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## 1.1

he was like death. She took my breath away.

She lived in a wood home by a harbor, and I was there it was sunset and the mosquitoes were biting. We were standing outside the perimeter of her property, there was an end of gravel and a beginning of dirt and her blonde home behind her, the unspeakable redness of the sky soaking the house like a sponge in blood, all the shadows purple and the harbor water an impossible yellow. We were laughing and she placed a hand on my bare shoulder as she laughed, her arm straight out, her teeth showing looking into my eyes as she laughed. I reached down and killed a tiger sucking on my ankle. A red stain in my hand, I held her shoulder too.

Because I had said "This is like a nightmare I once had."

Family jeeps were moving behind me on the gravel. I couldn't say more I wanted to right at that specific moment I wanted to I could not say more. I couldn't see the light change but each time I looked it was different. Darker, redder, blacker, and I could still see her face but not the detail of her face. Now I could hear the mosquitoes like a net descending upon us, and I felt fear of not being able to escape. I was not laughing, I could not. I pressed a finger flat against my left front tooth, I could feel it but not make out the stain black or red.

"What should we do?" I was the one to ask.

"I think you need to brush your teeth," she said.

Through the front door of her home I could see out the

back window, at a small boat tied up and rocking, at a great black-backed gull mounted one footed upon a piling, at a sun all the way down and still pouring blood over the rim of the end of the sea, and I felt the pulling feeling, of being stretched apart inside til there was only the one single point of contact holding the stretched place together, and if that were to break that would be it, that would be the start of something I never wanted to know and would never, if I couldn't. I felt one side of the stretching move all the way out over the rim of the end of the sea, moving right through her front door out the back window out and all the way out, over. Me in the chest the other side of the stretching, feet planted one in the dirt one in the gravel.

"This is October perfect" she said that.

"Yes. Yes." I saw the wire of the bell the front door bell hanging useless, unattached.

"So do you want to you want to come in and clean your mouth?"

"I don't know I'm getting bit but I kinda wanna stay and finish the sunset you know? I feel like I need to stay and finish it."

"Thats fine but I'm going to go in so come in whenever you're ready alright?"

I waved a hand through the humming cloud.

"Good."

The backs of her knees made two "H"'s she got into her home. The sea looked like a floor of autumn leaves, moving. The worst ones are the ones on the last knuckle of the fingers. Or the top of the head. Because I was standing there the stretching subsided and grew closer again. I had made a good decision, as regards that. The screen door slamming closed that noise was hanging in my ear and I thought the disattached bell wire might be the means of returning home. Me. I looked at the severed

attachment of that bell and wire until now it was already too darkened out to really see, so I stood and looked to where I knew it was and felt — I felt, I didn't see him — the great black-backed take off and go. *Call a low pitched kow-kow-kow.* Him silent though.

It really was just dark now. I wanted her to go. That was what I thought. I wanted her to go even as I was standing in her dark on her land by her home by water, sea. I wanted her to go so then I could move then. Now I didn't want to get bit any further. *Enough is enough.* Me silent though. It was a long way back to the station. She had my things. Family jeeps were moving behind me on the gravel, their lights on now. Oh, I had wings now. A black exoskeleton of wingmatter casing me hard on the welted back. There I was going. It was impossible. This was clearing now, and it was unalterable. Before me there was this. And as this would remain.

## 1.2

I imagine I could imagine it was snow as I walked, hearing the rhythming crunch go under, I could imagine it was chewing in the mouths of a friendly morning table scene, I could imagine the good words like stories half submerged by the kind food, the warm mouths spilling words chewing bread spitting milk, drinking coffee and juices and preparing for the day, the good words caressing all the hearts at that table, a sweetness because they can talk, and they emphasize this good thing, this thing that makes this morning solely and unrobbably theirs, they can speak to one another, making the words the sound of their morning, and they will never forget this sound of their morning, and that it is not the food or the sunlight early cross the low land ground but it is inside this sound, the sound of their voices making home for each of them, it is this sound, the sound of them own with themselves which make this morning everlasting and unremovable, and which they can erect in homes disparate and changed, having moved through years like a station wagon through bowels through a torrent of mud falling from the sky into a brief pause, and in that pause, just from the good ability of speech, erect and inhabit this friendly morning table scene, without food even, without any smell but the smell of sweat in the closed window car, stalled in the terrible rain but promising to start again — as it has — Smell of their teeth and tongues too, as is usual — Descending through the years like a soundproof pearl falling through a glass of blood — Speaking again, and the moment of creation is present again, and the good place is known to never wander far from here — Speaking — Speakers of good words one to another, they have this pleasure, this treasure of the good home, inhabited without fail, regardless of shelter, exile, fire.

