

You bought me a book about the love of and anguish of loving the color blue. Then we didn't speak for a small eternity. This was our relationship: intimate acts of professions of thoughts and dial tones where my fingers are wrapped around the cord to the last landline in existence not daring to hang up. This give and take, push and pull of waves we stand in front of, has been perpetuated for nearing on six years. It is not all your fault. When I dig into the specifics I'm hoping to find that the blame falls more on to you than me. I never reach that conclusion.

The day I finished the book on blues you flew a half a country away. That is also not your fault, but I felt the extended distance like a nail in a rented wall. Its permanence was enough to hold weight, yet I knew at a certain point I could take the back of a hammer to it and yank it right out again.

That's always how it felt when you returned into my life as well: a small emptiness, a pinprick of darkness on a plain white wall. Something I had to fill in quickly so nobody would know it had been there.

I knew I had to reread the book. Although I had dogeared passages I read as beautiful, I knew I must pour over the individual words again. Like my philosophy professor said about reading Nietzsche, you must be both a cow and a detective. Reading through it first, I was a cow. I grazed over the words, occasionally finding a flower to chew more thoroughly. I wanted more, though. I tore through half the text late one night to early the following morning. I was drunk. I was thinking about you and wanted to be held in our bubble of intimacy once again. I felt the coldness of a bed half full and reached for *Bluets*. Every word reminded me of you. She, the author, quoted philosophy, literature, critiques just as you always do and how I wish I could as well. She mused over the loss of her lover and every memory she recounted I placed you and I within the scene. The first half of the book was torturous and left my eyes wide open throughout the sunrise. I sobered myself with the thought of you, far away and no longer trailing your fingers over my body.

I wanted to drink away the sun that morning. I wanted to feel the warm drunk of night when I would fall more in love with you the more you spoke. You and I would inevitably sneak away and clamor for each other's bodies in the pitch black because it was forbidden and we were still kids and could do such things. But it was already tomorrow and the light was breaking over the skyscrapers refracting the fact that all of these moments we had were becoming more and more the past. The yellow of dawn spilled onto my comforter and I got up to go to work.

It took me a week to finish the blue book. I would read it in snippets as if I had learned my lesson. I began to forget the previous pages. I focused on the here, the now. I would read a few passages and not think of you directly. I separated you from the text like peeling the rind of an orange away from the juicy flesh. Yet even when I peeled you away, more of you returned. I didn't realize you were in fact the whole fruit I decided to eat.

I was ten pages away from the end when I began to write about the night we all took acid. The problem with reading or seeing or experiencing moving work is that it always wills me to make a piece of my own. Noah wanted to hear my voice tell my experience that night anyways, so I believed sinking myself back into that memory wouldn't be solely about remembering you. It was for a fellow writer, more journalistic than emotional. I clearly don't know myself at all.

I began with recounting the moon. You remember the moon that night, its fullness, its brilliance. I've never viewed such a pure object before in my life. Nothing could ever exist, going forward, that would leave me feeling so full. It spoke to Nathan. He would stand up, out of the cocoons you and Noah built for us, and walk closer and closer to it. I remember seeing him walk the first time towards its light and thought he would step right onto its surface like Le Petit Prince. He owned the moon. I watched the two of them stare at one another and as the minutes slipped away from us it felt as if his gaze was pulling the moon across the sky.

It did not speak to me in this way. The feeling was more of a mutual acknowledgement between two glowing forces. I felt its brightness within me. I understood the moon already. Or, at least believed I did.

Once I moved beyond the moon, my mind skipped like a stone across the other moments of that long night. For a while, you weren't prominent in my thoughts and actions and observations. I remember the world howling around me and the red ember light of a joint and the deep sadness in Maria's face. I remember Noah lifting me up and placing me down onto a rocky ledge where the ground shifted dimensions, and Nathan and I repeating our thoughts because it was our first time seeing everything up and out and beyond. We saw a comet and the entire world did a double take. My hand trailed above me, moving the stars like bubbles of soap in water.

I apparently talked about you and Noah as if you both weren't lying on the rocks right next to Nathan and me. I don't know what I said but Noah believes I was speaking the most freely. I wish I could recall how my drugged, freed mind thought of you.

