



Hi.

It's been so long, we never find a time to talk on the phone even though I'm always thinking of calling you.

And instead of calling, here I am writing you a letter, because I'm trying to give form to some thoughts. But it's hard.

I feel like I'm trying to remember a dream.

But remembering is exactly the force that makes it slip away from me.

One must remember then, not to try too hard.

Speaking of dreams, I keep having ones that are like the nightmares that I used to have as a kid... But instead of being hunted by sharks or being surrounded jellyfish, I'm in the ocean and being circled by creatures that look part humanoid, part celestial, and totally gentle.

There's even a shark that reminds me of Danny DeVito playing Penguin in Batman.

They are covered with dazzling, shimmering, volcanic glitter, and deep-sea bioluminescence, and all at once I'm lying at the bottom of the ocean looking up at them, while also somehow simultaneously plunging into the water trying to reach them.

And now that I think about it, they're not just familiar because they are from recurring dreams, but they also remind me of the performances we did as children – they've got puppet like, exaggerated form, but they also seem like they're in costume, in sequined Lycra, stocking and velvet.

The scene is entirely mesmerising. Not just because of the illumination and reflections, but because these creatures are juvenile and yet all knowing, and the combination of these two things is kind of empowering in a dream.

I mean... because they're not nightmares and I'm no longer terrified, it feels like making peace with some old demons.

And maybe I am, and maybe we are! Do you remember when we were in our twenties and back then any reference to emotions, to coming of age, to uncertainty, to girlhood (in our case) was quickly shamed out of us. At school, at university, in bars, or on the court, any expression of our emotions had to have a film of detachment over it in order to prove our intelligence?

As if emotional honesty was just too much for people to handle. It had to be made ironic, sarcastic, inter-textual, self-effacing? Do you remember?

Why were people in the early millennium so hell bent on emotional detachment? It was so tiring, and so *fucking boring* . That's why I've come to love these dreams about the ocean, because they make me realise that even in my dreams I'm thinking *I've fucking had enough of that circle jerk* . What a glorious feeling!

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Anyway.

You haven't met my husband yet, he's a diver.

I don't mean that he snorkels for cash – he dives for 5 or 6 hours straight to work under water with power tools. He inspects the hulls of shipping containers, cruise liners, and super yachts for invasive species. Sometimes he's straddling the markers out at Gage Roads to inspect their integrity and he comes back with his legs bruised from heel to groin.

Once he worked in crocodile infested waters and was stung by an irukandji jellyfish during a dive, but he stayed under and finished the job before resurfacing and vomiting his guts out.

Why doesn't he feel vulnerable out in the ocean? Is he ambivalent or is it a conquest? I am indignant!

I don't ask about sharks and he doesn't tell me. His reality is my nightmare, and when I tell him so he reminds me that other commercial divers work in sewers, or vats of cheese.

Our daughter is old enough to know that 'dad works under water' and now whenever we drive past the river or ocean, she winds down the window and calls out *Helloooo Dadda!* I've become concerned that we've planted a seed – throughout her life bodies of water will forever symbolise the patriarchy.

But I guess we often come to link those two in our subconscious – being overpowered by the tide, lost in the deep, stranded and hunted by sharks ...

I mean, not-all-sharks, but you know: *sharks!*

And so for her sake, and my own, I'm taking my cue from those creatures in my dreams. Trying to find moments where I can subvert some demons, channel my emotions and let them wash over me, and through me.

Anyway, I miss you. I just wanted to tell you about my dreams

Love,

C

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