

PRAYERS: VOLUME 1

Dylan McDonagh Richard Davis



Prayers: Volume 1

By

Dylan McDonagh Richard Davis

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Dedicated To Anyone Who Visited (Or lived in, like the lot of us) Apartment 100K in Yorktown, VA

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Venting

You are not enough. I have always known you were not enough but look at me. I brought you to this broken bridge to give this departure of mine a sense of place but a sense of place means nothing to yourself. I don't know how I have fallen into this. Oh I don't. I don't love you even though I so badly want to. My affection for you is twisted around what I expect of you to do for me. You cannot love me. No way no how. It is not an inability as much as an impossibility and like I know this but I cannot divide myself from my feelings. And I cannot seem to gather the courage to abandon you. You would not care if you were abandoned. But I would. Oh it would break my heart to abandon you. How would it be regarded by you. Her body is no longer here. She is no longer here. But it would be acknowledged without the loss and with all of the acceptance. The conclusion of my empirical data. My tears and my biological needs and the sounds I make and then the telling language of my body. It is data alone and it means nothing to you beyond the fact. You have unearthed my rhythms and your affection relies upon these rhythms and oh you exploit me. You make me feel like such a body. I can't believe that I say he when I am talking and thinking about you. I do it on complete accident and I can't even catch myself anymore. I can't keep you from sleeping in my bed. I can't keep you from touching me where and how and when I want you to touch me. But I don't want you anymore. I am trying to tell you this. You are an affliction and you are an evil. Such an evil. See how I am trying to hurt you. I am trying to hurt you and oh god I am so misguided. I wish I could just tell you to leave me without having to accept the responsibility of doing so. But no I know that it is not about that and it is probably because I don't want to know how badly I have wounded myself by isolating myself with you for all of this time. I know that if you were gone then my self-loathing would only increase tenfold and I know that I would have to confront myself and accept this loneliness. I would have to genuinely look inward. I wish you could feel and I wish I really wish you did not make me feel so alone.

...

You can touch me, if you'd like. I didn't mean to. I'm so sorry. Thank you. Thank you. We'll wash your shirt when we get home. I'm sorry. I cannot help myself.

Diary Entry To Be ead With My Permission #1

Forgive me for inflicting my subjectivity upon you. Forgive the too personal introspection and the nakedness and lack of clarity of some of my thought. The conclusions will not always resonate and I know this. I'm not necessarily asking them to resonate for you and if I am speaking from my side of things then I will say that even in the resonance of these said conclusions I am always a little unsure of the validity and the endurance of their uncolored might. So if it is so personal an endeavor then it is like why try to assert or collect it in a place so that it is available to everyone else and why exert or expend the energy of my soul when I cannot even clearly do so. What does it matter that I reach conclusions within a virtual or physical parchment that I leave in my absence. The relationship between you and I is sort of standoffish and it is physically distant and I could never surpass the corporeality of this by any means other than subverting the parchment itself. But there are many reasons why I could not subvert the parchment and then there are many more why I would not want to. So what is the parchment for; what is it doing. Would you hit me if I admitted to only having an emotional or gutty kind of understanding of its purpose. I think what I am trying to do is bring you underneath my subjectivity and to make you vulnerable underneath my light. There is a message of love, however faint, buried, or muddled. I don't think I could write anything truly grotesque or unholy because I do not believe in subjecting those that I love to negativity and to the easily manipulated darkness. My vulnerability is eternal within this parchment and it makes me invulnerable but the might and degree of your own vulnerability is at the power of your own will, despite the little pleas of whatever arises out of the pieces themselves. So I would say that this relationship requires more of yourself than it does of me. I am not intimidating you into doing it but I promise that if you did you would discover something useful or at least that you would understand and appreciate my attempt to bring you inside. I am not asking you to love me; I am only asking that you allow yourself to feel the love I have left for you.

Prediction and Predilection

I cannot recall the symbols or the order in which they were revealed to me and I cannot remember my own personal selection of the cards but I can perfectly recall the outcome. My girlfriend and I are sitting crosslegged on her single size bed with the ratty mattress and we are facing each other and there is space between us where she is laying some cards facedown. There are vague and antiquated meanings to the portraits on each of the facedown cards. It is night and there is one lamp on her nightstand that is turned on and washing the bed and her hands and the laminated cards in dimlight. She has me select some of the cards by touching their backs with my forefinger. She maneuvers my selected cards back and forth so I cannot tell if they are the ones that I had selected or not. Then she asks me to ask a question. I ask her why I have to ask a question. She tells me that that question will not work because it does not qualify and that my question or the question must be one which pertains to myself and that I am uncertain of. It needs to be something upon which I ponder long and often and that I cannot answer because of the volatility of it. So I ask her my question. She begins to turn over the cards and swipe them over and across one another and I cannot tell if she is arranging them in a fashion that is in or against my favor. Some portraits are gruesome and some are of that gold and white regality like old catholic school mosaics. She organizes the portraits and I know nothing of the symbols or meanings of these and so I study her face and eyes but I cannot tell if the face that she is making is grave or not. She leans back on her wrists and the bad mattress springs squeak a little and the bed shakes and she says it to me straight and serious. You will die and you will not become renown until after your death. I say Okay. I say That's sad to hear. She interprets from my tone of voice how gullible and helpless I am to this fortune and she tells me that I should not believe in the cards and that they are only to facilitate thought about the said potential of one's fortune. I say no I know that and then I tell her flat-out that I expend so much thought on this subject already. I sort of laugh and stare at the cards and I tell her about how I suspected this would be the out-come. She says she is sorry and that she feels guilty. She quickly gathers up the cards and puts them back into the labelwashed deck and she returns it to the drawer of her dresser where they had been hidden underneath some blouses. We lie in bed with the lights out and I talk softly at her in the darkness about how good and misunderstood I feel that I may be.

The Typical Atypical Tendencies

I have never met a person so wounded. She has struggled with her hatred of her self for nearly all her life and it is because of the seemingly unanimous hatred that others have had for her *How does it feel to be subjected to this I'm so sorry that I am doing this to my friends my girlfriend they don't deserve to share such quiet moments and to be manipulated* The softwhite lights in the fan are throwing big rapid rapid shadows of the clockwising blades on the arched ceiling and we are small in the large hollow apartment that is almost gothic and that Lucas has gotten like a very good price for. The walls are white white white and the room is bare of furniture and other necessary expendables and what was once a fireplace is now a wall and there are some books they have brought with them and set up on the mantel with the spines showing. Adam has been driving all day to come see me and now he is sitting up he is listening to me with his elbows on his knees and I feel like he is listening to me. Tyler is passed out on the airmattress with his mouth open and his arm is cast back over his head. His hair is maybe a little redder and more curly than it was a year ago. I'm sitting up talking and talking and talking. The subject is familiar to Adam and yeah the familiarity allows us to thread and to reverberate my futureworld and his pastworld off of one another *I feel loved here and I feel alone here* The hate in her life has been continuation continuation continuation and there are so many of the uncleansed untended wounds now and those who have inflicted her are all ignorant or pretending to be ignorant of the hatred and guilt that they have inflicted her with and I am a stranger from the south or a stranger from the east and I feel like I may be the first person in her life to love her and I feel also like being the first person does not make me heroic in my love and it may not save her to be loved so late in her lifetime *I am loved and she is not loved and I do not deserve to be loved like I am by my friends my family when someone else that I love has no loves like these* Adam is listening and making pretty reverb and I am listening to his reverb. Behind me there is a door that is closed and through it Lucas and Rachel are sleeping on a gratuitously large mattress. They are so in love and it is so good and right.. Lucas is in truelove and he is blind and mighty because of the light and warmth of it. I hope that Adam and I are not keeping them awake with our sad and true and very mutual reverberations.

Adam is driving and Lucas is here too. I am in the backseat leaning up over the center and I have them in a hold and in a place that they cannot leave. The music is turned down and there is wind blowing through the slightly opened windows and it is just like I have to bring it up, again. Lucas knows some but now he will know all. There is that hurt and there is that hatred but here are all of the hatreds. I am a paragon of hope and whitelight but not really and she is dying on me and dying in my hands and has come close to dying on me already. Someone says that it is not on your hands; it is not like you gouged her so don't act like that and but it is still on and in my hands because I have been plugging up the wounds for so long now and it has like spilled all over and is between my fingers now. My love is not strong enough but then I place such an importance on the love *Could you love again and I will say that I could but I don't know I don't know because what if I am the last love in her life and what is absolute failure like when you are a young twentyone. This could wreck me and this will probably wreck me* My god Lucas says as if out of breath and I know that he does not have a lot of breath on this because well there is not a lot breath to be permitted by this. Adam mentions his naivety in reference to his past and I try to speak like I am not naïve in my present. What if she dies. What if she dies and then the opposition to this possibility is absolute success and love. Pygmy lambs or goats or maybe just a not special mutt and we will then be living in the good district of town and in a big apartment or attic of an old pretty house where we will be uninhibited in our love. But it has reached an almighty crescendo and it is that she will either die or she will not and if she does not then she will live *Is reality unkind I don't know I can't tell anymore but then I don't think I ever saw that reality could be unkind before this*

I don't want you to die and if you die I am afraid that it is going to hurt me and that it might like severely

wound me. I mean when you say it like that it makes me feel incredibly guilty. No no no it is just the arbitrary outcome of this situation, my being hurt by your death is or I guess it would be. Well. I'm sorry I'm just so worried about you dying. I don't want to die. I know you don't. I don't want to die but this is very hard for me. I know it is. I try to think of the good things. That's what I hope you do and I hope you think about me and my cat and about the not so distant future that you could have with us. I do I do I do. Oh please I don't want you to die and I love you and I miss you and I think that I feel very alone after being unconditionally loved by my friends for a whole week. I want to meet your friends. I want you to meet my friends. I have to go though. You do. Someone else needs to use the phone now. Okay. I'm sorry. I'm sorry too. I love you and I miss you. I love you too. I really don't want to say goodbye.

jamestown

I'm in my father's clothes. We're playing in the jamestown and the water is kind of dirty kind of cold. We have our shoes off like we are younger than we actually are. She is writing my name in the sand with a heart going around it. She would take a photo of it and send it to me if I were not here. I'm in my father's clothes and they are too big on me and I remember that my family buried one of our old cats out here. We put her in an old vacuum cleaner box and dug her a shallow grave and my mother said a prayer. There are pieces of shells in the jamestown and I am gathering pieces from the water dipping my father's cuff in the water getting it all soaked. She has written my name in cursive and it will be there until hightide comes. The sun is up. The air is clean with a little salt in it. The sundress she is wearing you can see her legs through it and the colors of her underwear. When the sun is on her. Her hair is up in a snail so it wouldn't get wet while she was writing my name in cur-sive. She washes the sand off of her finger in the water. I have a collection of cold dripping shells and I think why am I in my father's clothes. The sun is up high enough but I keep thinking that it is near dusk because of the colors. She dries her finger with her skirt. Why do you have all of those shells. Why are you in your father's clothes. We make voodoo dolls out of some long shoregrass and cattails and she says that I am her voodoo doll and that she is mine. What will you do with it. She carries it all day not doing anything but carrying it with her. I will put mine down later and forget it and then I will not want to tell her about it. I don't want to write about this anymore.

