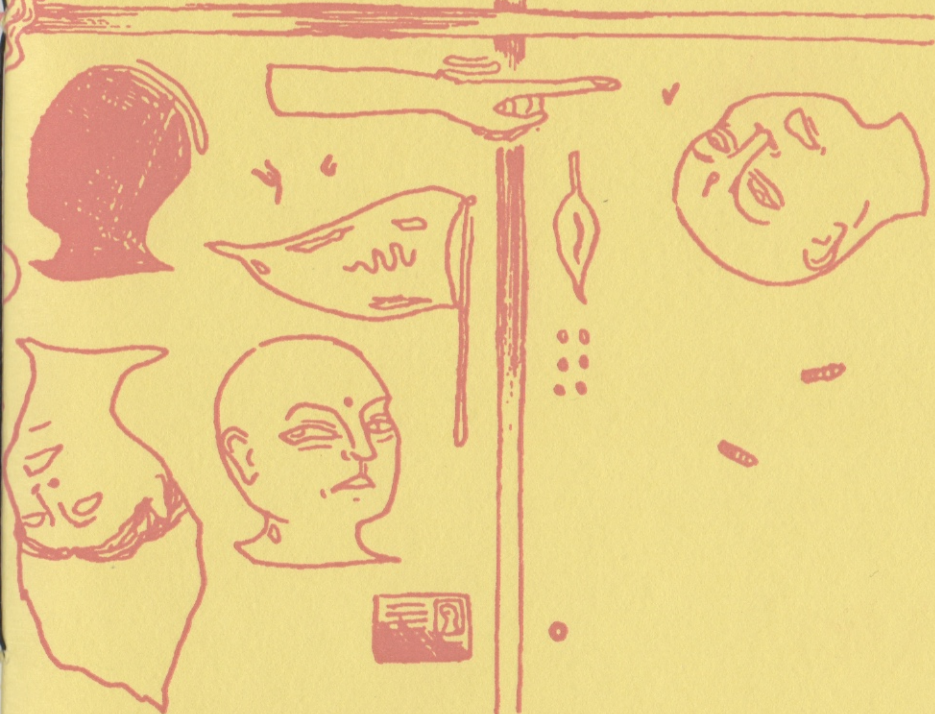


NO, DEAR



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Corazon Partido, Dominican Woman

When my mother tells me about her relationship with my father,
there is no romance sigh, no bright light in her coffee eyes.

She goes back to Santo Domingo and blames him for loving the independence out of her,
tells me about her pasola and her jobs and all that flight.

She speaks of immigration, of the way cold scares the bones,
of all the things English steals.

She speaks of the small apartment, the walls and the crushing.
All the things he took when he left, the little he left behind:

a mattress, like an island, and me.

She resuscitates stillborn children, says I was born twice
before breath settled into body.

She tells me about the times I almost died as an infant. One, when a fly went up my nose.
Two, when my aunt dropped me and the doctors gave me an expiration date.

When my mother tells me about her relationship with my father,
there is no laughing at the quick flame of youth.

There is brick in her voice, the pain, and then there are stories about me.
As if I were contiguous land for the borders of two young people
trying to rip themselves out of their lives.

I do not know that I was not the excuse to cross ocean.
I do not know if she ever truly loved him.

I do not know the extent of regret, that haunting devil,
or what stories of heartache my presence might bring when I walk into the room.

