LOST IN THE ARCHIVES

AGENT CORRESPONDENCES · SAN FRANCISCO, OAKLAND, LAS VEGAS, 2004–2015
in this time of coincidences, I felt I had to send you a line. My name is Emma and I am writing from Berlin.

This morning I went on-line looking for a quote by John Berger. In my search I ended up reading part from your blog dated Oct. 21th 2009.

There you write about how you found a beautiful edition of "To the wedding", in which you had found the Brassai card. The same card sits on the bulletin board over my desk and was given to me as a birthday card from my friend Klara.

A couple of days ago, on Oct. 21 to be exact, I visited Klara in Copenhagen and spent the night at her place. As I had brought nothing to read, she handed me "To the wedding" as a bed-time read. I was surprised and delighted that she handed me this very book, as I had been giving Bergers "Ways of Seeing" to my students in spatial composition at the Danish Theatre School the same afternoon.

I had first discovered "Ways of Seeing" as it was left behind in my apartment by another friend who stayed at my place when I was in San Francisco a couple of years ago. It now sits in my bookshelf, coincidentally surrounded by two novels by M. Oondatje, who you also write about, reflecting on Berger.

I thought that all of this was too remarkable not to notice and share.
When we found the other, we undressed, we gave water's hand beneath
docked limbs, laughing and spraying everywhere. Sometimes I was the
Other. Or you were Another.

Sunken orchard, you say, at the sight of minds in the match. The leaves are
seasonal like your funny words. Colors pop up in the most trampled
places. Just now: a pink wisp in charcoal shrubbery. A lottery ticket stuck
to a feather.

We play for weeks in the grottos around the lake. Few go as far as
We do. Chasing each other with the rolling in the guts, prolonging
screams.

Use me like a rolling pin when a cloud watches. Hide and
pursue in alternating scales. Impossible so many grottos disclose themselves at once, but they do, for us.

For each turn, I yell a different name for you, coined from
moods. The mood of maneuvering down ditches?
Or putting blankets in the oven until they're crisp?
Writing backwards the things we can't say yet.

Each word: radium, lucite-veined stone coming from the mouth.
Dreaming, words taste like sea-marbles, tactile melody, pearlescent.
Communication is a problem of stones in transit.

In autumn I spoke slower, as at napping in cooling mud. A
shadowy dialect of a criminal-fisherman, but we only fished for colors.
How they jumped out of each other.

Characters came and went, as grottos closed and reopened. The day dampened our cheeks even under cover
I've seen what they've done with our rituals, warped them into ghosts of the original spasms. Take these binder clips and rubber bands, and remember the kegp orgies and vine fires of a life before offices and cities, when the sand erased distinctions. I raise the pen to my teeth, as they do. Like them I am strange only if I think about it.

We come, of course, from different precincts. Can't quite believe it, can you! How the two of us, with the ease of incest, mated under a darkling tree owned by the Government.

Funny to relive it here while I'm making a Kilimanjaro of photocopies to be destroyed in a distant shredder.

There were super malls and car wrecks. Routique candy stalls mixed in cherry smoke. Nothing like the boxed greyness of the present.

I tried to explain the Lake to the Boss today.

But he was wondering aloud about the efficacy of having my desk facing the wall or the window. But the window is on the wall, I said. But suppose the wall is in the window? he joked. Downstairs, the men cook meat disastrously close to the extracted
I like the secretive quality of our emails because the "we" becomes untouchable to those who do not create the pronoun.

... but you must understand I come from a past of loving someone "underground."

One day I will rid myself of other's constant comments on our situation.
Will we ever reach the City or does it only ever graze us
ghostly thru

a fogged up Koreatown window or that faded blue hotel
oddly operational next to a long-abandoned train station;
sudden trail of painted stones
in an unfrequented sometimes sinister municipal park?

Are our entrances to the City but cryptic, brief embraces,
openings...but different

more like just mistaken backdoors that we quickly close,
or elevators we step into, and then out of, confused about what floor we are going to
and what hotel we are supposed to meet

whoever it was in in the first place?

Do we, instead of entering our City and inhabiting it, only hover and loiter.

Or does the City forever retreat, denying us, demoralizing us,
like some idea of a Beloved

beautiful corner with the shuttered market,
its gently rusting windows,
ivy and circuits showing misremember

a city we’ve never been