No Clauses

We are walking away from the music. What does it have to do with us. Caitlin uses the screen of her cellphone as a light for us in the forest. There is an unanswered text message on her screen that makes it bright. Caitlin has a big wool sweater on and black yogaleggings and makeup on her face. Muddy spanish eyes almost. She smells like perfume and is talking in her kind of drawl. I don't know anyone there but a couple of them and but I know you the best, Lorelei. The music is coming from the party we left. The party is at an old abandoned barn that someone had found when they were doing drugs in the woods around here. The forest is dense and skeletal because it is almost winter. We are not on drugs and we can see our breath and it is like smoke. Caitlin is guiding me away from the music and she is saying my name out loud without any clause attached to it. Lorelei. Lorelei. Lorelei. I think I feel a love for Caitlin. The love I feel is like the love that I feel for my mother or my little sister and I think it is sad that I feel a love like this for her because that love can get confused sometimes. We are walking through the forest in no discernible direction and the forest it is not scary like it used to be. When did the things that were scary about a forest stop being scary. Why do the trees not change their shape for me like they used to. We can see our breath like smoke and I am breathing the smoke out through my fingers. Lorelei without any clause attached to it and then Caitlin is singing a line to a song over and over again. Mistake a fountain for your father. Mistake a fountain for your father. Like that she says it. Do I know this Caitlin very well at all. I have known her my whole life. Who is Caitlin. Maybe I am falling out of love with her already. And it is just like that. Caitlin's phone turns off. I ask her if it is dead. It is. So we go back towards the music. Caitlin Caitlin Caitlin. I remember the saint who could speak to animals. Then there was Saint Martin De Porous who could be in more than one place at a time. Who could create multiples of himself. Saint Martin De Porous. I may be recalling his name incorrectly. Caitlin, do you ever want to be a saint. Caitlin turns her eyes on me. I can't be I am not a virgin anymore. You don't have to be a virgin. She smells like perfume and she is not on any drugs. I breathe into my hands and cover my eyes because Caitlin has had her eyes on me for so long. Caitlin turns away and we just walk through the falling darkness. Did you know Caitlin that there are a great many children that are saints. Are there. Yes. They well most of them died for their faith. Like they are called martyrs. Caitlin has muddy spanish eyes. Did they die because they did not believe. No they died because they believed. No maybe it was because they did not believe that much and they died because they wanted to know if it was true. Well. When we come upon the barn everyone is still there and the music is playing loud enough so that you cannot talk to each other. Caitlin is singing the line again though not really singing. I guess she is whispering. I can tell by her lips. Mistake a fountain for your father. Mistake a fountain for your father. There is a scene at the barn door. An older man surrounded by younger men and then there is a younger woman that is hiding behind the younger men. The older man is yelling but not loud enough. There is a young man and he is speaking to the older man like the older man would actually hear him. The older man is holding his ears and pushing toward the younger woman but the younger men are putting their palms on him and surrounding him like water. Keeping him away and talking at him. The music in the barn goes quiet; the song is over. I can hear the older man yelling out of his lungs and the younger men talking and Caitlin is saying mistake a fountain for your father at such a volume. Then it hits me. We are all just multiples of Saint Martin De Porous.

Letter to Bailey

Dear Bailey,

I am sitting in a courtyard writing this letter to you. It's very late. I'm writing by light of a full moon. Security is out and about with their pale flashlights glowing on their shoes and they are supposed to be enforcing curfew but they are too lazy and unconcerned to leave the preconceived pathways that run about the perimeter and encircle the whole courtyard. I am in the middle of the courtyard shrouded in some darkness that they could easily penetrate with their light. If not for their playing with their flashlights or smoking their cigarettes I would not even know that they were there. The obvious holes in the lattice of this security make me feel as though the protection is feigned. Like it is more about the appearance of safety rather than the exercise of it.

But this not about where I am. It is about you and well not you exactly but about where I know that you are and may reside for the rest of your life. I miss my hometown. I miss our hometown. I miss you too but I suppose that I could only miss you in a false and manipulative way. I did not know you or speak to you and I did not exert the effort. I am not writing this letter to say that I should have. I am writing to tell you how infatuated with you that I am now that I have abandoned you and my hometown and then how wrongly infatuated and how misguided I know that this infatuation is. You are not what I will say you are. You are the beauty of my hometown and the living heart and living jewel not hidden. I think but I am not sure if I believe that the intention of our hometown's legacy was to conceive of the child or I guess the young woman that you are. The spiritual growth and fermented regression and all of the architectural decay and then renovation of the decay; this shaping or manifestation of an enclosed world's history for the purpose of a girl like yourself to be nourished within. Like I am saying that you may be the point of all that you know of. But then I do not actually know you. I never spoke to you once and we lived in the same place our whole lives. I never talked about or discussed you with anyone else. But here I am telling you that our hometown was and is devoted to you and not myself and how it developed the idiosyncrasies of your character that which I do not actually know of. It is faith and yeah it is hope veiled behind the faith. Faith in an image.

I am lost. I am lost and away from the place of my youth and I am sorry but I feel like you could be a light.

The Guidance here tells me it is good and healthy for a young man like myself to have some of the ambivalence towards my future and the many limited possibilities but then I like tell the Guidance that I am not ambivalent and that I am only reluctant because of the repression of my motivations in light of the situation and the establishment. The Guidance will look at you from across the wooden or plastic desk like very critically after this. They say it is fear and that my ambivalence is manufacturing vague and unrealistic futures for me. I have asked the Guidance why they don't just suggest a pathway for me. They always say Oh No and that it is not their responsibility. But if it is up to me then I will act out of the motivations so willed by my ambivalence. It is the passion and it is the sensation. I have not learned or been taught enough to understand whether or not I am wrong to follow this.

Consider this a tug on the umbilical. If you do not reply to this then I will like turn my shoulder and look for warmth elsewhere. I will stifle myself.

You are the concentration of all that I would return home for and if I return it will be for you and only you and no one else.

I could say Love. But I'm not sure that would be right.

-Pace

Shower #1

Sitting in the shower trying to be pre-reflective. I'm drinking a light roast from a small coffee cup that I stole from a hotel. When was that. It was last weekend. The hotel was located near the water. But I don't want to reminisce. My ankles are near the hotwater. Steam and I'm sweating underneath my arms. The shower is contained in a dark dank place and it is a small closet of bathtile and I have the faucet aimed at the wall. The coffee tastes good. Pear bodywash smells good. Sometimes the scent of the bodywash of the person who showered before you will linger and it smells good especially when it has been a girl who likes to smell like coconuts or pineapples. I'm basking in my own scent and I'm thinking about what is and will be written. Repeating over and over what has been written. Like it will change in the repetition and like something will be unveiled to me and but there have been times when the repetition did unveil. Wash yourself in sweet pears and water. I don't hate my body but I don't like it. A somewhat strong chin and a strange hourglass shape that could only be genetic. I look like a boy all of the time. The image I'll push the image for as long as I can. Clean shaven. Adult clothes don't fit me. This is the body that I will be in for the rest of my life. I have to subjectively connect with this body. Wish me. There are strange warts on my fingertips and they are from stress maybe and I think that I deal with stress by not acknowledging it and only feeling it and being confused by the feelings. You deduce things about yourself and it is almost like you see in yourself an awful kind of charm. Hotwater flushing underneath my arms and then down in the place between my legs and underneath my boyparts. I don't write enough about the northwest. I can write about Olympia but I can't write about Seattle. The shoreline with the little clear crabs and then me and Tyler riding our bikes up and down the big hill. Listening to surf rock or whatever. We would go swimming in a small stream with my brother and there are some pictures up on the internet about it. Seattle: old buildings getting torn down for new ugly ones, and so many homeless. Capitol Hill is dying and dying and dying. Maybe I'll move to Portland and ride my bike around there. But I love my friends and I love my brothers. I love my girlfriend and I love my parents and even my step-parents. The water is good and then this coffee tastes good. Pre-reflection. My body smells like sweet pears and I hope someone follows me and thinks that whoever the last person that was in here smelled good. I hope the next person to take a shower really likes the smell of pears.

Vitality

I am a young twentyone and I can talk and talk about my vitality all I want to. It's not a vitality of fury and it is not like I want to hit anyone with my vitality. My vitality does not come from darkness. It is a vitality derived out of the light of some of the mild consistent loves in my life. I love my girlfriend and I love my bestfriends and I love my mother and I love my father and all of my brothers no matter how estranged we may be from one another now. I can sit in my older brother's mother's car outside the discount theater and tell him oh heck yes I think this is the best part of my life so far and that this is the happiest I have ever been in my life so far. I can be cold because it is winter and I can say all of that and also be happy that while I am speaking it I can see my breath inside of the car with all the windows rolled up. I can miss without asking anyone to come back. I can understand what is nostalgia and what is regressive. See you have to see the kindness in all that you give yourself by living your wild stupid grand life and you have to use your nonreason to disregard all of those expectations which have become embedded in your heart concerning your hopes and dreams and walk or manner or art of your life. You may love someone who will not love you back until you do not love them anymore. You may love someone who has a hard time loving back and it is okay because you think that you could like teach them the mantra of love love love but then you realize that you may not be mighty enough to pull such a thing off. You may understand books and relationships better than your parents do and did and then you will try to explain it to them and they will think you are speaking in dreamlanguage. You may be abused by sadness or abuse someone else with your sadness. I don't think it is a secret and maybe what is lethal is that everyone thinks it is like some kind of well-kept secret. Sometimes I try to focus on how the colors appear. Like overcast days in the pacific north-west are resolute with the not sorrowful gloomcolor and then a sunny day in the south is effervescent and near blinding. Lucas said something wise he said something about love he said that you may love someone for a time and you must live in that time and love as hard and long as you can and but you can never expect love to last forever because if you expect love to last forever then it probably won't do that. Lucas is twentyone and I am twentyone and I don't think either of us understand our happiness. I'm loving and does it make you sick and sure I am expecting everyone else to leave this bedroom of mine because what I love I love operatically.

As You Left Them

Pace and Bailey are riding their bicycles. It is just after Mass and they are still in their Sunday clothes. Pace has his father's red tie loosened from his throat and the top buttons of his shirt undone. Bailey had to roll the waist of her skirt several times so it would not get caught in her bikechain. Her black shiny dress shoes are in her bicycle basket because they have too much of a heel to them. She is pedaling in her whitesocks and she is pedaling ahead of Pace. One of her tires looks a little flat and Pace has stopped pedaling and he is letting his bicycle click click click while he bites the inside of his cheek and stares at the soft looking tire and debates on whether or not to tell her about it. But she is pulling away from him despite the flat and so he pedals hard and fast and he catches up to her. He chooses not to tell her about the tire.

They ride their bicycles for a long time without a destination. It is sunny and warm and the pavement is whiteblue and hot very hot and so they decide that they will ride their bicycles the couple of miles over to Esmay's. Esmay lives in a big empty manor on the cusp of a forest. If you penetrate deep enough into the forest from Esmay's manor then you will find a narrow long river where you can go swimming or fishing with a net. Bailey says that she will not go swimming or take her clothes off. Pace pedals up beside her and lets his bicycle click click click.

Esmay is watering some plants in his frontyard when Pace and Bailey come riding up through the clean bright grass. Esmay folds the hose to cease the flow of water and he escorts them to his backyard where they can lean their bicycles up against the remnants of some old fencing that Esmay never finished erecting. Pace removes his father's tie and drapes it over the handlebar. Bailey removes her socks and places them in her bicycle basket with her shoes. They ask Esmay if they can drink some water from the hose. He lets them. The water is cold and clear and it hurts their teeth and they laugh about it. Bailey asks if she can water some of the plants and Esmay hands her the hose and makes like an offhanded joke about the pleasure of the relinquishment of his responsibilities.

Pace and Esmay stand together beside the old fencing and watch Bailey treading barefoot through the green grass and watering each of Esmay's plants. Some of the plants that Bailey is watering have already been watered but Esmay is not saying anything.

Esmay leans on the fence with his elbows up. He is an old man.

How old are you now, Pace.

Twenty-two.

