

Like Someone in Love  
An Addendum to Love Dog

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Images courtesy of Masha Tupitsyn

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“...To bear the deception of this dream.”

— JACQUES RANCIÈRE

In *Girls, Visions, and Everything*, the novelist Sarah Schulman writes:

“Remember, when your heart is breaking, write it down. When a relationship is over, what do you have? You have nothing. But if you write it down, you have material. That’s the best a girl can hope for in these troubled times.”

A modern-day *fin’amor*, *Like Someone in Love* is Masha Tupitsyn’s addendum to her multi-media love manifesto, *Love Dog* (Penny-Ante Editions, 2013). Written during the summer of 2013, and set in the French countryside, the origin of courtly love, Tupitsyn’s visual hybrid essay borrows from the Medieval troubadours to create a modernday digital-compendium of text, image, and sound that explores feminine identity, erotics, chivalry, emotional excess, and crisis masculinity.

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AUGUST 03 2013

# Untitled 1

W(h)ole heart.



AUGUST 04 2013

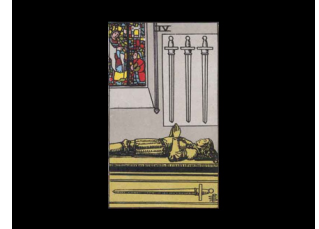
## Time Out (Modern Day Swords)

At my artist's residency in Marnay-sur-Seine, France. Long bike ride through the birch woods today, then two swims in the Seine River. No one around. I don't want to live in cities anymore. Not all the time. Or at least not in any American city. And not in soul-sucking New York.

Before I left New York, I pulled this card, the Four of Swords. Rest, repose, hermitage, retreat, time-out. And that's how it's been. With one sword in reserve.



▪ **IMAGE**  
Four of Swords, in the road.



▪ **IMAGE**  
Four of Swords, Tarot.

AUGUST 06 2013

## Untitled 2

“I am eternally, devastatingly romantic, and I thought people would see it because ‘romantic’ doesn’t mean ‘sugary.’ It’s dark and tormented—the furor of passion, the despair of an idealism that you can’t attain.”

— CATHERINE BREILLAT

AUGUST 08 2013

## Seasonal Work

Sometimes so much to say.  
Sometimes nothing.  
Nothing all summer.  
Everything all winter.

AUGUST 04 2013

## Untitled 3

This is the great Karen Black in the documentary *No Subtitles Necessary: Laszlo & Vilmos* speaking in close-up about why heartbreak isn't a close-up. I recorded this 28-second clip of Black a year ago but never posted it. Last week she died, so here it is now.

There are people who talk in close-ups, with their guts. Which is what Black does here.

I almost can't take what she says because it's such a moving breakdown of the cinematic close-up—when to use it, when not to use it; when to come close, when to leave room; why the camera keeps its distance from Frances and Harry in this breakup scene from *Frances*, aiming at their chests and their stomachs—their viscera—instead. And it comes from a very strange and very fearless 70s actress. I've always been fascinated by Black for her zaniness. Her cross-eyed stare. Her pretty ugliness and ugly prettiness. I like that it was never entirely clear whether she was acting weird or actually weird. But here she is so emotionally intelligent. When Black explains why this scene in *Frances* was shot using a Dutch angle; why it's not a long-shot or a close-up; why it isn't and can't be a close-up, the hairs stood up on the back of my neck. It makes total sense, when you lose love, you also lose the close-up. You lose closeness.

Black: "It's over. They'll never be together. It's over. It's just where the story is. It goes there."



▪ [LINK](#)

<http://mashatupitsyn.tumblr.com/day/2013/08/12>

Body, emotion, loss, and camera are all wedded here.

The camera goes where the story goes. It follows the story. It walks away. It breaks apart. It falls to pieces. It does what these two people do.

"It's over."

These words. Their directness, their ache—the way Black doesn't shy away from pinpointing the agony of the scene, giving us a close-up of the recognition of loss as camera angle. And that is what's so hard to bear—the dissonance between Black's verbal close-up and the painful distance (loss of closeness) that we see on screen.

AUGUST 16 2013

## Agony and Irony

A French boy named G that I've been spending time with here calls me Helen of Troy. Then, the strongest woman he's ever met. Then, a knight—not a damsel—in distress. He says I am waiting to stake my sword into a rock. He doesn't know about the entry ("Time Away: Modern Day Swords") I posted a couple of weeks ago.

All the sword and fire images (energy) of my life. Using swords, working through the swords, as they say in Tarot, as well as laying them to rest. Sleeping after battle. Waking up for battle. Playing possum, playing dead. Sometimes actually feeling dead. No more life.

It's always been quest for me. From Old French, mid 14th c., *quester* "to search, hunt." From Medieval Latin *questa* "search, inquiry."

I didn't write about this in *Love Dog*, keeping some things confidential, but on the first night at school two summers ago, I told X, the romantic and poetic muse of the book: "I am on a quest for love."

I said it in front of everyone at the village bar in Saas-Fee, Switzerland, where we were attending grad school. People were standing outside talking about their love lives and sex lives, and I blurted that out. Everyone but X ignored my declaration. X responded with:

"That's either the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard or the greatest. Depending on whether you really mean it."

I said, "I really mean it."

And yet, nothing ever came of us. We never happened, despite the cards, despite the sense of fatedness and the (immediate) destinal quality of our encounter. Our meant-to-be-ness was not meant to be. I wrote *Love Dog* to mourn that. But it changed me anyway, and that's maybe the real story here.

In *The New Black: Mourning, Melancholia, and Depression*, Darian Leader writes:

"We are witnessing how words converge at the point of what is most unbearable for us, and the clarity of this process gives literary testimonies like that of Joan Didion [in *The Year of Magical Thinking*] and Sophie Calle [in *Exquisite Pain*] an added power. They don't just tell us what it was like, but actually show how words are functioning, as if to stage this aspect of grief before our very eyes. They show us not just a loss but how something can be created from loss."

Can women ever be seekers or only found (passive) objects? Is that the real tragedy? There has always been agency in my quest for love. I am looking, searching. And on the quest for love, I have learned everything else I know, pulling (sometimes dragging) it along with me. The quest is the making, the being, and at times, the breaking, of my character. The quest for love has also been a quest for truth, passion, knowledge, strength, understanding, integrity, resilience, vulnerability, peace.

I don't know if what and who I am looking for is even possible anymore, but the need to look and find is in me nonetheless—unwavering and resolute, even amidst the buildup of losses.

AUGUST 16 2013

The search has been with me this whole  
(the holes in the whole) time.

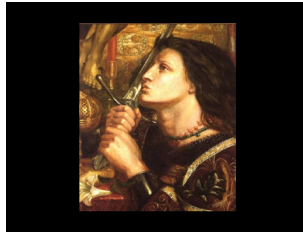
Daft Punk, "Touch":

*(Home)*  
*Hold on*  
*If love is the answer you're home.*

Thinking of W, my ex, the other night, at G's garden party on the Seine. I thought to myself, "W was the last man I believed."

It's true, what G says: my idea of being saved is someone (a boy) wanting to be saved. My "distress" is living in a world where no one knows how to save and be saved. Where no one wants to be each other's chance anymore.

Around the same time that G said these things to me, I found Bernard Shaw's book on Joan of Arc, *Saint Joan*, lying open on the dining room table here. The cover, a pale green. In New York my copy is bright orange and purple.



▪ IMAGE  
Joan of Arc.



▪ IMAGE  
*The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928).

The page the book was open to, said:

"She herself was not sexless: in spite of the virginity she had vowed up to a point, and preserved to her death, she had never excluded the possibility of marriage for herself. But marriage, with its preliminary of the attraction, pursuit, and capture of a husband, was not her business: *she had something else to do.*"

Joan of Arc:

"The sword was in the earth, all rusty, and there were upon it five crosses and I knew it by my voice..."

AUGUST 20 2013

## Summer Moon (August)

Last night the full moon was so bright, it literally woke me and kept me awake. I came to my window and looked out at S's window.

I walked outside while everyone slept.  
I lay in bed all lit up.



▪ IMAGE  
Marnay moon.

AUGUST 20 2013

## Untitled 4

I've met someone, S, but as always the timing is off.

He says, as we lie in the middle of the road under the stars and under the moon, after a party in a country barn (L's) in a field of stinging nettles last Saturday: "This is the perfect place and maybe you are the perfect person. But it is the wrong time."

He has a girlfriend and a daughter back home. He won't and can't betray them, which I love and respect.

As we walk back home, up that same country road we will lie down on minutes later, he says that my bare legs light the road because the moon isn't full yet. Looking back, I think I interrupted him before he had the chance to fully flirt with me in words. He is careful with words—we are both Virgo ascendants, so...we...choose...our words...That night I instinctively blocked the words I longed to hear from him. Or maybe I am just too fluid and excited when I talk to him. Now I want to kick myself because 3 days later we haven't said much of anything to each other.

At the barn, drunk, all of us literally jumping and dancing around in the hay, he said:

"I think you are a professional player." I didn't press for an explanation, which is unlike me. I tried to return to the insult the next day, after dinner, but by then it was too late. He evaded the question with a joke about chess.

At the barn sitting on a beam of wood, only our knees were touching. Bumping to the music.

We both have long legs.

He said: "Our knees are touching."

I said: "If we made love, you are the only one here who would know how to touch me."

And he just nodded, silently, like he knew this but couldn't bear to hear it. Maybe I am really starting to doubt words. Maybe I think that they don't really tell us much of anything. Maybe if there is a chance, I will take that chance because chances are limited.

