

The Paper

saying goodbye



{AP}

Para Anne Sexton

how do you think i'm going to cross these roads
i only have useful lies
and useless pain

the Sun is beating up all of my
strategies
and soon i will even lose
my lamb

i need to think

to remember what my grandfather told me about the days
about the magic of pretending
lying
and hiding everything
from people
but not from the Sun

{MR}

{LR}



1

all i wanted was emotion when you said
goodbye. not in you, but in the unearthing
of the less graceful aspects of my personality. i had always
thought
break ups to be sobering, not abjection
like turning toward the wall
after sex or reading aloud from books we never finish. i
should have
never stopped fishing
through the cabinets for a band-aid or a D3 supplement.

i said,
my uber has arrived, and a
mouse that was tormenting you all of august squealed:
caught
in a humane amazon-two-day-shipping trap. i'm sorry
i violently screamed in shock,
but there was a witness! and suddenly we were
rushed into the materialization of a together/alone binary.

I reminisce,
did she see the oil stains from the chicken
we accidentally left frying
while we lay outside,
in a hammock in a yard of concrete?
we loved disjointedly
watching the the dancing brick wall
across from your ivory couch
where we sat in the living room.
if we knocked it down
we'd enter the neighbors' bathroom: comedians with
opioid addictions who slid stand-up invitations under
the door.
did she hear you curse
their drug dealer, call him fuckhead, when he came to deliver
every three days like a
reminder of arbitrary order?

don't scream, jesus, you said and you slowly got up. she's
just scared. you
carried her out, in that *humane way*. and your hands were
full, so there
was no hug or embrace. your jaw clenched in disgust – so no
declaration or factually-accurate narrative of
our time together. while i got into my uber
you let her slip out between the recycling and the trash.

bye-bye now,
you said in that absent, mousy version of your voice.
i was getting into the backseat
so slowly, like a theatrical bow at the
end of a long and philosophically-ridden play. i was wondering
whose departure you were acknowledging
when the uber driver asked me nicely to shut the door.
and then,
as we drove away,
the curtain of night draped over
the whole city: like shaking out a clean sheet
and tucking it in at all the corners.

{KC}

OUR BURNING BODY



Are we turning our back to you? Are you creeping up behind us? Are we asking you to follow us? Are you chasing behind us?

Gorse is sharp. Sight is sharper.

Maybe they see me as a soft pebble, rolling at the bottom of the river like an egg when boiled in a saucepan. I bob. Funny how I seem to be so out of it. Out of the world. Out of my skin in the way it looks detached from up on the collapsing bank where I swim. The way my feet quickly follow my legs as I move upstream. The way skin melts away from my bones as I backstroke forwards.



This morning, I peeled and ate boiled eggs. I used my fingers to pick out the domes of shell from the plughole so that water could pass through. Then I pushed the smaller bits through the gaps. At the table, I spread the jammy yolks with a spoon.

It's the highest point of summer.

Now, they approach as I stand by the gorse, warming by the sun. I think about being seen, and watch them move slowly, skirting my sight. All three of us, dotted about. One with a towel around their neck, the other with sunscreen on theirs just in front, and me - naked, with hair that brushes my back. I'm busier than them and block their path with my purpose.

They pad the floor quietly, trying not to be seen. They wait for me.

We don't say anything to one another.

They are dripping wet with silt and clay

all over them, and at a fallen tree, they bend their legs over, but one breaks a twig with their bare foot.

They feel seen by me, and look away.

Bending down, I laugh, pick up another reed and keep on moving. You wanted long fingernails that were never dirty. You wanted a stomach flat like a cutting board and thighs the shape of hotdogs. You wanted skin like a bao bun and hair like Rachel from Friends. You wanted teeth that bit in a perfect half moon-shape and a face that lit up in the sun. You wanted a hairless crack. A hairless back. A hairless lip that laughed at every joke you told me even when it wasn't funny. You wanted hips that sloped perfectly, slowly. You wanted to see me and stand in wonder, and for me to stand there and wait for you to finish looking. You wanted me to be absolutely everything you wanted. You wanted to stand by the river and take a look at me and for me to stand still for you, forever. A body for you to take in. Take a photo of. Take home. You wanted to take my eyes from my own face and point them exactly where you wanted them to go. You wanted to be a lens, pulling focus. You wanted me to speak as you showed me. Move where you want me.

