

1.

I've been in the game for like 7 years,  
but as a lifter I'm still in the closet.

I think that people would  
judge me if I told them.

First rule of shoplifting,  
do not talk about shoplifting.

My rent is unfairly high,  
so I need to make budget cuts.

That's a bit harsh on the supermarket...

but I can't steal from my landlord.

What I found out is that prices go up  
before something goes on sale.

I have proof of that,  
with coffee, they do it.

They are super hyped up in their  
ads: "two for the price of one"...

and I'm like: no way...

two for the price of zero.

Everybody does it, right?

If you pay for all your products,  
you're a bit silly, no?

When those scanners showed  
up, I was like, seriously?

Now I am doing the job?

Without getting paid?

If I'm forced to scan my stuff  
I'm like, the avocado is my payment.

If you make me take my stuff out of  
my bag, that's a problem for me.

This is not passport control, is it?

If you approach me as a potential  
criminal, then you're asking for it.

What I don't understand is  
those other customers...

how they just stroll through  
the store without any concern.

I don't get that, how

blindly trusting they are.

In the old days, I did also drop my groceries on the conveyor belt...

But now with the beeps I am like...

do I actually find this a fair handover of money?

The beeps woke up my critical thinking, you see?

Those products, basically the things that keep us alive...

they were grabbed from nature, ruthlessly wrapped in plastic...

and reduced to a barcode.

We swipe them in front of those devices as if it's a videogame.

We don't realize what we set in motion in the world.

We know that what we do has some effect somewhere...

but we don't feel it.

We don't smell the mud, we don't see the blood.

At the checkout, I'm like, where is the small talk?

There were always those gentle eyes who asked me to behave.

Where are they?

What happened to Cynthia?

Who reminds me of my humanity now?

We are gone, you see, that's what I feel.

We are anthropologically mutated...

sold out to the market.

**2.**

The other day I was holding a tray of shrimp and I thought...

who the hell peeled these shrimp?

Why don't those women in Morocco, or I don't know where, get a bit of the profit?

Why don't they get Albert Heijn  
stocks for their work?

Peeling shrimp is no joke...

you ever done it?

The absolute normality of it all.

Why are there strawberries at Dirk  
in November?

Why are they there?

Why are there plastic bags within  
plastic bags within plastic bags?

And why can the store just toss stuff in  
a container at the end of the day?

How is that fair?

We know that our planet cannot  
endlessly provide us.

How is this legal?

They are crooks and from  
crooks you can take.

What I do is an adventurous and  
naive way of restoring balance...

like some Robin Hood  
micro-justice. That's it.

Tampons, for instance...

nothing related to our bleeding bodies  
should be behind a paywall, nothing.

Tampons should be free.

And by the way, I also steal sandwiches  
for the beggars at the station.

Although, I think we shouldn't  
be helping the poor...

we should come up with a system  
where there are no underdogs.

But well, good luck with that.

We all know this of course,  
but for the record...

It's an asymmetric conflict.

The other side has got way more  
power and resources than I do.

I can't just stroll to the Jumbo head-quarters and lay my issues on the table.

The only option left is to sabotage things.

If I were to pay for my products, it feels like I'm on their side...

on Jumbo's side. I don't want that.

I don't want to be complicit in how they import sketchy avocados from Peru.

I'm not a fucking puppet on a string.

Remember: the supermarket is not about groceries.

The supermarket is a moneymaking machine.

Those groceries are the means, not the goal.

For eight grams of dried parsley, they want 2 euros 49...

A jar of eight grams.

That's 300 euros per kilo?

Is that what it takes to grow a kilo of parsley?

Do these supermarkets ever think about ethics?

They think about the shareholders...

ethics my ass.

Some algorithm figured out that we put the parsley into our basket, without a fuss.

We are having friends over for dinner and we want to serve them an Ottolenghi recipe...

because we want to be hospitable and kind-hearted individuals.

What I want...

I want to freak out that algorithm.

I want to punch the algorithm in the face.

**3.**

Sushi, you know.

I just have an expensive taste.

Can I help it?

