

Complicated Grief

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SOLID OBJECTS
NEW YORK

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Grateful acknowledgment is made to the editors of the following journals and anthologies in which these works (in slightly differing forms) first appeared: *American Book Review*, *Black Ice*, *Civil Disobediences*, (*Dzanc's Best of the Web 2009*), *Eleven More American Women Poets in the 21st Century*, *The Fairy Tale Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *Paraspheres*, *Ploughshares*, *Tarpaulin Sky*, and *Versal*. The author is grateful for the support of the Louisiana Board of Regents through the Board of Regents Support Fund: contract number LEQSF (2012-13)-RD-ATL-03.

Design by Erik Rieselbach

Printed in the United States of America

Cloth

ISBN-10: 0-9862355-1-2

ISBN-13: 978-0-9862355-1-1

Paper

ISBN-10: 0-9844142-8-2

ISBN-13: 978-0-9844142-8-4

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(Etiology) Dreaming

Perspectives (Changing)

Cold. Couldn't move, couldn't control the size of things. "I." My size. The city rubble from that height: the site of some finished disaster. "Like." Or else it was green and damp and warm on the underside of a leaf, though I shivered in the sudden wind and shadow your least movement made. Do you still love me? My sighs. *I have a crush on you. Don't crush me.* The song I meant "the sound" of metal crumpling in on itself, glass splashing down on asphalt, the "deep audible respiration that is usually a sign of grief": distant flames. Static in the long-distance connection. Voices faint. The words so loud in my head I couldn't hear anything. Above it all a blurry star, a face. In the night I believed would hide me. My signs.

Explanation (Easy)

"Fear of Intimacy." (As though we knew what that meant.) I let someone close. I let him inside me. Only for a moment or two. *Thank you. I'm sorry.* The smoke blew back on the salt wind and I carried over the threshold a white heap of crumpled sheets and dumped them in the machine as though to wash away memory. Added bleach (on either side of the water): the setting "hot" and "normal": end of that story?

Further Notes ("They Were Sleeping")

They were sleeping (an over-sleep) (already written out thoroughly). Played out. In a confusion of pronouns. ("Shadows of the world appear ...") The blackened rubble in which *We write our reading.*

As in a Car Crash

I thought I could do nothing. I waited afraid to survive. I drifted through the echoing hallways saying only, “I wish you well,” like the blank in the tale. Princess cesspool. Under a spell for a time, yes? The broken imagination repeating its one phrase, “He touched me ...,” beginning and ending. We held hands in the back of a patrol car watching the radar clocking abrupt changes of speed on a road where there was no one passing, nothing: maybe wind. Then I haunted all the places—like Café “Brainwash”—I hoped you might be.

Some Translucent Veils

Were in the way. Voices muffled. Faces blurry. (You. He.) Wisps of smoke rising and drifting gently away. “Like.” “Like.” After the door slammed I got up quickly, tore the sheets away ...

Cold is a Typo

From down here the sole of your shoe is bigger than any house I could ever imagine building. From up there your movements—as you scurry or slither or file in formation back to your ... —laughable, tiny. *Ha ha ha*. What was it you were going to give me?

Nothing / Car Crash

“You looked like a long term thing, and I’m not into long term things. Not right now at least.”

Nothing / Car Crash

We both could’ve died. Cold have. Were going to die anyway. Hard to care, sometimes? You described the condition known as “Learned Helplessness” to me. Then decades of silence in

a room strewn with those translucent, wilted, latex blossoms. Drafts. The candle guttered again, a little smoke trailed away. Weirdly awkward use of the second person. Saying nothing.

Explanations / Easy (For You To Say) (Therapy?)

He was afraid of me. We were both afraid: we were frightened, distrustful, attracted, sad already and (because it was over already) angry. *Sorrysorrysorry*. *And thank you* (for nothing). As in a nightmare, no movement, no sound, despite the gesture of running away, despite the screaming. Unless a whisper maybe. Who's listening? The sheets smelling as much of rubber afterward as anything. Words cut into the black night rolling over me. "I saw stars." Flattened a pattern I could read. I could tell you without looking. *Could*, I meant to write. Then, accidentally . . .

