

SUZY ZEUS  
GETS  
ORGANIZED

MAGGIE ROBBINS

New York

A

TIN HOUSE  
BLOOMSBURY  
BOOK

2005

## SUZY ZEUS SETS SOME LIMITS

Suzy Zeus likes guys with handguns.

Suzy Zeus likes beer in kegs.

Suzy Zeus likes breaking windows.

Suzy Zeus likes breaking eggs.

Suzy's got a boyfriend, Harry.

Touch him and she'll break your legs.

Suzy likes her sister's undies.

Suzy likes her brother Keith.

Suzy likes her father's buck knife.

Suzy likes its leather sheath.

Suzy likes her boyfriend Harry.

Touch him and she'll break your teeth.

Suzy hails from Indiana,

land of crops, of Fords and farms.

Suzy lives in New York City,

land of cops and car alarms.

Suzy lives six blocks from Harry.

Touch him and she'll break your arms.

Suzy's got a kick-ass system.  
Suzy is what Suzy owns.  
Elton John and Cyndi Lauper,  
Fleetwood Mac, the Rolling Stones  
(Harry grooves to Waylon Jennings—  
touch him and she'll break your bones),

Carly Simon, Sheena Easton,  
Wham!, the Roches, Yes, *The Rose*,  
Billy Joel, Duran Duran, and  
Handel oratorios.  
Harry's humming "My Sharona."  
Touch him and she'll break your nose.

Suzy's got a bag of bridge mix.  
Suzy's got some frozen peas.  
Suzy's got a front-door dead bolt.  
Harry's got a set of keys.  
Harry's got a way with women.  
Touch him and she'll break your knees.

Suzy stands before the mirror:  
sultry, soulful, calm, complete.  
Suzy loves her shapely shoulders,

likes her nose, adores her feet.  
Wants a pair of mules in puce, a  
pair of pumps in parakeet.

Harry asks her what she's up to.  
Asks her almost every night.  
Harry likes to see her naked,  
see her naked in the light.  
Harry never takes her dancing.  
Harry says her hair's a fright.

Suzy Zeus is drinking whiskey.  
Suzy Zeus is making eyes.  
Suzy Zeus is making trouble  
at the bar, with other guys.  
Harry finds her, rips her dress off,  
leaves it bunched around her thighs.

Suzy's got a can of bean dip.  
Suzy's got a can of mace.  
Suzy's got a Good News Bible.  
Suzy's got a real nice place.  
Harry's pissing out the window.  
Touch him and she'll break your face.

CHAPTER 6  
Suzy in Love

## SUZY MEETS A GUY

Last week, at a parish meeting,  
Suzy saw a stunning sight:  
someone with a brace of cheekbones  
higher than a flying kite.  
William spoke, and made it clear, on  
top of that, that he was bright.

Bill knows port, and Bill knows starboard.  
Bill knows booms, and ropes, and crews.  
Bill can change his tack mid-harbor.  
Bill knows all the microbrews.  
Bill would like to take her sailing.  
Bill begins to call her "Suze."

Bearded, tall, as thin as Jesus,  
wowed by Christianity,  
Bill has learned to work on water.  
Bill gives Suzy rides for free.  
Bill is into contemplation.

Suze prefers activity.

## SUZY MAKES A DATE

Suzy Zeus is filling ketchups,  
thinking that it's very Zen.  
Killing time and killing roaches,  
counting money, counting men.  
Suzy wants to kiss and cuddle.  
Suzy stops to wonder when.

Suzy's thinking back to Harry.  
Looking forward to her date.  
Will she get off work by "nine-ish"?  
Will they keep her there too late?  
Bill says call him, hey, whatever.  
William's from the Lone Star state.

William's studied Being, Presence,  
won't eat meat or wear real fur.  
He's read Kant, a little Kafka.  
Suzy thinks he's real mature.  
Suzy wants to bear him presents:  
gold and frankincense and myrrh.

William bought a Russian icon  
for his roommate: angel, horn,  
lily, dove, and seated girl—"To  
you a baby will be born."  
Suzy wonders if this handmaid  
crops up in religious porn.

Suzy thought of Robert writing.  
Suzy thinks of William bound.  
Suzy thought of Robert reading  
to himself without a sound.  
Suzy thinks that Bill's the hottest  
son of man for miles around.

Suzy wants his what and why. She  
wants his when and wants it now.  
Suzy wants his where and whether.  
Suzy wants his who—and how.  
Suzy wants a new communion:  
bread and wine and *I and Thou*.

