

LAWS OF REST

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WHAT LUCY USED TO BE

What Lucy used to be, I now am. Or rather, I accommodate her foibles; they live on in me now that she is gone. For instance: the thin switch of the horse's tail. The barn before sunrise, cold as oats. Trepidation in a nearby thrush. We believe that the dust layering the indoor ring comes from somewhere close by.

After the damage show, during which Lucy won a pink ribbon, we headed to the Amsterdam Pub. Lucy still had on her dressage silencer. I was then just one of her admirers. My only claim to fame was having come up with a slogan for the owls in our local forest: Stronger than Ever! But from that, I was indeed very famous.

I suppose she liked my girlish charm, my key chain of boys. She held the reins absently while the horses grazed in a nearby paddock. Later, on the ranch house roof, we exchanged lockets. When we had sex, it was not exactly life, but more like the Cambridge Companion to Life, with essays of incisive brevity.

I have learned several important lessons from my love affair with Lucy: One: I know no Lucy who does not know me. Two: I am a gentle consumer. Three: I would like this bed to be free of stones if possible. Four: It is better to be a cabinetmaker. Five: When the town doesn't want me anymore, it will say so.

AIRPORT LIMO LOVE SONG

Jewel Avenue, Astoria and no other. No no traffic makes me this way Van Wyck Van Wyck. Why don't you switch? Which kind of battery? Motorola? The brown one? The flat one? If you remember, you spent fifty dollars for nothing. Hello? Every day in a golden mitt, but it turned out to be just another head cover.

Jewel Avenue, Astoria and no other. My dear, you make one big mistake. You love someone wrong. Life, you know. You show me the phone. Maybe I have it. The spacious one? The one with the canals? The mesmerized one? Wait. Hello? You fucking guy you never call me. I call you you say you call me a hundred times.

My dear I am back. The airport is so far away it could be a potato in the earth. You are so a romantic. If you tell me again I might privilege the rocks of my native land. If you tell me that other thing I will bless you by spitting on your back. I rocked back and forth all day calling you, and my headset spat on the front seat.

You have no idea! You are made of no clue! I am a lover for you, a special lover! Switch to the phone in the street. Your calls are like some clouds off the Van Wyck. I'm still in Queens, not lost fucked city of Brooklyn. This traffic you cannot imagine. What shoe are you wearing? You are not an angel but you are very nice.

PERMITTED TO RETURN

According to the striking formal invention of feldspar. Upper granite, a record of demoiselles. There were six kinds: Berenice, Booth, Fletcher, Townsley, Evelyn, Ireland. Men, wives, illicit lovers, sheep, dynamiting silver and chiselling trails, usually glassy and moderately hard, blocky. I do not know what the lupine wants.

Feldspar is a tiny room of femaleness, and it is blocky but on fire. Within the range of light, the unglazed waterfall is propelled by lateen sails. A bridal veil factory. Dr. Barney the geologist uplifted onto the rock and gargled. He is rewarding, flexible, personal. He is as sexy as a physicist. You can have it all.

I was standing on a fairly large group of clinical wonders. I was sighted like the batholith, suddenly Plutonic. I echoed, but big deal. On a weathered surface, feldspar is chalky and gives life, it is the rock made field. Easily cleaved, but not on your account, into a meadow you may have as a privilege.

I could get more potassium from a banana, but the windswept sparkle of my boot is for you, my only poet. If only there were space for me on the edifice, feldspar, antithesis. You were everywhere. A man carried a mattress up Mount Vogelsang. To be given autumn, or to appropriate it. Marmots, under cover of dawn.

D'OU VIEN DONC LE GRAND ASSEMBLY?

Written on the back of a 17th-century recipe book

First, concerning the primary importance of the definite article, we divined it was this, the individual, that marrowed our thoughts. We opened the white vellum book of remembrances, binding it to our fingers in diary form. In the book of short remembrances we found clear cakes made of plague, sent down by the king.

In 1705 Elizabeth Freke's husband, married a most grievous rainy wet day, first complained of shortness of breath; survived, though Dr. Jeffryes was unable to bleed him. Freke was aided by several courses of turpentine physick; murdered a short while later. The last he saw was shadows of several bodies, evening light fissured the corn.

The sought individual: a voice or form yet ahead, packed in sand like the Seville oranges in the cellar. Viscuous gasps pack full the children who have dressed for God. The man midwife said my son would have to be taken out of me in pieces. If the writing is unclear, it may have been cancer or smallpox, or the difficulty of the hand.

There is no second because there is no duel, only a dark crowd of what has already been written down an English lane. She lay in her coffin a long time before getting up to call her cook. Lady Norton has my son preserved in gooseberries. She gave me a recipe to make Hog's puddings, but I usually soak my guts in rosewater overnight.

AIN HALEV

Whatever became of the garden? The badgers, I remember, had the look of trees doing the washing, and the trees had not yet learned what badgers looked like. You were there, growing bits of ocean. Just off to the right, where I couldn't watch you. You were blessed the way city lights are blessed, one after the other.

You'd had enough of the future, but it insisted. You raised your nucleated arm. You broke off truths as you walked and dangled them in your teeth. You were an unwept tale waiting to happen, a prompt train on an unpublished schedule. You crumbled at the first sign of the police, used worms as tools to get back your baggage.

Night gathers in the fists of books. Everywhere you look the new country is blowing itself up in a springtime of beach glass. I don't know what I was thinking when I said those things; let's find a history we can both eat. Pendulous and barbonic, you tend to your coins of water. One day I'll see you with all my eyes.

After the breakfast dancing you used up your teachers. You stood staring all the rest of the day at fields flickering on the wall. As one of your tended iron shards, I felt I could speak to you, using the model of those guavas out on the cliffs. You looked past me. The weight of the jellied world between us, we set out wandering.

GRAIN IN EAR

This is what I saw and it does not have a name. After a week in which rain and snow fought over the city, someone wadded up a bunch of endings and shot them over the sea. They broke apart and fell down to the white tendrils of children and boats. A little God-light shafted the clouds, but that did not make it any easier.

Now is the half-month of Grain In Ear, beginning of June. To the south the rainy season begins to pry open the rice-heads. In the garden, writing at random, summer the tomato leaves. Villagers pound paper in the narrow lanes, or did once. A wanderer yawns to my interior stream, looks for his keys, departs.

I gather up my bones, their meticulous weight which I never notice. Memory is a thing Heaven and Hell have always shared – it is between them when they climb into bed at night and listen for the sea. I move farther down the row, to the bus with a hole in it. A suitcase flits across my neighbour's doorway, or perhaps a shard of salted fish.

It is a mistake not to think of the donkey contemplatives, their pens jaggling over rice paper shrubs. One can't help but live when one has made it out, at least for now. Sound of a brush on concrete: small mammals prepare to dig up the season of peace. You and I are practically our own line of egrets. We breathe like roads.

COLOPHON

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