Asparagus, Tony Chocology...

Ben & Jerry's.

And also, it tastes  
better when I steal it.

Call it self-love.

First they install the greed, and  
then they squeeze it out,

that's the strategy.

My brain is getting addicted.

Oh, nice thingy.

They make us think that we  
need 4000 euros a month...

and granola for breakfast  
and soy milk and chia seeds.

And we fall for it, because  
we want to succeed.

We want to show our family and friends:  
I've become a pleasant successful person.

We don't want to disappoint them.

We're tempted to be tempting people, and  
to tempt other people to be tempting too.

They tell us to buy diet drinks, to confirm  
some fucked up female beauty image.

And on top of the Pringles  
we start buying overpriced salads.

And we get into debt,  
and we work our asses off.

In the end we don't find time  
to see each other anymore.

We become strangers to one another.

We only send each other text  
messages with smileys.

Hihi

We start to feel frustrated,  
because we cannot have it all.

Still we can't afford a decent

home and we think...

What are we actually doing wrong?

Meanwhile the world is becoming  
an increasingly bigger mess.

And we think it's our fault...

that's the bloody limit,  
that we think it's our fault.

Why do we think that we  
are responsible for this?

We are not the  
dealer, damn it...

we are the user.

Why don't I have the right  
to organic products?

If I'm short on cash, does that mean  
I have to eat bargain chicken?

Wouldn't it be better to steal an organic  
one, that one is not tortured, right?

I also want to be part of  
the organic movement.

And when I eventually want a mortgage,  
and I do, I need a mortgage...

I need a mortgage.

then I got to start saving now.

I need a mortgage. I need it.

I'm a terrible socialist, true.

I'm not a worthy socialist.

I find it hard enough just  
to take care of myself.

Just to be clear: Albert  
Heijn is not the enemy.

Albert Heijn is a symptom.

The Appie is just doing what it  
has to do in a messed-up system.

If Albert Heijn decides not to make  
profit but distribute milk to the population...

the shareholders will walk away,  
and the competition takes over.

If you want to survive: You have to be selfish, but pretend to be innocent.

4.

So they do as if we are important...

we little consumers who get excited about a plate of pasta.

They act like a friendly market vendor...

a warm father figure who is kind to the kids.

We believe they are having the best intentions with...

those stickers with 'together against waste' and certified fisheries, and...

reusable bags, and whatever else.

The violence is hidden behind a facade of amiable coziness.

With the damn cozy smell of freshly baked bread.

And cooking magazines that make everyone feel like a part of a friendly middle class.

And Lionel Richie playing on the speakers.

So we don't see it.

We are hypnotized.

'Would you like Efteling punten?'

And it works, damn it, because we've got that fucking empathetic brain.

I'm a sucker for human connection.

So what do I do?

I am playing a role too.

I play the reliable customer.

I give the security guard my friendly white smile.

Oh was there a red pepper in my bag? That's awful, sorry.

Good person I am...

a good person.

In a good world, full of good people...

I am...

a good girl

in a good world.

Good person, I am...

a good person.

In a good world, full of good people.

I am...

a good girl.

Now I think about it... this performance  
of innocence is what we share.

That's the oil that keeps  
the machine running.

Hello apple lady, those are beautiful  
apples, are they Golden Delicious?

Yes little Red Riding Hood,

they have a sticker saying  
they're organically grown.

That's great, thank you apple lady.

Have a nice weekend,  
Little Red Riding Hood.

You too, apple lady.

There are different groups of consumers.

First of all you have the  
gullible good citizens...

who have no clue how much money  
they are handing over to the shops.

White middle-class people who still  
carry a few morals with them.

Let's call them Mom and Dad.

Thinking about injustice is  
more like a hobby for them.

If they have feelings of guilt,  
they go to Ekoplaza.

Another group knows all too  
well about inequality...

People with a migration background,  
the disillusioned working class.



But many of them would never dare to steal.

They would catch the eye of the security.

They are the ones ending up  
with a criminal record.

And then there is us:  
the artists of camouflage.

We know what is going on,  
and we know our duty.