Then we moved to the beach and more importantly the sand. That's where I saw you again. We were mirrors of each other, letting our feet experience the same soft sinking into "the mush" as we called the shore. The water hit our skin at the same time and we felt the incredible shock of warmth together. Everything began to fall away from me but you remained. I looked at your face and it morphed from old to young and young to old. I could see us together in many different times. I was watching the future and the past.

We would split and rejoin as if tethered by a delayed rubber band. I would run back and forth trying to feel how time had molded every granular beneath my feet. I stood on an elevated step of sand and watched the water wrap around its base while you stood nearby. You would flip, throwing your legs into the air, as I waded deeper into the water framing you with my fingers stretched in front of me like a camera. I built a noir film that night and you were my leading man. We were beside and apart, watching each other with dilated pupils that saw everything. I

told you I thought I finally understood you. My mind was clear of anxieties and filled with a comfortable confidence.

We stood, however, never touching. A padding of space made our hands never leave our own bodies. The air felt thicker the closer I got to you. I felt it the most when I stood on my island of sand and the tides would make you fall further and further below me.

All I wanted was for you to join me on that island and snake your hands around my hips and waist. I wanted to look at the infinite expanse of rippling reflections with you. I wanted to feel you pressed against my back like a safety net after a great trapeze fall.

I also knew that if I were to get everything I wanted and I were to touch you like I wanted to under the intensity of that drug, I wouldn't be able to stop. The feeling would consume me, your sunburnt skin against mine would go from imploding bliss to an insidious burning. I would be stepping into a fire begging it to consume me faster. I could never come back from that acidic touch. I would never want it to come to a finale.

We sat on the swings later that night and I felt that pulsing urge to be on top of you and feel like how the sky felt that night pressing down on us and then bursting out into all the corners of our vision. I could only imagine pressing my lips against yours while we talked with the two other "kids" as the adults called us. We were all one generational mass and I felt two types of wholeness sitting within our conversation. The first was family: melancholic, tense, with the knowledge of our pasts sitting as the fifth member in the sand. The second was being near you, both of us stripped mentally to our cores, and feeling some type of connection that made our relationship more whole.

I don't know if you felt that too, or if you ever actually feel the way my heart reaches out, touches just below the skin on my chest, at the sight of you. This is where it is also my fault for when you say beautiful words to me I falter and bite my fingernails. I fear if I tell you my truth and the way my mind flips the moments we share together over and over, like a child desperate not to burn their first pancake they've made all by themselves, you will reverse everything you've ever said.

I fear one day when I have fully given over my heart to you, you will have grown cold to the idea of having it. And then I will be beyond empty and the glowing piece of moon that I have inside of me will be snuffed out.

Love is a sword that has no dull edge. I hold it in my hands and wonder if I am more scared of it slicing me or you.

When we were high in New York and it was past the celebration of another year turning over, when I took the hand of one of your friends and let him lead me to the back room, I wanted to hurt you. I wanted you to see that sex was nothing. I more wanted to prove that to myself. But afterwards, I was empty.

Was it good?

Sitting with my sheer skirt hiked up and my tights in my hand and the faint stain of blood tingeing my finger tips, I knew I had done it all for the wrong reasons.

Was he big?

When you approached me as dawn was breaking, when I was washing the champagne flutes to keep my mind busy, you were cruel.

Are you going to tell me anything?

I looked forward, to him, too tall to sleep on the couch. This was all too normal for him and not for me. I don't know if you knew this. I couldn't look at you at first.

Do you want to be boring?

You were bleary eyed and not you. I said yes because you hate boredom and I wanted you to hate me. You reached not for my shoulder but for the bottle half drunk behind me. Fine, you said. Down the hallway, to your room, closing the door behind you. We hurt each other in this way. The way only lovers can do. A hurt that can return two years later when you could not say no and right after we kissed as a new decade rolled in, I found you dancing and kissing someone else.

You can see how much it hurts to not be able to be with someone, publically, who has just said I love you to you for the first time. It is a weight heaving down in your chest telling you this will never be more than words, and words can only carry so much upon their backs before they mean nothing at all.

The last memory of our acid trip is watching you sleep beside me. I had come down from my highest high and was being walked down to sobriety by the rising sun and the descending full moon. We laid in the bed from the pullout couch with Nathan on the other side and Noah on the couch we pulled closer to make the bed appear larger.