Do you feel twenty-two.

I don't want to feel twenty-two.

Accept your age now or you will never catch up.

Pace rolls back his shirtsleeves and leans on the fence beside Esmay. Esmay lives on the cusp of the forest in a big empty manor. All alone, he lives. Pace looks at the old man who is watching Bailey watering the plants.

How old are you, Esmay.

I won't tell.

Esmay laughs. He shouts out to Bailey that she is watering already watered plants but it is too late for it to really matter.

How long have you been home.

Two weeks. Maybe more. I can't remember.

I heard some things.

They're probably true.

Did you really come home for Bailey.

Yes.

Was it worth coming home.

Yes.

Will you regret it.

No.

Esmay laughs again. They both are quiet. Bailey is stopping between plants to itch her legs and her feet. Pace turns around and leans on the fence so that he and Esmay are facing opposite directions. Pace is looking into the sunlight spotted density of the forest that is just becoming autumnal.

I never thought that I could have someone like her in my life.

You're young. You'll think that.

I am afraid of the blind confidence that she has given me.

You're young. You'll think that.

I am grateful but I don't feel like I am worthy of this.

You're young. You'll think that.

Bailey returns to them, the hose flushing clear water over her toes and the grass. Her pale legs are striped red from where she was scratching herself. Esmay receives the hose from her and folds it so the stream is pinched. Esmay says that he will watch their bicycles for them. Bailey asks Pace if he is ready and Pace says that he is. They enter into the forest.

Sun is coming down through the trees. Leaves are detaching and falling in colors and they cling to clothes and hair. Footsteps upon the forest floor are made very loud. Pace feels the tingling of a sunburn on his face and on the tops of his hands and it is a wistful kind of discomfort because he has not been sunburned in what seems like a long time. The fallen dry leaves are cutting up Bailey's feet and so Pace carries her in his arms.

When they arrive at the river they both are surprised by how swiftly it runs. Bailey sits and dips her cut up feet in the water. She says that it is warmer than it would normally be at this time of the year. That it is almost like bathwater. Pace removes all of his clothes save for his boxershorts and he lowers himself into the stream. He holds onto a treeroot to keep himself from being pulled away. It is warmer than it ever was before. Pace enjoys the newfound vitality of the river and how it tugs on his legs and has like this cleansing might to it. Whatever had previously obstructed the true nature of this river has finally come dislodged.

Do you think you will regret coming home.

Esmay asked me the same question.

Will you.

No. Don't say that or think that.

Pace soaks his head and resurfaces. Bailey reaches down and runs her hand through his shorthair. She smells like perfume. The way that this autumnlight is falling upon her in her lightly tattered sunday clothes; with her long hair all combed down past her shoulders. Pace feels like he might die underneath her.

Bailey. I don't know what's wrong with me.

What.

I want to reminisce about you even though you are right here in the flesh.

Is this bad. Should I be different.

No no no. It is like I want to reminisce about how you are right now.

What is there to reminisce about.

The river pounds white against Pace's chest. He digs his toes into the muddy loose bottom of the river and braces against the warm flow.

I want you to be how you are right now and never like anything or anyone else. Please.

Okay.

I want you to be the twenty-two year old woman in front of me for the rest of your life.

Okay.

Pace dunks his head again. Resurfaces. He swims toward Bailey and takes her cut up feet into his hands. His fingers are starting to prune.

I want to say some things. Bailey.

You can.

I never thought that I could have someone like you in my life.

I feel the same way.

I am afraid of the blind confidence that you have given me.

I feel the same way.

I am grateful but I don't feel like I am worthy of this.

I feel the same way.

Pace releases her diced feet to the current and shows her his hands.

Look they are pruning.

Will we be young forever.

Your feet are pruning just like my hands.

Will we be young forever.

Yes of course yes of course.

I want to be a twenty-two year old woman for the rest of my life like you suggest.

Pace swims to the other side of the river where he climbs up and sits with his feet dragging in the current. It

is colder out of the water. Dead leaves drift downstream. They sit looking at one another from across the gap. Bailey cradles water in her hands. She cannot keep it from slipping between her fingers.

Mended, Mending

Allow the basic and apparent contradictions to unveil what is true in your life. Call your past into your future and long for your pastworld to manifest itself in your future. So that there is some familiarity because you feel your presentworld like it is some overwhelming kind of darkness. Consider your present a slight reverberation of your grand and intensified concept of your pastworld. This is nonsense yeah yeah and it is your nonsense which will reveal the sadness in your heart or in your spirit and it is nonsense that which you will use to illuminate and to mend. Smell massachusetts in the air of the pacific but realize that you will not allow yourself to think it is massachusetts. Understand the focus under which you put yourself in the light of others and then think about the focus under which they put themselves when they are in your light. Yeah it is loneliness yeah but it is your loneliness which resembles the others' and its good oh gosh yeah to have some resemblance between us. There is that tragic physical trauma of your pastworld and the malleability which it gave you and remember all of the times that you explained it to someone you did not know to get them to feel something for you. Remember how feigned that feeling was. How little do you talk about it now. Are you over it. No. You are relying on it for a muse like you would on some old crutch to get others to think of you as some kind of veteran. The tragic physical trauma is years and years past but you are mindful of it in your present and do you see how you recognize that it occurred deep back in your pastworld. Hands no Claws no Hands reaching reaching out for you from the so humid coast. Does it have any correlation to the person that you see yourself as in your presentworld. Walk around messed up like clay but do not tell anyone about the malleability and just let them think that the strange characteristics were born in your soul at the birth. Be grateful for that physical trauma because it allows you to pull the focus of others onto yourself like you so badly desire. Oh look at your deduction of yourself and oh look how devoted you feel that you are.

Segment From a Letter

(black out the NAME)

Dear NAME I remember when you were speaking Japanese to my cat and I believe to this day that my cat understood your every word. You looked at his lips and you said oh my gosh he looks so real. I'm so glad we didn't kiss, that we didn't consummate that night. That you only touched me on the arm and made it so it felt like the ants were crawling on me and that we lied on my bed out of covers and I talked to you about relationships like I knew something about them that you did not. Like I think you just wanted to hear me talk. You slept over and I was surprised to see you there in the morning in my bed in that dress you were wearing and you woke up beside me and you said oh no and just kind of left. My hair was long my skin was bad and what was it that you were seeing in me. What was it NAME. You picked me up in that sports utility vehicle and your sister was in the backseat. How personal it felt to meet her to talk to your little sister. We dropped her off somewhere at a friend's house I think and then you took me to your school and we saw some one-act plays that your friends were in. I met your schoolmates. Lucas came for that last play. You had written something on my windshield with your finger and it stayed written there in the dirt because I never cleaned my car. It was like hi Dylan and then there was a heart I think. That first year away you called me a lot because you knew I was lonely. Lucas you and I saw each other two years later and everyone still looked arguably the same just our hair was at different lengths maybe changed a little in the color. We talked timidly about things and we drove to where Lucas' old house was where there were strangers living now and the lawn was being far better taken care of. For both Lucas and I, the homes we grew up in no longer belong to us. We parked and went for a walk in the woods. There were the electrical towers buzzing and it was raining lightly and the sky glowed the orange color of the streetlamps. Lucas showed us where he used to smoke his pot. There were glowflies switching in the tall trees and I said to you and to Lucas that it looked like camera flashes and then I said that I would save it that I would take what I said. And here it is, released again. I thought and still think about how people were taking pictures of us because we were very important. We walked to the baseball field of your old high school. There was a fence up keeping us from being on the actual premises. A big kind of tree house and a rope obstacle course were erected against the sky and they had pulled up the cargo net to keep us from climbing up into the tree house. Lucas and I shimmied on the cables in front of you pretending like we might really do it. You said that the tree houses was new that it was not there when you were in school. Lucas you and I planned to watch a movie together to attach a specialness to it before me and Lucas left and then it did not happen.

Dream of Past Love: Morning Time

You had a dream about a past love. Whatever want you are feeling is not true want. Remind yourself. It is memory and impression calling out to you. Do not let it make you hollow. Be satisfied in that you once had a love in your life which has left such an impression upon you that it can penetrate and linger infrequently in your dreams. The present-tense of that dream was not a present-tense because there were the other ghosts of your not too distant past that you fail to remember the names and presences of. They were not given particular detail because they were merely there to illuminate the pastworld of her mighty love. There were those strange moments of clarity, and they will haunt so just let them haunt. When your past love and you were in her mother's car and she took a photo of some old wicker giant lying on its back on a green mountain. When you were with your old friends talking about your pastlove in a desert at night. How you contemplated the serious existence of colored sand and the temperatures that you associated with them. The large boy who looked like a musician you admire that you were trying to understand when he was speaking to you in what you thought was some kind of Russian dialect. It was dream language so don't try to understand it. Cling and Cling without giving it too much power.

Diary Entry to be Read With My Permission #2

Her mother was this kind of realtor or something for condominiums in a very round building in our downtown. A property manager that did not want to live on site, maybe. There was a barbeque being held in the parking lot and we ate a couple burnt things from the grill and followed her brother's girlfriend to the theater inside of the nearby multi-floored mall where her brother and her brother's girlfriend and her brother's girlfriend's sister all decided to see a movie that we were not yet old enough to see. So we returned to the barbeque and her mother let us hang out in the sample studio while her mother drank a little in the parking lot. The sample studio was eerie and a bit on the cold side. It had an enormously arched ceiling and you could not turn on the lights without a special key. Many panels of glass no plastic windows. Marble countertops but that cheap and laminated kind of marble that seemed so faux. There was a chainless bicycle hanging upside down from the ceiling. Darkness but not complete darkness because of the streetlight and nightblue coming through the many windows. She went about playing in the kitchen and laughed and smiled and said in her teenage voice that we would one day get a place like this. She kissed me. I didn't really want to get a place like this. There was a loft area and we climbed the ladder to the second floor. We kissed each other in the sample bed with the white sample covers but I felt so strange. Like someone would find out I was kissing my girlfriend in their bed. So I backed away and I sat on a sample armchair beside the sample bed. She stayed lying in the bed. Looking so nice. We were around fourteen years old and I suppose I could have been fifteen at the time. I said something like I do not believe in the idea of peace. Or rather that I do not believe in the attribution of peace to god like she does and so often stresses. This started a fight. Something about my lack of belief and her strength of belief and then a digression about how I attribute peace to man alone. Because peace is a concept held between men. Peace in god is separate. But you have to believe that god is inside of every man and you do not. Continuation continuation continuation. Until I steered it away from the concept of god and peace and toward a forced metaphor I manifested to explain my feelings about the overall state of my young person. I said I was a lot like a glass vase full of false roses that has been shattered. I brought her into the same metaphorical light and said that she was like a glass vase still intact and maybe with some real roses in it. I was a young man no a boy really who saw only false roses and fragility in himself. She cried and was angry with me. She wanted me to be a positive person and to believe in a divine concept of peace. In how it was not my direct responsibility as a boy or a man to create peace amongst men. She was crying and yelling at me and telling me how during Mass she saw angels fly into the cup at each consecration of the Eucharist. Something like that. I said that I do not see what she sees and don't believe that I ever will. I cannot remember if I felt good or terrible about making her cry. I know I didn't cry. Her mother came inside and turned on all the fluorescent lights with her special key. There was still not enough light to completely illuminate the loft. Her mother sensed that something was wrong. She sensed that I had made her daughter cry. She looked at us standing up over the railing of the loft and asked us what was wrong. We both lied.

