



Script

Visit

for Chris Horn

The drip kept me up
and the slithering blanket heat
silence
and our previous talk
of dreams:
thistle flowers
foreign language
pearls pushed up through the sand:
a grain weighs as much as the world
on my chest.

We sit in a circle
drinking wine, someone
else's house but you're the host.
You don't mind mixing.
I'll stick to the blush, please
then you're off to check the grill.
It's a meal and mild talk.
Your "ostentatious" days are us

finishing. The drive to your house
after dark isn't long;
by morning I've stayed the night,
but you're gone
already.
I'm sitting outside
near the half-dead half-live
marigold you planted
(only one because you knew
you were leaving), the center
of a space of bare earth
bordered by small
stones.

william siems

Ephesians

This is not what you expected:
mornings cornered by bread,
bibs, messages from red faced
tenants raging over water heaters.

You walk shoulders down, in,
protecting the child
who trails behind you.
Everyone comments on
his language skills,
his sunny eyes.
Sometimes when you
nap, he answers the door
bell by staring down
visitors through the blinds.

Sunday mornings
the two of you dress
early, eat cornflakes,
sunday school at nine fifteen
worship service at eleven.
You leave him
in the nursery for
one hour
and worry
over infectious disease,
theories of childhood development.

You do not think
of the man you left
at home, asleep.
How you once
looked forward

to the bread,
to holding hands
in worship
service.

Stephanie Young

The End of My Love

It took some detective work to learn that my Lucille was spending this weekend alone in the Rockies. By car, I made the trip in just under ten hours, bringing me here to the very top of this aspen decorated cliff. A trail winds down from here in curves and stretches and as I look over the precipice, I can see its conclusion miles below.

A tour guide has told me she is on that trail. Miss Lucille Allsworth had rented a mule for an unescorted tour less than two hours ago. With scrunched up eyes I scan each bit of pathway I can see. I look hard at that distant ground, like a hawk who knows his mouse is below.

And then I see her. My heart stops and my throat goes dry because there, pausing for a moment at a scenic overview, is my angel Lucille.

From here she is just a speck of blue and tan but clearly that speck could be no other than her. Like a microscope my imagination pictures her bigger than life, taking a snapshot of the horizon with her Minolta and wetting her dry throat with a sip from her water bottle. My microscope zooms in and I can see a drop of Gatorade slide off her lips and down her neck. Down her neck and down between her breasts to heavenly safety.

After this erotic rest, she returns to her mule, zipping her jacket tighter in defense of the new-born breeze. She is wishing she had someone to keep her warm, I think. She is singing a shapeless made-up tune as she enjoys the day, snapping a picture or two. Click, hmm hmm, click.

I lie down on my side, my right ear pointed directly at her so that maybe, if the heavens would have it, a word of her serenade would make its way to me.

I listen hard. I strain, gritting my teeth, trying to tune in her frequency through the static of the rushing blood in my head.

I think. Yes. Wait. Again, just to be sure. Undoubtedly!
My name.

My heart swells so big that I know I must act before I explode all over this idyllic scene. Somehow I must fashion the delicate silver cord between us.

There is a large piece of sandstone beside me. Lying on my stomach, my gaze only on her, I kiss the stone and hold it over the edge of the precipice, releasing it so that it may fall below as a sign. A sign that the man of her dreams hovers above her like a gracious god, adoring her every single movement and her every possible thought.

The stone bounces once, twice, and to my disbelief, makes its way to her position. My Lucille's mule moves at a slow pace, and hundreds of feet above a stone bounces, falls, jigs, jags, honing in on her with just the right lead.

"No, not possibly true," I say as I am suddenly granted a horrifying thirty seconds of foresight. "Crumble," I command. "Break into dust. Abort the mission. Deny your destiny. Find a nook or cranny and stop!"

But the stone bounces left, right, left again, veering in on its target like William Tell's arrow to the apple core.

When my fingers had let go the stone, I imagined it falling several feet in front of her like a diamond from the sky so that she might look up and see me, a speck of tan and green on a distant overhang. But did I really think I could make such a careful measurement? No, never, I swear! I had expected the stone to come to a stop hundreds of feet above her, a great span of distance from her like my intimate passions from her innocent consciousness. But the distance narrows now from yards to feet, "To inches!" I yelp, to one single point of unretractable contact.