When I think S has no heart because he never gives in, S jokes, "I am a repressed German. I can't." When we could kiss on his bed after a night of having fun together, listening to music, talking non-stop, drinking four bottles of wine with another resident here, D, a female sculptor and dentist from Guatemala. When it would be the *perfect* moment (*kairos*) to kiss; when we both acknowledged that we knew it, but then just sat in it and missed it, in that perfect moment, without doing anything. Later we awkwardly kissed goodbye three times on the cheek and laughed nervously because it seemed silly to do when we see each other all the time, and because the situation between us is now so charged. I think of what Darian Leader writes about mourning and loss in *The New Black: Mourning, Melancholia and Depression*:

"Feeling 'good', after all, is the affective version of denial: if we don't feel bad, then nothing bad has happened."

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And men are masters of this. But it is also hard—impossible sometimes—to know when someone is pretending not to feel because what you feel someone feel someone can always deny. Not feeling, after all, is part of feeling.

For three days he disappears and acts like everything is “good.”

The first day (the night after L’s barn party), he looked wounded, like he’d been crying, as he furiously scrubbed the residency kitchen and barely looked at me.

There was so much sexual tension between us in the room, I dropped and broke a wine glass while he was doing dishes. The third time since I’ve met him. He handed me a dustpan and walked out of the kitchen.

“Professional player.” No one has ever called me that before. It’s always been the opposite.

He was saying I flirt with everyone here and that everyone flirts with me. That everyone is in our way. He was saying I don’t really care about him. He was saying he fears I will hurt him. He was saying that he can’t trust me. The night in his room (the night before the barn party), he told me (stopped himself twice before he could get the words out) that when his ex-girlfriend left him and took their daughter with her for two months, he lost his faith in love, in people, in women. But before he said

women, he said, “I don’t want to sound like a misogynist.”

He also told me that men have treated his mother badly.

Why did he tell me these things?

I understood him to be saying he can’t hurt women that way.

He doesn’t know what I am really like. Or, what I was like for so many years: too loyal, too devoted, long-suffering. How I never used to flirt at all and how I almost never let anyone flirt with me. How I do it now, am doing it now, because I am trying to be receptive to what I thought if I shut out would bring me (seal in) only what/who I wanted. Needed. To get to yes, I used to always say no. Maybe time and a life of vigilance is finally unraveling me. Suddenly I’m letting myself be looked at (by many). Suddenly I’m letting myself be wanted. Suddenly I’m not fixed but roaming.

The night we kissed, S said:

“Making love with you would change my life,” and he doesn’t know if he can change his life.

For one moment he let go completely on the floor of the 19th century library, my favorite room here. Inhaled me. Purred. Flipped me on top of him.

I felt the passion that he might be capable of.

Then he stopped.

AUGUST 20 2013

He came to my room and stayed for a long time. He told me he couldn't stay with me, couldn't spend the night. Yet he couldn't leave me either. Kept telling me I could come to his room, his bed—to sleep.

I said: "You will miss me when I'm gone."

And he came back with: "Yes, and you will miss me when I'm gone."

It was cocky, but he was right. It is true.

I was cocky, but I was right. It is true.

I miss him now. When he doesn't come home. Hides. Works on his project in L's barn all day, then goes to L's house for dinner.

At first the other men kept us apart and now he uses the other men to keep us apart.

We are not in a relationship, but we are in a relationship.

Yesterday, D called her Tarot reader in Guatemala on Skype and asked about my situation with S. The Tarot reader mentioned the two men here who "love" me; "the many suitors around me;" the one man I like but can't be with, whom the Tarot reader calls "Blanco," because his skin is pale; the "contentment" I feel here; the patience and faith I need to have while he "tries to make

decisions," the "sadness he feels," the "crying." The looming "trip" (me to New York, him to Germany) that will "separate us for a time."

The Tarot reader tells D:

"Tiempo el tiempo."

Google translator defines this as: "Time time."

I tell D and she corrects me. "No, it means, *Give* time to time."

I think about it more and realize it means:

Give time *time*.

This has been my story all along. What one astrologer called a "timing problem" when talking about my love life.

How to give time to time

My time to time

One's time to time

My time to another

My hope and belief to/in another

My life to waiting.

Not to feel it is a waste. That it all comes to nothing. That this will too. That he will never take a chance.

And for whom (and what) should I wait and for whom should I let go?

AUGUST 20 2013

Which means: Who is worth waiting for?

For whom is time taking time?

This question remains unanswered. Still. And again. And while my book *Love Dog*, a book about time and timing, “time at the wrong time” (what the historian Jacques Le Goff calls the “psychologizing of duration”) also exists in a kind of possible future-tense (I wonder: what kind of life—love—the book might bring), my only copy currently sits on the floor by the bed of the man I like, who reads it before he goes to sleep. About the first 40 pages of the book, S said, “It wants the reader’s time. It wants all of their time. It’s a lover. That’s why you make them read, watch, and listen, no?”

AUGUST 22 2013

## Untitled 5

Happy.

For the first time in a long time.

Eimear McBride in *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing*:

“Think suffering’s worth it.”

If happiness is really coming, finally coming, then yes, it will all have been worth it.

AUGUST 23 2013

## Untitled 6

What to make of a man (S) who literally hums all his feelings away. Hums in and out of rooms, across a field of grass, at the dinner table while he eats, on the balcony while he smokes, as though his feelings and emotions were a bad sound he has to build white noise around. Maybe the point is to make nothing of him.

Darian Leader in *The New Black: Mourning, Melancholia and Depression*:

“Feeling ‘good’, after all, is the affective version of denial: if we don’t feel bad, then nothing bad has happened.”

AUGUST 24 2013

## Dark Knight of The Soul

I spoke too soon. I am always afraid of speaking too soon, clocking my joy too prematurely and jinxing it. And yet, I also want to be grateful for the joy I've had. A joy that crashed tonight.

After camping in the woods for three days by himself, G shows up at an exhibition at L's barn for the woman L is seeing, a photographer. He looks shaken. His face is grave. He is not his usual gregarious, busy body self. G asks me to talk and confesses that he went through a dark night of the soul. He tells me he went to the woods to "detox me from his system like heroin." He took off suddenly without any explanation when he thought I blew off dinner at his house. He says the first night was "pure agony." I listen. He is emotional. I well up.

"You need someone stronger than me. And you don't love me," he explains. "You are the most amazing woman I have ever met, the strongest woman I have ever met, and I will never forget you. It's not possible. There is no way that I could. But while you know how to be alone, you also get your energy from people. And I don't."

Dumbstruck, I ask him how he knows this. He says he can't explain it. He just does. "You have to tell me."

"I don't know how to put it into words. I have to think about it."

"Why couldn't I live here? I love it here. I hate New York."

"You just need more than this place. It's obvious. I was wrong for thinking you could live here, with me, in the middle of nowhere. You need energy. You need life. You need people. For your work."

He looks at me. Starts to laugh gently.

"Masha, if you stay here, you will burn Marnay to the ground. You've already taken two men to heaven and hell in a matter of days."

This is really the way G talks. Mythic, tragic analogies. I think he believes I genuinely have special powers.

"You are always so dramatic with me."

"But it's true, Masha. You are Helen of Troy. You are a tsunami. Nothing can stop you. I told you this the fourth day I knew you."

"A lot of things stop me."

"No, you just think they do."

On the fourth day I was sitting in a car next to G, with L and C up front. We were getting takeout in Nogent-sur-Seine, the neighboring town. I wanted to get away from S, so I joined the three of them for an impromptu dinner. On the third day, G had walked in on S and me kissing in the kitchen at Camac while everyone was partying on the terrace. On the second I had kissed G in L's garden while everyone else was dancing inside. I had to kiss somebody. Somebody who wanted to be kissed. It had been a year,

AUGUST 24 2013

and G liked me. After G saw me kissing S, he crouched down beside the chair I was sitting in after I came back to the terrace and said, "Nice move." He was angry but I think he was also impressed. Then he got up and left. The next morning he came to my room to apologize and called me Helen of Troy. Told me how strong he thought I was and how he had no right to react the way he did. I explained myself but said I had nothing to be sorry for, as he had a girlfriend and I was not his lover. I felt bad for kissing S the very next night, but things had been escalating between us. I told G he had no right to be possessive.

At the barn, G puts his hand on my shoulder and looks at me.

"It will be okay."

"I want to live a great life," I tell him, weepy.

"You already are living a great life, Masha."

I feel guilty for not loving G. For not feeling what he feels. Sometimes a loss is a loss even if it's not yours. Even if the loss is someone else's. I know what it feels like either way.

What G says about me getting my energy from people is true. I was thinking this yesterday. How I'm not really right unless, until, I'm right with others and others are

right with me. The way all these people, G included, are more social than I am, and yet they are fundamentally isolated and solitary. My solitude, as G points out, is the result of and armor for the closeness I seek. I am alone because I don't want to be alone. I am alone until it is time not to be alone.

As always, this makes me think of Sarah Schulman's great line from *After Delores*:

"When you get informed about someone, that's when the real loving starts." But also, "It takes a long time to break down someone's isolation."

When will the real loving start? When will I meet someone who doesn't want to live inside of their own walls?

Despite what is happening between me and L, the building attraction and connection, sidelong glances, non-sequitur (Latin for "it does not follow," which means I should treat these statements as puzzle pieces and clues) admissions, at some point at the end of the party at the barn, L (a 27 year old traditional carpenter and G's best-friend) drunkenly asserts, "I don't want anyone to depend on me. I want to be left alone."

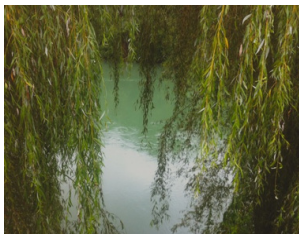
This translates to: "I am not dependable."