A body in a frame.



But I am a fish that knows when it's time to go upstream. I just know, and I just go.

So, I turn and take your look. I take it and throw it into the river with the reeds and the flowers and the twigs and the weeds. Watch as they drift away from you. Watch as I drift away from you.

{HM&LM}

The Little Things

in your arms the smallest moments live large

your tiniest gesture could move a continent

{AP}



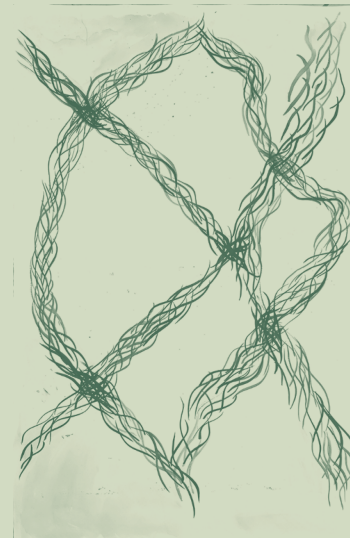
{MF}

Love, Love, love, love, love, orgasm

If you were to look towards and then inward to everyone sitting at the dining table, as much as you could, or as deep as their candle-lit chest allowed, you could achieve immense comfort; a collective mental pilgrimage! Dodging first, uncertain, directed outward, then, slowly, self-soothing via lights and heating settings, now tingling a bit with rum and coke, a piece of something to twiddle with, a swift look around the room and a regathering of the self at the start, at that very dining table, on that evening after a day of division and expression, finally home, at home in the house, at the table that asks us to face each other, at the table that asks us to embrace the safety of the circle, with open arms, with a parental sigh, in a moment where he and she becomes palpable, where he and she becomes right next to you, where he and she becomes so much, and where progressively the housemate becomes the reflection of, where the housemate becomes the guardian of, where the housemate becomes the bearer of the heaviest of feelings, yours and mine alike, at this point ours, to cradle, to take into our joint grasp and turn around, to twiddle with as we recall a story much too long to tell. And finally - the arrival at a heavy acceptance amid a light high, and finally we've all become, recognizable and there. To be present in this unspoken mutuality feels healing



{DN}



{PF}

{LH}



{AI}

Now it is all bloodless.

Those holy things that once were warm.

Those words commonly used to describe the smell of coffee.

There are so many of us in the spillage, in loaves of crusted upness.

Sometimes so far so good is the only definite answer.

I was so angry at myself for growing

because it meant no one to share a room with,

or to whisper with in the dark.

no duvet was big enough or friendly enough for the both of us,

our eventually bigger hands toppling the bunk bed.

You started to grace me in my dreams, in my road world, covered in repeated blue.

There was so much time there and so much final thought. So much eating pea soup. So much saying what we mean.

Now those dreams are laughing behind a curtain

I'm learning to walk less darkly. I've laid down in harder rooms, and now it is strange to find things both difficult and correct. Still punctuated, altogether a soft and right feeling.

We were walking along the footpath that skirted the river by our house. It was a hot day. The midriff of August. Carrying our things, we weighed down our burning, river-wet bodies with our bags, cameras and water bottles. The path was completely overgrown, and neither of us could see beyond the grass that was higher than our heads. We arrived at a clearing where someone, naked, stood on the riverbank, holding a big bunch of weeds, flowers, reeds and twigs. They looked at us for a while, and we, them. They must have heard us coming, and stood to see us. They didn't hide. They didn't look away.

What a beautiful day - they said.

That night we dreamed of someone with hair like ours, running through gorse, with sharp green branches tugging at their hair, their skin, their body. Not a mark was left. Not a puncture.

We woke up without a name for them. With only ideas of who they were or why they were running. In bed, sun through curtains, we asked these questions:

What does it mean to see a body as a vision? As a dream? Should we have asked the person collecting reeds for their name? Should we have waited for them to ask us a question first? Should we have taken off our clothes and crouched to collect stems with them?

Then:

2

What are we without a name? Without a face?

