Their alarm is overcome by embarrassment.)

COTTON (as narrator): Wallace, etiquette is why you pomade your hair before a date with Joy. It's good etiquette to show that between your weekly baths you're doing what you can to control the lice. That pomade lets JoAnne know you're responsible and that she can trust you to balance the check book and keep track of her menstrual cycle.

(Billy and Jane are suddenly naked. They are freaked out by this and try to preserve some dignity.)

COTTON (as narrator): That's why what's-her-name will undergo complex body waxings before a date with...him. It's good etiquette. The

passenger pigeon had no such sense of etiquette. For them all the pieces of sex, breeding, and America stood wholly apart. Their etiquette was orgy etiquette, not American etiquette where there's a good narrative flow. In orgy etiquette, each thing is doing its own thing with different things to a bunch of separate things, until someone's ottoman breaks and half a dozen people fall on the floor laughing. Laughter is unacceptable. Laughter is what killed the bison.

(Billy and Jane pop into bison costumes, then burst into tears.)

(The screens return to the blue sky. The GOURMAND reveals:)

*(Scene: They couldn't hit an elephant at this dist—
—General John Sedgwick)*

(Then she breaks some stuff; however, the outopia is nearing completion—a lunatic amalgam of the objects of natural history.)

(The GOURMAND lounges lushly. She is a seductress here. MARTHA enters, posts letter, picks up the broken bit and works to re-attach it.)

GOURMAND: It doesn't have a door you know.

MARTHA: Hunters use doors.

GOURMAND: I see.

MARTHA: We'll be safe in there.
Safe from you.

GOURMAND: I'm no threat.

MARTHA: I leave this project and you come in and
break it. My mind wanders and there you are.

GOURMAND: Yup.

MARTHA: Fuck off, birdeater.

GOURMAND: What if there's a flood?

MARTHA: It floats.

GOURMAND: What if there's a fire?

MARTHA: It sinks.

GOURMAND: What if the power goes out?

MARTHA: We won't need archival footage when
we're all together again.

GOURMAND: Reasonable.

MARTHA: It's Foucault.
It will keep us safe.

GOURMAND: You know it won't work.

MARTHA: Bullshit.

It would work if you'd stop breaking important components.

GOURMAND: I break out of love.

MARTHA: Bullshit.

GOURMAND: Really.

MARTHA: Lies.

GOURMAND: Darling,
you're fucked.

MARTHA: You don't know everything.

GOURMAND: I'm seven-eighths omniscient.

MARTHA: We are the most successful species in history.

GOURMAND: Dinosaurs?

MARTHA: Which become birds.

GOURMAND: You're just a pigeon.

MARTHA: Still, a subset of birds.

And the most successful bird species ever.

We ARE a system that works.

We are the most numerous vertebrate in North America.

We are forty percent of *all* the birds in North America.

If you're in North America, and you're looking at an animal with a spine, then you are probably looking at a passenger pigeon.

GOURMAND: Then you *were* probably looking at a passenger pigeon.

MARTHA: (*fighting heartbreak*)

We were the most successful animal in recorded history.

GOURMAND: [Why] ?

MARTHA: Awesomeness.

Just look around.

I'm an everyday kind of pigeon,
but I'm still building an abstract, intellectual
concept with stuff lying around a dated type of
museum, using only the labor of an angry sperm
whale and hot glue.

I don't even have thumbs.

GOURMAND: What about the Indians?

MARTHA: I don't know what they did with their
thumbs.

GOURMAND: (*nonplussed*)
What happened to them?

MARTHA: (*angry*)
How should I know?
This isn't an outopia for Cherokee.

GOURMAND: Are there any Sioux left?

MARTHA: I'm sure I don't know.

GOURMAND: What happened to the Iroquois?

MARTHA: They were delicious.

GOURMAND: (*serious*)
They ate passenger pigeons.

MARTHA: We're delicious.
It's well established.

GOURMAND: Unlike your species.

MARTHA: The passenger pigeon is still well
established.
It is.
Indigenous peoples couldn't kill us fast enough to
matter. Honestly, we barely noticed them.

GOURMAND: Or when they disappeared.

