

Cooper Sy
1602

Turn around; someone is watching the way you move. Your shadow at high noon is swaying slightly. The sun casts your shoulders, waist, and legs in silhouette on to the hot cement. Are you aware you're giving up a few too many secrets, details that a lover discovers over time? Intimacy is a point on a map where the borders of two countries touch and the touching is essentially what I'm referring to.

I was close enough to make a mental note of the way you handed the man your passport. He did not look at the photograph. I admit I have no proof, but, I believe he assumed that your smile, laughing green eyes, the casual way you threw your head back, blond hair moving like the silk sails of a sailboat, meant there was a possibility he would find your business card with cell phone number inside a very official document. I did mean official, not officious.

I was quite annoyed by your faux friendliness. I had no right to object so I left the scene ruminating, letting the two of you finish what ever it was I suspected was taking shape without outside the borders of circumspection.

Maybe I should buy you a watch, one that does not slide so easily from your wrist, but grabs hold like a hand, like my hand pinching the skin slightly so it cannot be removed without an effort, without muscle being applied.

The watch with a large face would have only four numbers—1 6 0 2.

The curtain in our room is wide open. The hotel clock says — 16:01. A red light in the distance blinking against a black sky disturbs you.

“See the red light blinking?” you ask.

“Yes,” I say.

“It bothers me. Does it bother you?”

“No,” I say.

A curious, observation I decide, in fact, I promise myself to take notice of only those things like the blinking red light that ruffle your feathers, throw a monkey wrench into your peace of mind. For instance—text messages, a vibrating cell phone left under the sheets, strangers who speak urgently, but too quietly for you to hear, and old lovers pleading for one more chance to start repeating their cycle of madness. Of course, it's only fair to include something about me that probably arouses your ire. Perhaps, it's my impatience, ill-timed curiosity, and silence after making love. Remember the other night when you asked, “Where are you? Why do you drift away, ruminating, knowing I'm not through?”

The truth is I started to write this story in my head as soon as I heard the sound of your breathing fade into the pillow, right before you turned and pushed your nakedness into my nakedness. It's not an excuse, or a defense I didn't realize that when I wrapped my arm around your stomach, sliding my hand between your legs that you needed me to lie still so I could hear your pulse quicken, a sign you needed more of what we had just experienced. I hope the few extra moments you struggled toward satisfaction didn't cause excessive discomfort or make me suspect, I mean, you suspect that I have the character flaws of a selfish lover.

A few days ago, I had a dream that you came to my house at noon with

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/3

fierce desire. Once the urge was satisfied you popped up out of bed like a jack-in-the box returning to the outskirts of nowhere, where you admitted you lived. I was lying face down on the blanket naked at the edge of sleep. You muttered something about keys, water leaking from a broken faucet, fires in the hills nearby, morning freeway traffic that would make you late for an early appointment at work (wherever that is).

I'm not sure if any of those excuses were real, except for the unexpressed anxiety that the ticking of a clock was becoming confused with the ticking of your heart as loud as an anvil. In my dream you were afraid I loved you more than you loved me. How would you tell me? How would you admit that the man that looked at your passport stopped by your office and left the scent of his cologne on your glass letter opener? In fact, the penetrating fragrance was now carrying you away to a different room in a different hotel, paid for by his corporation instead of yours.

I wish across the abyss that separates us, you could hear the ticking of my heart. I understand life works in fits and starts of passion perceived as love taking us further than we wanted to go, journeys of high flying midnight rendezvous and desperate longings of will, promises, and deep resolve. I absolve you and me from all hurt, ticking hearts of anvil proportion, words like knife blade Frisbees slicing through skin leaving scars of memory. This is how it has always been between us, lifetimes of repetition and regret. Let's try not to repent for the hours of pleasure and escape we have given one another.

I'm thinking of you on an airplane heading towards another short lived adventure. The world I leave behind, our world, is a microscopic map beneath the clouds and roaring engines casting wings over water. Our bodies from this height—molecules of dust.