I don't hear this as a warning.

AUGUST 25 2013

## Marnay Green

I feel better today. All the green (living) to live in helps. Being here means no phone calls or emails for most of the day. When you want to find someone you have to look for them. Sometimes over and over. You meet expectedly or unexpectedly in water and fields, on the town bridge. It's a small village, yes. But it's also a way. A refusal. Like the 90s, before the digital happened and everything between everyone changed. The way we meet and don't meet anymore. You kiss under apple trees. Listen to music while lying in grass. You walk into unlit houses and put people to bed when they're drunk (L). You sneak into someone's house while they're not home and leave them a note and look through their books (G). If I stay here an extra two weeks at L's house, as I plan to do, it will be in a house with no hot water or internet. Fall is already in the air. It showed up out of nowhere. I don't want this summer to end. This month has been magic and pain. Because with intense joy come melancholy lows. Both of my toes are banged up from so much dancing, and tripping up, and people accidentally stepping on my feet. My legs are black and blue from jumps, swims, and dives off of boats. I knew it was possible to still live this way. But maybe I did not think it would be possible again. Today G went back home to Brittany, to quit his job, to leave his girlfriend. He says he has to do it as soon as he arrives otherwise he will "lose his courage." It will take everything he has got. When we first met I grilled him about his 9-year relationship and why he stayed all these years if he was unhappy. And was the unhappiness his fault. I told him



▪ IMAGE  
Marnay, Seine.



▪ IMAGE  
Boat ride, Seine.

it was hard to take his romantic overtures seriously because of it. I asked him a lot of questions. Does she know you cheat? Does she cheat too, or only you? He took our conversations to heart. We had many long talks over the course of two weeks. He is generous with his time. Once I realized G wasn't just the social jester of a party, the clown. Once I asked him to talk seriously, and he did, we talked a lot. Spent hours just sitting and talking and laughing in his living room, drinking white wine, eating chocolate, listening to Edith Piaf. He'd smoke joints like cigarettes. He took me to the supermarket whenever I needed to go. We'd shop for food and wine. We'd make dinner. He'd buy food he knew I liked and keep it in his fridge for whenever I would come over. He made me laugh, he was attentive, noticed everything, gossiped intelligently. He was easy to talk to, open to counsel, always apologized when he said or did something wrong. Kept his word. All of this made me feel content, which is what I needed to feel. But I did not want him the way he wanted me. With him, talking was enough. Was everything.

AUGUST 25 2013

G said I made him realize that he had to end his relationship. His plan is to move back to Marnay, where he is from to live with L. He loves Marnay more than anything. Both G and L prefer places to people. This morning, before he left, we sat in G's room and shared a rolled cigarette. It was raining and gray. I sat on his bed and he sat on the windowsill. I reminded him about how he said I get my energy from people and asked him to explain how he knew this.

"You said you would."

G paused to think.

"Okay. You are like a TV. You need to have someone in front of you in order to make sense. You need a connection. A relation. Otherwise you are useless."

"It's not about being watched. I'm not an extrovert. I don't just need anyone. And isn't everyone like this?"

"I know. It's about witness. Energy. No, everyone is not like this. L is not like that. I'm not either. That's why I stayed with someone I'm not in love with anymore."

At this point, L and I have kissed twice. The only person I've told is D, though others suspect something.

Before we said goodbye, G gave me back the little piece of paper I left my number and email on this morning

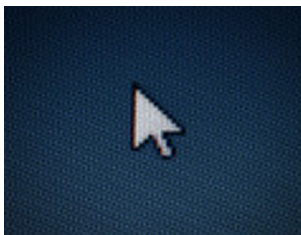
when I came to say goodbye the first time and he wasn't home. Said, "If you want to find me, you know where I am." Love don't come easy. He wants all of me or nothing. His eyes are like the river and the trees here. Watery and green. Warm and open. I haven't seen eyes like this in a long time. Some of the most beautiful boys I've ever met. I worry that without email addresses we will never write, and without writing, we will lose all contact, and losing all contact means these days never happened. G looked at me, smiled, and said, "I know I will see you again, Masha." Then we walked away from each other.

AUGUST 28 2013

## I Remember Touch

“Like the way you looked the first time I saw you.”

— JARETT KOBEK



▪ **LINK**

<https://soundcloud.com/pennyante/jarett-kobek-reads>

AUGUST 28 2013

## Untitled 7

Last night at J's (one of the residents at Camac, an American writer) going away party at L's, I spilled red wine all over my white, beaded Comme des Garçons sweater after a slew of other injuries and mishaps. At this point my clumsiness is actually getting on my own nerves.

I've already hurt everything. I continue to hurt myself.

L is watching me wash the stain out from my sweater with his kitchen sponge.

I say, "I am not graceful," as I rub hard at the red all over me.

L says, "No, you're not. You're *grace*."

I think of Deleuze's line on ethics, which I have quoted and written about so much in *Love Dog*. It flashes past me as I reel from words this sweet and rattling. It is like a reflex to be intimate with L. To wander into intimacy with him as though it were a secret room.

Words like hits. I need a certain kind of language, a certain way of talking and being talked to, as much as I need a certain kind of look, a certain kind of touch. In fact, it's all touching. It's all a *certain kind of something* that I am looking for. That I have been calling love.

When L accidentally dropped me during our drunken,

last-minute slow dance, I landed on my shoulder. This was after the wine spill. 3 AM. He put ice in a towel and pressed it against the injured part of me without saying anything. He peeled my sweater off my left shoulder while S, C, and M all sat stoned on the living room couch behind the kitchen wall. I had my back against the fridge. L leaned into me with his whole body, rocking back and forth, holding my shoulder against him, mouth against my neck (not kissing), immersed in my wound, but also making it something erotic. Like, my wound was his wound and vice versa. Like wounds are fulcrums of seduction and healing at the same time. I was so light with desire he could have tipped me over.

Not to be unworthy of what happens to me.

SEPTEMBER 01 2013

## Goodbye

Said goodbye to S this morning in Paris. He walked me to the metro, where I caught a train back to Marnay-sur-Seine. I'm staying in Marnay with L. for an extra two weeks. I spent the past two days in Paris after my residency at Camac ended, going to an all-night rave party with L, S, C, M, and others, doing errands, seeing my parents. S happened to also be staying in Paris for the weekend before flying back to Hamburg. I was supposed to go back to Marnay last night, but then S called at the last minute and asked me to take a walk an hour before my train, and I ended up staying the night at his place. At Café Epoch, just down the street from my parents' place, S opened up about the details of his relationships, which he's never really done before. He told me about his breakup with his daughter's mother as well as his current girlfriend. We talked about children, having them, not having them. We talked about his daughter. We shared a cheese plate, and each drank 3 glasses of red wine. We were both tipsy as usual. I welled up at some point, a combination of my period, wine, and too many goodbyes one after the other, and S looked down, as he often does. It's a thing he does out of care and respect, I think, and also when he is moved by something I've said. When he agrees on some deep level that eludes words. Afterwards, we walked a block to my parents' place and my mom came down to the lobby with my bags. The three of us talked for 10 minutes. I felt like I'd brought my boyfriend over, someone she will meet again. Someone she met for the future. But he's not my boyfriend, and that was our last

night together. The month of August feels like an entire year. All week long, everyone left, one by one.

S and I said goodbye to my mom. Then we walked over to where S was staying. It turned out to be only a 15-minute walk from my mom and dad's place. Even stranger, the apartment was located on a street I walked up and down the entire month of July, during my stay in Paris. Amazed at the coincidence, I said, "How weird is *this*?" S said, "Very weird." Then we got into the tiniest elevator I've ever been in, the kind where even two is a crowd and started laughing because it was so awkwardly cramped. Both tall, we were literally squashed together and touching. Then at the door, I repeated myself, "How weird is this on a scale of 1 to 10?" And S joked, "You with your scales and measurements for everything. It's *very* weird. Like a 10." I enthused, "10?! *Really?*" Like it was some kind of jackpot. Then S showed me the flat, which he loves: all the books, all the rooms, the pictures, the balcony, the view. We stood and looked at the street below. I shot videos on my phone. We smoked cigarettes. At the apartment, it was no longer as easy as it had been at Epoch, wine in us, that emotional weight and closeness that I love feeling with another person. It was gone. It has always come and gone with us. Last week we both admitted it's because we could never go further. We always had to stop. For S the next step would have meant being together. Changing his life. The apartment he stayed at belongs to old friends of the family, two French historians. S showed me my room, poured me a glass of wine. I took one sip and fell asleep on the couch while he looked at art books on the living room floor, something he loves to do. Out all night with L, M, and C, at a rave party in Paris the night before, we were exhausted, so the promise of "talking all night," as we'd agreed to do at Epoch, went unfulfilled. When I woke up, the room was dark. He was sleeping in his room. I went to mine. A few nights ago, in the Camac library where we kissed on the floor early

