

EXPECT FOREVER

I handed this to someone small enough to be in my life without wrecking it. The other things, like his red shirt, mattered less, but are enough to stay inside your head and call him that.

People like this hold the responsible head in the sink and wash it, They want you to know that its recess and they've got your back, but my own brother trust says to

tell them long but lightly,
let them leave.

The worst case comes from a classic nine o' clock when I was eager in the moonlight for a bit of sleep and dinner, but the bathroom punished me in chrome when my husband (not a small man) snuck in.

Behind me,
not an artist, reminds me
that we live together, for hopefully the last time,
at the house with the damp backyard.
Closed mouths, like the angels. Gauze getting

steamed on. Wrung on the sink, feet shoulder width. Mouthwash me again.
Baking soda again.
"We want to be smooth, right?" That right
cleaning action
under too much light for no money at that time of day.
He gassed,
I pled.

He squeezed vegetables into my belly,
cut things up to make them stick.
Then, dinner finished, peered inside and hosed out
the nutritious juice.

A dentist dressed as an herbalist.
That's sick.

Now he languishes, mindful, in a stupid airport
without a bag,
knowing him calling that "alone time",
a great character
ordering yellow beer on a touch screen.

Reading, everything
bulging. He could cry
face down in a bento box and still be a civilian.
How does a maggot get into a hospital? This way -
learning tongues.

Man of the world, proposing left and right
of whatever is an ocean.

I was appalled at our homebody.
What good on earth am I doing, digging this?

Others nod around the freestanding,
front-loading fireplace. Nice ex-friends
neatly keeping away the worst of the mosquitoes.

Our own door is off the hinges, anyway,
and we're leaping dogs now
that Portuguese landlords leave as patio furniture.
While something falls so easily, you still
like to knock it down.
Clap at the crash,
crouch in the disaster.

The hospital's wings
let us go, and I'm grateful because

sympathy comes first from the injured,
mostly because they have all day in bed, or in saltwater pools,
laps nursing ingrown hairs or hernias. Strong lights in there.

What I leave is up to me and what it is: a natural lemon tree
shading plastic take-home bags of dust. Not wanting to trash them,
I eat them.

Digestion proposes
that I say a long goodbye
so I have this
new manuscript
shored up from dandruff of the damp backyard.
Bird calls, you know?
Audible even over a gurney track.

Newness sparkles with its freak empty space
where you might put
your pie,

your tea,
your decade-kept ring from
a time you spent in a fair,
your new fruit-bearing tree. A yew?
We don't keep time for the future or ourselves.

People joke or vent instead of saying they are sad or confused.
I've noticed this behaviour in a mirrored closet.

Let's walk through.
On the sunset street I see
Choreographers of ricochets, stooped
over the cricket cage, starving for fun.
Luminous dudes in their baseball caps
and endearing bits of hair stepping over
the wrung out chick with cracked ribs
complaining she can't walk
but only work. Timed frustration,
writes a lot. Her partner
skirts understanding. They're a team.
Scrawny skirt imposes,
insists on the divine.
We drive away,
assholes flashing on the horizon.
Wait, they are horses. This is just a meadow, sike.
But what a place to iron out your impulse to kill
when camera talk stops. All the trampled things uncrumple,
grateful for our reservation. In murder's place,
the hesitation of laziness. Stiff bodies at dawn.

Prairie babies, all of us, folded like they were taught. Parents.

New sheets purge rural smells but reveal
mites crushed from the armpits of
a wood nymph
at the seams. Her jeans
too small to be the rag that wipes the floor.
She's staining the window so I can't watch out.
She offers me coffee and beer so that I don't sleep.
I offer myself more to see her strip
the nail polish off so that the nail clips fit
on the bedroom floor space illuminated.
We soiled some lightly woolen things. Her will
is working like a curling lino square jacked up unlikely in that humidity
Lit for any hour, just breathe on the door.
I called her city limit at the end.

Downtown, like, every time a tiny rosette fell
from her waxy hairline, we thrilled
at the success of our wet bums. Laughter wound
her coat off. The shag bitches, we are spots on
fur, the chilled mass, last night's soup
smoking around Sunday's breakfasts. Slam into
saccharification. Bye. Tip last fishes
down and retch them into morning traffic.
We sang, healthy but demented.
Wake as six, fresh but septic.

Then comes the ranger:
big legs
stalk air.
Audiences love you.
Where to?

