

5.

I discovered a version of God when I woke too early
Sundays for cartoons: the *Hour of Power*, its earnest

pastels, dawned before the television ceded neon
and mayhem: two hours later I'd have forgotten,

but in the antsy minutes of six a.m. alone I'd press my feet
into the carpet with impatience till the sermons ended:

I probably liked the music: maybe that's why I was
curious about the faith my classmates held, white dresses,

confirmation, though not curious enough for conversion:
perhaps they weren't the televangelists *The Handmaid's*

Tale imagined, ardent piety turned into coercion, control,
prosperity gospel turned to decline and fall: *it couldn't*

happen here: I haven't watched that show yet, something
I didn't realise would make me feel apologetic: the book's

Serena Joy in my mind played by one of those steadfast
faithful Sunday morning women: I learned of Tammy Faye

and Phyllis later: imagine the shock of Gilead for Tammy,
shock of being stripped of glamour: Tammy Faye, all big

hair and glimmer eyes, mascara and bold lips: now
modesty replacing glam, but at least not stuck in handmaid red,

handmaid bonnet, handmaid's scarlet anonymity: no longer
allowed to storm the capital, perform the insurrection, which

will be—has been—televised: the cartoons, meanwhile,
love letters to another logic I still hold dear: the giddiness

of Looney Tunes, an antidote to weight piled on by years:
the rules of *Roadrunner* still circulate: *the coyote must*

be more humiliated than harmed: me, as viewer,
still annoyed by Roadrunner's always-smug veneer,

me always, still, in sympathy with coyote's manic, fanatic,
heretic, gravity-afflicted heart

6.

I want to celebrate Astro, the robot boy I loved, his Pinocchio
ache, a moment's solace that time he found a robot girlfriend:

incandescent eyes at last find eyes to beam right back: and him
fallen in, into, unprogrammed love: but soon the complication

revealed, its violence: his robot girlfriend not just another robot but,
also, a bomb, *the* bomb, the one he needs to find, defuse, and his

girlfriend sacrificed: a higher pathos: so: her body on a table,
disassembled, redeemed, everyone but her saved, (a celebration,)

except the robot boy and his lonely deathlessness: did he understand
time's passage in a different way, its metronomic tick echoing

in his ever-childish body?: did he understand the replaceable,
Argonautic parts of himself as his own, as bodily integrity,

autonomy?: for all his griefs, there's that final shot—a wink,
a playful secret: Astro tells us, his audience, his only confidantes,

he *kept her legs*, which, non-explosive, did not require
sacrifice: and he caresses his own thighs, calves, and we

understand it: her legs, shared legs, now *his* legs, no rejection
of the transplant, no foreign tissue, instead a flawless

interchangeability, the comfort of this particular
inheritance incalculable: I recapped the scene to the boy

at the video store counter, our own private form of payment
for my late fee, as if it were just gross and not wondrous

as well: and, to me, this transplant only feels complete
years later, its longing for closeness, the intimate fact of being,

at last, one being, like me once telling my lover *I want to feel with
your skin*: Astro usurping this longing, Astro the only one

who ever really felt it