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made a verbal contract that we would never kiss or have sex. We've honored the sex part of the agreement. But the kiss had already happened. Never *again*, he meant. And when he said goodbye at Les Halles metro station this morning, we hugged for a few seconds, letting go fast, and threw each other kisses with our hands, as I moved to the other side of the turnstile. I was fine, we were smiling, and it felt light, like maybe we never happened, which technically we never did. But it was also the realization that our almost-happening didn't happen either, and that leaving a place and going to a different one—Paris—can alter a bond, which is sometimes only a temporary location. It was as though all those feelings between us just evaporated like a spell had been lifted; all the intensity (on my part) relieved. But when I got on the train back to Marnay, and Daft Punk's "Emotion" rose up on my headset 10 minutes later, I welled up, and welled up, and welled up. Felt his absence, felt the goodbye, felt the hole he left, the separation, all the time we spent together leading nowhere. How I'll never see him again. How he drove me crazy, how I liked him, how we made each other laugh, how much we laughed, how maybe there is no way of knowing who will be, who is yours, and why and why not. How so much in my life just doesn't seem to happen anymore, with anyone, for whatever reason, reasons that have become so unfathomable they've nearly killed me. And these reasons, if there are any, are still so hard to bear, though I am bearing them more and more because what else can I do, how else can I live, but eventually the bearing changes

even me. *This is my pain in life, and I have to learn to bear it.* Yesterday, at the health food store, I told my mom, "I feel like I have no destiny. Everything I have been looking for still hasn't happened." What I discover, as I ask around and talk to different people in different places, is that no one even wants love anymore. Flat out state, "I don't want it. I want to be left alone." *Left* alone. This is what L says, though I believe him least of all. And not just alone, but *left + alone*. They want the disappointment of what eludes us, of what can only be lost, of what has already and can only be lost. The permanent melancholia, mourning, and loss in advance of not just losing, but in place of ever having. In place of *being with*. *I am already alone, so let me stay in this aloneness. There is nowhere else to go.* And I don't understand how anyone can want to be alone when we are already so alone. When we can't really ever know or feel ourselves unless we feel and know others. Unless we strive for this, reach for this, *go for this*. When today there is less connection, less time, less intimacy, less security, less love. How much more loneliness, isolation, and alienation can we possibly stand, live with, bear, court? Why can't anyone really reach anyone? Why doesn't anyone want to be reached? Why can't we break down each other's isolation? Why doesn't it take love anymore? If not love, then what? Why when people find each other, do they want to go the other way? Not towards, or for. But away.

SEPTEMBER 04 2013

## Untitled 8

L says: If I do this, I can die (planting trees and repopulating the forests of Marnay).

L says: Now that I've done this, I can die (dancing all night last Friday, high on Molly at a techno party in Paris. Slow dancing briefly in each other's arms in a room full of hundreds of ravers like no one else in the world existed, and then off on his own again for the rest of the night).

As if the whole point of living for him were not living but dying.

SEPTEMBER 05 2013

## Untitled 9

All the weak boys, where are the men?

Everyone has learned to give up.  
Everyone has learned to let go.

SEPTEMBER 07 2013

## Untitled 10

What did I see as it was happening? I want to go back to those early days of patience and false security. When everything was just beginning and there was no rush to get to him. When if L left the room I did not yet notice or want him to come back. Or when I left the room, he followed me without my needing him to follow. When a glance, or the feeling of a feeling, was enough. I want to care less now. I want to retrospectively care more about what was happening between us then. What did I see that I didn't see? What did I hear that I didn't hear? "Sometimes we forget what we see the moment we've seen it." (Janice Lee, *Damnation*).

SEPTEMBER 09 2013

## The Fall

After an entire day of not being able to talk or even look at him, I fall down L's stairs. I always fall when I am experiencing some sort of trauma or emotional tension. I break the coffee mug I am holding. It shatters into pieces. Coffee splashes all over the walls, all over my face. He hears me, runs out of his room, helps me, starts cleaning up. I am badly bruised, go into a weird kind of shock where my body temperature drops, start shaking. He gets me pain killers, juice, ice, a sweatshirt, holds me, warms me, rocks me in his arms, makes me food. Begs for forgiveness, uses the word "unspeakable" to describe his behavior. The fall breaks the ice and allows us to talk again. I am willing to talk again. I lecture him. He listens. He can't look at me. I tell him to look at me. He says, "I can't." After dinner, he goes into the living room. In the kitchen, I deliberate about what to do. Whether to go to him. Whether he deserves anything more from me. I remember what Elaine always used to say in her letters, that it's never about deserve. Love and forgiveness need to be given precisely at the moment when it seems impossible to give. I come up to him and put my right arm around him because he feels so much more fragile than me. It's a word he used to use to describe himself when we first started seeing each other ("Take it easy on me, Masha. I am fragile. Go slow"). He leans in, dissolves. I know it takes strength to be open, willing. Not closed. I shouldn't touch him, I think over and over, but I do. I'm not protecting myself. When I pull back so that he can take a sip of wine, he pulls me back into him, sighs my name, *Oh, Masha.*

*I am not a bad person.* Both forlorn, we drink wine and listen to jazz in silence. Heads on each other's shoulders. Finally in the kitchen while we ate soup for dinner he admitted, "I could fall in love with you." But he has decided not to. Not to let anyone into his heart. He thinks he can only ruin things, so he does. When he says this he looks so miserable, dejected, weak that I have no reason not to believe him. Being this pathetic is just too unbecoming to fake. In the living room, he asks me to stay, not to go back to Paris early, which I've threatened to do.

"I like having you here. I can still take care of you. I can cook for you."

"I thought you want to be alone. That's what you always say."

"I do. I meant in my heart," he corrects.

White boys and their stupid self-inflicted pain. He declares *I want to be alone* all the time like he's Greta Garbo, turning away from people—love—as though they were cameras invading his privacy. The situation is hopeless when it could be hopeful. This is modernity: We choose to fuck things up. We choose to suffer. We choose to live with lack. We choose isolation. We choose to be without. "Depression was created as much as it was discovered," Darian Leader writes in *The New Black*. But when did the language of mistake, mis-takes, mistaking, become the only language we know how to speak? Everyone has become an expert at identifying what they don't know how to do, what they can't do, what they won't do, what they fail[ed] to do, and why. People have thought their way out of everything, but as Peter Sloterdijk noted about modernity, "with no change in behavior." Which is to say we have become very good at doing nothing. Clearly, people are able to forget each other. The (denial) system works.

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Later, in my room, I find a vase of garden flowers, which I hadn't noticed before. But the room smells so strongly of honeysuckle I find them on my table.

One pink peony (the herb of "intuition." Emotionally, peony was used to "speak up for oneself") and a strand of yellow and white honeysuckle.

I knock on the door to his room and ask, "Did you pick these for me?"

He is reading in his bed of red sheets, lifts his head off the pillow, nods. He is facing the wall. It's one of the few times his door is cracked open. He almost always has it closed. Everything he does has an air of secrecy.

"When?"

"Just before you fell," he answers.



▪ IMAGE

Peony and Honeysuckle.

SEPTEMBER 11 2013

# Untitled 11

“It is just not clear any more what freedom is...  
And where then is our true place?”

— LEONIDAS DONSKIS

*Moral Blindness: The Loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity*

SEPTEMBER 13 2013

## No, That Wasn't Our Happiness

You know how in movies people realize, change their minds, go after what/who they once let go—act? Love strikes, love emboldens. Love returns, haunts, is more than just a random occurrence. Love changes being and how to be. You know how in the movies people realize they were wrong and then mend that wrong? Get in the car and on that plane and mend that wrong. The way mending wrongs—since we can't seem to not wrong each other—becomes one of the odysseys we must all go on, and what movies are largely about. Worse not to mend a wrong than to commit a wrong, I think. Shit happens. Lots of shit happens. But to not mend? Not knowing when and how you should mend? Not feeling anyone is worth mending and being mended for?

You know how movies believe in and offer us the epiph-anal? Which means “striking appearance; manifesta-tion.”

Life is not like that, I am learning. Life is a series of realizations that never happen or never lead to mani-festation. Never take hold, never make themselves evident, and then fade.

Life is regrets that we live with or don't have at all. Life is people we should miss but don't. Should love but don't. Love but don't love, as in taking loving action. Love as *how* you love. Love that we find but let go of for no reason other than because we don't know how to be

worthy of what and who happens to us (Deleuze). Because we think so much more will happen to us. Because we think there is no difference between this and that. Him or her. Because we no longer think any experi-ence or person is singular (my mother). Because the world has run out of goals. Because it is the death of grand ideas. Because we think we have so many chances, we don't even want chances. Thinking of something or someone as a chance is a very romantic way of thinking to begin with. There is a debt involved. Readiness is required. Try finding someone who thinks that way. Try. Try. Try.

In the movies, we remember. We can't help it.  
In life, we forget. We know how to. We make sure.

In life, remembering (missing, truly wanting what we desire and *living with it*) is the problem.

Jeanette Winterson: “It's a sin this not being ready. This not being up for it.”

What does anything matter, if you can only say it? If you cannot, do not, ever manifest?

I've been told more than I ever need to hear. I've heard too much. And still, I think of Pasolini's *Decameron*:

“Say just one word and you'll save both my life and yours.”

Or Jenny Holzer's: “Say the word.”

Words as passwords, secret codes, open sesame. The right word unlocks an entire world. Think of the precious words you had to know—you had

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to acquire—in riddles and parables. Think of how few chances you had to get those words right.

Words alone aren't enough. But they are also enough. They can be everything. It's hard to negotiate what language can do, how it should add up and cohere with action. How it proves and disproves. Language has to manifest for that to happen. That "striking appearance" of language needs to take shape in materialization. In the form of *the way we decide to live our language(s)*. This begins with being accountable for the things we say to others. Still meaning it the next day.

On the phone, my mother cautions about L.

"You believe in words too much. You believe in both the things that are true and the things that are not true. He doesn't know himself what he is saying or feeling."

Like me, she is fed up. She is also tired of hearing this. My problems. Her voice is raised. She almost never yells at me. I can count the times on one hand and it's usually my fault. Plus she is overworked. I talk to her while I hide in the garden behind L's mother's house, crouching in the wet grass for privacy. Flustered and hurt with L, but mostly disgusted, I listen to her hard truths. I tell her that I am thinking of leaving L's house early because things have gotten so bad between us.