I could imagine it was snow as I walked, a steady, rail-tie beat.

I imagined I said *I stood at your door ringing the bell for hours, it was already dawn by the time I gave up, you never heard me, you never even came to see if I were alright, where, and finally the light was breaking and I saw the broken attachment too, and then I realized I could have simply walked in all night, I could have just walked in any time* I imagined I said *And I was standing here, before you came to the door, now, I was imagining I was telling you how I stood over you while you slept, all night, listening to the water lapping at the piling and the boat, listening to the wavelets licking the moonlight in the air, watching your neck beat above your robe, seeing your calf upon the sofa cushion in the lit candle you sleep waiting by, I just watched, til now, til morning, not needing to wake you, not needing to sleep, but needing you more there, then, than I could ever tell you while you were awake* I imagined I said *I dreamed this as I stood outside this door, all night, before I noticed the unattached wire of the bell* Imagining remembering feeling my lying even as I tell you this, because I cannot tell you *I left* I cannot tell you *I could not come in* I cannot tell you *I am long walked away, gone here* imagining walking imagining the gravel become the snow of the good words.

As I walk I am telling you this story: a long time ago, he was living by himself in a room he'd torn the plaster off the walls exposed the brick it was good that way he liked the texture, as the landlord begged him to agree — needing a reason — either that or he'd just destroyed a perfectly fine room — It was a good room, he liked it. It fit his geometry. He knew exactly where he was in it at all times, and where it was in him, which is what made it the good room. It was about the thirteenth of the month, and all the money was evaporated. February. There was really nothing left to sell, but clothes



and this old brass fire extinguisher he can't remember where it come from. So he walked over the bridge with it to Second Avenue, where the shops did the business used to be — And signed the big book and left with eighteen dollars and a lighter load, but more of a hurry. As he walked back over the bridge he imagined the old thing still worked, still had fluid in it. He realized he'd never tried it. And that he couldn't remember where he'd got it shocked him. Nothing entered his kingdom without the visa of a story — nothing — and so this was an alien, undocumented, and so a vaguely dangerous realization. It just there. Well, now it was gone. Anyway, somehow he gets Mike to give him two bags for nine each — membership does have its privileges he thinks on the lope away from the spot — and four blocks later he gets took by a crackhead waving a muzzle out of his sleeve, makes off with the bags and a severely crooked grin backing away then booking into the setting winter sun. Crackhead stealing dope. The worst day yet, species crossing lines. Then he is back in his good room, getting sicker, soaking and resoaking the little flicks of cotton saved on the desk, by the typewriter — shooting and reshooting like some crazed director — smoking and resmoking the charred aluminum foil til his throat and chest became sore to the touch — And finally, mostly from exhaustion and the smell of the memory of dope, — despair — nods off.

Next door, same floor, right on the other side of the deplastered wall, in the abandoned building attached to his, the wayward thieving crack smoker without regard for protocol and a similar friend in need are huffing their tubes pitch black again, their dirty faces appearing and disappearing in the flashes of the lighter, with one candle burning, a new orange votive with the face of the goddess scratched off with the wire they use to clean their tubes with. They decide to