It is quiet. We feel like wood from a cottage by the sea that was supposed to be consumed by the ocean but still stands to this day. We have history coiled around our bodies. I am not afraid to tuck my head into the crook between your arm and chest. My arm is draped over you as you rise and fall in sunken sleep breaths. My ear is on your chest and I hear the rhythm of your body pulsing under me. I peer up and you're so close that even though I don't have my glasses on you are in pure focus. You are my moon. Your eyelids flutter and your body twitches periodically, subconsciously. You make soft sounds like you are, in another world, in your world of dreams, running or yelling. You are wired even as you sleep.

We are so warm, sticky with sweat and morning dew.

I study your jawline and lips and each individual hair on your face. I think one thing: All I want to do is save you. From all the sadness humans carry like pocketwatches in their waistcoats; all the sadness I know you have had to endure; all of it I wasn't there for or am not privy to. I don't expect to wind it out of you and roll it up into a ball of yarn to use to knit together an understanding of you. It's just the feeling of not wanting someone you love to experience splintering pain, something that cannot be stopped.

That was the only thing I felt looking at you. Then I pressed myself closer to you and even though you were somewhere else, your arms grasped me tighter.

I finished the book in a cafe while I drank espresso that made my heart thud thud thud against my nervous system and in turn made my fingers jitter in anticipation of what my brain would choose to do next. I read the last words twice over like I was back on that rock with you and Nathan and Noah seeing everything repeating. I wanted to soak it all in, bleed the final phrases I still linked to you dry. She said she will, perhaps, in time, stop missing her lover. I read that over and over even though I understood the well used feeling.

Maybe, one day, I will stop missing you because you won't be far enough away to miss.

We will do all the things you told me you wanted to do with me. We will wake up together, whisper good mornings while the sun peaks then breaks all around us. We will read in bed, snuggle in front of a fireplace that will flash orange light against the brick wall behind us. We will go to museums and shows, concerts and countries. We will go back in time so I'm in London with you, and we'll go back further to the night we first kissed on that couch on Nantucket. You mused about how we shouldn't or maybe we should and I kept sitting with my leg wrapped around you hoping that you would just lean over and kiss me. Kiss me dammit. And then you said fuck it. That's where it began.

The fear of being caught. The risk, the thrill, the secrets. It all began there.

Maybe, in time, we won't be afraid to get caught. I thought you were the one who wanted to keep our secret but now I'm beginning to see how you could think it was me all along.

I am so tired of love being intertwined with fear. I am so tired.

Does this only work because we see each other for such short periods of time and we are rushed and passionate and we don't really talk? Or could this be beautiful all the time?

You asked me this and sent me into shock. I said it was hard because we were often so far apart. You said that wouldn't always be the case. Then we listened to the waves from the lifeguard

tower and you kissed me because I wasn't speaking. My mind was there and also a hundred different timelines away.

Now I need to reread the book of blue. Instead of being the cow, I will be the detective, pouring over the passages and dissecting the language like it has something to hide. In actuality, I will be searching for true beauty within the words like she sees in the color blue. I will still think of you, perhaps more intensely this time. That is another reason I tell myself I must read it again like I replay the times I see you and the feeling of your head on my shoulders or the sound of your whistling that I described as haunting.

I will read and read and read, picturing us falling in and out of love, both fearing and grasping for the future of our moments. Did you know by giving me this book you would place yourself into the forefront of my waking thoughts? More so than before?

You did not because I have given you nothing to cling on to in return.

I wish I could give you the beauty of a color or the hot burning under my cheeks when your foot touches mine. Or the air that encircles us when you pick me up and twirl me in a welcoming hug. I want to hold your gaze and have you experience the melting of chocolate that is the feeling of your eyes on mine. I want you to know that you were the first person who made me feel beautiful, in the darkness of the first New Years Eve when your hand glided along my stomach and my breath tightened in the realization. I wish I could express the love you fill me with.

I want to drain the darkness and illuminate us standing on the beach, touching but not touching, together and very far apart.

Maybe I will just give you this instead.

Epilogue

Will that be enough?

I am alone on the beach once again. I stare at the moon and she stares back. I walk the silver carpet she has spread across the water's surface for me. I stretch my hand up, almost touching, almost reaching-

And suddenly I am submerged, taken by the ocean so, for at least a few breath-held seconds, I don't have to know your answer. Or find out we do not work together. Or realize that what we have is, in its nature, doomed to be ephemeral.

But I know I must break into the air eventually and feel how it has changed from warm to cold.