"I want out but only because I want in and there is no in

with him," I tell my mother.

"There is no in with anyone anymore. Nobody wants in with anybody."

"So what am I am going to do?"

"Nothing. You can't do anything. That is your problem. There is no answer for this. When are you going to learn that there are just some things you will never understand? One day it will just work and you won't have to do anything other than what you need to do."

I tell my mother that of course I believe in words too much. To me they are pacts. It's the aporia, the not always knowing (because the people saying things to me themselves don't know) which is which—true or false—but nevertheless always trying to know that is both the location and praxis of my belief. My being able to feel and trust this much no matter what happens. She says the world has run out of goals and singular themes like Love and Future. Like believing in love and believing in future.

"So how am I going to live in this world if I still believe in these things and other people don't?" I ask.

After I present my mother with this final question, I remember that scene in the movie *White Palace* where the working-class waitress Susan Sarandon screams, "Words like that could kill a person if you don't mean it," after James Spader, who plays her younger yuppie lover, tells her he's never wanted a woman so badly in his life.

Words. The night L took my hand in his hand and told me, "I feel a soul connection to you that I have never felt before." He said he did not want to

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rush things by having sex or even kissing because what was between us was special.

“Words like that could kill a person if you don’t mean it.” That is what I should have said. That is what I was thinking. But I was also so happy to hear it.

“They’re just words,” my mom would say. Only she is referring to other people’s flimsy and irresponsible relationship with words, not her own or mine.

Perhaps a better way for my mother to put it is:

You hear too much. You stake too much importance in what can be said and what can be meant and what can actually be done if only people would be willing to do it.

SEPTEMBER 14 2013

## Untitled 12

"I step into a blue funk  
(Blue of my heart, blue of my dreams).

You say to the boy, 'Open your eyes.'"

— DEREK JARMAN  
*Blue*



▪ IMAGE  
*Blue*, 1993.

SEPTEMBER 15 2013

## We Are Too Much Ourselves (When I Leave Here I Want To Be Remembered)

“Memory comes to us externally. It arises from the Other... We need a sensation that creates and establishes and tells the world about us, but in reality it is others who give witness about us to the world. The memory saving us from non-being comes from somewhere else... Others find in us what we lose ourselves; we perish when we forget.”

— LEONIDAS DONSKIS

*Moral Blindness: The Loss of Sensitivity in Liquid Modernity*

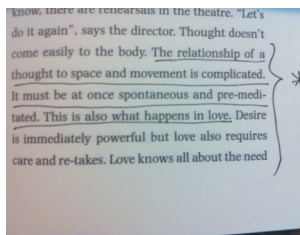
SEPTEMBER 17 2013

## What's In Not Having? (Apparently, Everything.)

I am re-blogging the above passage of Alain Badiou's *In Praise of Love* (posted by Kara Jesella on Tumblr today), which I read two years ago while I writing *Love Dog*.

Given where I have just been, and who I was just with, who I've just left, where I've come from and returned to, where I needed to be, and how I am realizing that love is also becoming a problem of movement. Of people's inability and refusal to move. Of their psychological, emotional, and mental (not just geographical) inertia and confinement. Geography is maybe the easiest form of movement despite being a frequently used excuse for why relationships don't work out. How geography is a tangible limit for the other more nuanced traverses we can't handle or chart. But really, it's everything else in us that refuses to shift places. That won't *go*. If we can move across and through thought and emotion, we are also willing and able to move across land and water much more easily.

It is more about: How steps are required and needed and not taken. Of dots that are not connected. Of feelings that are left hanging at train stations and in summers that turn into winter. Of how in order to love, we need to move our minds and bodies and hearts (as well as our lives) *around* for love, for those we could maybe love. How our lives *are* our minds and bodies, which we betray when we *stay put*. *Stay back*. How we *stay put*—locked—both inside and outside, even when we meet



▪ IMAGE

Alain Badiou, *In Praise of Love*.

people and are in situations by which we have been moved. Profoundly moved. Profoundly relocated.

Movement is happening without our movement. We are not moving when we are supposed to. We are choosing to stay—lag, drag—behind.

L has told me numerous times, once at the grocery store, once at his dinner table, once at the flea market on our last day together, that if he saw me on the street and didn't know me, he would follow me. *I would have to know you*. He likes telling me this. *Why?* Despite framing his erotic shadowing of me as a desire to know, as the route to knowing, knowing as re-knowing, as a desire so strong it *leads*, anonymity and distance, fantasy and projection, administer this imagined scenario. This dream is really about the eroticism of *de-familiarization*. Hitchcock's *Vertigo* comes to mind. For, what exactly does following a woman (or me) entail? Where does it lead and what's in it for the woman? For most men,

wanting to know a woman is hopelessly inscribed in not wanting to know her. In not-knowing as knowing. In the fantasy, L would lag behind me, tending to his distance, maintaining a fetishistic gap, thereby risking nothing. What would happen, I wanted to ask L, if you caught up with me and I actually turned around? What would you do? What would you say?

I would follow you takes the place of I will follow you. The conditional auxiliary verb *would* makes L's wish to not know (me) subjunctive. *I wish I did not know you, then I would follow you.* Then I could. In this wished-for construction there is no present indicative, no future either. There is only unreality; the wish fulfillment and ineffectuated time of the subjunctive mood (wish fulfillment as what one doesn't really want to have happen; what one doesn't really want to have). The subjunctive is not meant to transpire, and therefore perfect for imaginary and conditional structures. Everything increasingly hinges on the ever-expanding and precarious *if*. And that is why people today like to use it so much. Tied to the subordinate clause, *I would follow you* is entirely contingent upon the, *if (only) I did not know you.*

This great scene from the 1949 film *The Fountainhead* skillfully performs all of these emotional and grammatical disjunctions.



▪ LINK

<http://youtu.be/vC5yxqKedTk>

*Do you want to leave me?  
I've loved you from the first moment I saw you  
And you knew it  
You tried to escape from it  
I had to let you learn to accept it  
Are you gonna leave me?  
Yes  
I won't stop you  
Don't you see I don't want to leave you  
Will you marry me?  
I want to stay with you  
You must learn not to be afraid of the world  
Not to take any notice of it  
I must let you learn it  
When you have you'll come back to me  
I'll wait for you  
I love you  
I'm saying it now for all the years we'll have to wait  
I'll do anything to escape from you*

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Nothing sticks. Love is a tennis ball of inversions bouncing back and forth.

In real life L did of course catch up with me. We became lovers who started off as strangers who felt instantly familiar to one another. For weeks we waited to become intimates, sometimes speeding up the process, sometimes patiently waiting it out with others. Ours was always *in medias res*. Something fated from the middle (“When I returned his gaze I saw my fate... He reacted with the right glance, as in sympathetically.” Fanny Howe). Yet from that middle, which was really also just a beginning like any other beginning, L said things to indicate that he could not handle actually having, actually getting, actually reaching me. He was blind to that point, as most men are. Especially ambivalent, self-loathing melancholics, who are never really interested in actually having or attaining, and who vacillate between wanting and not wanting. When L admitted that he used to dream of me returning his gaze during those early days I spent with G, wondering why “the fuck” he “didn’t affect me;” why I “didn’t see him or want him,” I told him, “I did and I do.” When he sighed, on our last night, while we made love in the dark, “You are too good to be true. I don’t know what to do with you,” he was admitting a terrible truth about not wanting what he desires. He was also echoing the first time we ever slow-danced and the second time we kissed. When, as we lay on the grass under apple trees and moon, he shook his head in disbelief, pulled back to look at me,

and declared, “This is like a dream. I don’t deserve you.” L was right. It was like a dream, and he was the one I wanted to have the dream with. But thinking about it now, L’s declarations formed a bookend about the threat of proximity: when real intimacy encroaches too closely, when a wish comes true, what people can only imagine living with but in the end kill. L doesn’t want what he wants, doesn’t want what he wanted. Elaine always called this lack fetishizing.

True union, or love proper, exists only between living beings who are alike in power and thus in one another’s eyes living beings from every point of view; in no respect is either dead for the other. This genuine love excludes all oppositions. It is not the understanding, whose relations always leave the manifold of related terms as a manifold and whose unity is always a unity of opposites [left as opposites]. It is not reason either, because reason sharply opposes its determining power to what is determined. Love neither restricts nor is restricted; it is not finite at all. It is a feel-

• IMAGE

Hegel, from “LOVE”  
*Early Theological Writings* (1971)

SEPTEMBER 17 2013

At the flea market, I decided to lag behind L, staging a kind of encounter therapy to test out his theory of stalking.

When I caught up with him, I whispered, “So I watched you and I’ve decided that I would follow you too. If I approached you, would you go somewhere with me?”

I’d already gone further than L in this classic scenario of male obsession. Where L, a man, wanted to observe me, a woman he already knew, from afar and in a controlled fantasy in order to pretend that he didn’t know me but also to indicate how much he would want to know me if he didn’t, I had decided to actually make contact with L both in the fantasy and in real life. Luca Guadagnino’s *I Am Love*, a feminist reimagining of *Vertigo*, comes to mind here. *She* follows *him*. *She* punctures *his* fantasy. *She* gets up close.