But somehow, you wouldn't  
guess by looking at us.

Know your privilege, I say.

In the time when I had black flat mates, I  
was the one doing the grocery shopping.

They did something else.

## 5.

Suddenly, and it happened overnight,  
stores started to look like playgrounds.

While everyone else was wandering  
around like zombies...

I saw: everything. The people,  
the workers, the cameras.

I started to see how I could free  
myself from the dogmas.

Sure, I target the toothpaste...

but what I really want is the adrenaline.

The pounding heart in my throat

The fear...

the possibility of getting caught  
when I do something naughty.

Why call it stealing?  
I call it a love affair.

The camera and I play a game...

With my right hand I draw its attention...

while my left hand slips something  
into my jacket pocket.

It is so freaking exciting.

It kinda makes me horny, even.

And remember, society as it is  
is also just a game...

the cops are the referees.

But you don't realize that you're playing...

you don't see that you can flip the board.

Only shoplifters see that.

Luckily more and more people wake up.

If I see them take something,  
it always makes me smile...

especially if it's a woman.

The system was designed by  
people with penises, right?

I feel connected to my fellow  
lifters, sisterhood I call it.

And sometimes, passing by,  
we give each other a nod.

I love that.

For me it's a poetic act.

It evokes something  
magical in me, shoplifting.

As if we are lifting the items  
from the store, one by one.

The products shyly rise up...

and float behind us  
as we leave the store.

Basmati rice...

the pasta...

the bananas.

they all start losing their weight.

Come on guys!

Imagining a different world,  
that's what I call it.

Fun fact: I used to do it a lot  
during my maternity leave...

adds a bit of excitement to the routine.

My big tip: stuff things in the stroller.

If you get caught, just blame it on your baby who keeps you up at night.

6.

We have to do this together, people.

if we don't do it, who will do it?

We have to destroy the supermarket from within.

Our shopping cart is a Trojan horse, you get it?

I started sharing online what I take from the store...

and my followers really appreciate it.

We become this army of shoplifters...

the product liberation front.

And it's also just a good joke of course, stealing.

#borrowing

In other words:  
How to steal?

Lesson one: presentation.

Don't dress too shabby,  
no hoodies, no leggings.

And the outfit has to match...

you cannot wear a fancy jacket  
from Bijenkorf with worn-out sneakers.

Not too much makeup.

Lesson two: methodology.

Roughly speaking, there are two methods: be messy or be impeccable.

First, the messy method.

Forget a basket, make sure you have too many groceries in your hands.

Make a call while walking, put your phone back in your pocket, take it out...

put a protein bar in your pocket, take out your phone again, drop something.

In other words: juggle.

Once you're at the self-scan...

What I sometimes do: I ask  
for help with a specific item.

Where on the screen can I find the pear?

Then I come across less suspicious.

How does this work? It's  
my first time here, you see.

I don't get it, did I remove that product?

Is that a chocolate croissant? I thought  
it was a regular croissant, sorry.

What does the employee do?

They say: "It happens, ma'am".  
They learn that in training.

If a supermarket is too strict,  
it won't attract customers.

No one wants to shop at a police station.

It happens, ma'am.  
It happens.

And tomorrow humanity comes to an end.

It happens, ma'am.

Okay, the impeccable method.

Do your things with an attitude  
of casual presence.

You're an expat, okay?

What I hate is amateurism,  
never look at the cameras.

By the way, don't think someone is  
studying the footage all day, right?

Everyone knows there's a staff shortage.

Those cameras serve a  
symbolic purpose, like...

Jesus on the cross.

My best technique is this...

When you're at the self-checkout,  
keep the expensive items separate...

with a bank card on top,  
don't pay for them of course.

If you're not checked,  
you take them with you...

if you are checked, say: no, those  
are for my sick neighbor...

I have to pay for them, with  
his bankcard, I take care of him.

Suggest solidarity, like in the old days.

Make eye contact, very important.

Put yourself in their shoes.

Look, those teenagers...

This is not their dream job, right?

Approach them with a sense of empathy.

Wow, it's busy here today.  
Do you have much longer to go?