Fist me in the mud room.
Love to!
Find things different on the junction.
Panting,
thirsty and stranded.
Good thing I didn't cry or thank her.

Some lonely time in big mirrors and small ones
in church halls, giving just the tops of hairs at an activity.
Banks on the street, our summer outfits dripping badly.
Cell phone cameras that tell everyone you're bad.

The round one a gift, earring-sized and perfect
for wholesome inspections or pretending
we have the power to charm.

One side broken from failing to charm my husband, not small enough, modeled on
stone mirrors in Europe,

with their giant prescription of the duty
of especially hard-won self-respect.

We're capable of listening, though, to something like Nicole: a flag bearer,
martially dangling her projection: mouldy felt. Lots of names.
I summon gallery floods lapping at degenerated wool.
Dreams of water arson wet my shorts.
I leave the room to pee, head over knees,

bend to where I hear the gush.

Spread for the end of history,
stand up, flush.
Backing out of class,
it also rusts.

Red shirt, I could count on you, painting lightning bolts on the floor, disregarding the cat.
One friend I never expected finds things in petting zoos.
One deserts me after moving in.
We are bad housepainters, worse dishwashers.
The worst artists but still trying.
But emo as always I'm happy
it's happening my way now.
Biking down moonlit lakefront Front St
chirruping with fear in those sunglasses called Peony.

I lean into problems like the giant wild peony bush in the suggestive remote park that supports
eviction in this heat.

This asshole obsession has got to stop.
Sell things to mom
or teach.

Someone with the capacity for children has one
dribbling neatly in the dusk, springing his ball. The clean function
troubles us breathing one another's wet hair upstairs.
The bounce announces the death of the two dollar houseplant. It interrupts
the creditor and the alarm that sound the same on our
bad cell phone at the apartment
eating salted eggs from an anonymous pan
smugly with no fork. We scrambled these, delighted,
anointed with our oils in the sun. Here comes baby reality
with its rubber ball: when will I have eggs for three or more?
And forks? I'd have to move downstairs. And how can I talk openly
to my kids about my urge to get them help with their
resistance to failure and drawings with teeth?

No one has found his or her way with me.
Back to friends whose badness reminds me of
chimes rung offscreen for video, shooting air
all Monday in a laneway, way too old.

I'd like to nourish other impulses in those sunny lanes
with unfertilized eggs split perfectly on clean pavement, scrambled
with desire and commitment.

These are to be shared, for encouragement, with care.

All sheer-weight refined by flame.
Yup, weave too loose to warm us up.
Nevertheless, we're draped to shape what floats
so we bring each other joy.

Cc'd myself:
WORLD DOESN'T STOP FOR YOUR GURGLES.
WE STILL WANT YOU TO COME UP WITH SOMETHING,
HATE SUFFERING AND STOP BEING SO DUMB.

I can still demonstrate love beyond the inches
in between whoever her nose is and my own,
or the earth and the heel of my hand.

I can get my happiness elsewhere, from a guy
on a bike. His knees exposed, his
smile still first for his sister. For friends,
he has to practice coldness in hot air,
concealing kindness with offers: bright green
gum. Just the thing for ads. It's undelicious but
comes before you get the stranger's kiss.
He's smart about anticipation and results.

With him I feel good wanting, jaw on jaw
like a child's best crocodile. The two of us
uneven as the same. Gnawing.
Walking bikes we straddle, pushing
with the space below our dicks.
Shooting shit.
What is it to want but never try?

Happiness! We guess, and guessing is a game
That lasts all night – what counts as
Losing? What's a blow?
Where are they now? He has his phone.

Memo:
Muffle suffering. Struggle
against art (your own).
Or maybe hers,
of seduction.
Or his,
of pain.

Use bed,
dreams
ways things ought to be,
and finally,
the banality of sleep.

Things go in his shopping list
bagged chrysanthemums tucked in armpits,
bought for you in June in place of cake,
distractingly ugly enough for public grief.
You know, the public sob. Bird calls.

But here I am outside,
seeing you,
someone new,
piss in the nightlit rain offering yourself
to pink flowers reeking of nicotine,
rare treats in north July.

And I become no longer the fag hag rolling in the smell,
but the warm advisor at a distance,
aversion my expertise,
nauseously loving your stream.

This moment, of love, I begin
just to embarrass red shirt, the pigeons, guy on the bike in sin,
and because our teachers read us too,
hands folded, details innocent.
Try not to laugh for me. Breathe in.