I am also reminded of the film that plunges into the heart of darkness of male sexual hysteria—with the more civilized *Vertigo* looming on one end and the sexually liberatory *I Am Love* on the other—Nicolas Roeg’s neo-noir, *Bad Timing* (1980), completely outs Scottie’s latent necrophilia. And inside the misogynistic nightmare of *Bad Timing* is Catherine Breillat’s *Anatomy of Hell* and *Fat Girl*. One day I will teach a class on all of these films, along with Brian De Palma’s *Dressed to Kill*, which also came out in 1980. The famous woman-at-the-museum scene pops-up in all of three movies (see also Rossetti’s *Voyage to Italy*). Women looking at art is art for

A pure heart is not ashamed of love; but it is ashamed if its love is incomplete; it upbraids itself if there is some hostile power which hinders love’s culmination. Shame enters only through the recollection of the body, through the presence of an [exclusive] personality or the sensing of an [exclusive] individuality. It is not a fear *for* what is mortal, for what is merely one’s own, but rather a fear *of* it, a fear which vanishes as the separable element in the lover is diminished by his love. Love is stronger than fear. It has no fear of its

7. [I.e., if a lover does not surrender himself completely to his beloved, he is as if were dividing himself into separate compartments and reserving one of them for himself.]

[ 306 ]

LOVE

fear, but, led by its fear, it cancels separation, apprehensive as it is of finding opposition which may resist it or be a fixed barrier against it. It is a mutual giving and taking; through shyness its gifts may

■ IMAGE

Hegel, from “LOVE”  
*Early Theological Writings* (1971)

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men. And just the whole idea of bad timing... Bad timing could have been an alternate title for *Love Dog*.

See all the red and green in *I Am Love's Vertigo*

homage: <http://youtu.be/ZzUgFF-zkZ8>

"I don't know," L told me, predictably. "It's always different in reality. I would like to imagine I would go with you, but I'm shy and would probably get scared."

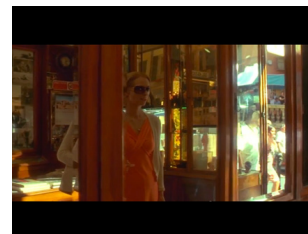
L's memory is dangerously selective. He remembers all the wrong things. Hung up on the glitches and mishaps, he forgets the rest. While waiting on the platform for my train to Paris the morning I left to fly home to New York, we held and kissed each other non-stop for 25 minutes until the train arrived. Just before it came, L asked me to "Remember the good things, not the bad." He was even selecting my memories. In *Castaway*, Oliver Reed puts it to Amanda Donohoe this way when they part on the deserted island of Tuin, where they've willingly spent a year stranded together: "Be kind to my mistakes."

L also thanked me. "Thank you," whispered into my right ear, was the last thing he said to me. What was he thanking me for? For tolerating him? For not tolerating him? For leaving? For letting him go? For dodging a bullet called love.



▪ IMAGE

*Bad Timing: A Sensual Obsession*, 1980.



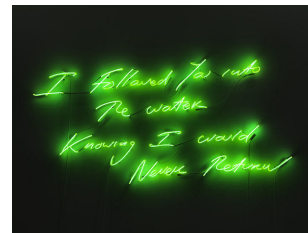
▪ IMAGE

*I Am Love*, 2009.



▪ IMAGE

*Vertigo*, 1958.



▪ IMAGE

Tracey Emin, 2011.

*I followed you into the Water*  
*Knowing I would Never Return*

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I remember the Rumi poem:

*I am yours.  
Don't give myself back to me.*

At the very least, don't thank me for letting you do it.

From the moment we met, L rarely kept his distance from me. Yet I misjudged his encroachments, his slow but steady moves towards me. What they meant, what they didn't mean. Most importantly, what they would end up meaning. I thought his proximity meant that I could know him; that he wanted to be known. From the very beginning, he would let things slip out, ask to talk to me, ask me to believe the things he said and did, in case I didn't. In case I saw or heard something else or thought the worst. But whenever I would run his words back to him, he acted like he'd never heard them, let alone said them. He claimed it was his faulty memory. He said it was becoming a real problem. But he never wanted his words to last. He hates consequences, or what he calls "complications," of any kind. Hates the prospect of words, of having to live up to them. Yet he denies being a liar.

Now is the time, I want to tell L, now that you know me, now that something has happened between us, now that you could have me, now that I'm gone, to decide whether you will follow me in life, where it counts. Whether you will let us follow each other. L often accused

me of being *too mysterious*, but that isn't true. He was putting veils on me where there were none. Where there aren't any. He was veiling me with his own veils. The ones he is behind. You can show people everything they need to see, but it doesn't mean they will see.

What is the reason that as soon as one human being shows he needs another," Simone Weil writes in *Gravity and Grace*," (no matter whether his need be slight or great) the latter draws back from him? Gravity."

Born and raised in Marnay, a tiny, abandoned, nearly empty village in France, 50 minutes outside of Paris, L might always stay Home. He lived in Paris for a few years, in his early twenties, when he worked as a film animator, and then after he gave up that career, in Burgundy, where he studied and apprenticed to become a traditional carpenter. Now he is back in Marnay, living in his great aunt's crumbling 19th century summer-house, across the street from the house he grew up in, where his mother and sister still live. A few years ago, his aunt, a woman he loves and writes long letters to, moved to Sweden. She suffers from dementia.

"I knew I had to move my skin to another part of town," Fanny Howe writes in her novel *Indivisible*. And in *Monogomy*, Adam Phillips echoes Howe's need to relocate both her body and her life by noting that Home is the way we get trapped:

"Obsession is a way of dispelling alternatives, an abrogation of choice, a cure for thought. If it speaks, somehow, of our unwillingness to leave home, our first and necessary obsession, it also speaks of our fear of freedom. Which is partly, of course, our freedom to leave other people out."

To me freedom is also the people we are willing to let in. The ones we are

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willing to leave home for; to make new homes with and out of. L's return to his original Home is also his refusal to traverse all sorts of internally banned places. Where he stays is also where he never goes.

These moves "*must be at once spontaneous and pre-mediated.*"

Spontaneity and pre-mediation, as Badiou points out, are like a couple. We need both. We always need both. Ways of being both. Two of something, two in one—symmetry.

What good are chance encounters, random encounters, close encounters, being in the right time and place, meeting a contender, as Elaine, used to say, if that place is stuck in only *one* time and *one* place? What can be called the original, default Home. If, as the poet Mallarmé put it, chance is not curbed, what good is spontaneity without the dexterity for pre-mediation, which makes something durable? Possible. Which makes it switch places, go the distance. If we can only act recklessly, or in the moment, we will always be limited in how far we can go. If the moments do not aggregate and coalesce; make us plan and hope and try and move towards more. The more we maybe did not even see coming but that came for (to) us nevertheless.

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## Untitled 13

One day, the last four, it was good, and we were sitting at his big wooden kitchen table, which his grandfather made in America either after or during the second war. This was after lunch, and we were talking again. The house was finally empty. C had gone back to China. It was just us. L put Mozart's clarinet concerto: II Adagio on while we were drinking afternoon coffee out of our bowls. I told him I had been listening to that Adagio my whole life. He told me that he sometimes goes to classical concerts by himself in Paris. He relished that part—saying and doing it—*by myself*. "I don't tell anyone," he added. Then smiled. That is the difference between us, but is also the place between us. Between any two people and how they get or don't get across to each other.

And maybe we get there and maybe we don't. We get there and then we slide back. Slam shut. Start over.

But that day we were sitting at the table together, after days of discord and barely talking, stopping and starting the things between us, before we spent the afternoon in Marnay's only church, locked to the rest of the village, but his family has keys. 12th century, rare Roman frescoes, crumbling, in need of repair, he shows it to me. He wants to help restore it. It would be a dream of his. We climb around everywhere, up to the roof, look out at the views, the bells, the wood beams, the old stones. We look, talk, in the pitch black. Look out the windows with light. We go back downstairs, sit and



▪ **LINK**

Mozart, "Clarinet Concerto: II. Adagio"

<http://youtu.be/BxgmorK61YQ>



▪ **IMAGE**

Tracey Emin

*I Keep Believing in You* (2010)

talk more. About everything. There is some kind of slow recovery after trauma and disappointment.

"Have you ever had that feeling like," Chris Kraus asks in her novel *Aliens & Anorexia*, "suddenly some things are one way and then all of a sudden it gets turned around and what seemed most wonderful suddenly turns out to be despicable?"

Sometimes the reverse is true. You expect the worst, but the worst is not what happens. The end is not yet the end. It gets better and there is more. And it is from this day that we will spend the kind of time together we failed to spend for the two weeks that we had planned to spend together. What seems despicable and unsalvageable suddenly turns good again. Turns good one more time. Something good is still there underneath it all.

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After everything you'd hoped for goes wrong, a relief that you did not think would ever return returns. And later that night the touch you've been waiting for, though now the conditions for this touch, while in some ways even more loving than before, are different. "I didn't believe in acts coming to meet my hopes," Fanny Howe writes in *Indivisible*. "Yet there I lay waiting for his body to arrive, and it did." L was the opposite of S because L can never say no, which is one of the problems, everyone says. For where exactly is assent for a person like this?"

There are no strings attached. You will not stay together. You may not even see each other again. You are "just friends." You are not even friends. You are not touching to make a future. You are touching to let go of one. Somehow, rightly or wrongly, now the touch is stronger and more resilient than everything else you've decided not to do. And everything else you've decided not to be. It is a risk you take.

I often think of L as a sound, as something melodic or discordant or shut off. Maybe because of all the dancing we've done. Because of the way his feelings and desires come out through movement. Before I moved in with L for two weeks, when all we would do is dance around, use dance as an excuse to touch and hold each other, L said: "When you stay with me, I want us to dance in my room every day until the windows steam up." It was so *Flashdance*. Minutes later, that same night, we slow



▪ IMAGE

Marnay church, 12th century.



