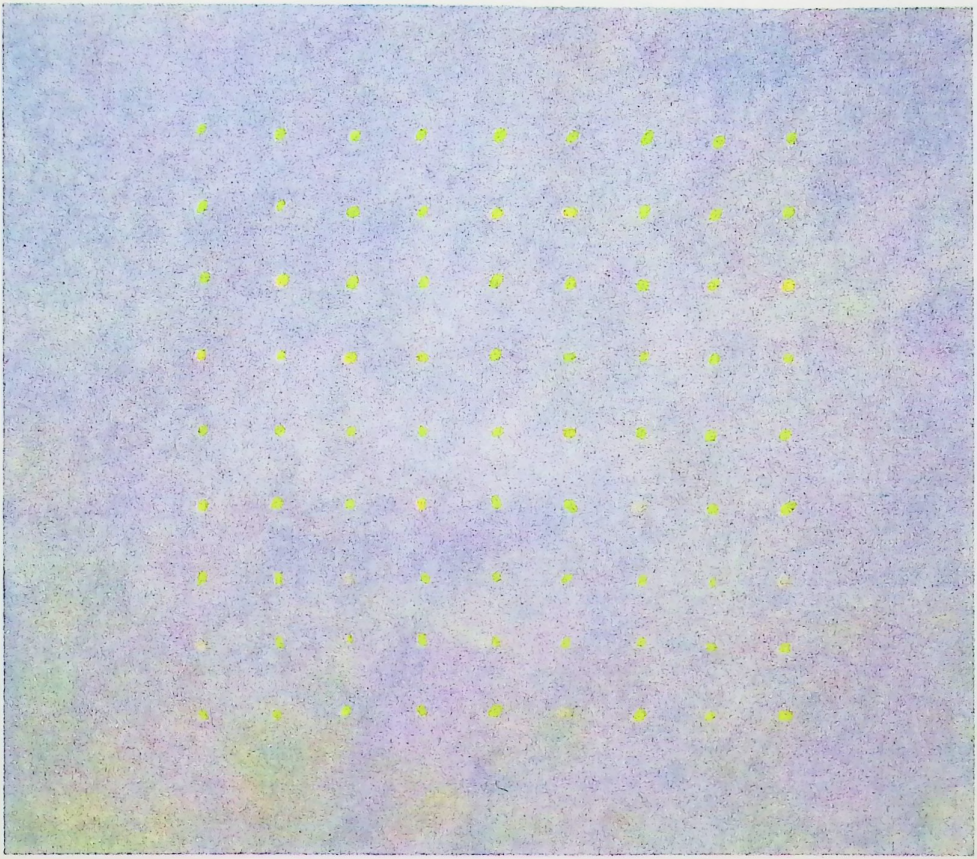

AND ALL OF A SUDDEN WE MISS EVERYONE

NAOMI WEBER



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SAD FACE LONDON 2018



Long Evening

Long evening in the sun's dried grass
long face in the night's grown wind
weigh my time against itself
that I could leave at 7.45 and return at 4.30
and everything between is what happened
(and at the very curl of my lip

Well poetry should be easy, in that case
and it is. Even the most furious blank knot speaks
something of desire and living. Even the most
careless conversation points to the sky's endless
opera. Talk to me about the weather: the heatwave
agrees with me and I'm awake
in warmth, 11 p.m.

Why is the day ending? The question rarely
gets old. I have brought you my greatest
fantasy: that one day the clocks will all stop
saying anything and we will endlessly, greedily live

And write. The school is ending.
In this room the only
means of telling time is one of two broken
barometers I have inherited, and the weak light of an old scar.
Meanwhile a peach given as a gift is ready to be put
in a salad, and that is the grand plan of my life,

I wish it. At night our dreams come out and weave their
wiry sensuous song with the dead hum of appliances.
Why are they always
trying to tell us something we no longer need.
The patience is infuriating.
The outside of the room is raw air and our bodies
glimmer with stale fragrance like two walls.



