

Elena Botts

what aches

of extremities are laid out like winter trees shivering in a nonexistent breeze,
blood has an end to it. i could watch where it runs frantic
but i do not mind and tend these aches like the premature child
that i am this is only a skeleton of thoughts
no longer color but an in-utterable light that is the fluctuation of your ribs when there is so little air in them
and a heart that slows like the soft feeling of the moonrise just over the hill which was once dark in a way
that was like no other darkness that we might remember but that does not make it so
i am tired, everlastingly. a vacant sun today and the sky just
a vast haze. i would take you to my heart but that is in the hinterland that i am
not blessed or cursed to roam any longer. i cry for elizaville, and milan, yes,
and the lake of the deli which is god the surrealist's fond memory.
i have lost my sound, the crows flung out like dusk
and the waterfalls now pooling only in my veins
underneath the skin, unbruised and perfect. this is ruin,
to be unloving, to be taken out of suffering,
to be a fool giving nothing to the world. this is
deepest surrender.

i wanted to be alone all day!

time has become directionless or at least i cannot determine which direction it flows in, do i have yet to meet the ones i have lost and the ones i have never met, have i lost them too, as i lose time and in losing, am a composite of loss and an unsubstantiated universe but to what end does one fill a harmony in or a poem of thoughts or a focus in the midst of that river which is to say an island and as you brush your teeth you say to yourself that love might mean crying about someone years later because of a slight motion that someone else made reminiscent of them where they were dozing off but someone was talking to them so they half opened one of their eyes very slightly like he did late at night when his eyes were half closed and i was looking at him (i guess that ought to happen now and then when you know you probably will live out life (and too easily) having lost someone you've truly known) and being kind implies being aware of all the horrible things that one does and doing some but not all of them anyway because you have killed so many plants and microorganisms in your lifetime and for almost nothing given that most meanings elude you, or you, them. they say that species were less diverse before the cambrian explosion though that is only determined by the environment that traits die out in response to and also by our here is what humanity thinks it is governed by. the difference between gaslighting and constructive ambiguity is when i tell you that the realities of this poem are not yours to keep. if when someone thinks they can know or see or can save you, they're probably on the wrong planet. when all my life has already happened will i find you living alone like a blessing in the neighborhood between the blue dark and the lamplight and the power lines strung down to the water and yowling cats which is necessary like emptying the room at night of any other lost souls else so that the mind may roam? when you've lost everything don't go out looking you might as well pass the time walking around your own mind. they were right about memories, there's nothing better and no one but you can have them even under the same moon. it is like stupidity a whole new chaotic and uncalibrated world/mind, but not necessarily synonymous with the universe before it came into being

grocery shopping/i am distraught

death is not at all in opposition to life i went grocery shopping and i needed to buy an apple not to eat to buy an apple because this is an example of an idea i had when i was grocery shopping to buy an apple but just because i was buying an apple (not to eat, for the idea) i decided not to buy the cheese because the apple and the cheese are two very different things and the absence of life is not necessarily death

i went to a grocery store with an imaginary boy let's call him jack, jack and i went to the grocery store and jack started to cry in the frozen goods section but we don't know why. neither jack nor i know why he began to cry in the aisle next to the frozen peas. i looked at him and i said, well i don't want to get you down i don't want to get anyone down and that is what got him down, so to speak, but i hadn't said anything and the boy wasn't crying so we went to buy some milk because that is after all, what we came to the store to buy.

i got very tired one day and i didn't get up and nothing happened. the postman woke and he delivered on the other side of the door and the small animals crept around the spaces of the house and the cats raised their hackles about the neighborhood and a man spraying the fresh concrete shouted up at the sky that it was all done and painted but he wasn't talking to god he was talking to another man and three old women in white stood outside a catholic church and talked in a very minute and particular way about very lovely small things and they grew closer and closer about the virgin mary and i didn't get up and then the sun fell through the windows and cracks in my house (and through the cracks in my eyes, the cracks in my skull perhaps to penetrate some strange and ancient heart like an unlikely universe tucked in the darkening but this was not so and this was not so and this was not

we didn't buy anything at the grocery store. we drove there and jack wandered through the aisles singing about someone who had died and i slipped a block of cheese into my bag and then we both walked out and didn't say anything and a woman who worked there came up to us to wish us a nice day and jack said yes, it is a very nice day in fact though jack didn't know yet that he didn't exist and that i made him up merely for the purpose of detailing this brief and entirely fictional episode which is also so pointless) because in fact, i had never gotten up, though i was wide awake i dreamed through the hours in a dark and i thought i was dying and it was true, i was dying and i thought i was living, and it was true, there was nothing more horrifying.

vermont

we went to vermont to observe a man who, in being, barebacked, betrayed
that he was a laborer and she said that she liked that his body said it was so.
while the boy who was meant to be in the woods cried because he was leaving her in the parking lot
outside the national guard and then we drove back from vermont.

he went into the woods as we made new living rooms and hung lights and rearranged the artifice of our very
separate
and seemingly predestined lives and she said it was a beautiful day and it was a beautiful day
and soon it would be over but for the several motorcyclists as they made their way over the horizon and into
the dusk of our lives that were not our lives any longer and i couldn't hold anything in my hands any longer,
and the sun grazed my face in its everlasting light as it sunk and sunk and there were large pockets of air
sucked in and out of his chest as he sobbed which was not even uncanny, it was normal.

and tragedy was boring, and nothing made sense and we were wrapped like saplings around each other in a
dead fog, grown into and out of the earth with only the sullen protestations of ourselves
but i wanted to feel at home when we reached the morgue or onward for the mass burial in an unnamed pit
on an island where nobody can feel our unfeelingness, that is
and i have already encountered this, it's true but these days mostly, i am most familiar with the bus station
between here and maryland or is it delaware i know it when i see it, it makes my heart swell like a strange
ugly beast blindly faltering its way through the orifices of mother earth who lies in coma through the toxic
frenzy of our lives and she said it was a beautiful day.

and it was beautiful, i could find you in your house, your bones cracked and uncracked in everlasting light
and i could look you in the eye, i could say hello.
i could run myself into the ground or a clear bottomless lake thoughtlessly, with all the world of dreaming
held intact though i knew what it was i could not hold anything, not even the dying sun, or the moon as it
fades from us as we lose the children of ourselves and so are plunged into ultimate undoing.

to know that you will and have and continue to exist is a miracle were it just a thought i had on a rainy day
when i was walking by myself as the sky collected its darkness into a sound that was like quietude or even
nakedness. and synonymously, that you and i come to the end it is no question but the barest certainty of my
brief and unconscionable soul.

cultural productions

if you were to be on the hill, or if you were to see-
there is a ghost ship moored not far from here-
it is tethered by a strand of wind,
weighted by the dawn of the world,
which is tomorrow. maybe i will see you there
and all the ones i knew before
though no time could keep us there,
hours still somewhere in your heart
which, like a strange unlikely realm
lingers on in the dry
winter. the world does not thaw
just for you-
we are not moved by any particular breeze
there is a light on just beyond these naked trees
do not name it mine, do not name it yours
as it comes on and then goes

december 1

it is quiet now and i dont want the sound of the thought i said aloud to travel up and down the river,
disturbing those in the midst of deep vast dreams of their own