▪ IMAGE

Roman frescoes.

danced together for the first time. I'd never slow danced with anyone seriously before. L said, "forget about everyone and just dance with me." He sang Irvin Berlin's line, "When we're dancing cheek to cheek" in my ear, even though it wasn't the song that was playing. In fact, we sang the line together, in unison. I expected to feel embarrassed, but I wasn't embarrassed at all. Even though G, L's best friend, was sitting ten feet away (and who I'd just kissed), with S, who must have been thinking, "Oh, there she goes again." If S's whole thing was to stay away from what he wants, L couldn't let himself stay away. L had to let himself go. I wanted to stop, but I couldn't.

L loves to dance by himself the way teenage girls love to dance alone in their bedrooms. Every time we danced together, we were also listening (and trying to hear) to the way it made us feel to be with each other. During an argument in his room the other day, I told L that when he claims to have shut down his feelings for me, it is more like he has just muted

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the volume on a song that is still playing.

At the kitchen table, just before the church, he said:  
“This is the last thing Mozart wrote before he died.”

I said: “I know. Goodbye world. Hello divinity.”

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## Real Solitude (Back Home)

What I realize, or rather what I remember, is that I don't like being alone, or dealing with the feeling that I will always be alone, around other people. If I'm going to be alone like this, if this is the way it's going to be, I want to do it alone. I want to do it in silence, in green, in an empty house, next to trees. In peace. Not in a crowded city, not in a tiny apartment, not while passing anyone by, not in noise, not with speed, not at a party, not on the subway, not in some long line at Whole Foods. I want to surround my aloneness with something beautiful like solitude. I want space/place/time/air for this absence. Which is maybe why he, L, does it this way. Literally no one around to miss.



▪ **IMAGE**

The Hermit, Tarot of Marseilles.

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## Just Words

Will I ever lie in a pile of hay again, in a lover's barn, who despite the difficulty and strife between us, the prematurely hijacked attempt at being together, came to lie down beside me after he was done working 50 feet away. This was over a week ago. His shirt off, I burst into tears about my pain of never being able to find lasting love. I want to give up. He comforts me, watches me very intently, listens, strokes my face, wipes away my tears, says, "don't give up hope," which makes it even worse because he's taken himself out of the equation of possibility. It is exactly why I am crying. He isn't going to be someone I can hope for or about or with, and that makes me feel hopeless. Because it can't be us. It isn't going to be us. And this means I have to start again. I want him to say, I am the one for you and you are the one for me, and I am going to try to do something about it because I know how, or else I will learn. Instead, he says, "I am sorry I am just a troubled kid." Meaning he is not ready, he is afraid, he doesn't know how, and time and place are against us. He also says, "You are a wonderful person. The world needs more people like you." To be wonderful and unwanted. To be more of what the world needs but not what he needs. To be so wonderful no one knows what to do with you. L always said, "I am too impressed by you: your personality, your mind, your body," and I always wondered about the language barrier. Was "impressed" really the word he was thinking of? Even he wasn't sure every time he said it. "Is that the right word, *impressed*?", he would ask, as though I could answer a question like that. I think L

meant he was too intimidated. He was in over his head and could not see beyond the imago he'd formed. And when he says kid, which he's now said twice, how old does he mean? While chronologically he is two weeks away from turning 28, in my gut I know that most of him is still 14. After all he doesn't even say boy, he says kid.

For 2 weeks, I would go to the barn when L wasn't there, during my daily bike rides and walks. It was on the way. If I thought he was there, I usually wouldn't wave or even look. If I knew the barn was empty, I would climb on to the pile of hay and lie on my back. Resting, listening to music, crying— thinking the good times were over. Maybe I was fooling myself. Maybe I was secretly waiting for him to find me there. The grass shapes under my back and the smell of the hay put me at ease. On the occasions that he found me lying there, I would apologize for intruding or interrupting his work, and he would answer, "No, I love it. I love that you come here. I love that you like it here." It was always about being worthy with him. The barn offered me something, which meant he had something to offer me.

My eyes were closed when he came to lie down beside me in the stack of hay that afternoon. I opened them when he placed a handful of freshly shaved oak chips that he'd just chopped onto my chest. The kind a week before he'd told me I smell like. He'd figured it out, he said one morning. What I reminded him of. Before that he'd just say, I love the way you smell and I can smell you. "You can smell me?" I would ask, as sometimes I was at least a few feet away from him. "Of course," he would quietly confirm to himself smiling. Of course because scent is also a feeling, no matter how far away. A sense of someone. A sense *for* someone. Oak is his favorite scent and I smell like his favorite thing. Oak is the type of wood he works with every day at the barn. What does it smell like to you, I ask him, as I inhale the tiny bundle of wood chips and press it to my face? In other

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words, what do I smell like to you?

Like, earth, sugar, and I can't remember the third thing he listed. To me, it smelled like maple syrup, spice, forest. A week later, in bed after dinner with his family across the street, after we'd decided to be a kind of pair for our last four days together, but just "as friends," he told me that at the dinner table, underneath which we secretly touched each other's thighs and knees, he'd been trying to figure out why he loves the color of my skin. He was telling me about this very seriously in bed, studying the question, lying on his back. I was listening to him, lying on my back. "I think because it's also the color of oak," he said. Is that what people who are "just friends," who have decided not to be together, which means you don't have to think about the Other—you are off the hook!—sit and think about in silence while they eat one of their last dinners together? About how the details of a person rattle them, stir something deep inside of them, reminding them of the things they love, savor, and need while they tell themselves that they don't need that someone who stirs those somethings. Only the things themselves.

Afterwards, we roll over on our sides to look at each other. He says, "I want to look at you all the time, but sometimes I can't because your eyes are on me and it's too much." Then he traced my lips with his hand and told me that he never wants to forget my lips but knows he will because he forgets everything. His eyes close in

pain. Why does he want this sadness? Why does he choose it over me? Why is everything, even when it is good, too much for him?

I am reminded of what Roland Barthes writes in *A Lover's Discourse* about the relationship between love and scrutiny, and I would add, resentment. L both liked and resented his need to pour over me. He capitulated to this need while at the same time hating his capitulation. It was a kind of dependence, his worst fear. The emotional loner doesn't like feeling less alone. Doesn't want to be pulled out of his seclusion and impartiality. And yet, L liked telling me what he saw. Or perhaps it was simply a compulsion he couldn't control. With the woman L was seeing before me, he was able to draw a clear line between being with and being without. He saw her when he wanted to and didn't see her when he didn't want to. But with us, it was as though we were always in the middle of a conversation, even when we weren't officially having one. Even when we were upset with each other and not speaking, L would look at me and I would usually catch him because I was looking too. I was waiting for his look. Once he said, in his typical non-sequitur fashion, "I like the way your eyes are always searching." He seemed annoyed to be telling me this. To be finding this out. He interrupted his conversation with C to convey this observation, then resumed it again. We were barely speaking, we were not together, we were angry. I was feeling invisible.

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When it came to L and me we could not control what and where and when we were seeing what we were seeing. Often when we would lie in bed together, L would look at me all over and make sounds at the sight of something on me. It was a sound that mixed amazement and fright, and every time he made the sound, I would laugh because I could not believe he was making it.

Barthes: "Sometimes an idea occurs to me. I catch myself carefully scrutinizing the loved body...To *scrutinize* means to *search*: I am searching the other's body, as if I wanted to see what was inside it, as if the mechanical cause of my desire were in the adverse body (I am like those children who take a clock apart in order to find out what time is)."

An old parable that concerns the Justice card XI in the Tarot:

"When I possessed the keys, read the book and understood the symbols, I was permitted to lift the curtain of the Temple and enter its inner sanctum. And there I beheld a Woman with a crown of gold and a purple mantle. She held a sword in one hand and scales in the other. I trembled with awe at her appearance, which was deep and mysterious, and drew me like an abyss."

'You see Truth,' said the voice.

"On these scales everything is weighed. This sword is



• IMAGE

*I don't believe in this possibility of knowing.*

always raised to guard justice, and nothing can escape it. But why do you avert your eyes from the scales and the sword? They will remove the last illusions. How could you live on earth without these illusions?' You wished to see Truth and now you behold it! But remember what happens to the mortal who beholds a Goddess!" (Ouspensky)

"I want to look at you all the time, but sometimes I can't because your eyes are on me and it's too much."

We might as well be this card.

All month G, L, even S, called me a goddess. It was absurd. But in the end it had nothing to do with beauty, perfection, or even with what they wanted. G, who always gives everything a mythic bent and loves to allegorize, pointed out one afternoon, on one of our walks (during which he urged me not to worry about other people so much, "do what you want

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to do," he said) that goddesses are always singular and alone in the world, and then it made sense.

"A goddess worries about everyone, but no one worries about a goddess. Her problems and decisions are all her own."