Nothing happens to the clocks,
but we are very deep and swallowed in self-knowledge.
In quiet study, we are sifting diligently and without control
through these heavily felt yet indecipherable images.
A life's honest
work. Then
amongst us the birds call—swifts?—and we are no longer,
(it hurts a little)
we are preparing to shake ourselves out to the sun
(breakfast might then mean the most, a little note to say)
and depart again, for what happens and for what happens
and for what



Girl 1

The girl enters the university of her mouth.
The girl is soft on the issues. Soft issue.
The girl is too sensitive to where the comma
is going. The girl is a jealous baby. She is measured and humane,
a woman living her life through each moment deeply felt and
not at all. The girl is a bride, a mother, a wife, a worker and yet
has knees, gums, times when she is frightened.
She is really enjoying her day off! Whatever the year
there she is, blowing through the streets like heavy-armoured detritus,
heading for the department stores.
The girl grows both in the blistering heat and the cool damp
of leaves, the girl turning season.
The girl is anyone. The girl can see nothing if it isn't
right in front of her, or she can see nothing, the concentration
of it and its waging depths or surface, from the shell she found
among the sea grass to any man or woman she may have loved,
from her mother to the barren seas, but not *how*.
'Mourning is known to be as absorbing
and fulfilling as it is painful'. If it was only—all—
a historical absence, lost, castrated, then she bore it like a child,
and lived.

Girl 2

At 258 years old, the girl is passed her prime and
living from hand to mouth in unnatural figments,
a gaseous elbow of trees. Does she make people
afraid? Only when her back arches like the snapping
crest of a wave and who cares if she's female as her mouth
fills bravely with salt. Only if she doesn't suffer lightly, blindly
the red rib of the yew, the Norman churchyard and the waning
sky. And as the platform drives the mouth toward home, the books
to be read and forgotten, the deaths to live through, the parents
to nurse and then lose, the ages to finally get over, the support group
for her specific experience, and yours, and yours, the green
rib of the meagre foliage of the car park as we are all saying
goodbye in the little rain, leaving bitterness alone
and forging brief glances with one another



Girl 3

At 12 years old, the girl is passed her prime and
has become the shorthand for captain,
one endless maiden voyage. She is chained to the bow
of her body and its pulse. Surviving wreck after wreck and
sailing back over the rubble of the horizon: 2000 and
whatever. It is easier to draw a clear line and say before
and after than reach back further to find what it was
that had suddenly, necessarily, culminated in such a line.
Pulsed out. Nothing comes from nothing: was that the story?
You cannot do anything but circle around it too, because it touches
every written word, everything read, plus many lost utterances,
and above all what was wordless, unread, utterless,
and yet mattered. So everything was circling, touching or
not quite, mouthing the unuttered off the page.
Once the girl entered the library and fell through floor after floor
after floor, like a hollow sky. Everything was made there
on the long way down. In what is lost, wrote the girl,
we find ourselves, lost. What I have left behind will miss me,
and all such numerous iterations. But will she forget all she's read and just think
about this for a while (light falls, just right)? I understand these things only
in the moments before sleep (night falls, okay). Will it come to this

When I miss myself,
left behind, she must miss me.

Girl and Colossus

Filthy heart is fierce in the hearth
road cleaves or falls off to the scent of the gorse
to its bow to the lap of the horizon insidious
as ink in waves

Girl and colossus weaving nothing but ink.
The problem of material as I imagined it
was how you could weave into air and make
substance. Now how has the girl been allowed the
words and out of nothing comes to make it,
even out of her most humiliating dreams and arrives
as if on a surfboard, to say:

As if there was all this at the fingertips then
who do you become, we, made very quiet
not inexhaustible like the search engine
not so expansive, annihilate, like the sea
not so wrecked, reckless, as the city's airborne and
close like stones the closed emotions of strangers

Not so filthy as the heart or the road as the beloved,
as the untied threads of need, the baby's,
frayed like the first beaded luminance of dusk
seen from the surf, seen from the shore, seen
from the o'clock and the half past, and from
the wrong world again, peering like fog over
innocuous harbours—and someone says
in a girlish voice: no, it isn't quite right

I heard that it wasn't. I heard someone fall
was it the creak of the roots, the tree so
near to the beach it could make us
why does woodland down to the sea lead us
to aching, and pleasure, the girl would never say it means nothing
because like silence it was the sound of many people
like a glisten restorative no nature could cure