Tuesday morning he curbed chicken bones from granny
under condom broth in special velvet dish.
Means for nice guests makes nice trash.
Duvet ticking, under all this,
like all past hips thrust inside it.

The sheets caught fire when we were high.
He built his bed roughly ten feet up.
Difficult maybe, since his back's my twin.
Nobody's father yet.
New resident of this hole.
It got hot.
It got his arm, although
the smoke alarm absolutely helped.

Air clearing was fun!

We got this one pillow to keep between us
(really it is his),
young game shooting,
heat jokes.

Holler apology down the fire escape like sorry to fine-tune those years all to
ash sprightly on
his new shiny floor.

Mouth swept ajar,
the bones
external.

His new to me skin, fried crispy on the left arm
he flung down.

My familiar gums,
raw from abuse
flapping about him

to three pigeons graceful on the deck,
huskily speaking of sleeping positions,
prepared to fall if knocked, but certain
in their hug. Three birds abreast
warbling nightly about boyfriends
who wait somewhere. Three boys
singing in whispers under patio lights,
no lover better. Dedicated, patient, shy,
ready to break their little feet together.

One branch up,
hello up there!
Speaking of love in its fleeciness,
my woolen one,
almost, from spinning in your grief. Definitely not a bird.

Did your oak tree fill out finally?
Fabulous big-eyed monster in your forest room,
probably magicking up denser cover.
Armoured though you are by your bottle thicket,
you never said no to more. Over
to everyone who wanted you for a familiar,
silent when you can come up, all thirst.

I still miss giving the crap you get
when you refuse the special kind of help I offer.
You're asking to be tugged past collapse,
your tucked in centre eager for a slap.
When we cuddled, both of us relaxed.
We've been up this hill before,
oil and shit, tough
against everything the other is. I'm alert
where you've dried up most places
Though. The eye, the sketchy armpit. Lanolin.
All on you are blistered, sick.
I'm doing great, well-slept and kind of thick.

You're lost. You're downtown looking for my skirt.
Sucking water from a waxy box.
Violently serene, the end of shock.

People only like one idea at a time so mine
Is denying them pleasure by
speaking tangentially. Opening
my mouth is an offer to stick to something only
when the stickiness slides away like drool at night,
shameful like a fresher cup of water upended off a nightstand
that's not yours, lovely like the moonlight on the not you asleep
beside you, the not you unfamiliar as an empty room.

Packing up is a project for the gloomy one,
the one who wants a hideaway. No, the toter
and croucher, the laughing changer, unfamiliar, has to stay.
Packing being such a drag, I end up an ass
dented pillow. People say I've got a long way to go
so to manifest, I picture the end, and what do I get?

A luxury bed to plot stars and fart in. Opening
my mouth to swallow anything offered from this position,
feeling, as the moon rises over the water spill again,
reflecting my lover, sliding off the edge with all
the deranged fear of a restless squat. Grabbing at my ankle is
the best friend, all dressed, hauling ass to get me
back in bed. People are sometimes there for us.
Notice them, clamouring for a spot as you disappear
through the same cranny used by the moon.
Here is a face that seems as old as. Choose it carefully,
The best of your people. Use it like you would a furnished room
but never one in which contains a bed,
not even lit up, ten feet up.

A steel box: climb up. If you think
of a grab at the back of your shin, then sing
like a scared child and a pro reassurer.

It's not important to listen. Continue to sing. Resort
to the peaks. Exceed.
Every face you make becomes a joke.

Applause is a misunderstood language.
Stages may as well be four-posters.
Speakers explode like angry daddies. End

with the mouth adjacent to the thumb
but not slopping on, shin healing. Hair
brushed back, you thank the inevitable blast.

The hollow left is a home for yearning. Red shirt, red face,
lean in. You've had the worst and silliest but not the best,
what comes for the best comes next:
Deeper in. I anticipate you in
places smelling like an abscess. I
did laundry there, wringing useless things gently.

I loved wet socks like a dope,
holding my nose. I thought
of hot lint as what's yours, and wiped my hands
on my yellow walls with reverence. I was ready
for my exposure by pickaxe
when I scattered this damp treasure on
stuff growing at the back. Your back by headlamp
is a thicket, and the corners of my mouth
reflect my macking on it in the funny gloom.

Talking smacks
left by my messy student face. In my student card,
I'm wearing this orange vest and holding
a glittering nug. I earned every scrape.

Paint off skin like a video, red to trick you about injuries. Stop
betting on compliance. Punishment
rewards us when we forgive it.