All of us are disenchanted  
and a bit lonely, you know.

If you play it well, the employee  
will sympathize with you.

They catch you.

Damn.

Lesson three: Never panic,  
never run, relax.

There are plenty of solutions.

Start by stating that this is  
not true, this is a mistake, lie.

Small story...

the other day I scanned my stuff and this  
boy comes over to check my groceries...

and he finds a piece of cheese in my bag.

But he can't call me out on it,  
because I'm a damn good liar.

He didn't inherit those rhetorical skills.

I see him realizing that  
and that hurts.

The face of someone who's  
been robbed is just awful.

I kinda took away his

faith in humanity.

If lying doesn't help,  
make yourself the victim.

Ride the waves of patriarchy.

In the long term we have to get rid  
of that, obviously, but for now...

That security guy wants to  
feel like a man, use that.

Tell him you have to choose  
between eating and the heating.

Make him feel like he is somebody.

If that doesn't work, tell them:  
this is not stealing...

this is nonviolent resistance against a  
violent economic system we are trapped in.

7.

Why call it stealing?  
I call it politics.

The rich are getting a tax deal, and  
my neighbor is accused of fraud...

just because of her surname.

Are you surprised she  
started stealing sausages?

People take something so they  
don't need to beg, you understand?

It is about dignity.

If you don't get that, then I guess  
the system is on your side...

the system might be  
working just fine, for you.

Maybe you don't know what it feels like  
not to be able to buy toilet paper.

Or how to ask your children not  
to invite friends over for dinner.

Maybe you don't know.

I could write a whole essay on injustice,  
but I don't think it changes anything.

Standing on a rainy square with your  
protest sign is not going to do much.

That's old politics.

It's about time that we tear down  
the sanctuary, people. Together.

Or what do you think?

That the wealthy ones will come  
to their senses by themselves?

That their greed will  
miraculously disappear?

Suddenly they take everyone and  
everything into account?

All living beings, and  
all future generations...

and all the entities without a wallet?

No, they won't. Of course not.

What those cameras do,  
they protect the billionaires.

The cameras are here,  
protecting their thingies.

Where those women are peeling  
our shrimp, there are no cameras.

If they are a little happy, we cannot see.

Let's end our passive compliance, ok?

Let's, for once, be indecent, damn it.

Stealing is stealing back, you get that?

I do what they do every day,  
I take and I take and I take.

I want to feel what it feels like.

Don't get me wrong, I am not  
going to force you to do it...

but I want to inspire you.

So if you like to do something, I say:

take the cookies.

The cookies are a beautiful trophy.

This is it.

I came to terms with  
the fact that this is it.

We plunder our way to  
the end, that's it.

Mea Culpa.

The human race is dying out...

but not without a good farewell party.

This is our last supper.

The decay is coming closer and closer,  
and we are happily rotting along.

Mankind has cut its veins and  
it waits for the end, and...

the few decades we have left,  
we swallow up the last Wasabi nuts.

**8.**

Remorse?

No way.

It's not like Etos is going bankrupt  
because I steal a lip balm.

I don't feel ashamed at all.

Only if I get caught, I feel ashamed.

Boundaries are elastic, you know,  
things are stretchable...

sometimes the elastic snaps back  
and you know your place again.

People want to be  
reasonable, so they pay.

And mom and dad...

they taught us to be honest...

And the bible of course.

There are still these religious morals  
hanging around here, like phantoms.

But mom and dad bought their  
potatoes from someone in the village.

Long before that little farm got  
swallowed up by a multinational...

with investors in Silicon Valley.

You get that?

Mom and dad come from prehistoric times.

Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal...



thou shalt not lie, right?

We need new commandments.

Thou shalt not fly...

thou shalt not esteem your  
shareholders above your neighbors.

Those are the things that would help.

Thou shalt not abuse...

thou shalt not abuse your monopoly position.

And what's super funny is that...

Albert Heijn thought that we  
would stick to those old lessons.

They thought they could exploit our  
Christian heritage a little longer.

Nope, Appie Happie, our  
morality is fluid, just like yours.