My mother, she is a world, that woman, has me digging
through bones and dry roots of a whole country,

just so that I can get to her.

body

if I was that am
always am I an

wo

man

was my father smoking
volatile wind
noche plateada all
the way to red dawn
my father
with maté gourd
horizon eyed
to brackish shimmer

che, me escuchás?

nothing like momma
too closely bound for me to see
stoic nordic china blue
she found the
untango, unmilonga
under lithuanian apple tree
broken momma blame
culpa mea

mea
then body came.

ne'er wanted these breasts
fed to feed
become

I was that I was
'cause I knew better
to reject that mother

yet she comes like body.

alone I push out from strength
then draw in to fill
color past the out line
pencil bounds o'er past
with might I tear frontier

and yet feed me feed

well me to plumb
a southern cross
of wo man I would
woman built between
such womb when we were
of a same body loving

when I'm strong I am man
when I'm safe I am
when I win the argument, man
when as man I fuck you
I am man

oh i know it's a lie but

when overwhelmed, wom
frustrated waylaid struggling wo
mistakes along the way oma
generous and poor woman
lost i loose the wo

so cut my hair for strength
i say to brianna
or leave it long for man
but make it wild, less femme

i don't want breasts pulling apart
the buttons
of my button down shirt
give me less hips and a tight ass
to shoot from

always thought i'd be freer like that
ya know?

yet man you say you're bound as i
man when i try you on
i'm as tethered to the ground
man sometimes i see you with breasts
and just as hard to reach as ever
i cannot grasp your body whole
i only feel it and the pleasure
of your lesbian hands
wondering what is it to you

oh i know love is not body
but when i am only body
where is love?

I Dreamed a Word That Meant a Break in the Weaving

I dreamed the word for a splinter between weft and warp

It came from Old German

I saw it in the frame

of the pre-loaded dictionary

a ß broke in in the middle

The dream went no further

than the bounds of the window

which bore a faint gingham check

as in a screen seen through a lens

Wherever there's a surface

a quarry, a gash

How to address

the thing at which one is looking

as across the centuries

text takes you in

Poem (after Frank O'Hara)

The train doors open—110th Street, halfway between what was & is,
I'm late for work but I'm walking.

Someone asks for a swipec, someone asks for a dollar.

The light allows me to continue—cross into the park.

The other day I saw a crawfish & now the body of one smashed into the path.

How green the Meer these days, these days after these nights alone, or
these nights remembering your hands.

The blooms time-lapsed into leaves into a blanket of orange, the first hint winter will
sleep too long.

The men leer & I let them,
this body is not for them.

Moments of shade, moments of rain. Sometimes silence, the sound of a bus kneeling.

The giant afro pick & the men on benches sleeping through morning.

I'm late but I take in, take time.

Watch the birds gather worms fresh from the grass,
they know how the earth moves with them.

A dog takes a shit, a bird takes a shit. The water moves like sick left from a bad night.
I'm late—the shade takes my sweat, the wind takes my warmth.

The babies asleep, my body itching.

Wave good morning, wave into the sun, the leaves waving back, the shore waves back,
the turtles wave back, the trash waves back,

the garden has the time &

I'm late but this is holy.

This is my time to wave.

Tigualo

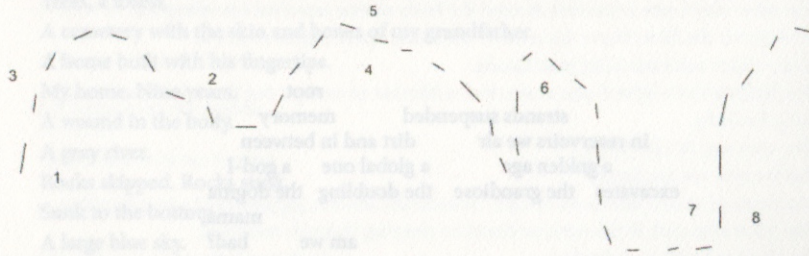
Mountains.
 Deep knee grass.
 A long road.
 Trees, a forest.
 A cemetery with the skin and bones of my grandfather.
 A home built with his fingertips.
 My home. Nine years.
 A wound in the body.
 A gray river.
 Rocks skipped. Rocks sunk.
 Sunk to the bottom.
 A large blue sky.
 White stars in a black sky.
 I grew and traveled far away.
 From the animals.
 From my brown land. From home.
 A long road.
 With stores and cemeteries.
 Decay and growth.
 Now, a closed school.
 And the mountains.