MARTHA: They what?

GOURMAND: Have you seen any lately?

MARTHA: The ones in the pen behind the museum died last winter.

GOURMAND: Indigenous peoples kept your numbers in check.

MARTHA: So?

Smallpox worked in our favor;

I can't be responsible for that.

Geronimo can build his own fucking outopia.

GOURMAND: You weren't the superior species.

MARTHA: Bullshit.

GOURMAND: You weren't.

MARTHA: Anachronism!

GOURMAND: Still. Nope.

MARTHA: We're just going through a rough patch.

(The GOURMAND embraces MARTHA.)

GOURMAND: Like 8-track cassettes?

MARTHA: No.

Like...

GOURMAND: Linear A?

MARTHA: I don't know what that is.

GOURMAND: Like Camelot?

MARTHA: Get off of me.
The outopia will be perfect.

GOURMAND: Want some suet?

MARTHA: *(down)*
Yes.

(MARTHA, all ruffled, takes the suet and sulks with its deliciousness. The screens fill with birds.)

(The GOURMAND reveals:)

(Scene: More light. —Goethe)

(The GOURMAND exits. MARTHA has a suet binge, a gluttonous pecking ensues. As its intensity grows the birds fade out from the screens. When they are gone, she is interrupted by COTTON.)

(Enter COTTON MATHER, in the Puritan costume from his archival footage.)

COTTON: Excuse me, madam.
Are you Martha Washington?

MARTHA: Yes....

COTTON: I'm Cotton Mather.

MARTHA: Pleasure to meet you.

(COTTON bursts into tears and throws himself on her.)

COTTON: I'm sorry.

It's just, you're

so,

so

MARTHA: Delicious?

COTTON: Well,

yes.

I suppose so.

I was going to say "magnificent,"
but "delicious" is also true.

(MARTHA gets all pigeon-proud.)

MARTHA: Magnificent.

COTTON: I crossed three centuries and half a continent to find you.

MARTHA: You're not from Nantucket right?

COTTON: I hate those limerick loving bastards.

MARTHA: Why are you here?

COTTON: I miss you.

MARTHA: (*a creeped-out*)
Oh.

COTTON: Your kind.

MARTHA: We're not all gone yet.
In fact-

COTTON: You're the last.
You're Martha Washington,
the last passenger pigeon.
You're the last one.
And I need your help.

MARTHA: I am NOT the last one.

COTTON: In 1721 I saw the black hand of God blot
out the sun.

MARTHA: (*trepidatious*)
Okay.

COTTON: I saw pigeons.

MARTHA: Oh.

COTTON: Beautiful, rapturous pigeons.

MARTHA: ?!

COTTON: Your forefathers.

MARTHA: By, like, three hundred years.

COTTON: Pigeons showed me the hand of God's love.

MARTHA: We're, we're just pigeons.
And I am not the last one!

COTTON: Martha, if I know one thing, it's how to burn a witch.

If I know one thing, it's that God loves us and wants us to be terrified.

If I know one thing, it's that you are the last passenger pigeon.

MARTHA: I'm not that old.

COTTON: Martha, one plus one plus one makes one.
You are the one. The last one.

MARTHA: I saw a fledgling just the other day.

COTTON: The chicks of mourning doves look identical to the chicks of passenger pigeons. It causes false sightings into the 1920's-

MARTHA: It's 1914.

COTTON: One plus one plus one is one.

MARTHA: That's not true.

COTTON: Three hundred dead witches can't be wrong.

(COTTON goes into full preacher mode, as in the archival footage.)

You can have my gun when you pry it from
an angel of the Lord said unto them:
let's get this party started,
but nine-out-of-ten dentists agree that
you should call your doctor if your erection lasts
more than four hours.

MARTHA: Save the absurdist fragments for the pulpit.

COTTON: Fine. I'll tell you a *story*.

I once saw a flock of passenger pigeons
near Boston
block out the sky
for an entire afternoon.
Such, Martha, was the greatness of your species.
Horizon to horizon,
the four points of the compass.
They blotted out the sun.
They fertilized our fields.
They filled our pigeon pies and our lobster traps.

END OF SAMPLE.