



I am writing to you with my urine, a secret message like the invisible notes written in the margins of envelopes sent from death camps. Let this be a letter out of the stupa of our epistolary years that began seven years ago, a year after I met you in a bar in Porto. You wanted me to debase you so I wrote your biography as a worm. But with a nose like that you could just sit at a desk near the window, neither writing nor thinking (although appearing to do both), looking dreamily out into the overcast scene. We all fell in love with the beautiful inferiority we imagined bloomed within your pale skin.

Just now, the urine is burning and it fills the kitchen with a sour scent. The image has darkened to a pale pink. I lied about the bar Ceuta in Porto. In fact I never met the man they call Oscar; I never ate those brined beans that taste like cheese. I only read about it in a press release. But it *seemed* as if it happened to me. In any case, my eyes were swollen as though from bee stings, and if you had seen me, you might have thought, "my god, the poor girl is grieving". Maybe you'd have even bought me a beer. I first met you through a Google search where your nose was sent to me in a string of unintelligible numbers. It was this same sequence they sent out on the Voyager record, it was this same string of pearls a shark in the ocean gnawed loose. Everyone said, "He's so brilliant. Have you read what he did to Tuesday?" So who was I to question it. I couldn't do math with more than 3 digit numbers involved and I was always the one who belabored the joke with puzzled brows and "I didn't get it."

"What was the last miracle?" (stands with arms outstretched as if on the Cross)  
Wipes hand across nose with sniffing noise.

(Sneezes) "Do you have SARS?" A man on an airplane asked me.  
"No I have RAS."

"I hope you will get lipstick on the right orifice this time, as the excuse 'the collar was much too big' will not work with a mask."

(Don't ask me to explain. These were just things I heard with predictable Asian mirthlessness and uncomprehending.)

It was only much later that I began to feel angry and betrayed although non-violent communication tells us that betrayal is not a feeling but a judgement. I began my letters to you with phrases like, "In fact" and "Should you have asked, you would have learned" and "the beauty of the fold". You replied to the non-essential parts of my letters, asking for the routing number and name of my elementary school. Later I saw you used a pen name to publish a book with the title *The Beauty of the Fold*, which detailed the beautiful napkin art of Joan Sallas, rather than the original meaning intended by my words.

As you stand on the promontory of this looking ground, gray and obsolete, the secret chamber it is rumored to hold pulses like a rabbit's heart beat from within. Someone is not inside the room masturbating. Someone is not inside torturing Katurian's brother so that he may become a cultural genius. Someone is not scripting their screams of horrible agony in order to elicit a confession from said genius. From the highest point of this industrial heap, this man-made mountain, the orator is now giving an inspirational speech. I must speak louder to compete with him. Ahem. I will shock you into attention with the spectacle of violence. I will confess my sex crimes. I will divulge the confessional. I will insist upon these tales in such a loud, querulous voice. I will have vocal fry.

An old man was walking slowly in his neighborhood when a young man came running up from behind and shoved him to the ground. Later the man died from his injuries. A woman was walking in Times Square when a man suddenly kicked her in the stomach. She crumpled to the sidewalk and he kicked her again and again in the head. The security guard watched from the nearby apartment building and quickly closed the front door to keep the inhabitants safe. We get hung up on him, inflamed with indignance. We say, we would never have done the same. We would have run up and stopped the scene. Cut. A man drove to three different massage parlors and shot his eight victims as they huddled in their futile hiding places in the backroom, closet, and bathroom, pleading. They declared this an absence of hate.

You are yawning now, bored of my predictable pedantry, my thesis that you care more about the so-called hidden room and what *could* be happening, than the panorama of violence and death that is. We have glutted ourselves on this endless feast. But I tell you it is personal, I insist on the story, as if to say my body here before you proves it. I say, it happened to *my* mother, who turned in awe to the man at the grocery store to share with him her surprise that Thomas's English muffins had come out with a new thin slice. He spit in her face and said, "You people are always in the way."

My lack of imagination conceives of the hidden chamber the way I have always imagined the inside of my genitals since I was an 8 year old—a cavernous space with spongy warm wet walls that grew diamonds the way trees grow walnuts. My childhood conception of sex was shaped by Samuel Beckett's description of an old man trying to have sex with an old woman, his small pinky-like shaft groping blindly into a cave, straining to itch itself against the walls, but the room was far too big and empty. (creak, creak, creak, creak)

In fact, I was always in this room waiting for sex to happen. Despite having a few pretty years in my 20s, it seemed that no one was very itchy. I know, I know, hard to believe in this sweltering heat with the rampant new breed of Asian Tiger mosquitos. (They are the most virulent! Horrible blood thirsty beasts!) But should you have asked, you would have learned that the taste of Jesus's foreskin that appeared miraculously in my mouth as I daydreamed in Latin grammar class, was sweet and bitter like madeleines dipped in oolong tea. But you did not ask and even pretended to be embarrassed by the size of spoon I used to serve you ice cream. "Goldflocks! Size Queen!" my internal dialogue screamed. The beauty of the fold seemed to elude me despite the declarations I made to this beloved "elf girl" in the form of dried lizards, bubble gum, and plastic toys melted into "creative and unique shapes".

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Later in the day, Roger asks me in a series of gestures with his beautiful nose if what we do counts as sex. He sits on my stomach as I'm trying to work, pushes the computer away with his handsome, angular face, presses me into the bed and breathes heavily on my neck with his hot stinking breath. He pins me easily with one nail threatening to draw blood if I move too suddenly. His body slips under mine like an assembly line and I fill my fists with the knotted muscles of his thighs which clench and release in response. After a few moments, his head hangs limply, his eyes roll back, his mouth opens slightly. Sometimes the ass massage is too deep and his anal glands emit a strong musky scent. I marvel at the flexibility of his ligaments. His feet, thrust into my mouth, smell faintly of tortilla chips. I used to have to bribe him for his touch with vitamins placed strategically in the crevices of my body which he would tease out with terrible patience, licking and licking away. But now he comes with alacrity every afternoon for our post Zoom recovery nap, ties me into the sheets, and stomps gently on the tenderest parts of my anatomy.