Still, he didn't ask to be hit.
Nightsticking that other one, the bad boy,
for not copping
to three appearances in bad hats
I warned you not to wear where you wagged
Your own insignia like a dumb tail.
Uniforms should not smell
except like vinegar. This shit
is an anagram I hate to parse,
but you are doing it again. Bad heroes dress
for what is not at all tough love,
though they often call it that, badge of heroes
flashed like a general flashlight. For not taking you out
before you asked me out, you knock me down.

Before I get to man my own beat,
I may have to beat my own man. Not down with that.
Your highness is entertaining but
sometimes I can't wait to leave you and eat
whatever I want and shit also.
Carrots drizzled with brown sugar.
Explosive potatoes.
Things so fresh they crawl.
When asked to stop kicking people in the teeth, you hop.

Feeling you're impossible
comes from possibility, though. You know?
You never could have been the one you are if you weren't the one who makes it all move at once.

Praise difference.
No breeze.
A particular voice. A caw.

Text them swearing,
hope that means they'll be there in three hours with rosehip tea.
Wake past daybreak,

damage still unseen.
Get phone call from your boss
setting you free.

Certainly a gift.
You thank the team.
Then drink yourself to peace.
Since you sleep without commitment, maybe read.

Meanwhile, new town laid out for me while I swallow alone,
hating interiors and their poppy stem hairs,
I go alone to woods of buildings,
sheets of pink in the evening while I
gulp my being on and off my playgrounds,
all sensations but smell thanks to years of beers.
Spotting wildlife in urban dusk, and souvenirs.

Three blonde invitational flicks like cobras, the same
Dehydrated hiss, approaching broken things with

Fear, the fear of feeling sick. Enough compliments on
The sky to have you ditzy till you
drop like a piece of rain in a dance-planted acre
on these knees, kissing!
New movie stars, sparkling
like the good wine we always drink jealously.

Loving is often a good struggle on the floor.

Hear me: the further out you get when
taking it in,
the less you feel.

Hear me:
Please let that go beyond a tombstone.
Make my guy on a bike make it happen,
six foot two off his bike at the podium.
Something I trust.

Height right now uncertain on this swampy ground,
Possession by marsh. Levelling. Mounted, an ancient jawbreaker
wrapped sheerly, planting odes.
Boyfriend holds her like a rock he climbed out west.
How much is an acre? someone asked.
The long walk back to camp through explosions,
my war movie memory psyched on flight. I staple shut my crop top. It is tight.

Asking but not receiving, waiting and discovering that
fortune has not been generous with
the pigeons, their shit-roosts impaled, fired from carrying.
This is the outcome of too little
love.

Comrades triumph and get undermined in

The bloody field again.

Through problem stars,
His rearrival.
Avian and cruel.

Bad bird calls with questions like dismembered froggies.
Regurgitation, not a healthy pee.
He speaks as if, when cooking, the ferocious chef
plugged in the biggest piece of ginger root
and left it in all night.

Indoors, outdoors.
Tentless, restless.

Always without choice! Holding back gasps that
only hurt the injured
stomach more, crammed with spice.

Hiding becomes the perfect way to live,
knobs dreaming under sheets in the basin,
silk on knob. Ice packs cozy,
laugh and imagine that.

People stop naming their families us when
stand-ins rise up from the sides. The same noses
smelling the same smells, if they can.

The gingery reproach and for all you know,
the same wet dick. These body snatchers come to the attitudes like
snobby hate when we share with them our news anchors,
breakfasts, bedtimes, and mirrors modelled on stone.
One look in those and they are also sure:
it's time we moved. Though they put it like that,
they don't want you messing up their new
life as someone else's baby bro.

Next we'll be finding out by being
offered things that are
antidotes from the wild, that's
also, our big preventative,
anti tenderness.

Think of mushrooms clustering on a hot lawn.

Decoration writes off major gestures.

Like a slip of paper folded badly twice for my unfold.
There they were, what I had done.
Wasps. I'd put the water on the floor for an empty jar,
then exiled them from the place they filled with hum.
Then something came. Wow, the wasps have come.
Look, they were here, and now it's me. New blue look,
up on two big shoes. Almost what you wanted,
Little Girl With Flyswatter, '82, pocketing my mess.
Slipped in dumpster behind Gifts 4 U. And hope
someone comes along who wants a new
avatar of water jar. Let it be you.

