

Pandemic 1917

So many vaudevillians
died that year
 rubber chicken men
 bankrupt
 theatres sagged
 scraggly clowns
starring in skeleton revues
 playing for a penny to

blank rooms

 boost the actors' morale

Olive and her mother
 watched "Corrigan's Review"
 (signage outside:
 "an anchovy who reads minds with 98% accuracy")
in a dump of a former palace

two poor women
 a cold
 vaudeville theatre

 here
 it happened:
a man in "showbiz" discovered her:
(saw her and thought \$\$\$)

 Olive
 a girl with blue-foal eyes
licorice-black hair
 reflecting light
 the starving mother offering
 the hungry daughter peanuts
 as skeletons danced on the stage
 do anything
 dream big
 get us out.

Chinatown, Los Angeles, 1924

Olive and the small players like her
bitch at The Oval Cafe

the incense, the red bulbs, the women
playing at exotic
for the white men with cash to spend

Olive ate chop suey, egg foo yong, shrimp
in "Australia sauce"
with Mae Wong Sue (real name "Alice")
travelled by steamer to Hollywood from Canton!
(born in Sacramento)
smoked, held hands under the table, talked shop
talked about how they'd
live in a world of women
when they got rich.

Studio Executives Meeting, 1925

The broad with the black hair
holding the hoe beside that cow
Who is she?
Hello?
Sorry sir. Just bringing in your clam juice.
—hello can I get an answer?

Olive something. She's just a day player.
Olive what?
Borden sir.
Olive Has a Body on Her. Put Jack on.

Hullo Jack? Yes, she has something.
Right, she's a nobody now.
Day player.

So who do we want her to be?

"Little Mary."

We got one already.

"The Vitagraph Girl."

We hemorrhaged on the last one.

"America's Sweetheart."

"The Vamp."

That Hungarian's got it covered. Garbage whatever.

"The Siren."

Warmer.

Something about that black hair.

She's mysterious.

She's sexual.

She's her own boss.

Turns up her nose at the working men.

Manipulates to get to the top.

She can't be controlled.

She's nobody's sweetheart.

She'll stop at nothing
To get what she wants.
The Ice Queen.

Terrific. We'll see you for tennis Thursday.
Give my love to Shirl.

Hello? Call that broad's agent.
Tell her to go see Bill.
Boilerplate contract.

Restroom, 1926

Olive saw Jean Harlow
skinny ankled, pale, clammy, but blonder
in the coat room at Chasen's.

I heard you were at the Good Shepherd Hospital
Are you alright?

I was getting rid of a problem. Jack Warner paid. No silly. He does
that for all the girls.

Don't look so surprised.
Are you a bearcat or a kitten, Olive?
ok then.
So you get it.

Play like a man or you're out.