

Routine

Cleaning chemicals running down a dirty window:

tears manufactured in a factory

by people with dirty glass faces under

fluorescent lights that circle like vultures hovering

over the life rotting in the workday.

A military drafted into the war:

dandelions caught in a breeze that

blows wishes around until

they're dragged out into lonely places

with all the other exhausted people who have forgotten how to dream

spending so much time

working to barely sustain themselves

expiring through an empty reality.

Romantic encounter:

Two strangers on public transport

exchanging a glance share

a second away together from all the other

people choking on oxygen

in a suffocating metropolitan wasteland.

Domestic violence:

The dread of going to sleep with a machine that
screams a scheduled reminder
every morning to start another day
wasting away inside a cubicle
just to afford a place with a bed where
it'll be heard again tomorrow.

Cloud nine:

A place in passing thought
of somewhere
else.

September

I was barricading myself from September again, purely unaware of the kettle boiling downstairs
who's screams had become reduced into whimpers as the burner below it blew out its sun as
though it was an October swallowing the August whole all while forgetting to taste the days
between, all as though those days were full of Crusades never meant to be written down or read;
or an edition of the Black Plague no one remembers because it put an entire generation to sleep.
No one ever healed, but no one ever suffered either.

There are doctors out there with big machines and no manners driving vaccinations into the sky when no one is looking, they hire angels to bring out medications that infect public opinion and pop culture in the middle of the summer when the heat brings people out to the beach to hibernate from the casualties of the lonely cities. It's allowed that time of year: to forget a little harder. It's in those months that there are more distractions to make more memories of what isn't of the earthquake that split each molecule apart, no, nostalgia is allowed and the coward that grew to become embedded in the chemical composition of this raw world shovels oxygen into its mouth and breathes only when the fever starts to rot away.

Galileo was wrong, the Earth rotates around the words of nothing said when there's so much to say. I grew up playing hopscotch on top of concrete pricking up at the undersides of my feet like little skyscrapers, sometimes finding my skin becoming a field of petroleum rubbed raw into blisters by the top of their antennas, and other times I laid flat on the ground drying out dreams in the smoldering afternoons. The ground was so quiet, that's what I liked about it. It didn't say anything back when I had questions and let me think for myself about what I would do if I were to be the weatherman I'd seen on Channel 5 who controlled how quickly the seasons changed. I remember trying to slow down the last day the cicadas had conversations about romance, oh, I always used to think it was the sun that was screeching at me. Now that ground is loud with a city on top shouting down at it, no room left to hold the noise. There's so much noise it's all I know of what is silent.

September makes the most noise. I hear the cries outside of people being whipped and tortured, calling taxis home before the night feels bitter, metal scraps scraping across pavement in screams of agony as it's put away in storage, I hear glass shattering in from a gale through a window who gave up and let nature take its life before the frost came and turned it into a boundary line

existing for the mere purpose of a means to isolation. And following the break-in, police sirens. A knock at the door. Too many questions. Was anything was stolen? Was I hurt? Only September, it was robbing me of the company of robins and monarchs, it was taking away from me hours of day that I could have found romance and could have found someone to forget about tomorrow with. It was spitting and smearing more reminders of the shattering fragility in every ephemeral moment, the tomorrow that threatened me with traffic and business and disassociation into an endless void with temperatures that would reach below freezing. It hurt my feelings, how there could be such a violent wrath introduced in such an unapologetic systematic facilitation. Oh, so debilitating it is to know the prospects of how the diseased summer will decay until it's known by the name of its deathbed: winter.

Hunting Season

The stillness inside the car is felt so unparalleled
to the snowstorm it drives through.
You are November
and I am the passenger you drive north to
a cabin we sit outside with rifles,
camouflaged to look like nature
not to protect ourselves from becoming part of the ground,
no, we don't wear doctors around us in a hospital
who decorate us with IVs
and filter out the danger

with medicines defending us against
becoming part of the wilderness
we're staring into.

We came out here to be the disease infecting
this land with bullets.

I reach my hand out like a weapon
that threatens to kill the space between us
and I touch your shoulder
where the light hits
like a hunter finally firing the gun
after waiting for hours
in the middle of the woods
for something to shoot at.

This time, I'm the one to
take the blow right into chest
watching you look at me like that.

I miss my heartbeat.

Feelings don't show up on autopsies
and can't be surgically removed or
treated like an infection,
just like deer don't show up on radars.

Love does not come
to those who run out yelling

for it to come closer.

How to Reach You

Running electricity through draft after draft of how I feel
until the gears cause a power outage,
until there's an oil spill from a crack in the tank
from thinking about you too hard on a drive
into Area 51 where they keep the secrets on how to
write presumably realistic romances among
other unreleased documents with information
on the workings of hidden government surveillance programs
and other terrifying manuscripts that could
lead to the abuse of power and love.

I have a workshop in Antarctica
for when I would like a place to write
that brings me to really feel like I am nothing,
a place that deepens the thought of that
you are the everything

I cannot have.

Another in Chernobyl
where I wait for an accident to happen
when I need something to compare

with meeting you.

One in Athens, Greece

for when I don't want to think about you at all.

And one more in the Sahara,

where I leave my love letters out to dry.

Sitting alone in the smoldering sun,

I apply another layer

of chapstick

over the desert

and watch the words I say

fade out to mean nothing

just like a mirage.