smoke his heroin too, something the two of them haven't ever done before. Were saving it for later to sell. A series of purists inhabit this story. They manage, they smoke, using the tubes and the lighters they breathe down all his shitty street grade heroin and get completely fucked, whacked down and nod to almost death — this was the first night of this new brand and so it was ripe — Well, the winter wind blowing around the sheetmetal nailed to the windows lofts a newspaper page along the wavelet of candle flame and ignites a huge blaze. He — our hero in the next room — is woken by the smoke, believes it is his room on fire — he shares the wall adjacent to the burning room, but not the room itself — And in his waking body, a body without stricture of spacetime, goes and reaches for the old brass fire extinguisher, and finding it missing, is woken fully up. The fire department comes, and a woman from across the street whom he's always looked toward with hunger offers to put him up for the night, as they stand and watch the building attached to his burn and hiss. She, it turns out, also partakes of his sweet-tooth for heroin, and they boot that night, she's got a giving heart. That morning, he finds himself awake, kneeling on her bathroom floor and the image of the fire extinguisher, brass and dented in spots, surges up in him with a suction drawn behind it, and he begins to sob. It had been a long, long time since he had cried. She believed he was vomiting, he woke her. The two tubeheads were found charred and smoldering, without eyes, grinning in their own vesuvius. Later, he decided it was that morning he began to dislike the job of dope.

I imagine I tell you this story as I am walking listening to the gravel in the mouth under foot of the dark by the harbor, I have never told this story to anyone I have never heard it before I tell it and I realize it is true, it is you have asked me to

tell you and so I listen and then something comes I can tell, if you were not to ask I could not say *if you were not to ask I would not speak* I think as I imagine I walk away.

It is cold. I hear a single bird cry I cannot identify I imagine two bird eyes glinting in the reflected dark out over the water, wise to me. Knowing me, and knowing hounding me.

### 1.3

I made myself barefooted wrapped my head in darkness like a towel and walked slowly in the air upon the ground, upon the gravel and then the dirt leading up to her home. I walked I traced the outline of her home by walking around its left — southern — side. I was thrilled I knew this because of having seen the sun go out behind the rim of the sea. A geometry secured in me something I had been told many thousand sentences ago. I knew now, due to the sun, this was the southern side of her home. I passed on. There was a limning of grass around the circumference of the home. I imagined the reading taking place. The limning of grass around the circumference of the home very much evocative of a vagina's lips with its limning of hair. The home, in this sense, could very much be seen, in this reading, as a cunt, entrance to a womb, sexual, maternal, bloody, fragrant, yearned, missed, lost. Tufts did surround her home. I was moving along their edge, not yet entering. Mine was a trained mind. Working. I was clear about that. A great black-back sanded the air above my head, swooping. Through the blurry southern window I saw her sit heavily on the couch. Her white terricloth robe undulating through the ripples in the glass. Her back to me. Leaning over cutting through the coke on the low glass table. A hand tugging her hair back. The stained-glass lamp — the colors of dried leaves and desiccated insect body — on its post by the western arm of the couch, the arm closest to the sea. An amber parachute of light on the ceiling, a pool of yellowed light on the couch. I had never been in her home. This must be implicit in the reading.

I could not distinguish the sound of surf from the inhale of coke through the window. I imagined two tidal waves of blood erupting from two incisions made just above my collar

bones, two geysers erupting, and then merging in their ascent out of my body. Only ascending. Deepest blackest red upon bluest deepest black. A warmth I did not want seeped from the lamp by the couch arm into my throat, even through the window. I heard voices on the surf wind, reflected inside the bowl of the harbor's curve from who knows how distant. There is no need to ask, if you don't jump to ask immediately. Things are not unknown, even if having never been experienced. Just wait. Wait out the swelling that wants to be told *what this is*. And then, *what is* tells you exactly. I made my naked footed way to the waters, tickling the cunt hairs of the home with my toe after toe after toe. Which reminds me of a new reading for a rose is a rose is a rose. A rose IS a rose IS a rose IS a rose IS a rose IS. The mosquitoes had retreated, heavy and surfeited with plasma, stunned and desperately sleepy with the sudden temperature loss of the air. The lamplight like blood in my throat. The small stones which were beyond the water's rim were still warm, and the sand was cool, and the mix of the cool sand and the warm stones was very nice, very very nice. With closed eyes and the low surf sound and the bites begging to be scratched, the warm stones and the cool sand and the thick blood in my throat cast by the lamp light I stood, *I am standing*. In the reading it goes *I am not waiting for anything. I am no longer waiting, here. I am conscious of her home, and her in there, behind me. Me here, by the water, listening, standing, feeling the bites making tiny twisting eddies of skin on my back and hands and feet, feeling the heat of the small stones fade into my naked feet, feeling the swelling of blood in my throat cast by the light of the lamp, hearing surf, small wavelets, voices cast off the inside of the bowl of the harbor arriving here. My feet in turn become these stones, the sand no longer feels cool. The sea wind blows through my skull as if through an open window. I sway, back and forth, almost indistinctly. The waiting, the panic, has vanished. I*