After all, they're perfect for one another only means they
won't be some day. Watching, amused, through
white goggles on a new swing set,
perfect for twelve-and-ups,
hope feels like being trussed up to the sky.

The other nearly there,
way way past the horizon, in the nest where
had I been his mother, I'd have wormed.

Animated, still. Over beer. Under knees.
What comes out for red shirts, a rant
the same size as a rough chicken egg. It hurt, but
here she is. The gift from the neighbour's dog,
Always, the whiskery bitch, given too much love.

This is the outcome of too much love: survival-based
replacements, burnt-out theatres, minor talent birthed
from major beauty. Oh, birth, certainly the worst.
This dog is sure.

My girlfriend pitches a printing project: envelopes
for slipping through the letterbox into the womb.
Out now the newborns, considerately wrapped.
If labour is everything they say, well,
we both want to start nursing through adornment.

Necklaces, we gather, are not enough, and pretty love
weakens
in that long year when our first babies come.
Never neglecting the dry
movement that hosting guarantees,

the empty tree.

Mothering is only one such place to be.

But watching gets harder than doing when each
eye offered hurts from some dark drug or the wages of money or a day
spent focussed on nature. Sleepless after a drink. Focus too sharp, like some dead prince.

Little painters turn icon manipulators. Greens and
orange autumnally curdle into browns, but all ink left
undone gets dry and black. The streaky work that
has been made for the worker whose computer broke
splints the wrists and makes them miss that sleep.
Yawning, they emerge, tenderly, like knots in a long rope.
Climbable, insisting on their use, even when what seems
they need is sleep and sweet water. Failing to be their mommies,
how can we say?

One evening rises above the urban ridge.
Eyes closed by twilight mess, they get at it through exhalations that they shouldn't do, being
mothers expecting forever for their brood.
My own nostrils messed with, I let them. I never missed them until now.

Lined up in lawn chairs, in spring dresses that are the worst for what they want to look like, but
nostrils open, their recitation works. Perfect breath.

Cumin chicken.
Third-hand glass
in which best smoothie: lemon, pomegranate, pear.
Crunchy grass, almost wheat. Urine of crush
heating something paved, matching its heat.

A bluster of delight, I get all hot and grateful for the senses I have, even when cooking won't
happen here without a kitchen. Only stovetop drugs,
and maybe something distant from the loop.

I'm getting better with computers, though the lawn chair ladies argue about
lacking online blood tests. How'd that work? Ask mom, red shirt.
It's like a special tube. Imagining a discounted life, one less
counted than the one I steep in now, one entirely mired in digital shit. Like
reality, but finer. That's every fluid counted, all the more to wash us away
into the city.

Flat though it is with lights and weather, the city's where we plan,

especially against problems like pregnancy or a problem with the phone,
or a badly-timed nap after every city person says I'm bad for them.
I wake up like a lonely fish with a pain in the place where delight resides,
shuffle into a friendless neighbourhood, eager to share memory,
drunk on low energy, yearning like you do for special oil to give you fats and a certain shimmer.
They'll always say you have it anyway, but pals
are not the women working on the ridge, with rosemary, three kinds of quartz
and carrot seed in the bottom of the basket. They reckon with
seas, in dreams in this not coastal-part of world, and wet pastels for fatter,
lucky strokes. Learning here isn't knowing but listening, and refusing your own guilt
that fairly, is not totally up to you. You have your own.
We've been long enough to get back, why don't we?

Simple really, recitations still frequently angry, still mood music, waiting
to become worth saying
is boring, spraying
all over the floor post two cava and a
jumbo fish is
not. An awful lot of happy times
are not the best to talk. Tell that to them, still reeling in sober scents you can't avoid. Originally,
you asked, and they recited

all-boy in new outfit. Butter cut with detergent.
Aspirin, strongest drug. Soggy diplomas. Coins rubbed
off on their pocketed hands and rubbing hard, discouraging
preening and secret jerk-offs.
The unbearable pain
of seeing yourself
loving without criticism behind an elm.
Probably getting arrested. Again,
that cumin chicken, well.

This is what you'd end up telling your sons.
Clearly now, I'm glad my husband's gone.

All those other chins in hands are saying waiting
happens even when things happen.
The roots of our distress grow out for outcomes.
And who cares least about that twinkle in the stone, that bad alarm?
Reliable brothers, that is to say, the furthest thing from
birds, far from birth-based swamps I'll stop climbing into,
to your major gratitude.

There you are,
being right.
In the moment,

cheap and sweet.