

SELF PORTRAIT AS A SMALL WORLD

**DANIELLE
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They say not to splash the water, not to drink. Just sit back & float through in your tiny craft, hands & legs inside at all times. I am little bodies singing for you in seventy different languages. This Haitian girl says *My stomach hurts*. This little Dutch boy is holding a tin can to his belly, listening close. Everything is research. The pancreas is paper mache & my body making paste. Did you know the lower intestines swim in milk?—not like a bath. Our internal organs move constantly. Benign tumors float through like raisins in oatmeal; tourists from Germany. Sometimes when you taste me I'm sweeter than agave syrup, or is that my succulent wilting in your mouth? But anyway, when they lock us in at night I drink from the fountain that flows near, just to keep my bloodied lips wet. To say that the trail leaking from my ears is just from too much music. Let's reset. Really, I'm sponging poison like the nest of asbestos I was raised in. Really, my animatronics are failing. My elbows click & eyelids fall like snapping fish. Let's say we unzip my belly & rummage through the wires, see the sad organs shoved against the circuitry; I rust, I spark against. The water barely helps my thirst or wets the throat. I'm so tired of this song. If I could break my concrete casings & hot glue-gunned breeches I'd jump gaily into this canal. I want to make you happy. I want to sizzle & combust. We all do, it's all we talk about.