from BIOME'D

strands suspended root
 in reservoirs we air dirt and in between memory
 a golden age a global one a god-I
 excavates the grandiose the doubling the dogma
 mama,
 am we bad?
 we shoot soon , recall
 dinner plate to father's head til' body-dead
 mama,
 we too remember grief

[B]order

Since the 2008 Georgian-Russian war, Russia has steadily moved a barbed wire fence marking the border between the two countries several hundred meters, farther into the Georgian controlled South Ossetia region. The Russian government claims that it is protecting the region from Georgian troops. The region is mostly populated by farmers. This move, also known as a "creeping border", often occurs in the middle of the night. It is not uncommon that Georgians will go to sleep in their country and wake up the following morning in Russia, unable to cross the barbed wire fence, cut off from their country and whatever land, livestock, and family remain on the other side.



1. A Georgian cow eats grass and shits.
2. A grape began growing in Georgia; was picked in Russia.
3. Russian cow eats grass and shits.
4. A family dines in Georgia today. The father believes that if they are still dining together in Georgia ten years from now, he will be optimistic about his country's future.
5. A family house is Russian today; was Georgian yesterday.
6. The youngest child in this family has woken to the sound of Russians moving around the farm outside of his house: the animals confused by the presence of strange men speaking quietly in Russian, clinking metal rifles against the fence.
7. A woman wakes, puts on her shoes and coat, and walks down a Russian road alongside a barbed wire fence.
8. A man brews two cups of coffee after waking and walks down a Georgian road with both cups—one to share with his elderly, newly Russian, neighbor whom he will greet through barbed wire and talk with till noon.

3

2

4

6

1

7

8

1. A [] cow eats grass and shits.
2. A grape began growing []; was picked [].
3. [] cow eats grass and shits.
4. A family dines [] today. The father believes that if they are still dining together [] ten years from now, he will be optimistic about his [] future.
5. A family house is [] today; was [] yesterday.
6. The youngest child in this family has woken to the sound of [] the farm outside of his house: the animals [] speaking quietly [], clinking [] against the fence.
7. A woman wakes, puts on her shoes and coat, and walks down a [] road, alongside a [] fence.
8. A man brews two cups of coffee after waking and walks down a [] road with both cups—one to share with his elderly [] neighbor whom he will greet [] and speak with till noon.

Seeking Arrangements

Everywhere, worlds were prostrating themselves on top of other worlds. Some cared more about my orgasms

than others. Some ripped silk, let slack the sinew, carried a tanned riding crop. I had so many tabs open, so many apps begging

to be dragged, their feeds refreshed. It was clear, I could either be productive or I could show myself out. My movements

became increasingly transactional, a sequence of doodads shifted from palm to palm, swarmed in an undertow of give

and take. Seeking: salve to soothe a homesickness for singularity, fruit stripped of all metaphor, a landscape incomparable

to the feminine body. Everyday I settle for reinterpretations of the same dataset. Sometimes I leave just to go

look upon the lake's secrets and then I come back trying trying to tell you about them.

-- THE RIVER SET IN GENGHIS --

is also flowing – leaking – flowing.
There is slippage – real talk – tracers –
there are lines (of lang) in star.

The bulb above informs my choking – sets the marbles
in my mouth. But I must bless this beautiful
nonscan – its scummed up with (Genghis) Khan.

Whereas the silver panther. (The silver panther)
informs nothing. My false lang becomes a father –
becomes a map without a bone.

Was the river just my fam lang – come in fable
– wrapped in shadow? Was the panther just another
bulb lodged in the moon?

But then I felt a different body
in the corresponding angel. I drew cold spaces
for the nomad – called them (Genghis)
getting loose.

For (form) I then read (false foam). For (sublime)
I slicked my thoughts back to
the (slime) traced on my bed.