All this old-fashioned, histrionic talk of goddesses, leads me to believe that the goddess is in fact a ground zero, not a vertex. There is no way to be with the goddess as of yet, which is why she is alone. More eremitic than ideal or "single." She is where we start from scratch in the sexual politic. As it stands, men have nothing to offer the goddess, only their desire for and entitlement to her. There is a hole, a chasm, which is what the ideal always covers up. While we think we know what we want from the goddess; while we believe her to be the glorious storehouse of everything we have ever wanted and imagined; while we believe our one-sided yearning for the goddess is enough, what does the goddess want and need from us? What do we offer the goddess in return? G says the goddess gets nothing in return because nobody cares about what a goddess wants, only what they want from a goddess. Besides, how can everything—something totally whole—need anything? (Athena—"Complete unto herself"). She holds everyone else's wants within her wants. Full to the brim and alone with those wants, like a switchboard all dialed up. The goddess is our ancient lone star feminist, for she epitomizes a subject/object problem for which we still

do not have a clear solution. When it comes to love between men and women, to be with an exceptional woman requires a man to be exceptional too. What G was trying to say is that the human goddess, the goddess in the real world, is alone not because she is a cultural and sexual signifier of male desire and imagination, or because she is everything a man has ever bothered to imagine *a priori*. Or even because she is some kind of ideal that procures all that she desires in the way we think ideals always have it all. Even though we know ideals get played out on the outside. And that ideals are displayed not lived. It is not that the goddess is unattainable or perfect. It is not that she gets what other woman do not get. Or has what other women do not have. It is what she wants/needs that is unattainable. She is alone precisely because she embodies a cohering that we do not yet have within us to reciprocate. The goddess necessitates new modes of relation, engagement, subjectivity. G saying that I need more than a small town, that I need a stronger man than he could ever be (I am speaking internally, psychically). S fearing that he would never be able to give me what I want or even know how to say the right things to me. L saying over and over that he wasn't good enough, that he was undeserving, that he was "too impressed," that he "did not know what to do with me" because "I was too good to be true." That we were a dream that could never be real. The only thing a goddess gets from men that other women might not get is simply the truth about their inability to be gods to their goddesses. At the end of the day, goddess is just another word for rigor, and rigor is just another word for all the things it takes to make something work. The goddess is all dressed up with nowhere to go. Or as G put to me when I showed up at L's barn party in a Comme de Garçons dress and No.6 corset heels while everyone else wore jeans and t-shirts, "You are Cinderella in an ashtray."

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At dinner at L's mother's house, L placed a big bowl of watercress soup in front of me, which his sister cooked from scratch. The color was a deep forest green. He said, "Green is the color of hope." Not only does he know this, he said it out loud. He said it to me. He didn't know how much I'd written about green in *Love Dog*. All the green I filmed for the book. How green has been a guide for me. A through line, a signpost for love. For remaining tender at all costs. For letting things grow. And Fanny Howe's poem about green, which also appears in the book: "Love is the green in green. Does this explain its pain?"

Marnay is a place saturated through and through with green and this was the greenest time. Not just because it was summer, the age of living, and some kind of thwarted, truncated love was budding between us, after other people (the wrong people) came and went. We were the green in green, and this explains the pain. But does it also explain what happened? After all, love is making things living as Judith Butler points out in her text about Hegel's fragment on love.

Which brings me to the problem between us: that L doesn't feel enough (or, more precisely, doesn't know how to feel what he feels; doesn't know how to make it live), and I feel too much (give everything life).

After dinner that night, we kissed in the doorway of his wood shop and then he lifted me up and carried me in

his arms through his mother's back garden, up the street, to his house. Then to his room on the second floor. It was raining and my legs were wrapped around his waist. We were kissing the entire time. I asked if I was too heavy for him. He called me a feather. But how could that be true? We are almost the same weight and height. He often carried me, lifted me, threw me over his shoulder, swept me across a room while dancing. He was intimidated by my stature, he said, which is maybe why he would take me in his arms like that. It was a way for him to feel that some part of him was strong. I remembered loving *Dirty Dancing* as a kid. Baby and her botched dance lifts with Johnny. In L's left ear, I whispered, "God, this is so fucking romantic. It's like a movie." A movie, as in, something we only see as plausible in fiction actually became possible in real life. Like that scene in *The Purple Rose of Cairo* where Jeff Daniels steps out of the movie screen and into Mia Farrow's real life ("Possibilization must prevail over the impossible," writes Derrida in *The Politics of Friendship*). It was too much and that was the point.

During our two-day road trip through Burgundy, the best two days I've had in years, we stopped in La Charité-sur-Loire, a medieval village in the Loire Valley region of Burgundy. La Charité-sur-Loire is one of several Villes des Livres (Cities of Books). Quotes are strewn all across Charité's walls. Charité, which means charity, also comes from the Greek *agape*, which is not Eros (erotic), but rather, spiritual—unconditional—love. Agape is used in the Biblical passage known as the "love chapter," 1 Corinthians 13. It also referred to a "love feast," a religious meal among early Christians.

At dusk, we set up camp on the Loire River (the longest river in France) for the night and then plunged into the water at sunset. In the car, L talked for hours about wanting to find a river to swim in. He said he was desperate

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for water. L went in alone while I was still getting into my swimsuit behind some trees in the sand. Doing everything alone is L's default move. And I am bad at following men around, so I swam in the river by myself a few hundred feet ahead of him. Then I watched him walk upstream towards me, against the current that was pushing him away. I waited while I lounged in my shoal of water. I bided my time. He was moving slowly through the orange beams of light. I watched him inch nearer then decided to meet him halfway. When we caught up to each other, smiling he said, "It's hard to get to you." No, it's not, I thought. It's hard to get to you.

After that we stood up to our knees in water and laughed and flirted like Bill and Abby in *Days of Heaven*.

How am I living without this? How am I going to? How (why) is he? How (why) does anyone? How is this going to be something—someone—that doesn't happen, again? Living without all the things I was looking for and thought I'd found this summer and that I didn't think would ever happen again. And then they did and then they didn't again.

Why are so many people good at living without while I only seem to be capable of living with? Living for.

At the barn that day, in the hay, we ended our talk, our future, my crying, with, "You'll see, you will miss me when I go back to New York."

"Yes, maybe. And then I will have to come back for you."



▪ IMAGE/S (TOP)  
La Charité-sur-Loire, France (2013).



▪ IMAGE/S (BOTTOM)  
*Days of Heaven*, 1978.



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## Untitled 14

This landscape is from our Burgundy trip, two days of driving in a car. C drove, I sat up in the front because of my carsickness, and L sat behind me the whole time, in the back seat, looking at maps, constantly leaning in. Kisses, touches, handholding, eye contact in the rearview mirror. I pretended not to see. I thought it was the start of walls coming down. What was between the trees: that blue, that sunlight, the green. Every time we got out of the car to look at something, to stand in a field, he picked me a wild flower. It was the first time in years that I felt completely content. Happiness as motion. Happiness in motion. A week later he told me green is the color of hope. What were we hoping for when he was hell-bent on grinding hope to a halt? He acted like Holly Go Lightly (“You’ve got no guts”) without the cinematic foliage of things getting better by the end. Stupid about his feelings: petulant, destructive, weak. He always said words that made no sense given the other words he said. Did things that made no sense given the other things he did. There are moments when the iPhone footage I shot in the car looks like old TV static, Super 8 film, blue pools of water. I guess I know how to make the digital wind back. My eye wills the new into old. Joy turns to total abstraction. Happiness sweeps.



▪ [LINK](#)

*Burgundy #1*, Masha Tupitsyn (2013).

<https://vimeo.com/76491655>



▪ [LINK](#)

*Burgundy #2*, Masha Tupitsyn (2013).

<https://vimeo.com/79072083>

SEPTEMBER 21 2013

## Mourning Is For Life

“What is there to indicate that we are no longer haunted  
by the one we’ve lost?”

— DARIAN LEADER

*The New Black: Mourning, Melancholia and Depression*

SEPTEMBER 22 2013

## When Beauty Comes Your Way and The Reception of Meaning

“Rather than self-choice, self-reception becomes the operative term. We find this elaborated in *Repetition* and in ‘the Job Discourse’, the sixth of his *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses* of 1843. Job waits through his suffering with *nothing* to choose. He is only dust and ashes. Out of nowhere a storm appears, singing the rebirth of his world. Through the Wind’s poetry he is given seas, great birds, infinite stars, the glory of dawn: ‘the shape of things is changed by it—they stand forth, as if clothes in ornament’ (Job 38: 12, 14). The moral is that when caught in despair there is, at the limit, no ‘autonomous choice’ by which one lurches out of the muck. One is remade and saved (if one is) by an intervention of the other, as it were. One is offered a call or vision not of one’s choice or making: the birds of the air, an assembly of true friends (not Job’s mockers), an icon, a Saviour. One does not *create* Truth *ex nihilo*. It jolts one awake, strikes one dumb, steals one’s heart... To be servile is to be held hostage or intimidated by another, but yielding to another is not always servile. *If we are to be loved, we must yield to a passion from another and let responsiveness to that other unfold...* Job is the model for repetition. His world gets restored in his yielding, and in his dependence and acceptance of the wondrous beyond all choice or control. He does not set out on a ridiculous attempt to construct repetition. It happens on its own, in a fresh burst of glory that overtakes and humbles our sense of studied control... I await something momentous, gathered as the *future* unveils it toward me. I tilt forward in anticipation, in a

hope for the gift of repetition, for I half-know what to expect...Job gets the *wonder* of a world returned, but he does not learn *why* he suffers. Metaphysical wonder is uncoupled from metaphysical explanation. The reception of a life beyond dust and ashes throws the *need* for an answer aside...The consolation of explanation or theory pale beside the shattering wonder of restoration...And if Truth comes through a revelation that I am powerless to summon, then I may be condemned to endless waiting.

...Love must be seen and unseen—we have to imagine a miracle.”

— EDWARD F. MOONEY, in his introduction to Kierkegaard’s *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs*

## Untitled 15

All lovers should exist between (inside of)  
The -----> End.



▪ **IMAGE**  
*Jane Eyre*, 1996 (End Credits).





▪ **IMAGE**  
In a boat, the Seine.



▪ **IMAGE**  
Marnay road sign.



▪ **IMAGE**  
Road infinity sign near L's barn.



▪ **IMAGE**  
On the concrete wall near L's barn.



▪ **IMAGE**  
Marnay road, bike ride.



▪ **IMAGE**  
In a boat, the Seine.



▪ **IMAGE**

Last days of summer.

Photo by: Frieda Verlage (2013)

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