Untitled

They tried to convince us there was not enough,
but we had seen how the tide comes in
having receded this morning far out of sight blue as a line or
an eye's soft rim. Meanwhile we had slept and dreamt
of a friend of a friend of faceless bandits hiding in woods
we then crossed to reach the far sea. We had seen thickening
like lantern light against the inner wall of the eye the friend's
shallow dive off the old concrete step, and had been rocked still
by the beauty of it. We had heard endless stories and fielded
countless interruptions and lost too many to count. We had lacked
only courage. I for example was on a Sunday's afternoon train when
I heard again of the long way out and the sudden return,
the land parched of itself and then full and buoyant of an evening,
the silver marsh streaked low where no one goes, unconvinced.



Untitled

A home built in the recesses of the night
forged like a balm by your nerves
from and beyond all forsaken hopes

dawn comes and the desert lays down its ruins
and the train moves like a hum only forward
and the dream stops when my car is stolen
and I wake to remember that I never learnt to drive

(and very quietly now) the waste in being lonely
even for a minute,
that you can trick yourself into believing that this is it
then hear someone call your name
across a bar or the street
and remember: I have a face
streaming through
like a tear
half wind and half emotion



The difficult child

I may have been clumsy brash and absurd
in the day's endeavour I may have held
nothing together nor taken the right tone
nor driven home the nuance (mistype: nuisance)
of my intent which was itself unclear,
I may have seen rage and calmly declined it
and chaotically implored those above me for help
yet no doubt the child will continue to be difficult

Because he is a difficult child and why
should he not be since he has met
great difficulty
(it is only that it hurts)
and though it hurts
we continue to stutter blindly together through
each hollowing day, the rampant disregard or the
adjoining of laughter to each concerning source
the spontaneity of small bodies pouring in, momentous
and befriending
and what does it matter, if I do not exclude him from myself
since I bring him home here held in my
solitary twitches and may lie awake
a moment longer for him in mind

And in this way
it is also that I have been bold and that
under the deep summer's bronze and
the dreamy stretch of it across our lives
right now and all evening
gladly I am growing too large for this skin
earlier he fell asleep and then he was less
difficult and then I left and now I too fall
toward sleep
begin to, then start to think girlhood may well end,
difficultly with the muscles emerging from the heart
into the blooded compression of nearly solid air,

to say we must allow ourselves to be alive
and human which is to say somehow animal
somehow meaning, guilty and a little at a time
under season
this is something I almost mean
let us live in great feeling together
is something I nearly do
since I had to learn
to be difficult, too



A friend meets me

A friend meets me and it is great
while the first whirl of autumn opens like a void unfurling
we are just anything, the brief synapses of gulls
a memory of gulls after the sea has long been swept
into the away train, we say goodbye and the heavy sleep comes
almost like sadness



For the love of —

Freedom appears to me now
as adulthood: the ability to take myself swimming.
More precisely, as womanhood: reading a book

As the wide open spaces enabled by these parameters:
woman and reader, I roam here,
capable, appreciating rain

I had hoped to separate each of us out and wake early
and see it through—
but I grew, hitched a ride and my skirt up

I lost the loose thread and the hem came billowing
all over, then it was as if years had passed
and I remained still in bed, returned
contributing in absence to the ongoing thrash,
the hot beak of ruin and its rampant caw

Once I wrote: *the body goes many ways toward god*

a body splits into pieces, passages, various place names
and some parts remember and some parts fight to
and some forget: condensing like power into
the great unnamed

I can't get to god any more,
but I can find a face for each day (it's in the limbs)
thank god reason is out of the question, meaning little
except what it is, or thank god
for whatever, anything at all, in the truth we seek. Is it the eyes
of an animal—the bead of a heron—is it the long heard of
city or an unknown island where stones wait and wind wraps
against them and nothing is thought. Is it the light
behind the green, is it giving up giving up giving up



Or these proclamations of love, and those we love
and those they love. It keeps springing up everywhere!
We are ruined! Or,

Some things have always been ruined and yet
they are salvageable, yet



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