*have no direction, there is no place where I am missing, where I am not. I have arrived. Here. I have arrived. Become a vacant window, an empty doorframe, a house halfbuilt the air moving through bare studs of bone.* I don't want to go in there the reading continues. I don't want to go in there. I'm going to untie that tiny boat and shove off. I'm going out into the night sea and drift til morning. I'm going. I'm not to stay. I'm going to go.

I lob my shoes in the direction of the boat. I cannot distinguish the sound of surf from the dropping of my shoes. I believe they arrived safely. The water numbs. The larger stones under the waters edge are coated in slime, and finally I am at the bow of the tiny boat and know, without trying to see through the dark — might as well see through my eyelids — that the big toenail of my left foot probably is not hanging on by much. The sharks will eventually come, smelling blood one part in a million. A trained mind. Here on the western side of the home. The water is up to the pockets of my pants. My money is soaked, I know. Current sea. I untie the homerope from the piling by the small jetty of stones and toss it at the boat. Shove off and enter. Then I am in. One oar moving out. Backing out. The lighthouse — the home, that is — the rectangle of piss-yellow light begins to grow small, recede. Family jeep headlights rolling along the curve of the harbor without sound. Small. There is nothing around me here, out here.

## 1.4

There is a full moon missing a small piece already risen above me. I lay down in an inch of numb water. I look down my clothes. Through my flesh to the bones. The moonlight X-raying me. I lift my left hand to my face. I see a small, thick triangular shaped bone, its three points rounded, its sides flat, at the root of my left thumb, a bone I have seen on the beach many many times. I realize the beach is strewn with hand and foot bones. I was assembled along a walk along a coast from out of a collection bag. They were picked up, pieces, and now I am together. The difference between me now, and me dead, is the space between bones. *tell me no one can* I float into the night on my back on the sea, the furrows and interstices and curving cello-bow bends of my bones, the grin I am always hiding uncovered now, the heartlessness, lunglessness, stomachlessness, gutlessness, cocklessness I have always hungered for revealed, now, the piece by piece inventory of a structure I only sensed but never could see here shown, uncovered, exposed. These are my bones. Laid out on the bottom of the tiny boat. I sit up and look at them. The harbor home lights are darkened. A family jeep occasionally rolls by, soundless. Later I hear the engine. Her home, her cunt, also dark. Far far away. Under the beam of the X-rays I feel me finally relax. *Break what?* I pick up the bowl of my pelvis. Rugged, acned termite holes dot it like a stump. It too seems to have its own particular grin. It is heavy, as if it were filled with pears. I lift it up and squint at the moon through its bone circles. Then I raise it over my head and toss it into the sea. A deep slow bass sound and then a plume of water. I can make my ribs skip, the curved side down, once, twice, I even get one three. And the sternum goes farthest. I count seven, maybe eight. My shoulder blades move like water skis over the surface, my left one even hitting a buoy I cannot see and making its bell ring. Collar bones, dropped straight down over the side. Upper arms, forearms, all