Fatcat

Lifting my cat up into the air. Lifting my kitten up into the air but he is two and a half years old now and what is that. Somewhere around twenty. He is twenty pounds in weight and I still call him a kitten. When I'm at a party I often refer to myself and those around me as kids. She is a girl. He is a boy. All love outside of my love is judgmentally interpreted like a hard first love to me. But I am lifting my cat into air like that one scene from the animated film. We lift those animated films into the air our whole lives until arms our tired. We lift those animated films not acknowledging that the film does not care whether it is lifted or not. My cat does not care either. I want not to care too but I'm not a cat or an animated film. I care so much that I project and make my cat care too. I care so much that my care overflows and makes it seem like the cat cares about me. But then lifting an animated film into the air is a lot like lifting my chesapeake or the big woods by my ex's house. It's an inactive raising. Now if I were watching the film enjoying the film then I might not be lifting. I might actively be raising it depending on the feelings and whether or not they are faulty and nostalgic. The evidence that we are not intended to be always nostalgic is in the raising of my fatcat. It is in what I felt in the big woods by my ex's and in what I felt in the chesapeake. I care to raise the fatcat into the air because I care about him and about raising him in a kind of adoration of how much I care. Why do you think the little lion was raised into the air in the animated film. Because the whole kingdom cared. Watch me raise my fatcat. Raise a fatcat into care and then adore a fatcat.

Out of Water

Lorelei lays her bike down in the shorebrush and removes her sundress to reveal her one-piece swimsuit with the white emblem of her local swim club on it. She folds the sundress and feels the draw of a very antiquated tradition and so she runs up the hill in her shoes and socks and swimsuit and kisses the bronze boy on his patina stained lips. She thinks that he looks like he is smiling, today. She throws her eyes over the inscription on the shiny plaque beneath the bronze boy and reads it in an incomprehensible way. It is the time of morning where there is sunlight but no sun. Blue and washed and clean. Lorelei returns to the shore and removes her socks and shoes and places them on the folded sundress. She ties up her long hair in a snail on the top of her head and she climbs through the stickerbushes without getting cut. Lorelei steps down into the lake. The water is warm. The bottom is muddy and loose. It has not rained here in like a month. Lorelei trudges through the shallows and far enough out to where her feet no longer touch the bottom. She swims and treads water. Always she wants to keep her hair from getting wet but then it becomes like a burden and so she just dunks her whole head. Someone had said to her once that if you swim a lot without washing your hair it would eventually dye your hair green. Lorelei cannot remember if this applies to lake water or not. Lorelei sees a boat that is not too great a distance away. It is unusual for one of the boats from across the water to drift so close to this side of the lake. It has something on a chain thrown over the side of the boat. An anchor or maybe a treasure claw. The boat looks unmanned. Lorelei swims back to where her feet touch the bottom and rests for a little bit. Then she swims out to the boat. She moves in a full circle around the boat before climbing onto it. There is a young man sleeping on the deck. He is lying on his back with his arms thrown out. The water dripping off of Lorelei and hitting the deck wakes him. The young man sits up and wipes his eyes and tells her to hang on for a minute. This is the captain of the boat. He crawls away from her and opens up and reaches into a hidden compartment. He brings out a towel and a blue long-sleeve shirt and hands them one at a time to Lorelei. The captain then hands her an orange somewhat whitewashed lifevest and tells her she has to wear it while she is in his boat. She says that she can swim fine. He says that he does not care. Lorelei puts it on over the long-sleeve shirt but does not buckle it.

They sit on opposite sides of the deck. Their legs are crossed. The boat dips toward where the chain is down in the water.

What's on the end of that chain.

A robot. A Silhouette, more specifically.

What's it doing.

He's searching. Excavating.

For.

For scraps of other Silhouettes. Don't ask me. His owner makes him do it.

Does it ever find any.

Yes. He does nearly every time we're out here. You have no idea as to the kind of stuff that is sunken in this lake.

You call it a 'he'.

I can't help it.

Lorelei lays the towel down underneath her and gets up on her bare knees and leans over the side of the boat. Drawing her fingers back and forth in her soft reflection on the water. She does not know if she is ugly or not.

The sleeve of the captain's shirt is long for her and she has to roll the cuff back to keep from wetting it. She talks to the captain with her back turned.

What are you doing this close to our side of the lake.

A favor for the owner of the Silhouette down in the water.

Okay.

I'm around here about once a week.

Have you ever been to our town.

A long time ago. I don't remember it very well.

I bet it hasn't changed that much since you were last there.

Do you want to leave it.

Yes and no.

I know what you mean.

The captain returns to the hidden compartment and brings out a soda. He has Lorelei turn around from her reflection and gives her the soda. She laughs at him and says that she does not really like that flavor of soda and she turns back around to continue staring at and disrupting her reflection. The sleeve of the captain's shirt slipping down over the cuff and her having to push it up and up again to keep it from dipping in the water. The captain watches her fussing with the sleeve and then playing with her reflection. He opens the soda and drinks from it. This is like his second favorite flavor. He wonders if they have the same favorite. After finishing the soda, he removes his shirt and shoes and socks. He leaps over Lorelei's side of the boat and splashes her and gets her hair and his shirt and his lifevest all wet. She reacts so that she looks more upset than she is. The captain treads water. Lorelei sits crosslegged with her back turned to the water.

What's the matter.

Do you know a boy named Pace.

The captain shakes his head but Lorelei is not looking at him. He feels embarrassed and turns the shaking of his head into something more violent. He makes it seem like he was only trying to dry his hair. Like a dog does. He reflects upon himself doing it, like that. Like how he is shaking the hair on his head to dry it just like a dog does.

I don't.

He doesn't live here anymore.

Where did he go.

I don't know.

That's unfortunate.

I dated him for like a year and a half of my life.

Was that a long time.

Lorelei turns back around and puts her forearms up on the lip. Watches the captain swimming in the water. She wonders how much younger she is than this man. The sun is coming up. There are stainglass cuts of yellow on the water where it is shining through the branches of the trees that encircle the lake. It will continue to rise and it will dry her.

Yes. It felt like it.

It sounds like it.

Why do we date. What's the purpose if it's not permanent.

You're asking me.

Lorelei nods and hides her mouth behind her forearms.

I've never had a girlfriend in my life.

That's a lie.

All right.

The captain dives underneath the water. He keeps his eyes closed and plunges as deep into the lake as he can. He ascribes a figurative value to his diving; this is the descent he must take into himself to locate the answer that the girl is asking for. The water grows colder and the pressures intensify. He cannot reach the bottom. He resurfaces on the other side of the boat. Lorelei moves to the side that the captain is swimming on.

Will you answer me.

I don't know. You will date a lot of people. It's not about the dating.

That's why I'm asking why.

You're dating to come to a better and deeper understanding of love. This is more pertinent than the person.

I want it to be more complicated than that.

You will.

Why are you alone.

Because I want it to be more complicated.

So you are warning me.

I'm a living waking walking warning.

The captain climbs back into the boat. Lorelei hands him the towel. While he is drying himself she vaults out of the boat, shirt and lifevest on but unbuckled. She submerges and quickly resurfaces holding the lifevest clutched around her torso. She tries to view her reflection in the water in front her but she cannot. You don't really have much of a reflection while you are in the water. The captain kneels down on the deck of the boat and puts his forearms up on the lip. He pushes his palms together like he is praying. She kicks backward.

Is Esmay still alive.

Lorelei nods.

I'm his youngest son.

All right.

Did you know that.

No.

Will you tell him that you saw me.

Does he know you are alive.

Yes.

Then there's no need.

The captain leans forward with his arms over the side of the boat. He disrupts his reflection on the water like Lorelei was doing. She kicks her feet and splashes him but he does not entertain her. His reflection this shaggy lanky man that is not really that young anymore. A resemblance to Esmay or to the image of Esmay that he can recall. To his mother that he cannot. The water is rippling from the young girl's kicking. He draws his fingers through his reflection. He does not know if he is ugly or not.

Did you expect me to tell you that Esmay was dead.

Not really.

The captain reels himself back from the water. He pulls on his shirt and socks. Lorelei stops kicking water at him.

I sometimes want Pace to be dead.

That's dramatic.

I know.

You shouldn't think that.

I know.

Doesn't it hurt to think like that.

It does. But he's not dead. He simply left.

I'm sure he had his reasons.

Did you leave because of Esmay.

Partly. Yes.

Lorelei turns over on her stomach still clutching the lifevest around her. She swims toward the boat with her chin out. The tail of the shirt he lent her is spreading out in the water behind her like a pair of wings. She levels and treads water just underneath where the captain is. He joins his palms back together and looks down into her. The sun is high. Far away, there are other boats pulling out onto the placated surface of the lake.

I will love you.

You can't love me.

Lorelei smiles so her lips are thin. She nods. There are clear beads of water on her face. Clefs of hair matted down dark over her cheekbones.

You can't.

I love you.

You're too young.

No I'm not.

You should go home. I need to pull this Silhouette back up and return him to his owner.

Come home with me.

The captain stands up and goes to the winch and starts it. The chain begins to retract from the water. Lorelei

kicks away from the boat, still wrapped in his shirt and the unbuckled lifevest.

Come home.

I won't.

You will never see me again.

All right.

She turns over onto her stomach and swims back toward shore. The water rippling about her like time. The captain pretends to be so fixated upon the winch.

The winch halts and the Silhouette reemerges from the darkness of water with the corpse of a young man held in his (its) arms. The captain helps the Silhouette into the boat and they lie it down flat on the deck. It would not feel right to simply discard of it. The captain dries the Silhouette with the towel and has him (it) sit on the other side of the boat. He kneels down beside the corpse. It is wearing the somewhat decomposed tatters of funeral clothes. The skin pale and nearly blue. A sad blackening around the eyelids behind which there may no longer be eyes. No hair save for the sickly overgrown strands. The captain cannot tell how long the young man has been dead nor how the corpse must have gotten into the lake. It has not the stink that you would expect of dead things. The captain looks back at the Silhouette. He (it) sits very still. Little black tears trace shiny lines down his (its) featureless skull where the captain had not taken the time enough to dry him (it). He wonders how he (it) must have confused the corpse for a fellow Silhouette. The captain goes and tries to start the engine of the boat. It turns but does not start. He stands and breathes and paces back and forth across the deck. He tries to remember how old he is and then verifies that the girl has actually left him and that she is nowhere to be seen on the lake. He breathes some more and returns to the side of the corpse. If it is so inanimate. The captain touches the young man's sunken and very cold cheek. He cannot tell the difference.

Inscription To Be Read On The Plaque Underneath “The Bronze Boy”

“HOW IS IT THAT I CAN ONLY SOLIDIFY THE MEMORY OF YOUR YOUTH.”

. . .

IN DEDICATION.

Flights

They are the intense obvious experiences that you stay up all night for only to fall asleep before everyone else underneath your grandmother's living room table. One dusk me and Tyler rode our bikes the fifteen miles across our southern town to Adam's mother's apartment. We were only there for a couple of hours maybe, until there was clean light in the sky. Instead of sleeping we decided to ride the fifteen miles back and I listened to Tyler tell me stories about girls he liked or had liked and then about a big wildfire that may or may not have happened in front of the laser tag building. We stopped outside the airfield and stood on a little mound and watched a plane take off which was funny because well we were going to be taking a train so it was not really that symmetrical. But it felt symmetrical.