Then (Genghis) was a matter of everyone -- and he was only
a matter of them. They are – *write letter to self*
of self-spiraling – re-write said letter – stab (lang bulb) again.

For (position) I read (poison) and (prison). For caress
I then read (carcass). Or maybe I read (death cloud) or just
rancid cloud (of death).

I asked my fam for future language – just to have the sound
of them. I formed a river set in (Genghis)
and to the right (of his scum)
(was a star)

ode for tomorrow

tall summer grass and inside the tip ripe
and full of seeds

is my buffalo.
she is finally
the last buffalo.

she pitches toward the Justice sun and
stands at attention
hoofing scrolls of marble history
out of hardpacked dirt.

unroll the scroll
and the children i
will never have
tumble out one by one

one is lizard skinned
and barren

one is blue—
already dead
and ashamed of it

the last is yellow
uncontrolled morning sun
and dandelions
glued together with tree sap.

they ride their buffalo mother
through white men's mountains
and dig through the rubble with
their bare hands
looking for sweet morsels to chew.

Justice yields wine from buffalo milk.
it makes a hearty porridge
for the new world.

Eyelashes Or Their Absence

Say ocean. Atlantic. I know little of it but possibility and salt. Thalassa, primeval possibility. Not love. Not love. And birdseye brings me to you. Away from sickness, above the water. Between us, water. Text. Palms, open. Pores of bread. Eyelashes or their absence.

Palm And Palm

Palm and palm at the marmalade. Then finger to mouth. So it is dust I draw from, my home of dust where I am every other, licking at the sugar. So home. Say, dream. I am desperate and walk each summer past those sweet, stupid donkeys, smiling at everything. Worlds in their teeth. And in every sun I mistake moths for dragonflies. Think, etymology of fly. Follow each fusty morning out with the day. Say dream. Say thought. Whatever prostrate thought that follows each false moon. Where moon says no, no.

So Saying

Repeat in Greek. θέλω I want. θέλω, want. Here circling, a leaning. Here asking, a leaning. Few fews and every all, a golden mended joy. Sweet, stupid donkeys in open air, smiling for nothing. So saying breaks the morning, and morning breaks the eye. Every I, a leaning. θα δώσω θα δώσω θα δώσω, I will give I will give I will give.

A change of scenery

is a loose english
 unfamiliar confidences personal bubble
 vomiting discreetly while smoking a cigarette
 with a pregnant friend ¿qué pasó?
 in every gull the refuge of language
 the ruffage of time.

is another draft of mother's eye
 what other body parts are inherited
 if not words waiting to lay one like an egg
 bearing down, except up, from the throat
 smelling the same waft of mystery
 spoil from the fridge
 even real nice things can sour plastically.

is a thinner boundary between selfs
 the sun comes out
 overheard in a child's Swedish
 vad kan man vara stolt över
 what can one be proud of

not nor not only
 what one can and can't say
 where one can go
 what can be learned and how that is different
 from taking
 how many different ways of saying it happened in the past
 how it can feel versus how good
 whose fault it was
 the exact number of gulls on the shore
 if they are laughing or fucking or something else
 say all that in any other language
 imagine how fluent something can sound
 squeegeeing to dryness
 to chafing as if it could ever mean blood.

is finally reclining
 on a bench in a square
 to the only originary place
 the thought in between
 nothing at all
 in cantonese arabic umbundu
 whatever you would rather speak.