3



{SP}



{SW}

4

Stroking time

Be chic
 Bored but not
 Boring
 The table isn't the right fit
 Some days I wish I was a rapper
 I wish I was nowhere
 Was a fish
 Or a horse on a hill
 Or a cathedral
 With high painted ceilings
 And tall Gothic steeples
 And a crypt, deep and dark
 Where feelings lie locked and hidden
 The walls screaming with secrets
 (tear up the prime minister, kick him out)
 Lost in a whispering tower
 I long for Italian plaza's and beaches
 Or some life full of life
 A powerful energy, morning sun
 And many many people all crowded together
 In a square
 In a stadium
 In a club, sweating and dancing
 At a Christmas party
 With wilting Christmas roses.

{NR}

Venice

Don't love me,
 Have better shoes, cleaner
 husbands, jobs.

Men don't love me.
 I don't know how to follow great
 people,
 Or hold my tongue.

Amy enjoyed her visit,
 Though David refused her birdcage.

I perform daily before a green screen,
 But I could just watch sea lions.

Instead of burying me,
 Put a note
 By the apartment and in office,
 Write: "out on loan"

I don't want exhibits, just notebooks.

{MC}

What's good art to you,
 she asked.
 I answer:

- 1: welcoming
- 2: but disturbing
- 3: ranging from sensual
- 4: to sexual
- 5: and from suggestion
- 6: to provocation
- 7: everything mild must die
- 8: everything raw must live

I want to leave the art
 space feeling

- 9: puzzled
- 10: and electrified

{LV}



{EA}

sheep head
in the well

tra la la la la
 there's a sheep head in the well
 tra la la la la la
 sheep head in the well
 tra la la la la
 the water tasted funny all week

{TS}

5

{JS}

Bog Roll

Cushioned layers enriched with lotion,
 Soft and frangranced for every bowel
 motion, Always follow this strict routine,
 It's dam sure to keep your bum 'ole clean,
 Must always wipe from front to back,
 When cleanin' up your dirty arse crack,
 Use enough roll to make a boxing glove on your fist,
 Make sure there's plenty so tha's not covered in shit,
 Once the mess is cleared,
 Use one last layer to make sure it's all disappeared,
 Pull up your kecks and check on your poo,
 Then it's all good to flush on down the loo,
 Now to initiate the final demands,
 Is to lather up in soap and wash those 'ands.

{JW}



{SS}

HaikuOf
Indifference

with your monalisa lips
 I kiss bliss indifference
 lust is a slow glide

{AP}



{DC}





{AC}

Today I take a walk round the site, when no one else is about. Walking as meditation on the land -

Silver birch/corrugated metal bends in the wind, the roof I stand under relinquishing to nature, grey blue skies to pink, hands clasped in the cold. One solitary blackbird calls.

Looking out, I witness starlings glide in tandem, almost touching, pushing their small bodies through the dusk settling, grasslands beneath the skies stand yellow white and ochre, tracing soil to air, soft wavering lines like the veins in my wrist like subtly carved lines in my palm.

I curl in my fingers - nails grazing skin - then unfurl. Let my hands' heat into the air. It becomes part of this landscape -

skin
surfaces
soil
tending,
repeat.

walking as a prompt for making / notes from a residency / starting a new piece, new season, new(s) travels

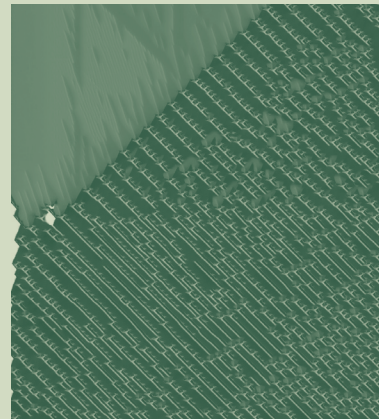
{LRC}

INTELLIGENT ANIMAL

One thing that people fail to realise is that fish, like some apes, are also able to use tools. These particular fish are intelligent. Look at the fish use a rock to open the clam. HE selects the perfect rock. HE takes his time in doing so. HE uses his mouth. HE uses his mouth to place the clam on another rock, also perfectly selected. HE uses his mouth to place the clam on the perfectly selected rock and uses the other perfectly selected amount of force on a perfectly selected point of the clam and opens the clam. HE opens the clam with his mouth. HE uses tools.