Reply: jamestown

Why are you in your father's clothes. We make voodoo dolls out of some long shoregrass and cattails and she says that I am her voodoo doll and that she is mine. The sun is up. Her hair is up in a snail so it wouldn't get wet while she was writing my name in cursive. The sun is up high enough but I keep thinking that it is near dusk because of the colors. We have our shoes off like we are younger than we actually are. When the sun is on her. The sundress she is wearing you can see her legs through it and the colors of her un-derwear. She would take a photo of it and send it to me if I were not here. I don't want to write about this anymore. I will put mine down later and forget it and then I will not want to tell her about it. What will you do with it. She carries it all day not doing anything but carry-ing it with her. We're playing in the jamestown and the water is kind of dirty kind of cold. I'm in my father's clothes. I have a collection of cold dripping shells and I think why am I in my father's clothes. She is writing my name in the sand with a heart going around it. Why do you have all of those shells. We put her in an old vacuum cleaner box and dug her a shallow grave and my mother said a prayer. There are pieces of shells in the jamestown and I am gathering pieces from the water dipping my father's cuff in the water getting it all soaked. I'm in my father's clothes and they are too big on me and I remember that my family buried one of our old cats out here. The air is clean with a little salt in it. She washes the sand off of her finger in the water. She dries her finger with her skirt. She has written my name in cursive and it will be there until hightide comes.

The Bronze Couple

Anthony Believes

In an interconnectedness between what he can perceive and then in what he cannot perceive and yet he can feel. He believes in truth but personal truth. He believes that there is something special that is retained by humans. This something special allows them to interact with the spiritual and physical natures in the capacity that those natures exist to themselves. Anthony will use the word soul with a straight face and consistent tone of voice. He will use the word soul in a way to describe what he feels that he is. Not for what is a prisoner within him but rather what he cultivates within the parameters of his seeing and thinking and touching body. Think of the scent of your grandmother's house when you were three years old and how that same scent comes drifting around here every autumn. Think of the light color of the grass as the sunlight glows upon it, of the loud so loud sounds of the cicadas in the summertime and how you are emotionally strengthened by this real and living memory of the time of your youth when you were going swimming in the lake nearly every day of the summer. Anthony acquired more than a couple of his truths from listening and residing underneath the late and somewhat agoraphobic Joshua. Anthony believes that it is his responsibility to continue in his student's scholarly determination of understanding Joshua's near master grasp of worldliness and of mindfulness and to share and further sew those tendencies into the broader community. After Joshua passed, Anthony ascended to figurehead and lone remaining member of the two person clergy. The people of the town started calling Anthony 'Father'. Anthony is not a Father. He has no children and does not desire any. But he allows it. Anthony sermons to the people who call him Father because they gather before him once a week to listen to him speak. He tells them that there is a purpose in striving toward an interconnectedness between each other despite the inherit disconnect between your physical and spiritual life when held up in comparison to the physical and spiritual life of another. He encourages and has partitioned time within the duration of the service for socializing and for improvisational intermissions of music. Anthony says that there is a little of that natural eagerness in allowing one's self to be vulnerable underneath the light of another and that you should follow that sensation to whatever extent that you feel you are still exerting an effort in the personal containment of your own light. But you should not allow yourself to feel as though you are bound or limited by the other. Anthony says that life is lived lonely but that the loneliness is only there to provide the obstacle which one learns to vault by allowing the other and yourself to be vulnerable and naked in the other's light. In the way that you develop affinities for particular scents or music you must develop affinities for the individual lights of each other. See the practical theme in the linkage of your corporal and spiritual natures and now apply that thematic method of thought to the experiences between each other. Anthony believes that those that are most mighty are those who can learn to suppress the exciting power of their very own light.

Ellie Margaret Believes

In the separation of the spirit from the body. She believes in the guidance of a moral maximum that is native to a grandiose spirit. That truths are predetermined by this spirit. In devoting a heavy and steady amount of her silence and her time spent in this world of corporeality to the figurative grasping of the moral maximum concept of the spirit. Ellie Margaret is quiet. She adores the four walls of her small bedroom and recognizes it as a personal sanctuary, however disordered. Ellie Margaret will cross her legs and sit on her woodfloor in some jeans and socks and by somewhat of an intentional fever or delusion she will attempt to detach from her body. Ellie Margaret believes that upon her death she will be given the opportunity to ascend into the nature of the spirit. But since she remains in her body for a set amount of time, Ellie Margaret believes that

she must operate her body in such a way that it heralds or upholds the maximum moral concept of the spirit. By subverting her own physical life to the life of another, Ellie Margaret believes that she is performing in the essence of the moral maximum, or at least she believes that she is doing it in a figurative sense. Ellie Margaret understands the general good in acts of selflessness. But she is not selfless for the reaping of the corporal rewards such as mutual amiability and appreciation for herself and others, but rather she acts in selflessness in an effort toward arriving at an understanding of the spirit's moral maximum within herself. Ellie Margaret understands the contradiction in acts of selflessness for the purpose of personal growth. Ellie Margaret understands the contradiction in striving toward a moral maximum inherit to an untouchable spiritual essence by means of corporal mingling. She knows. She disregards these contradictions because she sees the contradictions as founded upon purely corporal notions. Her striving and the ritualistic exercising of her selflessness is what she believes will prepare and motivate and allow her to shed her body upon her death. Ellie Margaret spent a lot of time alone in her youth. She lived in a very large house with all of these different rooms and compartments. Some of the compartments were big enough and clean enough so that she could climb inside them and hide. Whenever she was hiding in a closet behind her mother's old unworn clothes Ellie Margaret felt very safe. Ellie Margaret believes that there is a single moment in which a person can pass into the spirit, and if one is not educated or practiced enough in all the ways that one could be in the moral maximum native to the spirit itself, then they will not see and grasp at this opportunity. And there is only one opportunity. Ellie Margaret believes that if one devotes all their time in a striving toward an understanding only of their corporal life then that is how they will spend their afterlife, a prisoner within their decaying body. Like a state of night paralysis except it is eternal and you are underground and there may be some bugs on you. So ugly so lonely in your decay. But you must subvert that body. Learn to figuratively surpass your degenerating corporeality, even if it is by the means of attending to corporealities that are foreign to your own.

They

Anthony and Ellie Margaret will lie in their bed with their bodies twined together and all the lights out. They are careful to breathe in such a comfortable and regulated pattern so that if the other is trying to mimic their breathing it will be easy for them to do so. In this darkness and embrace they will discuss their individual concepts of sacredness and spirituality. The remarks of the listener will be passive and withheld to a standard of their objectively subjective understanding of the other's beliefs. I want to know if I am besouling my body, or if it is the intimate tool through which I besoul the objects of the world. Then Ellie Margaret's completely passive statement of: well if you believe in like the interconnectedness between human bodies as a method of recognizing the personal soul or personal light in another, then I would say by your own standard that your body is more intimately connected to the soul than simply being besouled by your spiritual nature. They will thank the other and hold each other harder and maybe kiss. When they release each other and lie on their cooler side of the bed they will either fall sleep or spend some of that time thinking and questioning themselves in the not frightening darkness. Ellie Margaret does and has not attended any of Anthony's services at the Church. Anthony never asks her to. On the nights that Anthony has his services, Ellie Margaret will sit on the woodfloor of their bedroom and meditate on corporal detachment. When Anthony returns home from the Church, they will eat a large dinner on the floor of their bedroom. They will put a movie on and sometimes they will fall asleep on the rug underneath the television. Anthony and Ellie Margaret try to visit the statue of the bronze couple every few weeks. They sit at its feet and eat some takeout with white plastic utensils and study the statue. The bronze couple is solidified in the act of kissing. The faces of the young man and the young woman are melted into one another. Features are disorganized nodes or lumps drifting in the muscular bronze sinew that joins together their profiles. The young man's fingers are sinking into the young woman's cheek where he has his hand lifted to cup the side of her face. The young woman's arm is pushed up to the wrist into the young man's chest between the open lapels of his coat. They remain solid and separate beneath the waist. The young woman's knee touches the young man's shin through his pantleg. The toes of

their shoes overlap one another. Anthony and Ellie Margaret patron the statue out of an infatuation. There is something familiar in the almost obscured faces of the young man and the young woman. An intense feeling of relatedness. Anthony and Ellie Margaret cannot tell if the similarity lies between the young woman and the young man, or if between themselves and the bronze couple.

Home

This is the place which lies between places. This is the place that you do not miss when you are away from it. Calico lies on his cot in the panel of gloomcolor cast by the sky through the window. He listens for the rain and he thinks about his dead plants. The plants had withered and died while he was gone and they always die when he is apart from them and so he feels each time that he must plant and cultivate more. They will die. He knows they will die but they will have at least lived for however long a time. Do plants suffer when they die or do plants simply understand their wither as one of the many phases of their physical form and then feel nothing in their gradual decay. Maybe there is a richness in the soil from all of the other deceased that allows the plants upon each new cultivation to grow a little bigger to live a little longer. Rain it looks like it is going to rain and then it rains like he has been anticipating it to. He can hear it on the roof and it is like a not too heavy pitter pitter pitter. When you are gone for so long you will sometimes wish that you could not remember where it is. Because that would dispute reality and in a nonreality you would be able to sustain your flight forever. Calico lies in his bed and since the rain began to fall his mind is turning toward Victoria-Kaylee and he is trying to make it like she is there with him in his cot even though she has never been here with him *Is your name Calico because you do not know what you are made of* He is losing her but he does not want to lose her because here he feels a bit alone and a bit like he is aimless and lying between places *Or is your name Calico because you are a composite of so much* Calico does not want the rain to soak the seats or rust his plane and so he suppresses all his thoughts of Victoria-Kaylee and takes the mildewy scented tarp outside and throws it over the plane. Water in the grass and pale light in the grass and the water. It takes time and in that time he loses his grasp on any of the feigned closeness that he manipulated Victoria-Kaylee's phantom into giving him. When he returns to the house his clothes are soaked and he is so cold and so he strips naked and sits crosslegged on the dusty woodfloor with a woolblanket wrapped tightly around his body. Calico opens the neglected green cottonsack of letters and turns the letters in the light coming through the window and he reads the names written on the envelopes. Sometimes there will be special seals and family crests pressed in red or black candlewax. Never does he open the letters *I just want it out of my hands and I have had this written down long enough to want to reconsider it and I don't want to reconsider it so take it* Every time Calico lands his plane in a new place there will inevitably be at least one person who hands him their letters. He will explain that he is not a messenger and that a messenger would not fly his kind of plane but they still will give him the letters. Calico has declined to deliver letters and then later found the letters that which he declined tied to a brick or fragment of concrete or ordnance and then placed in the passenger cockpit of his plane. There must be some thought that because he falls out of the sky and returns to the sky that this makes him a messenger. Calico puts the letters back in the cotton greensack and tries not to think about how long some of the letters had been in there. He paces back and forth in the one dark room with the woolblanket wrapped about his body and looking like some sexless figure. There is the pitter pitter pitter. You and the letters lie between places and you and the letters lie between your own concepts of deliverance. You can return to the place from which you came or you can go to the place you are intended to go. But until then you must lie in a green cottonsack on the dusty floor of a house that is no larger than a shed. You must wait because the place of your deliverance has yet to be found. Calico goes to his map. It covers one of the walls of the room and he has painted this wall many many times over to give himself the liberty of reattributing areas and names to different locations on his map *Dope you are a dope because you refuse to acknowledge where you are going* This map is personal and individual; every line and every drawing is intimately correlated to Calico's departure from this place. Central to all else is the house in which he lingers now and stretching out from this center are the black painted veins of Calico's expeditions out into the greater world. His ratio of distance is defined by his personal interpretation of the length of the corresponding journey. He will arch and extend the arm very far if he felt that he was a long distance away from his center. And if he felt like he had not traveled so far away from this house then he will barely arch the arm and he

will draw a straight and short line. What lies at the end of these black painted veins are pictures. What he illustrates is whatever impression has been left in his memory by the place in which he has visited. There is no geographical intent. It is a treasure map of intimacy. Nearly every time that Calico returns to this place he sketches the map as it is into his notebook and then applies a fresh coat of paint and begins a new assessment of his map. Reflection will often push and pull those places that have felt close to or distant from your center. But there will be those places which remain close and draw ever closer. Calico has several illustrations which threaten to integrate with his center. The deflated hot air balloon: where Calico first met Victoria-Kaylee. The large upturned bell: the small religious village where that man was insinuating that he was Calico's father. The tombstone: Calico's brother's gravesite. Calico sits on the wooden chair wrapped in his wool blanket and reflecting *Calico the family is estranged and Calico it is your responsibility to reignite to reconnect your family because because because* He traces the black painted veins backwards and forwards with his eyes. Where everything lies on the map is how it feels. Calico returns to his cot and lies down and he listens to the rainfall. He can hear it hitting the tarp over his plane. Gloomcolor or maybe it is mythcolor. There has not been a sun for a day and a half now. It is keeping Calico grounded and sheltered. When this weather lets he will plant his new plants. Then he will leave this place. He hopes that he happens across Victoria-Kaylee and that she will have him wherever on the earth that she has temporarily set her camp up. Calico wants to sleep in her sleeping bag with her and he wants to hold her even if she will not want to make love then. Calico gets warm thinking about her and he turns away from the mythcolor because it is too bright for him to fall asleep to. Maybe Calico will take the letters with him this time and accept that he is a messenger and cultivator and supposed savior of his family.

