

Main Archive, Land of No Boats

(correspondence from the land of no boats.)

Dear boy, I have heard that you sleep in a row boat. Here we have no boats, and the days are closer to one. I spend a great deal of time worrying about the supernova, our supernova, the one meant for us, here.

It is not that I want specifically for it to come or not to come, but how I wish and wish for a longer memory in a head better build for that kind of thing—at best, we were only beginners, we weren't designed with that in mind.

Today, very suddenly I thought of the huge wasp I passed on the sidewalk, and I could not remember whether I had dreamed it or seen it in actual life, while someone else was talking. It was a black and detailed lump of stone and floss, crumpled inside a leaf, pulsing slightly. The wide, flat face and alien eyes that were the stuff of early nightmares. The swivel-neck turning it as though to speak warnings. All of this making it nothing like the surreal.

In a dream I'm certain was a dream, I read text and wrote it down upon waking. In another, I followed a solemn farmer with a shotgun because it was our duty to rise at dawn and kill hundreds of irreparably beaten dogs: *My dear boy, I do not understand it, and it goes on and on.*

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(family planning in the land of no boats.)

“To say anyone ought not to have a child is the same as wishing you yourself were never born. Might as well walk backwards and sweep the ground.”

A string of boys walked through black paint and across a gymnasium floor, and were severely punished, and their mothers wrung their hands: *be careful, for I myself was*

conceived on St. Valentine's Day. Under a tepid hand, a match is struck, but time passes. Adheres and fades the heat

to simple ashes and a pool
of fashionably colored lamp oil,
on which we sail, left behind.
It would be an unkind gesture
to request a remainder, yet
I do it all the time. I am
waiting, as I write this,
for a boat, a big break;

my heart is heavy
and irritable no matter
how you move your hands
over my body. Are they
where they've always
been? So hard

to please you now—
you have become
cruel and remind me eagerly
that there are no boats
to wait for. Also you have
become tepid. But please,

I ask of you this one
forgiveness—leave
it for me and I will be
so grateful. I was for
all of it, but now
I am not sure

what any of it was anymore,
or if I just remembered any gentle sailing,
called it heat.

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(coming of age in the land of no boats.)

The swan, as you would not guess, is
in truth a remarkably cruel animal. Mother and I

stopped to feed one, once, on a beach,
and when we ran out of food he rose to an awful height

and careened over the sand, and chased us
back to our car. Even then, it was becoming clear to me—

that the world is fast and hungry,
and wants inevitably more than you've brought—

to be killed by a swan—
what an obituary. My father once collected a list of

strange deaths, to remind
himself, it could be worse. Now, he looks at the mundane

and incremental stillness of his

only son's body, and has little to say, while eight hundred
miles South, another man
who kissed me on my graduation day wants to hang himself
in his jail cell, and there is nothing
I can do about it. We have no boats here, we have no need
for them. On a strip of sand
by the river, the water birds are strange and hungry.
We do not attempt
to feed them these days. We have solemnly learned.

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(multi-million dollar tourist industry in the land of no boats.)

home to many fine vehicles though you will notice a refreshing lack of boats
because of this you will have to go down our many picturesque rapids &
waterfalls in a specially designed shoe or pie-tin our resorts boast the finest
accommodations replete with cable television swimming pools hot tubs
dining facilities & suites with many modern amenities the sandpiper inn for
example offers a waterbed meant to remind you in sleep neither of a canoe
on a huge pond nor a great ship out on the open water in a huge sea for
example the mediterranean or caribbean one why wait come visit don't worry
too much about the differences we hope you enjoy your stay & don't even
think about sailing off towards the vast & beautiful sky in one of man's many
useless constructions you will not even want to here but if you do be warned.

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(fine dining in the land of no boats.)

Darling mind your peppers if you poke them like that they begin to leak
and you haven't touched
your trout and it is quite clear
that you think the gravy is simply awful in which case pass me the gravy car.
You never could be trusted
with these sorts of things
always smuggling oyster crackers into the dining room and setting them afloat in the soup
as you do. I don't
understand why you won't
be direct like me and say whether you have lost your appetite, whether
you are hungry
or not.

*

(early childhood development in the land of no boats.)

There are always warning signs.

For example if your son sets into motion, on a small puddle somewhat resembling in color and mystery the ocean itself, if the boy places a small item made of paper, tape, and tongue depressors

down in the water and blows at it with his small mouth, this might be a good time to discuss with him the values of your family.

In the early nineteen hundreds, hundreds of children began constructing small boats of wood, and larger and then again larger ones until finally, it was possible to ride in them safely, and even

after the prohibited toys were taken away, the children were left with this sensation of sailing for many years, and would tell their children and grandchildren sadly and carefully about the delicious

sensation of floating unconnected, and for the most part dry, in their inventions, those supposedly wonderful things that we have done away with,

because what crime worse than willfully untying the rope, than willfully climbing in and floating off into the unrecognizable ocean, away from the

unrecognizable land?