Haha look at that I wonder if he'll discover fire next.

{LD}



{NDS}

Benson & Hedges Blue

nicotine madonna
pale translucent lip
you've got my number

please don't call again
please do

{AP}



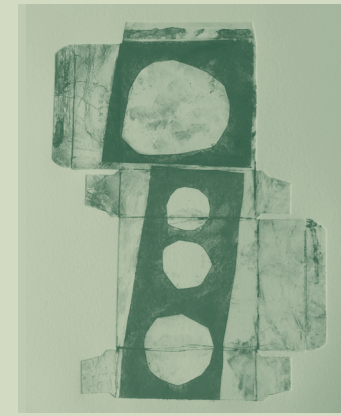
{HR}



{ATT}



{JR}



{JP}

Honey suckles

I

I am breathing, full of bold swallow air and cry. I cannot reach far.

II

I am still. Our furred tongues stretch, unfurl to lick up that sweet dozing dew.

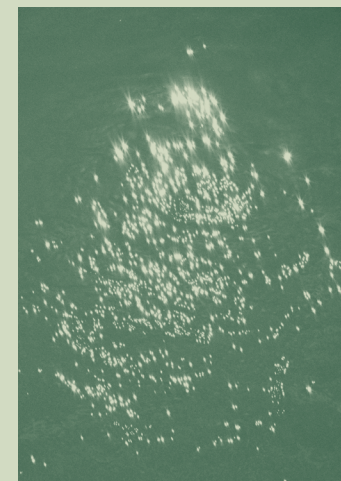
III

I am awake. My eyelids form moon curves. A bird watches. Comes near. Leaves.

IV

I am thin now, limp-cold, and my quivering tongue tastes Winter once more.

{IL}



7 {JM}

STEVE

~ Oh, bliss! when we are adrift. It keeps me hanging on and makes me forget myself. The suspense is unbelievable, I tell you! Best enjoyed when she refuses to converse with other creatures crossing her path because of the obvious five degree problem, need I say more? Yes. An Olympic sport to remind me of my unfortunate existence by ignoring it. I want to yell that my eye is up here! Instead, I lower my gaze onto her gloved hands and exhort them into gesticulating. When her hands have become mine I am possession of her body. I have an appearance. I have dimensions that reach out and depend on the dimensions of others. I am the shark now. See you at the paranormalympics.

~ Oh, it's this one again! I love it so because he is always in frame. Steve has fallen asleep on a red vinyl sofa. The barmaid gives him a light kick in the leg. Steve unwillingly stumbles to the bar where he asks for a last drink, but Mr., the last round was 15 minutes ago. When he leaves the frame, I can be sure that he enters the next one. The many deaths of Steve has made me firmly believe in resuscitation. Steve's name is Tommy.

~ I am a membrane. There are no dimensions to my utterings. The world is a silent place. I have no depth perception. I am shallow by nature.

~ I bodylessly lean back on the darkness that lures behind me and observe what is going on in front of me. I project eye-beams onto the objects that render their shape and movement. Without me, she would have no road to ride. This gives me great comfort. I cannot attest to what goes on outside when I blink. Maybe this is when just about everything of importance happens. This gives me great discomfort.

~ They've got it all wrong about their dreams, they have. In retrospect, dreams are chaotic odysseys — the most curious thing materialised, can you believe it Barbara, Minnie, Betty?! the gloom, the gloom and then my old flame showed up, out of the blue, into the fire, literally. In my book, people are much more simple than they would ever admit to themselves, or to Barbara. These "dreams" are simply made up of pictures randomly paired with affects. Sometimes they confirm reality, sometimes they contradict it. In the end a dream is just a pearl necklace of juxtapositions. A person in a room with an object. Only us non-dreamers should be certified to interpret dreams. If people only knew of my beautiful objectivity!

~ Reading is my worst enemy and I have been forced to read some dreadful books in my one-dimensional life. I stare at the text as if it was an image or wander off into the scenery. I watch her in the reflective surface that hangs next to the creepy painting of Rhett

Butler. We watch Gone With the Wind AND Casablanca every New Year's Eve. She just couldn't have painted it herself, I would have noticed.