Lock and Key Analogy: Attempt #1

Key to Lock. Key to the heart that is sealed. Lock that is the heart itself or the mechanism behind which the heart is held captive. Key that you will be given and then required to wield or utilize or whatever and which you will wonder what it was intended to unlock or rather than what it was intended to release. The mechanism of Lock is not the mystery. The way in which Key threads or penetrates the mechanism of Lock is not the mystery. The mystery is the corporal or spiritual or the intermingling substance of the both that will be liberated by your fumbling or I guess you could say your precision. Lock and Key and what is the historical context of said Lock and Key. What came first. Lock or Key. Did they come together. Calvin Johnson croons and Calvin Johnson sings, 'When I saw you. So many locks and keys and chains shield you'. Lock for protection or perhaps to give a sense and purpose to Key. Must Key be wielded by another. Can the owner of Lock also wield Key. Loving myself and so much adoration for myself and would it be vain of me to unlock myself. Thread my own Key into my own Lock just to see what it feels like to be unlocked. Dig the hands around in myself a little bit to understand my temperature and consistency. But maybe the purpose of Lock and Key is a matter of relinquishing Key and letting the hands of another both unlock you and then push their arms into you all the way up to their elbows and either dirty or cleanse themselves in the color or in the potential of your love. Is love sealed away in the heart. If we are talking in Lock and Key, then yes. Still sounds like a petty flirtatious relationship between them, though. Why not always and forever keep the heart unlocked. Why not discard Key and Lock. Discard the dubious analogy. I can't believe it takes me two Locks and two Keys just to get into my very small studio apartment. It's autumn and it's raining out. Cold rain on your face to make you look like you are crying. So many shiny Keys on my ring on the end of my lanyard and the jingling and the jingling and there are even a couple Keys here on my ring to Locks that are on the distant eastern coast. To Locks that I no longer have access to; Locks that could have been changed while I was away from them. But my hands are shaky from the wet cold and trying to elect the right Key and to thread it into Lock is about the hardest thing for me.

Internalization of An Angry Man's Philosophy

How do I turn the aesthetics and reveal the values. Like aesthetics trying to be more than aesthetics. It's a praying that the aesthetics are fallible and then allowing them to gain a kind of value. Pouring out the actual particles of the aesthetics. The metaphorical values surfacing from the excess and becoming that aesthetic actually. Like of the snow if we could dissent and disassociate the snow from the word and only apply the numb or the cold to it. Feeling because it is what gives the memory and the perspectives. Turning the aesthetics inward letting the aesthetics shed the shell and then operate internal. So they become the adjective, which are the feelings in actuality, and the true aesthetics of the subject. It is not the subject but the aesthetics. What if the aesthetics are a soul. This could be it. The aesthetics and their purpose are to be a soul. Can aesthetics be a representation of emotions. So you like appropriate a color and that color reminds you of your grandmother but only when it is applied to quilt. Not like to the sky at sunset or anything but to a quilt. But is it the quilt that represents your grandmother or the color of the quilt. That quilt makes you unhappy because your grandmother is dead but the quilt is still the color and has the properties while she may no longer. You are trying with me to shed the noun. Shedding the noun. Shedding the material gods that are given in a noun. Adjectives alone. Could I write anything at all in adjectives. Unrelated subjects or indirect objects. This and the aesthetics of a noun, your adjectives. Disillusioning the noun. How to pull it off through. Stripping the noun and sinking into the adjectives, barely. So nouns are the fallible ones. It is the metaphorical values the feelings the emotions that these nouns represent purely. Not the other way. Metaphors have become the truths and how has it gotten like that. So he had something potentially. But he was too angry too sad too set on a destruction of his christian name. Do you have reason to believe in this. What would you derive. All of the likeness will be shed if we could shed the noun. Because then you would be able to recognize and swim in your adjectives. What kind of adjectives do you represent. Calvin is the adjective.

Chesapeake

Hiding beneath where the shore is and watching through the brush my ex's parents out for a walk. Fisherman jetskiers I wave to them trying to get them to wave back. Always wanting to swim. Water in my hair my hands are wet and not swimming. A girl and boy further up the shore are swimming in their underwear and I can see them from my shore. Take off my shirt and climbing rocks. Mud or clay on my shoes. Seaswell in my shoes. Rocks that my seaswollen soles slip from after hightide. Glittering sun. most beautiful prettiest yeah language I use to intensify the urge but it is here and I am swallowing this without it. Snails sticking to the rocks and I am careful of them. Hiding. Hidden. No one thinking about me. I lock my bike to the big tree washed up on the shore. Reading a book at the fishbloody table. Lying in the warm bright bright green against my bike wheel. It is itchy and I sweat and so I have to shift to be in the seabreeze coming in off of the. Trees with big dogflowers in them. Dyed. I dyed them their colors. Sleep in the sun with a book over my eyes. A child throws a pinecone at me and I keep the pinecone. Fingerprints of sweat on the screen of my cellphone and I block out the sunlight so I can see the message someone had given to me. Listening to my mother on the phone and she hears the water and she asks me where I am and I tell her and she says she doesn't know where I am. Listening to the water. Lying against my bike wheel. Cold water wake me up. I swear my ex she runs past me while I am lying in the bright green and she did not recognize me because I had cut my hair short.

Verisimilitude

I can see your breath in the not gloomy darkness outside the grocery store. White and mingling with my own. I am seeing shapes yes I am seeing the concentrated substance in your exhaled breath and I am standing and sort of moving in your breath. While it envelopes me I am interpreting from it in all the ways that I can. You are alive. Yeah you can transmute ordinary unseen air into a color. You can wear a large coat all the way down to your ankles and a handknitted scarf tied many times around your throat and you can hide yourself underneath everything and yet you can still remain seductive and alluring. You are alive and I am alive like you. I will kiss you on your chapped lips and yeah I kissed you then I think with like a hand somewhat lightly touching your cheek. Later in bed in darkness and then on the phone again and again I will explain to you all the ways that I feel like you are alive. But you are not alive you will tell me. You will say your soulself is weak and depleted and I will say that this is not so because I feel the presence of that soulself when we are together and sometimes in your voice on or through the phone even. I will explain that I only know the soulself because the soulself is precisely the reason that I am around and have been around for such a time in your life. Listen. I would not linger here and I would not wait for you if you were hateful or if you rejected me like you reject yourself. You will deviate and you will alter the conversation by sighing and by telling me that you wish you were home. I will say it like you only want to come home because your soulself flourishes when you are with me and in my bedroom with me and I will tell you that I am a light in your life and that I illuminate your soulself in all the ways that you cannot seem to recognize yourself. You will tell me that you do not know. I will tell you that I do.

Desideratum

I had like this obligation to acquire a souvenir. Last year I found a discarded yellow fishing bobber and so now I am feeling the obligation to find another because this year is different and perhaps better and yeah even Tyler is here with us. So I am pulling on a stuck leadchain like a child. I do not believe that I could break it or pull it from the stone where it is so embedded but I am pulling on it anyways and I am pulling on it right in front of Adam and Lucas. Maybe this was where they would latch their boats when traveling down through the river. But there are a great many rocks and very wild rapids and so Lucas suggests that maybe it was or it still is for anchoring air balloons instead. Tyler is further out in the water with his shirt off but he is submerged waist deep and not swimming. He has a stick that he is using to keep his footing against the current and to check the bottom. There are some pretty girls in sunglasses much further up the shore; they are sunbathing with their brownish arms thrown back behind their heads. We all have our shoes off and our feet are wet and somewhat dirty with the rivermud. There is a slick kind of algae on the submerged rocks and so you like have to watch your step and weight yourself carefully. You have to kind of speak up because of the loud hushing of the river. Sunburns and Suntans. Adam smokes a cigarette or no maybe he doesn't. He is carrying my bag with him because I asked him to. Tyler comes back on shore and I go out in the water with Tyler's stick. I prod the bottom I dare to walk out into a current that will surely take me. Everyone is telling me not to and so I don't. And so I don't but I think about what it would be like to lose my footing and to be sucked away by the current and I wonder if I would be able to save myself. There is a big parenthesis of whitewater in front of where we are standing and we are all staring at it while it is sucking sucking sucking. I look for a souvenir but there is only trash and the sunbleached and discarded beercans and then someone's unfinished cup of yogurt that has been placed delicately on the top of a stone that is almost out of reach. I see the same names as last year carved together on some of the wood that is wedged and piled between the stones and I gesture to a heart with two names inside of it and ask Lucas if he remembers. I don't think he hears me and so I choose not to repeat myself. I scan the river from the stone we are on and I see all the parentheses of whitewater and the great scattered remnants of an old ruined southern bridge and I keep saying that I should have brought my film camera and not left it up in Baltimore. Tyler goes back out into the water with his stick. Adam puts his feet in the water. I gaze out and then I tell Lucas that this is my kind of place and he says oh I know I was just thinking that you would think that. I did not come home with a souvenir.

The Bronze Boy

It will make me jealous if you kiss that statue. He's not real so what would it matter. It's that you would consider kissing someone other than myself and it's that you would do it right in front me and in such disregard for my feelings. What if I told you that I have already kissed him. Have you. I'm going to kiss him right now right here in front of you. If you kiss that statue then I will throw myself down this hill.