Scales of unconditional regard

Hands rubbing waists at the bar as
 Social collateral for gemini season;
 A boxcutter to clean under dirty nails.
 We're late to work but no one else is
 There—just a locked door
 And dark screens and when we look at
 Our phones, all the messages have turned
 Into rain emojis. "I'm sorry," I say,
 "For everything" as the sky gets
 Clouded over and those thick clouds
 Turn charcoal gray. It's violent and
 Wet and you respond: "It's OK" while
 We watch small cats climb into hot
 Car engines to wait out the rain.

paradise

Ma searches the Qur'an restlessly
 Finds the perfect combination of Surah's
 To cure my "Sadness"
 This time -
 Convictions in her
 "Insha'Allah Ammu they will work"
 Is unmatched yet ineffective to my tried-and-true
 Combination of ☪ and ☾

I think of how my people survived genocide
 And I brave a wave of shame
 To embark on a quest to hide my prescription
 To hide chemical imbalance -turned- pain
 Even the psychiatrist can tell
 I am a hollowed out broken shell
 Pieced back together ever-so carefully
 She prescribes generously
 "An extra 20 mg ☪ to take the edge off
 You won't even feel the difference"

The Imam at the mosque says
 Our souls are not of this world
 But are made in paradise where we shall return
 And mine manifests a restlessness on earth
 So I cut a ☾ in half
 Take ☪, save the other ☾
 One where my soul is
 Not of earth nor paradise
 But on the edge of paranoia
 And my toes curl close to the ledge of my own demise
 And I close my eyes and catch pieces of me mid-fall

Parts of me have been lost on the road to recovery
 Hair, appetite, weight, short-term memory
 No matter how much I eat, laugh, and breathe
 This mind and body
 Love to make a sport of "Let's see how little space we can take"
 Sometimes it feels as though
 Have all retired - causing no effect
 And sometimes
 The hardest pill I swallow is
 Antidepressants and mood stabilizers
 Are not elixirs

Making Rent

Your brain as a series
of packed apartment units
with sound bleeding in from both sides.
Learning how to filter &
keep. My mother paused
before telling me that after thirty years
she no longer thinks in Mandarin,
but now in English. Communication
as product of war, as continuous
competition. There is grief in translation,
so even if my mother was not sad,
I can be. I am sad at most losses.
Even to translate is to decide &
deny the other possibilities.
I watched an interpreter
in a documentary once explain
his job of diplomatic dialogue.
I wish I could be professional about this.
I wish these walls were not so thin,
or makeshift. Maybe they will last thirty years
if I'm lucky, then flatten and fall.

Vexed & Signed

Striation variation of vein clenched and I can see
The past few weeks I've become interested in spillage, seepage
Inaugurates true telling you this
Exchange short anecdotes three for three—on someone, on yourself, in public

Striation make & unmake at will or unpleasure to have time so free as to decide, to craft, to lose
So speech so speech so camp & hike
Press further on version of lavish made through scraps
Convene at a later point

To what degree do things reveal themselves unbeknownst to themselves
I do not mean anything
I say this to signal something
I transmit to transform akin to recognition not meaning

Full phrases that work like abbreviation
Sift through the crowd
Make a statement of repulsion keepsafe
Acronymize desire to conform to political commitment

While not untrue that revelry toward feeling together and free may well be erotic
Into yr autonomy, new model fixed fit and unfit

How to mourn the dead, notes from a different land

On the phone I ask Mother how to say,
I am sorry,

She says,
out here
you don't say that to children of the dead

I say, out here you do,
that's how they say they are here for you,
they say Sorry,

She says
that makes no sense,

I hold the pause on the phone,
the electric cables connect us through
an underwater system, thank you science,
now I can hear Mother clearly, She still mixes up
her Vs and Ws, Her mouth caves in
at the wrong syllable, I try again,

what do I say? they lost their father,
how do I say I wish I were there,
that I am thinking of you,

She says,
out here
you don't say that to children of the dead, out here
you show up, clean their bedsheets,
bring them food they won't eat, you bring it
anyway, out here
we gather, like stars on a sky, like
infinity, no one says sorry, no one says *I wish*,

they pick up the broken bangles, they hold the
woman while she wails, they wail while the
imam prays, they say, we out here, crying with
you don't need my words, you have my
silence

out here we grieve,
without words,
without mixing up Vs and Ws,
without the ocean drowning in our mouth,
we grieve, in silence, together,

always together