Autobiography

At once completely meaningless and more necessary to me than my own life, I thought that if he turned away—to someone else—I would die. If he left me. In a green shade. "I wish you well," was all I could say, figuratively stumbling over the long skirt of my invisible gown as I tried to drift past gracefully. From shining to shining. I had my work, didn't I? *Cut out for me*.

Symptoms

Without the courage to be hungry.

"Autobiography"

I kept looking down at the empty space beside me, as though there was a book there. In which I could read. Myself, my own heart. How to behave. I was so sick of being told how to behave:

I knew I was supposed to drift past gracefully. The gentle rustle of my garments the attraction of my vaunted inaccessibility. My name, my etymology. Father, I am reading; Father, I am bleached. The cycle paused, a rush of water in or out, and then continuing.

Some Translucent Veils

Turning and turning away.

Point of View

Where the web flew wide. I said “Don’t hurt me,” and he said, “But that’s what I’m best at, it seems ...”

Origin of the Species

The empty bed, the liberal traces of our impotence. Thinking.

From What Vantage (One of the States)

Inside a towering structure I had some small control over (as it moved through the world crushing whatever stood in its path) I cowered, miniscule in a dark crevice in what was known as the interior, humming what little I remembered of my various anthems, off key, clutching at my rags and hoping at once to be recognized and not to be seem, I meant to write “seen.” I meant to write to the rest of the world (the world at rest) what I was, an apology, clumsy. Unfortunately my appalling pride got in the way. *Sorrysorrysorry*. My ride. Fuck you. Fuck me. “I wish you well.” I watched the destruction happening far far far away, in another language, on a tiny screen. *Thank you again. Sorry.*

Symptoms

Alive, sort of, in the delay.

Perspectives Changing

She got up from her work. She put the mirror away and went to the window. Then she died. End of the story. You drive past unseeing, the light glitters back from shining chrome and the tower throbs slightly to the bass rhythms of whatever pop song it is you're blasting.

Sleep Explained

(Easy.) Close your eyes. She put the jagged pieces of the world away. To get me into bed you'd have said *anything*.

Dreaming

What it meant if you wanted to touch me. Me. You. Meaning. A green shade. Emergency. I would exist, finally. Oh, and you too. Naturally. What it meant if you called me, if you called me and I came. If you stayed hard long enough to penetrate . . . My dream. And yours, carried over from when? What it meant if I let you touch me, if I let you touch me as just another better or worse one among the many. Already a memory. Whose sleep is this anyway? Hands off the wheel as we skidded—together whether we liked it or not—into the ditch of the next (century). Eyes closed. Mouths open as though we wanted to scream. Dreaming I'm sick of this. Screaming. The crumpled metal body and the broken glass. The crash as I drifted out gracefully.

In the Mirror

She thought the horse was a part of him: both of them covered in the same glitter, where the sun dazzled and flamed. A machine thought in a machine state. Statement made. Seamed. She thought he was part of the gun-metal blue twilight in which he,

one of the moving pieces, gleamed. Maybe a misplaced part of the river's reflected shine. Dreamed. Impervious to pain. Because it was dangerous to admit to being vulnerable: as if it was the recognition that would finally end things.

Sleep Explained (Love & Kisses)

Go back to any previous section and test yourself to see how much of what you've read you've retained. Am I you, are you me? Say the words blacken under your gaze, the smoldering pages sift between your fingers as ashes when you try to look through them, or leaf ... If you look away for a moment the meanings sear and escape. That book never existed. Trust me. Now the table is burning. Now I am burning, further, the words you remember, and you think that if you lie still enough, eyes shut, you will be allowed to re-enter that dream. *Cracked from side to side.*

Xxx

How laughable you are, my death, my love, how massive and how tiny: what a complete failure what an astonishing success. You're right not to answer my letters: it's true there's nothing either of us can say. And yet these gestures from the tower though you can't see or hear me, from the tower in which I am allowed to burn, to blow some kisses, to watch the mirror, to say, The car came to rest in a ditch and we stumbled back up to the road and you flung the not quite empty bottle of scotch into the slough just before the cops arrived. Yes I'm still, in answer to your question, a surrealist. A romantic. Waving. If you look up from the vanished page.