Lorelei stands up from where she was sitting beside Pace and she brushes the dry grass clippings from the back of her bluejeans. Pace glares at her in a way that is empty of all threat and she walks around to the other side of the sedentary statue and she places her hand upon the boy's hard dark bronze shorthair. Pace has come to this statue of the boy on the hill many times with many different people. It is the only place on the hill from which you can overlook the whole of the lake without it being at least partially obstructed by some of the wild brush or the trees. There is a small town on the other side of the lake and then the many little motorboats from this town are puttering out in the water with their anchors thrown over and their big iron treasure claws sunk in the water and scraping blindly along the dark belly of the lake. Most of the motorboats will quit around sunset but there will always be the couple that stay and roam long after dark with their large spotlights glowing upon the surface of the water to get the fish to come up. The bronze statue of this boy sits here with his legs crossed day and night, overlooking the lake from his slab of pavement. He has earbuds in, the thin twin goldblack wires twirling on down and vanishing somewhere into the pocket or waist of his pants. The bronze boy is polished and clean save for a thin layer of turquoise patina on his lips where all of the young girls had and continue to kiss him. He was sculpted with browline sunglasses on and you cannot see his eyes and so he must not have any. A lot of the boys in town cut their hair like the bronze boy and wear browline sunglasses. Some kind of effort to divert the attention away from the bronze boy but only by method of imitation. Being animate where he cannot. Lorelei brings her hand across the bronze boy and holds onto his big goldblack ear and she leans in and kisses him on his oxidized lips with her eyes wide open. The face of the bronze boy remains impartial, his expression this cool lingering between soft placation and a smiling. Pace thinks about how his whole life he has perceived this bronze boy as older than he but not by anything longer than a few years maybe and how even though Pace continues to age and age he paradoxically continues to perceive and to believe that the bronze boy is older than he and that Pace will soon be closing the gap and then surpassing the forever age of the bronze boy. Lorelei releases the bronze boy. Pace waits for her to look at him and then he turns on his side and tucks his legs and lets himself fall forward. He tumbles down the hill in a violent way and comes to rest on the cusp of another long incline. Before Pace throws himself further down the hill he looks back to see that Lorelei is chasing after him. She falls and slides down on her behind getting her bluejeans all stained with grass. She holds onto Pace from behind and wraps her legs around his waist and she wrestles him away from the incline and kisses him on the neck and ears and like there is no way that he would try throwing himself over now. They lie twined in the cool green shadow of a tall tree and she kisses him and the sun is somewhere over the lake that they can no longer see.

Oh my god you have scrapes on the back of your neck and your arms. I wish you would let go of me. You will look back on this and you will recognize how stupid and silly this was. I am going to do everything I can to forget of this moment. You don't have to act like this. Like what. Like you are ungrateful. I am not ungrateful; I am only a little irritated. Because I kissed the statue. Yes and because you had kissed it before today and never told me about it. Fine I had but you are real and he is not and so why can't you just preserve this as it is and be grateful. Is that what you are doing. I am preserving you in your boyish anger and in your sweet and misguided irritation. You will look back on the conservation of this memory and you will recognize how stupid and silly it was to preserve this. But I will have conserved it, nonetheless.

Primordial Lights

(black out the NAME)

But are we objects to ourselves. I would argue not. Primordial light has some kind of immunity in that it can never be objectified. I can reflect upon 'my self-in-the-world' but not 'myself'.

What makes NAME sitting on my bed with her laptop different from the waterbottle on my desk.

I can reflect upon my self-in-the-world through my body and my mind. My body and my mind belongs to my 'Primordial light' in terms that my 'Primordial light' must be the essential source from which it exists to reflect upon; but I cannot reflect upon my self-in-the-world through either the waterbottle or NAME.

If I drink from my waterbottle I can feel and then reflect upon its temperature, taste, motion. But how do I know that it does not reflect upon myself when I take a drink from the waterbottle. How can I say that NAME can reflect, when I cannot verify whether or not the waterbottle reflects.

How is reality expressed by the waterbottle different from the reality expressed by NAME.

'Primordial light' is not above me, it is me.

I communicate to NAME my dilemma by method of language. Language is an abstract action. So was the overly conscious sipping of the water from the waterbottle. And all of this writing and reflection, too.

NAME echoes my question back to me. NAME sounds hurt and says to me that if I cannot tell her reality as different from the waterbottle, well then NAME cannot differentiate my reality—which I know is evidently and undeniably truthful and expresses reality different from any material object of my subjectivity—from the waterbottle on my desk.

NAME can distinguish herself from my subjectivity by denying undeniable truth. She can deny a truth for me as I can deny a truth for her; she must be real and essentially distinguishable from the waterbottle on my desk.

I am truth for myself. NAME is truth for herself.

We recognize in each other the Freedom. Freedom is a truth as well.

Follicles

Grant is squat over a 16x20 that he has lying down flat on the woodfloor and he is making some art. He is holding the pastel between his fingers and swathing the canvas without any of the hesitation or the contemplation of his execution. Tessa really should not refer to Grant as a he and she should only refer to Grant as an it, but. Properly speaking, Grant is a silhouette, which is an it and a pure physical entity. Grant is a mark of silhouette that is the last of its kind and well does that make Grant unique enough. Is there enough a tragedy to Grant's historical context and enough naivety on his part to qualify him for something other than pure corporeality. Tessa sits crosslegged on the bed in her unrestrictive sleepwear with the standalone heater blowing warm air at her and she is pretending to read a book while watching Grant make his art. There is the dimlight of a lamp that is on and sitting atop their nightstand but the dimlight is for Tessa to pretend to read under and not for Grant to make his art by. Grant does not need light to see in darkness. Whatever he wishes to externally illuminate he can illuminate without disrupting the darkness of another. Tessa dogears the page that she has not read and closes the book. She sits on the bed being warmed by the heater and she watches Grant without pretending because she knows that Grant is so attuned to her that she cannot feign him. He is always observing her and recording and reducing her to the broadcast of the language of her body. Tessa liked to dress Grant in clothes and but now Tessa just dresses Grant in clothes. A white thermal with the three buttons undone and some bluejeans that are very short for him. When it is cold out she will have him wear a furlined coat that she bought for him and then a lipstick colored scarf that she had originally knitted for herself. His exoskeleton is wrapped in a black latex or rubber that imitates skin but is nothing like it. There are none of the follicles native to skin but when they are lying in bed and Tessa like wants Grant to have the follicles he will turn himself prickly all up his limbs and chest and wherever else. Illusory enough for when she is lonely but when outside of her loneliness it does not fool her into believing it as anything more than a perfectly executed rendition of skin and follicles. Sure there is the temptation but it is only because of her self-inflicted deprivation of the human contact. How long has it been and how long has it been. Two or three years maybe. Tessa calls for Grant. Grant places the pastels down on the floor and stands in attention of her. Grant is over 7 feet tall and he must duck his head because of the height of Tessa's ceiling. She says no okay you don't always have to get up when I call for you and you can continue making your art. Grant returns to his art. The Silhouette was manufactured in an exaggerated image of a human. It was given musculature and bloodlike warmth and height that is generous and unnatural but not in a perceptively inorganic way. It can labor only as efficiently as the best of a human but it alone can labor in many ways at the bests of many humans. Silhouettes were personified service and silhouettes were discontinued because humans wanted silhouettes to be less like servants. Tessa pulls the standalone heater closer to her and the plug comes out of the socket. Before she can rise out of bed to reinsert it, Grant has already placed his pastels down and crawled over to the socket. Tessa sits in the warmth of the slowly reigniting heater. She looks down sadly on Grant's backside where the thermal is coming up to reveal the color of his exoskeleton. The historical tragedy of his creation is only tragic and sorrowful to her and Grant does not care or appreciate or truly feel anything. She can cry for him but he will not understand the tears beyond some wild secretion of the wild body. His own tragedy is a fact and bears only the solidity of its permanence and there is no rejection or disbelief or denial and no desire in him to manipulate the pathway of his life but no you can't say life in reference to Grant so well there is no desire in him to manipulate the pathway of his duration and course. It is not even some recognition of defeat that Grant has given up; it is that Grant had been predestined to surrender prior to his conception. Tessa asks Grant to show her what he is making. Grant holds it up to the dimlight so that she can see it. It is a perfect rendition of her sitting on the bed and reading. No asymmetry between this and the reality. Tessa makes a face, tries not to look like herself. Grant, she says. Grant, that is not art.

Inscription To Be Read On The Plaque Underneath “The Bronze Couple”

“THE CLOSEST I COULD GET TO A SCULPTURE OF MYSELF.”

. . .

IN DEDICATION.

Duet

That lead was so pretty it must have been her hair. You know in black-and-white how blondes were so pretty then it was like they weren't even real people. Yeah man my lord that's what she was she was godawfully pretty. His mother's jeep is loud with wind and it shakes the soft top wild. There is never quiet and the music is playing though not like we could hear or understand the lyrics. Everything orange. Our hometown is so pretty by the color of the streetlamps. Both of us were incubated under this warm kind of light. Nothing else is on the highway with us and we are going the speed limit. The wind is coming in wild through the window and there is a spider on the dashboard and I ask him if I should slam it and he says oh no don't touch that guy he isn't hurting anyone. The spider slips into the dashboard and is gone. He and another special girl one time took a phone picture of me sitting down in a desk with the sunlight falling on me because they said I looked like an angel. This might be the most meaningful compliment. What were they seeing in me and maybe it was the way the light was. We get lost somewhere in a city that is asleep but we find a cop and he helps us points us toward home. We talk about the choreography of the fight scene. Orange lamplight shooting off and off our faces that incubator light and we are really only children. Did you see the way those two fought. The hero and the villain and how they were fighting but also trying not to hurt each other. I do man I noticed that too. Music and wind. You know man my parents failed and I'm not saying it's just my parents but like I'm starting to believe that love might not be true like at all. I know right. I mean my parents last week told me and my sister and not any of my younger littler siblings that they had actually decided to separate a while ago and that it was in paper too. Official and they never discussed it with us or anything. I was devastated. I cried I was so goddam mad man. I get it it's okay I cried too. My parents did it like this; they were really open about it because my dad I mean he always beat me you know but he went too far or aimed in the wrong place and he broke my nose and my mom found out and though it was like not like something new to her it did expedite the whole process. That incubator light and a couple spotted deer walking alongside the road seeming so scared. I don't know man. I don't want to believe that love is untrue.

Reply: Reply: jamestown

She is writing my name in the sand with a heart going around it. Her hair is up in a snail so it wouldn't get wet while she was writing my name in cursive. She washes the sand off of her finger in the water. She dries her finger with her skirt. I don't want to write about this anymore. She has written my name in cursive and it will be there until hightide comes. She carries it all day not doing anything but carrying it with her. The sundress she is wearing you can see her legs through it and the colors of her underwear. The sun is up high enough but I keep thinking that it is near dusk because of the colors. I'm in my father's clothes and they are too big on me and I remember that my family buried one of our old cats out here. We put it in an old vacuum cleaner box and dug her a shallow grave and my mother said a prayer. What will you do with it. I will put mine down later and forget it and then I will not want to tell her about it. We're playing in the jamestown and the water is kind of dirty kind of cold. We have our shoes off like we are younger than we think we are. I'm in my father's clothes. Why are you in your father's clothes. There are pieces of shells in the jamestown and I am gathering pieces from the water dipping my father's cuff in the water getting it all soaked. The air is clean with a little salt in it. I have a collection of cold dripping shells and I think why am I in my father's clothes. Why do you have all of those shells. The sun is up. When the sun is on her. She would take a photo of it and send it to me if I were not here. We make voodoo dolls out of some long shoregrass and cattails and she says that I am her voodoo doll and that she is mine.