dropped directly into the water over the side of the tiny boat. My thigh bones I throw at the moon, see them turn end over end in the X-ray light. A night heron skims the surface as I watch one of these huge bones plunge in. The bird's hollow armbones and arrowhead skull flash-illuminated as my leg falls near it into the sea. Lower legs, my shin bones, I smash in half over the side of the tiny boat. The cracks are like thunderclaps. The marrow is wet and smells like forest mud. Wristbones, handbones, fingerbones, ankle bones, foot and toebones, kneecaps, vertebrae, skull are left. I put the wrists and all hand bones in my pants pockets. I take my skull, and dunk it, raise it over my head and pour sea on my face like out of a helmet. My soaking money I squeeze into a lump and shove deep into the bowl of my head, and then set it adrift, out onto the nightsea. I watch it heave and bob away, and then suddenly tilt, take on water, and go under, my unchanging grin swallowed by the sea. My shoes are not on board. I must have missed. I try, instead, to smash my backbones with my hands but they are too hard and sharp, and I get cut. I collect my vertebrae into a pile and just take the whole mess and drop it overboard. They don't sink, they float away, their tiny wings on the surface making them seem like drowned things, faces facing the deep. My shoes being gone I throw my footbones over too. Delicate little plashings but they do sink. I lay down again, put my kneecaps over my eyes. Cool like stones, weightless almost, perfect concavity fitted to my eyes. There is a roaring in my head, as if the tiny boat had an outboard. She's taking on water, I can tell.

I hear wings swoop over me, continue on. The roaring doesn't block out sound, just seems to separate sound out of itself, give it relief, a space between itself and my listening. I can hear the wings retreat far, so that it seems they would have reached the shore by now. The boat water numbs, soaking me. The reading will become further problematic, the excavation that just occurred and then, here, or soon after here, the going under



of the tiny boat and me finding my own bones laid out in a single sentence upon the moonlit water's sandy underfloor. Spelling. The coincidence of spelling and my own expiration easily read as no random juxtaposition, and the site — the floor under the world, the foundation — of *spelling* and death, of language and loss, of suffering and *words*, of writing and catastrophe — the foundation — easily read this way. I cannot seem to change that. Nor do I want to. Here I am, on my back, the water rising from beneath me as the boat sinks with its hands offered up to the night sky, backing away from the canopy of the world as I backed away from the shore, facing what I left even as I leaved it, backing away into *spelling*, into excavation, into night and the loss of my own life.

I sit up as the boat begins to rapidly fill, and I watch the shore seem to float over itself as the water passes my shoulders. I am gripping the plank seat of the bow. The numb water covers my face and the few lights of the shore flare and run like candlewax breaks sudden through the rim of a candle's edge. The roaring is coming from below the water, I can tell, off way below me and to the right. It no longer sounds in my head. It has a source. I float down with the boat as if I were floating down from the sky on a leaf fallen from a tree. Turning slowly, remaining seated, the silver chain which bound me to the air pouring out of my mouth and up towards the light of the moon, like an anchor's line running out of a hull. The end of the line has not been tied-to, however. I watch the end of this unsecured chain race up towards the moon and disappear in a tiny fist of spray as it bursts through the roof and into the night air. I have seen this, exactly, before. An unbearable nostalgia bloats in my chest. I remember that. *I remember that, now*. The boat touches down, more heavily than I expect. I no longer feel the water. Uncanny feeling of being in the air. Only when I move to dismount the boat do I feel the resistance of the sea. And there they are, spelling on the seafloor. One single sentence made of my own rejected bones.

## 1.5

Inconsolable.

*What are you doing here?*

*I wanted to be here. I wanted to come.*

*Who asked you? Who asked you? Who the fuck wanted you here?*

*I want to be here. I want you to let me in.*

Inconsolable air. Inconsolable sea. Inconsolable moving light them arriving here, to me. Like old dusty ground the road of ocean kicks up around as my feet walk away. Away from the sentence, final and serene, latticed down before my legs in bones of the body that walks away, walking. I am moving towards the engine. I can hear it, steady and clear, as if it were behind just a thin cotton wall. The moonlight brightness seems to gain upon this entering bowl of ocean. Light of the movie sifting down, playing upon the rippled wrinkled ground. There is no engine. Just its sound. I keep moving to it, I know where it is, I am moving to it even as I know there it — it — is not. Moving into its unmistakable missing. I know too, the reading taking me there — I know too the source of this missing engine, tracked by listening and concealed by vision is leading me — will lead me — the reading — towards the gradual ascending grade of the ocean floor, to the harbor's edge, hilling up onto the beach, spilling into air, past back the unboated piling, soft along terrain of sand and stones and perimeter, limning, of her home, and into room of its single lamp and amber light and candle flame, within home I have never been — implicitly — Soaking and made changed by night, dispelled, my whisper even turned down — to deference in the engine —