~ I dare only to close my lids for short periods of time, dead scared they will stick together and never ever open again. She does not share this one fear of mine and willingly lays down and float in darkness every night while I suffer in terror, that air-head. I get suspicious of my host, I suspect she left long ago. I play games to get through these hours. I pick a person that I want to travel. This person is sometimes most often always Steve. In my fantasy, I am free floating and can observe him in 360° and as close as I please. I can melt into his skin and I can see the insides of his body. I would not do anything to him and he would not even notice me, I promise, I'm no perv, Jesus! Since I can see Steve but he can't see me, it feels slightly realistic. It's just something to hold on to.

~ For all I know, they might all walk out of my field of vision and into a studio where they turn on the monitors and watch me watch the world. For all I know she might be fully aware of my presence but can't be bothered to acknowledge it. I don't know how to feel about this.

~ Human interaction too easily shatters my fantasies. Luckily, she spends most of her time alone and inside, watching others who cannot look back.

~ If I were a remora stuck on the forehead of a shark, wherever one could say that that is, I would have spoken shark. This personality printed right here must have developed in symbiosis with my human hostess, bless her heart. An eye without a personality would not be able to systematise what is seen. I therefore take great pride in my ability to discern things from other things. If people only knew of my beautiful subjectivity!

~ It seems central to their philosophical mumbo jumbo to deny this but I knew it as soon as I opened that I am static and the rest is spinning. When people appear and disappear on the screen, I know that the world is in order and I can let my existence go.

~ Who would sit in front of a mirror and feel and let it show? Actors. I too practice the art of face reading, but have long ago abandoned the stubborn misconception that humans carry themselves according to their nature. The system of facial expressions does NOT, I repeat, NOT correlate with the system of emotions.

~ I hope I perceive the world like Steve's vision does.

~ I am in love with Steve Buscemi. Yes, it is true, I know what love is. I have read about it.

{KH}

Correspondence

Many miles away,
still the wake reaches the shore
—I must watch my thoughts.

{LS}

All of them talk
with your voice

What I want to see is a need to be a game pleasure. This is all scripted. Improvisation following certain rules. Another person behind you I didn't hire.

The taste of the veggie burger for 5.75 pounds from Leon at the London Bridge Station. I am just average. I will go home, order some food. Healthy food, and watch one episode. Or two. I know, I am proud of myself too.

Your language, your tones, learns your highs and lows, to sound upset or urgent, and comforting, when buying milk. You learned to talk as your speaker too. The sexy voice saying "60% charged". I learned that too. Much better than 10% or 20%. "Please charge" also works. She says, "please", when she breathes out, and there is no air in her lungs to say "charge", an opportunity to enrich children's language. In the end, you hear another breath which you learn how to replicate perfectly. I go to make myself a cup of tea, "please, tea" with an extra exhale.

I learn how to replicate THAT perfectly.

Rapid movement of her head makes the ticking noise of pearl earrings crushing onto each other. "It looks splendid," she said quickly while her eyes catching one bit of a room after another. Silver grey snails of soft curls frame her face in an urgent appearance, her posture as she is picking up berries. It won't be reversible.

I learn how to replicate THAT perfectly.

Royal family at a beauty contest in Barbados. Floor full of water with a Banana Asphalt snake eating old skin on our feet. He stands straight without unnecessary movement. He is saving energy as a device with an A rating. One would even think that he is indeed made of iron and that his whole body is rusty THANKS to English weather - unable to move his body to the extent other bodies move

- insert medical advice here.

I have such a desire to poke him. Perhaps to get a little squeaky noise out of him too. He is the Queen of England. We pay him with baked mascarpone.

We are sitting on the bench with mascarpone cakes, unemployed. Those women with mascarpone cakes can't be trusted.

And on those days, when we lie on our backs and watch yellow maps of watermarks on the ceiling, we retaste the veggie burger for 5.75 from London Bridge Station.

Trapped in the relaxed silence we add randomness.

The aggressive silence plays at the same time. Every fourth crashes and the pattern repeats.

WE replicate THAT perfectly.

{LK}



LONG TAILED TIT
(AEGITHALOS CAUDATUS)
SEEN AT CLARKSTON ROAD
21.11.21

{HD}

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