

Elena Botts

how you come so broken and bitter and like a lost island.

i wake into a dream. we are always, in different ways, dying
fills one in a while or in a tantrum of this is not i. maybe the deeper thing is that
farthest from you, or maybe it is the truth. desperate shakes
to be rid of oneself and back into the curvature of creation of fluidless fixation like the skin of the body of being no
one. and of being no one? it is feckless, sad,
a sunrise shamed into the storm cloud, a true undoing.
if you were not, there would be no surrendering you. now that you are not, so you are, saddened but simple as the hole
in the earth that is in the island that is the quarried gold that is the open wound that is the ache of the sky buried and
then uncovered universe as holds, an ocean of sorrow. but then what is you, a whole world.

titles are useless

i give you something before you have asked for it until all there
is is sadness or the aftermath of what was meant to be
which is to say things are just what they are i have left myself behind me
like that which has not yet been discovered
will be found like a body of the drowned.

by then my spirit will have snuck in your house through the window to do the dishes
because the woods today is never a color that wasn't breathing like i or you.
the worst was when the boy was found in a dumpster after we had sat in the room where together they snorted off of
the linoleum.
actually that moment was his.
the night was unsuffocating.
i don't know which boy died all i remember is my friend eating cool whip out of the freezer.

a girl undressing in front of the city it's not like the usual films
where it is either a nighttime full-colored blackness or the evidence
of an early morning shattering
the screen into seconds which do not correspond somehow to our own pulse we know
it is a time instead
where the green barely rims the few buildings just smudged
out of the dark, dawn is uneven
behind the swimming pool which is unlit before she jumps in
and it is completely dark as the boy dives
and almost reaches her,
like a thought holding its arms out,
the spell ends only in a
new nakedness, no bodies,

a senseless dream of being wrapped in water
flesh without movement
folds if they ever reach the bottom
more like silhouettes than dancers, thoughtless
and they are mild as the heat of august is only the thunder underneath the water.

as the third person, you are outside of the frame, as the filmmaker phrased it so you can see only
the black water an unlit pool wherein the two have gone is completely still
as you become bored, you turn away

i don't know where it is, life.

i tried to keep the window open to hear the cicadas chirping but midway through the night i had closed it with my feet.
i called up a magic boy on the telephone and he said you have so much to say and i said i haven't spoken in days and
the line went dead, breathing was too easy. they haven't fixed the canal yet. the riverbed is cracked dry in the heat.
being sad was a gift because you got to care about something in the first place. i watch the water glasses collect beside
the bed as though in a movie the observed habits of the protagonist but there's no story and nothing here is even ugly
it goes from full to empty, i mimic the passage of time. i guess i don't know when you are here and when you are not it
makes no difference the universe moves in and out of vision you said, i hate it when you talk about the world that way
and i tried to find the fog of the morning as it burned off and as i, too, disappeared like a cloud taken in the sun and
wind as if i too were the illusion here as if i too were not something made of shadows buried to get out of the summer
heat. but this is not for you, this spectral wandering along the haunted river has no end really and the sea really, and
the sea to be alone but for the sea.

not me but some one

that night, alone again crossing state lines on foot in the cracked mud of the canal between sirens, foraging owls,
drunken crowds and homeless
watching them live lives through a vacant buried mind, this heat of dead july
after no light of midday and no real person walking the streets but this who moves through myself, a ghost? isn't the
universe emptied yet,

you sit inside to eat ice cream during the downpour. everything's getting so personal. you'll cry over an impersonation,
you'll cry over her. there was only one person you could bear to be around but that was before you knew the colour of
their fear. i do not know why there are people outside or why there is daylight as i am very slowly leaving my life, i
wish i knew someone who would sit in the same room and not say any words.

when the morning fog clears off, opens a whole mind of sky. life without you is easy but there are less dreams intact
like souls wandering off a breeze above the water, sometimes i wish you were here and could see it only so that all the
awe of this world could move through your body.
to be honest, it was really just a dream.

eight track

how strange to be as real as the ridgeline of mountain meet sky and to hear the sound of you breaking my heart its
colossal ruin of the ice sheets in late february the organism of river cracking its innumerable vertebrate and to be glad
of it

sweet to hear the cicadas singing us into a haze of summer while the crickets foretell autumn though seasons are
always in the past now that we have grown older and sadder and forgotten some love to the fading leaves and stranger
trees

to have imagined your own shadow as you walked and to be struck in awe by any merest glimpse of another to name it
wonder and hardly ever not think of it after though all comes to this dust of my tongue and me, buried in a dream like
that spring that had me so shut away

felt the glow of my own soul again, enough to light up the world, but only the love that brings us back again through
this thick infinity,

i do not think i have yet forgotten this world.