I scream. I stand up and beat my forehead, causing a brief spell of dizziness. I fall to the ground and look up into the wild blue sky thinking, this must be a nightmare. "My Lucille is alive and well and I am dreaming!" I yell. To confirm it, I crawl back to the edge of the precipice and peer over. I grip the edge of the cliff in disbelief because there is

my Lucille, a blue and tan speck lying on the ground, her loyal mule standing beside, waiting for her to stand and saddle up and continue the journey to the bottom.

But she will never stand up again. I've crushed in the beautiful skull of my angel. One eight pound sandstone that I had released like a bottle in the ocean without any serious thought of its destination has struck my Lucille dead center.

Did she scream? Did she cry out? Did her little shapeless tune end on a lyric about, maybe, possibly, me? What was the last thought to make its way through her lazy, sun-drenched thoughts before her fate struck her topside?

"Isn't this the way of it!" I cry to those who would hear me above. Two strangers who take great pains to reach each other, even if only in their dreams, are wrenched to opposite ends of an even wider abyss by cold, mischievous fate. One stone intended to be a gift of love is transformed by cruel chance to a crushing murder weapon, sweeping my beloved away to the next world with a casual "bonk."

I run in circles yelling, "Cruel gods!" because I have never hit anything square on the mark. I am always throwing inside balls, always scoring the A minus, always missing the bus by five minutes. What perverted luck that I would perform an Olympic toss quite by accident, and without anyone around to confirm it to Guinness.

She was surely bleeding by now. I can imagine her brains and red insides out of her head and down the side of the canyon. Maybe the mule will take a leaking drink. I cannot tell from here, but I do know how imperative it is I get away. The park rangers will come in time, see my Lucille's stiff body, the rock by her head and hypothesize. They will look up into the air and wonder, and best they not see me peermg down.

Well, time to get on with life, seek another beauty to glimpse from afar, a beauty quite afar from here. I will give Lucille a permanent deposit box in my memory and I will always wish she had at least known my first name. But no,

I never let her know that, making it impossible that she could have thought of me today. What awful misfortune that her last thought before dying was probably merely, "Huh?"

I run through the woods, away from the scene, but then I run back because there are fingerprints in the dust to be brushed away.

Can I help it? I take one more look down but my Lucille is gone. The mule is nowhere to be seen either. Have the rangers already come? Had any of it happened at all?

Either way, I must escape, so I run like the wind and try to shake free the thought of her haunting me hundreds of feet above with a rock in her ghostly hand, ready to revenge me if I ever slow down so she might take aim.

George Brewington

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George Brewington

Thomas is crazy.

He sent tulips to Sarisa
and hates himself for it.

"What's a two-year-old do with tulips?" he asks.

"Do you even know who I am?..."

He points a wicked finger at Maria,

"I'm telling you the truth

and you don't like it...

but I like you."

He's going blind. He thinks she's wearing
a red dress. Wants to take her to a dance, ("And you know
what I'll do afterward.")

but he's old, he's sick.

Closer to me, she pulls at my sweatshirt.

I feel it too.

Thomas is crazy.

"Ten counties in Ireland...

and we didn't give in to any FUCKING THING!"

He looks at her again.

She wants to hide, I want to hide her.

He's sick.

The place stinks.

We're all unclean now.

"Do you know who I am?"

You're Thomas. You're crazy. "No," she says,

"Who are you?"

Either he doesn't know or he's forgotten his question.

I'm getting hot and if I speak

he'll know...Thomas is crazy and he's

going blind, but he still sees.

He has to write a letter he tells us.

"You know why I have to write it?"

It's your ticket out? "No," she says,
 "Why?"

He doesn't know either but it's to
her—his "special" friend.

He thinks Maria is her.

She is hiding.

He won't touch her.

I'd stop trying to love him first.

Hotter now, patterns of (cat litter?)
are making me dizzy...

I'm staring at his lip.

"It goes to your heart doesn't it?"

No one knows what the hell he's talking about
but it goes there anyway.

She's falling back, back behind me.

He's still looking.

"Goodbye," I say.

Thomas sent Sarisa tulips—
now she's 12.

Before I close the door

he looks at me for the first time
and says,

"It's not my will,"

and I don't care anymore.

Thomas is crazy.

Chad Bartlett