Suzy Zeus is mad about him  
(let her sing it in the rain!)—

crazy for her handsome sailor  
(spin and twirl, a weathervane!).  
Suzy Zeus is full of feelings.  
Suzy Zeus is feeling sane.

## SUZY MULLS IT OVER

Suzy Zeus knows guys are shallow.  
Suzy Zeus knows life is short.  
Bill says let the field lie fallow,  
bring provisions to the fort.  
Suzy Zeus says ride the storm out.  
Bill says shelter here in port.

Suzy wants a whole new haircut.  
Suzy wants a special gown.  
Suzy wants to wear silk stockings  
and a boa and a crown.  
Bill wears jeans and cotton T-shirts.  
Bill is calming Suzy down.

Suzy hears but doesn't listen.  
Suzy looks but doesn't see.  
Suzy Zeus is like a chipmunk.  
Bill is stiller, like a tree.  
Bill knows how to stop and notice,  
sit (or stand), and breathe, and be.

Suzy needs to slow her talking:  
slow her teeth and tongue and lips.  
Suzy needs to slow her walking:  
toes and ankles, knees and hips.  
Suzy needs to slow her radar:  
slow the sweep and slow the blips.

Suzy watches Robert blessing,  
bowing down, diluting wine.  
Suzy tries to be a grape and  
think of Jesus as her vine.  
Tries to be an upright sheep, be  
graceful as she waits in line.

Suzy's stance is so unsteady.  
Suzy's grip is none too strong.  
Suzy's feeling so unready.  
Suzy's feeling so, so wrong.  
Maybe this is just too heady.  
This week's service is so long.

## SUZY MAKES AN EFFORT TO APPEAR PATIENT

Suzy Zeus is trying softball.  
Suzy's trying macramé.  
At first base and tied in knots, she's  
at a loss for what to say.  
All that she can think is, Will he?  
All that she can do is pray.

*Falling in* makes love sound deep. A  
vat. Or is it more an art?  
Suzy's feeling scared and shaky  
as she watches something start.  
Suzy feels like someone's playing  
table tennis with her heart.

Suzy pushes, pushes harder,  
wonders where she wants to get.  
Suzy isn't sure what's wrong, but  
something hasn't happened yet.  
Why is Suzy so unhappy?  
Why is Suzy so upset?



Suzy tries to sit and wait for  
matters slowly to unfurl.  
Not o'ernight a grain of sand in  
oyster doth become a pearl.  
Suzy doesn't need a guy to  
tell her she's a pretty girl.

Bill is loaning Suzy books to  
look at while she's on the train.  
Bill is making Suzy tapes, and  
Bill is causing Suzy pain.  
Suzy falls asleep to *Follies*  
and the sound of driving rain.

## SUZY MAKES AN EFFORT TO AVOID VIOLENCE

Suzy wants to take him sailing  
just to smack him with the boom.  
Suzy may just need to leave him  
drowning in his elbow room.  
Suzy wants to bean him with *The  
Book of J* by Harold Bloom.

Suzy grants him room for elbows.  
Suzy grants him room for knees.  
Throw in houses while you're at it—  
swing sets, cars, a couple trees.  
He can find some other girlfriend.  
Let her search for birds and bees.

Suzy has his number. Baby,  
Suzy has his full address.  
But how William thinks about her,  
Suzy can't begin to guess.  
Suzy, none too good at courting,  
only knows the full-court press.

## SUZY RETREATS

Suzy went beyond Poughkeepsie—  
Suzy went to Holy Cross.  
Looked and listened for the Lord, 'cause  
Suzy knows the Lord's the boss.  
Suzy went to shake her innards,  
keep her soul from growing moss.

People try to contact God there.  
People try the herbal teas.  
People listen to their heartbeats,  
to the wind through groves of trees.  
Sometimes in the silence they re-  
member where they left their keys.

Suzy gazed across the Hudson  
at a mansion on a bluff,  
trudged through trees and wet her knees—she  
had to put on all new stuff.  
Suzy's going to dance her praying,  
like King David, in the buff.

Suzy met a handsome monk there.  
Suzy met an aging nun.  
Suzy asked the Holy Spirit—  
and the Father, and His Son—  
how to tell her own unconscious  
from the Transcendental One.

When an insight comes to Suzy—  
what to wear, or what to do—  
could it be a gift from God, or  
is it her? (They're not all true.)  
Is the voice divine or human?  
Suzy Zeus has not a clue.

Ancient Greeks, with nine to choose from,  
sipped their ouzo, heard their muse.  
Suzy wonders, was that real, or  
was it maybe just the booze?  
Suzy hears a thought. *His roommate*  
*isn't just his roommate, Suze.*