

THIS IS OUR TURNING

NORA TREATBABY / ROSIE STOCKTON

Jagged swells thrash our ensemble

I cull milky mouthfuls sitting here rushing

to nothing, slowing tomorrow. to be

(and longing for) shade — rained out

in the broken heat. that's how — not

beautiful but shady, no tree

but total induction.



you call and say you fell in love and now what

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I take your photo in preparation for the future in which the tide pulls you back under. Away from my daily call. Busy in love, in avoiding love, in directing love away from your pillow. Today, you can't talk, you have to work. The sun still belongs to dawn, when I could stretch your limit far into the night. Now it's pouring in the window, and I confront knowing you: how you wrap yourself up with thick margins of soundless air. This is where I confront myself. Your limitless severity. You have rarely appealed for more.

Here is exactly how I want you to sculpt me, weave me into your products, your personal affairs. You require so little affirmation, it makes me wonder if you can read my mind.

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I take your photo in preparation for the future. I know you'll never leave me, but that doesn't mean I'm not gonna miss you. It is a matter of changing, as everything is. I cannot hold onto you because you are like the light, falling over our day. When you pressed your big toes into my eyes I said please let this be permanent. I take your photo from behind you, ten or so feet behind your shoulder. You are doing nothing important, distinct or interesting. You are answering a text message. You are sitting slightly hunched in a green plastic lawn chair, the brittle kind that breaks easily. Your hair is normal, dark and cut. Around you is the fence, the yard. It purports to be normal, substantiates our life in space. The agave and succulents you planted are in front of you, the brick beneath you. Surrounding you, by implication, is other yards. The photo is the disappointing kind, the kind that captures almost none of the perfection that motivated me to take it. The image does not relay certain information such as: you love me, and when you pressed your big toes into my eyes it was a new formation of intimacy one, I had never experienced such that I began jerking you off. None of the ways you began to ooze and harden into my hands, the same hands that fold your laundry are these hands that coaxed you to shiver like a leaf after a rain and to come the way you do, helplessly, reluctantly and gratefully, none of the ways your chest finally cedes to the convulsions of your body as I design each dimension of your surrender really comes through the photo. The colors are the unremarkable kind, slightly blurred and muted. The gray light of the day, which makes the scene seem to my eye gentle and rotund, comes through as if a layer was peeled off the image.

Into pink, into folding, into setting

the sun was predictable and

you offered me no shade

so now I am bordering, my

under eyes an edge and this

pink cradles our day

lets not margin our time

together lets flow the page

lets flow it like your ankles

for which there are no words

complete, no finish line

for description for where your

feet meets body meets arrangement

you curve partial you curve

me completely I am petaling

this is sound this is sound

this is the sound of saying

I want to film us fucking if that's

okay with you, it's okay if it's not.

I confess this whole thing has been set up so you can disappoint the world so exquisitely, it's my monologue alone that echoes off the walls I have erected. It is rare I'd ever attempt to convince anyone to stay. Having set up my barricade in your peripheral vision, I lay in wait to make sure I can withstand whatever rain refuses to stop falling. This is me begging you to stay, conditioned on how I depend on you leaving. I want you gone, nestled and spread in my horizon. I can't recant how I have been trained to win. Perfection is what floods time, which is blinking blankly at me. It is thrilling to watch myself recede in your attention. You will circle the long way back to me. I fall to my knees when I beat you. This bloodies my own knees. There are times I think to myself, you have no idea how lucky you are. There are times I am afraid I let you slip through my fingers. I feel closest to you folding your laundry, like you are a child. I fold mine alongside, like I am a child.

The rain smashes the roof as if it knew exactly what was going on. There are many ways to enter a house. I am so angry at you for all the things I am afraid you will do to me. It is possible I don't know how to truly let you love me.

Blinker stuck on, I drive home in a flood. The thing I refuse to accept is that we live in the world. I sop up the water as it enters the house at the base of the cement walls. The sky is broken open and carries the sea to the spot you are standing. It is in the absence of love that the ground becomes barren, unable to absorb the relentless release. On my knees, I embroider your name in the darkness. I switch lanes so slowly the wind touches me twice. The temporality of loving wraps around me the way the clouds hit the sand. Like a far off light. Singed wrists. Grief tripping. Full moon. Catalytic converter. Cardiac arrest. Eco mode. Your soft bpm's. Sweat pants. They say prayer works. I say change the brake fluid. You stick your foot in the middle of my confession. You trip me. This is how I fall.

■ *Nora Treadbaby is the author of "Our Air" (forthcoming from Nightboat Books).*

■ *Rosie Stockton is the author of Permanent Volta (Nightboat Books) & Pumpjack (Other Weapons).*

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The storm was all we had. Another thing we had was the time I folded your laundry when you were sick. I felt pretty good about doing that. Look, I am going to try to say it plainly now, for myself. Our love is about love. It is about by the time we got to each other, we were fucked up by the world and maybe made a bit cruel and there is lot that can be held in glances and memories and the future will destroy you so its fair to ask what we are planning for? Our love is about our limits. It is about mystic love and it is about the way cigarettes taste. It is not about summer, although that is when all this occurred or will be narrated to have occurred. It is about the world, since it is about us, and so it is about money and life, together. When it is true, which is always, that we share the conditions and events and textures of our lives with other people, such relations are imbued with the current hegemonic structure of exchange which is to say that privation has made us seek the other in value. Reciprocity is measured even though it can never be completed. I see the way light falls all over our lives every day and I also have a job. We show up to each other fumed with wage, the supply chain has vibes, the situation is the DVD bin at Walmart surrounds our fucking and it is still so beautiful that I will die on my knees.

What I am trying to say is that the world embroiders us with its effects. How could Walgreens have this much to do with our love? I share it all even if you are the only thing that is in focus. I suck on your breasts the same day that I walked across the parking lot. Look at me. The telos of desire is infiniti. That is why we have all these things on Earth. Cubicles, dirt, price tags, dream journals, hope, Bobcat Skid- Steer Loader S770, you, me, summer, storms, external hard drives, and light. Look at the way it falls all over us. Look at how we have different days, all the time. Look at the way light escapes its cage, supposed to have fallen forever on 5 o'clock traffic and now it is night and your back is curving and your limit is near and I am going to go through it, I am going to go shopping tomorrow, I am going to be in love with you, soon.

so would you dare

bottom with your eyes open suspend

your belief that someone could break you

as good as you know how to break yourself

new cracks in the lightning, in the backseat,

you brutal machine, exquisite gadget,

pocketed cliff hanger

you don't need to believe me to love me

every so often you just have to turn to look