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# Nec(Romantic)

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

NEC(ROMANTIC)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

in

CREATIVE WRITING

by

Cathleen Ferree Chambless

2015

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus  
College of Arts and Sciences

This thesis, written by Cathleen Ferree Chambless, and entitled Nec(Romantic), having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

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Campbell McGrath

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Maneck H. Daruwala

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Denise Duhamel, Major Professor

Date of Defense: March 2, 2015

The thesis of Cathleen Chambless is approved.

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Dean Michael R. Heithaus  
College of Arts and Sciences

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Dean Lakshmi N. Reddi  
University Graduate School

Florida International University, 2015

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Futility- Jai-Alai

Going Steady in 2013- A Touch of Saccharine

Kind of a Hurricane Press Best of 2014

How to Perform Necromancy- Cent Journal

Inside A Mason Jar- Electronic Encyclopedia of Experimental Literature

Pick a Card- The Mindless [M]use

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

NEC(ROMANTIC)

by

Cathleen Chambless

Florida International University, 2015

Miami, Florida

Professor Denise Duhamel, Major Professor

NEC(ROMANTIC) is a poetry collection thematically linked through images of insects, celestial bodies, bones, and other elements of the supernatural. These images are indicative of spells, but the parenthesis around romantic in the collection's title also implies idealism. The poems explore the author's experiences with death, grief, love, oppression, and addiction. NEC(ROMANTIC) employs the use of traditional forms such as the villanelle, sestina, and haiku to organize these experiences. Prose poetry and a peca kucha ground the center of NEC(ROMANTIC) which alternates between lyrical and narrative gestures.

NEC(ROMANTIC) is influenced by Sylvia Plath. The author uses Plath's methods of compression, sound, and rhythm to create a swift, child-like tone when examining emotionally laden topics. Ilya Kaminsky influences lyrical elements of the poems, including surrealism. Spencer Reese's combination of the natural and personal world is also paramount to this book. Adrienne Rich and Audre Lorde influence NEC(ROMANTIC)'s political poetry.

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Trials

At nine, I was bewitched by

Samantha,

Sabrina,

& the ladies

of *The Craft*.

In my tree house

I made a nest of

rhinestones,

clovers,

& lizard eggs.

Baby anoles bit my

lobes & I wore the reptilians

like earrings

as I would chant.

Sometimes

I still talk

to the moon goddess

at night, when

the locusts of loneliness

swarm.

Once upon a lunar eclipse,  
hanging ripe  
in the sky, amidst  
an ochrous glow,  
she whispered to me  
our herstory.

Medieval midwives  
used the blushing Belladonna's  
asterisked lips,  
Ergot's golden brushes,  
& dishes of digitalis,  
to ease Eve's curse.  
But the Church said  
mothers should suffer  
& doctors desired  
the birthing business.

They called them  
witches. Wrists  
tethered together  
at the stake,  
breasts illuminated

like Luna Moths

rising

from the smoke & from

their ashes

grew a gnarled

mahogany tree

with a womyn's

face, owls nested

in her mouth.

I could see it

from my window,

she sang

to me

as I plucked her plump

mangoes,

their coral

phosphorescence caressing

my cheeks.

## Kill Your Darlings

Spinal tap tap, tick-tock, tick-tock, the mouse impaled beneath the clock, poor Hickory-Dickory-Dock. Was the sound shrill or scratchy as the nail pierced his rectum and slid against his spine? I heard a vivisector dropped his carcass into a glass vat, vacuum-sealed shut. Stocked in the lab in the cellar of the Pentagon, where Hickory became the pinnacle of a pentagram of jars propped proper on shelves. Some specimens so old, if opened they showered snowflakes of rust. Semen of Satanic recluses, shreds of nooses from the Salem witch trials, bile of crocodiles that devoured infants along the Nile, Hitler's fingernail clippings, the fetus of Mary's aborted child. Sugar, spice, and everything vile, liquidated and sucked into a vial. Pediatricians plunge the sticky slew into plump arms. We have created the vaccine against evil, the spit of the spider that bit ya. Hip-hip hooray, hush hush, here's a cherry Tootsie-Pop, lick it while I wipe the pus.

## Blood-Moon

3 a.m.: lunar eclipse.

Lying on my back on the tarmac

of my roof.

The moon submerged under the umbra of the Earth,

rust smothers the last silver heirloom.

A red embryo glows in the sky,

the shadow of its fetus dissolving inside,

clouds spread like secrets

you weren't supposed to tell.