Shower #2

Until this day I have been virginal of song. I was virginal of song and of melody and of voice and yet I have been singing to myself my whole short life. A return to the closet of bathtile and again the shower is weakly spraying the hotwater and again I have some coffee in the stolen coffeecup that I have broken and fixed twice now with some woodglue. The roast is dark and not light. I am a little older and still in love with all of the same things and then maybe even more things than before but I am possibly muted of spirit tonight and I have been working and lonely today and I don't necessarily feel like hollering about my loves. I can focus and meditate and try to quietly try to live inside of the influences, too. I don't have to rejoice like all of the time about this stupendous life. I stretch my legs out into the falling hotwater and I breathe and breathe the heavy thick steam. It is dim and it is night and so when I stare at the graycolored bathtile on the wall in front of me it begins to manifest itself into patterns. It is almost like the tiles are glowing or transfixing themselves in ways particular to myself. Crucifixes sometimes and other times they pulsate and align themselves into a square. I lean forward and throw both of my arms into the falling hotwater and it mattes and darkens the thin blonde hairs on my forearms. My arms are very tan and somewhat freckled from the baltimore sun. I was supposed to receive a call but then I can never expect a call at this time of the night because the treatment facility has only the single cordless phone and there are about this many other girls clamoring for the phone and the person who was supposed to call me is courteous enough to allow others to reach their loved ones prior to allowing herself. I am a loved one. She loves me but then I said I would not rejoice because of some depletion that I can already feel the coffee and myself overcoming. I need to return, though. To the primitive wholesome concepts. To the water as it feels now. To the shiny slick bathtile. To the air that is thick and heavy and yet still perfectly breathable. To the influences upon my life who are not dwelling with me in a corporal sense but are in a vigorous spiritual sense. Names names names because when I recite all of their names over and over to myself it is like I am performing the mantra that is like crucial to the reaffirmation of the primitive wholesome concepts that I have of those to whom I have attached the names. It is kind of hypocrisy that I would have to use the names but I hope that the mantra of them helps to dull the names and then intensify the truths of who and what the names barely represent. Maybe that is the advantage and intention of a name; to first help define who you are and then to be tossed unto the wind and completely disassociated from the far more powerful nonsubstance that you more truthfully are. You don't want to be what your name represents but rather what your name cannot. Like the somewhat red spirit to who you have become financially bound and who you feel understands the primitive execution of life better than you ever will. The spirit who has the incredibly long arms and can sing very very well and who has come into bloom since the encounter with their firstlove. And then and then there is the intimate spirit in your life. The intimate spirit to who you gave the campfire name of littlebones to the first time you slept in bed together and to who you long to know the body of but have yet been permitted to because of this spirit's sad deficiency of health and subsequent inconsistency of their corporal form. But it's her. I know her name and I use her name and but it is her. I miss her and I wish she would have called. My blood is warm from breathing in the steam. My forehead is pounding though not so violently. Oh maybe this is not primordial or wholesome or whatever but I have finished my coffee and I feel like I am going to sit on my hands and holler holler holler. I want to hear the legato of my own once virginal and not melodic voice reverberate off the acoustics of this bathtile.

He (It)

Dakota throws the anchor about a boat's distance from where he had thrown it last week and he helps Grant to remove the clothes that Tessa dresses him (it) in. Dakota then reels the great long chain from the winch and proceeds to tie and padlock the chain over and around Grant's chest in a way that would both hold Grant and leave him (it) comfortable and unrestricted. Dakota knows that it is silly and foolish personification to consider comfort when in reference to the method in which Dakota binds Grant in the chains; but Dakota cannot help but think about how it would bother Tessa or even himself to be sinking and raising an object that is very much built in the image of a human by a chain secured around the throat or the arms or legs because these are chains that Dakota is using and with chains there is that metaphorical implication of violence or incarceration against one's will just as there is the metaphorical implication of a human being in Grant's exoskeleton. So Dakota chooses to exert the little more effort and time in binding Grant in a humane way. After double-checking every padlock, Dakota tells Grant that if he (it) would like to ever come up before noon, all Grant would have to do is tug on the chain twice and Dakota would reel him (it) back to the surface. Dakota then tells him (it) to submerge himself (itself) and Grant steps over the side of the boat. The winch screams as he (it) descends swiftly to the bottom of the lake. Grant never tugs twice on the chain. Dakota sits up on the deck and eats something in the cool blue morning and he watches and waves at the other motorboats out on the lake with their large iron claws lowered into the mirrorlike water, searching.

Prior to these once a week outings with Grant, Dakota had always gone out on the lake alone. He would wake early enough to take the boat out before the sun had risen and most of the other boats were out. He would throw the anchor wherever he pleased and then if he felt like diving he would do so until he was tired and then he would nap in his boat in the sun and then go diving some more. Dakota finds that the mighty and clarifying solitude of his morning boat ride is somehow interrupted or threatened by Grant's presence. Dakota makes like the meditative effort to differentiate Grant from himself but he ends up speaking and talking to Grant anyways and yeah well maybe Dakota spends too much time out on this lake after all.

Dakota sets an alarm for half an hour before noon and lies on his back on the deck in the just becoming sun of the morning. He falls asleep with his arms out. Dakota dreams of an ocean he has never seen before. The alarm wakens him and he feels a little irrational anger towards the alarm. He wipes his eyes and yawns and leans over the side of the boat to splash some of the cold lake water on his face and then he starts the winch into reeling Grant back to the surface. The boat dips as the winch slowly coils back the chain. It malfunctions a couple times and Dakota has to go over to the winch and yank and kick at it to get it to continue coiling the chain. When Grant surfaces he (it) has the thrashed upper torso of an old Silhouette clutched against his (its) chest. Dakota sighs. He asks Grant to climb back into the boat and set the torso down. Murky water and threads of algae coated wires spill out of the cavity from where the Silhouette's torso had been torn away from its waist. The fiber that envelopes the somewhat collapsing musculature is tarnished and eaten away at. It has one arm and most of the fingers missing from the hand. Dakota looks from Grant to the cleaved torso and feels uncomfortable and perhaps a little embarrassed. This is one of the more intact Silhouettes that Grant has brought up with him (it); more often it is just the gruesome remainder of an arm or a head. Dakota goes about releasing the padlocks and unwinding the chain from around Grant's chest and feeding it back into the winch. He tells Grant how unfair it is of Tessa to ask him (it) to go scavenging like this. How little it does for him (it) and how much it would disturb her if she actually saw the kind of stuff that Grant fishes up. Dakota dries Grant with a soft towel and dresses him (it) in Tessa's clothing again. He sets the boat toward shore. Dakota tries himself to lift and return the torso of the Silhouette back to the lake but it is too dense for him to lift over the side of the boat and so he asks Grant to do it. Grant tosses the torso over the side of the boat. It floats shortly on its back before sinking.

They pull up underneath the green canopy of trees where the brush is cut away from the shore. Tessa comes

running down the hill to meet them in a sweater and some jeans and her scarf is unraveling from around her throat. Dakota tells Grant in a whisper to go to her so it looks like he (it) did it of his (its) own volition. She sends Grant up the hill without any thought towards the feigned volition and she stands over Dakota in his boat with her head shaking.

Nothing again.

I told you before that I don't think there are any in the lake. I don't know where you heard that there were.

Did you let him look the whole morning.

Yes.

I'm going to come out with you next week.

No you won't.

Why not.

You can't swim. I don't take anyone out in my boat who can't swim.

You take Grant. Grant can't swim.

Grant cannot drown. He isn't alive.

Okay then.

Wait.

We'll see you next week.

Wait.

What.

I want to talk to you.

Okay.

What are you hoping for.

What.

What do you think would happen if he did find one of the old Silhouettes.

I want him to understand what and who he is. I want him to know what he is the last of.

He knows what he is.

He doesn't act like it.

How do you want him to act.

I don't know. Grateful. Maybe sorrowful.

He can't be grateful or sorrowful.

I could teach him how to be, then.

How would you feel. What if you saw Grant all torn into pieces. With the wires and whatever else spilling out of his insides. What if you saw Grant as hardware. How would that feel.

I don't know. I don't want to think about that.

You Will Lose It, Unless

So you are limiting me. I just don't feel comfortable doing this in your brother's bed. You would do this in my bed. I would but this is not your bed and I don't know your brother and you just got to respect me and my decisions. Fine all right fine all right. Where is your brother. Attending school in the north. Why. I don't know. What is he pursuing up there. Education. Does he know what he wants to do with his life. He hasn't decided yet. Do you think he knows. Probably not. What do you want to do with your life. I don't know. Do you want to attend school. I don't because I want to do many other things while I am young but then I guess I will probably attend school. Hmm. Will you attend school. Yes or maybe or I guess I will. Do you think we will attend the same school. No probably not and you will go away to the north to the same school as your brother and I will be left behind in your dust. I wouldn't leave you behind in my dust. Yes you would. No I wouldn't. Please don't touch me like that. What I can't put my arm around you in my brother's bed either. No that's fine I just don't want it to escalate into anything. It won't if you won't allow it. I have self-control. Do you. I think I do but then I don't think I would if we were lying in your bed. So you don't have any will at all and I bet I could break your self-control so easily. Oh no please don't. Fine all right fine all right. I don't want to lose this. Lose what. I don't know I don't want to lose you and I don't want to lose your brother's bedroom and I don't want to be allowed to sleep in your brother's bedroom and I want to have to sneak in at night like this when your parents are asleep and my parents are asleep. You will lose this and I probably will go to school in the north and leave you lying in my dust. Stop it. No this is what you want to hear right. No it isn't. You will lose me and my brother's bedroom and no I don't believe in love anymore. Please don't say that to me. You are losing it and you are losing it and you are losing it. I don't want to talk to you anymore. I will break you and if you let me break you then you will not lose anything. Leave me alone. I won't. I have self-control. Don't have self-control and let me break you. Do you believe in love and if you tell me you do. Yes yes yes I believe in the sacredness of our love and no one else's. Fine all right fine all right.

The Truth: jamestown

I don't remember it very well.

Mighty

This situation requires some kind of might. You may not have it. Push your hair out of your eyes and listen yourself. Like you cannot do it. Like you have not the determination to maintain what you already do without any cause for serious thought or contemplation. Push your hair out of your eyes and reflect upon yourself. You are a young twentyone. You are a wild childish southern boy who is slowly becoming placated by the wet mellow air of the pacific northwest. You are learning to love despite yourself and you are learning to love in a way that is so objective that it yaws in on itself and becomes subjective. Perfect spirit and no you are not a perfect spirit but you are willing to become one. You want to be a saint but it's not like in the future after your decay that anyone would have to pray to you. Might and the acquiescent tradition of your might and then all of the discipline it took to emerge from your youth in a mildly successful way. Of further stretching out that infantskin of yours without dismissing the special intellect of your youth. Can you believe that you have been in the same body all your life. Can you believe that your infantskin has yielded this body. Infantskin you may have reflected upon poorly at some time in your past but you do not now and you cannot now. There are parts to like and others to accept. The cut of your jaw and the sometimes color of your hair when it is properly combed. You can appreciate those in some lowlight in front of a mirror. The outward and inquisitive nature of your ears and the near averageness of your height and your comparative physical strength. You can accept those and actually you can forget about them. But can you display this knowledge to her. This is the might required of you and you are unsure that you can. To have to use rationality to bring her toward the good and more irrational renditions of light. To differentiate what you feel against what you should be. To trust. To envelope her in love even when you yourself feel denied of love. To lie in bed beside her and to let her see you without your clothes on. To see that she could want you to have shed your clothes. To shed her of clothing and not feel as though you are undeserving or sinful or enticed by her body purely out of some animal or misogynistic tendency. This all requires might in a way that you are otherwise untested and okay all right you are replying to this requirement. You spit your clear clean spit on the rainy wet pavement and you tell her that you want to live together anyways.

Reply To Pace

Dear Pace,

I never really thought about you until you wrote me this letter. I only knew you as the boy who dated Lorelei. I knew her. I didn't like her all that much. I guess I still don't.

You are very sweet, though. You are verbose.

I'm going to keep this letter in a special place. Like in my jewelry box or something. I wear a lot of my mother's jewelry. Rings and necklaces mostly. A brooch here and there if the light of day permits it. I prefer gold to silver. I bet you didn't know that about me.

Where are you. Why did you leave your home. You shouldn't be hanging around in courtyards after dusk, adequate security or not.

Do you remember how the birds would find their way into our attics around wintertime. I sleep in my attic. There is a bird in here right now. She is making a nest up in the rafters. I really don't mind it. I am thinking about you while watching her tend to her loose assortment of twigs.

I have things I want to ask you. But they all pertain to our home and of your duration while you were here.

Come home. I am tugging on the umbilical. Come home.

-Bailey