

A script for the video
BEYOND THE NATION STATE
I WANT TO DREAM
DORINE VAN MEEL

AND EARLY IN THE HOUR on our way to the airport,
where we separate in opposite directions,
the heavy weight of our suitcases next to us,
you lean back,
your body tired because of midnight conversations,
you lower your gaze away from me,
leaving pauses,
in between fragments,
of cryptic sentences.

And I find myself holding my breath to hear them,
all the gaps you leave.
To listen beyond the limitations of language,
in which we struggle to meet.

And early in the hour I wake up to the sounds of the new heroes that roam the streets.
(Capitalism redeploys us, workers.)
Swapping the blue jeans for a white blouse,
to go with my red tie,
a foamed latte in one hand,
I push with the other the trolley that carries the fresh-looking children,
colourful logos on their machine woven sweaters,
into the corporately sponsored nurseries I push them,
where ever-cheerful care workers await them,
confident smiles,
innocent jokes,
and at the horizon looms the promise of what might be yet another productive day.

(The need for new national anthems.)

Fruitless attempts to fall asleep to the sounds of my national narrative,
that speaks of us,
of them,
of those.

(Fear filling the veins of our bodies.)

But early in the hour,
when we meet in the kitchen,
my hair still damp from the rain,
I ask you,
quietly,
what it is we can do,
and you,
hesitating to answer,
draw closer.

Because, perhaps, the question that confronts us is not what to do,
but instead what to be,
and how to be more.

And early in the hour I wake up to the sounds of your questions,
do you remember, you ask,

how this country once, proudly, stated its supposed tolerance?

How this country, proudly, declared its commitments towards—

Do you remember how once,
not so many decades ago,
blue-jeaned youth marched through the streets of the capital,
slogans in one hand,
a raised fist in the air?

My memory, fading.
Streets remain, empty.

And when early in the hour,
by accident we meet again,
your touch sudden and warm from cycling,
you shyly look away,
when I tell you,
too loud,
that the question is not *how* this is possible.

(The daily illusions they feed us.)

And in the darkened streets of the city,
you park your bike next to mine,
half drunk you sit down,
your body close,

to share one bottle of midnight coke.

But what to do with this image,
this celebration,
confidently it claims the pages of my history books,
courageous sailors,
tough but fair traders,
an open minded people.

Oh yes, I will practice my canon, proudly,
a golden image,
of stark blue skies,
of dams and dykes and waterworks,
masters and guilds,
and how they transformed into dedicated directors,
offshore engineers,
shiny-looking cars on lease claim our streets,
the logos of well-designed brands stuck to their windows,
one empty baby seat in the back.

And during the last days of our encounter,
you look me straight into the eyes,
to tell me that perhaps the weather is poor in this part of Europe because of bad juju,
a spell that we cast upon ourselves,
due to years and years of—

And early in the hour,
when we meet for the workshop,
young sun light spills into the room,
I start by saying I am not a teacher
and you are not my students,
or maybe all of us are teachers,
and all of us students, and what will that allow.

(The contracts we sign to keep us in place.)

You see, our encounters are limited in time,
sporadic meetings followed by long lasting intervals,
in which I look forward,
and back,
and imagine us to live,
in a different time scale,
a life shared from a distance,
stretched out,
over time.

And to feel reassured,
by the knowledge,
of your existence.

Fruitless attempts to fall asleep to the sounds of the national narrative,
in which history is understood as linear, as progress.

A narrative in which we will move to a place,
better,
for all of us.

A narrative,
of upward movement,
of eventually,
of in time,
of at some point,
in the future,
yes at some future date,
this narrative of step by step,
of this step first,
the narrative of one day . . .
Of some day . . .

But when early in the hour I wake
the boys are still buttoning up their shirts.
Carefully folding the fringes of their collar,
they dress to gather,
for the conference,
in the city,
in which I lay awake.

And I wonder what to do with this image of the nation,
this celebration,
of what you called “civilization,”
placing your cigar in one hand,
(luxury goods from overseas)
whilst drawing,
with the other,
one straight line,
in the sand.

Well-kept moustaches,
glimmering medals,
dividing up a continent,
stretching out your one hand,
to reach for agreement,
whilst drawing,
with the other,
a long straight line (in the sand)—

Classical music, sugar and coffee, claims the foreground.

Oh! Beyond the nation state I want to dream!
Beyond its lines and lies!

Beyond the borders of these binaries,
these barriers—that keep us,
(from meeting).

And instead, to believe that *here*.
To believe that *now*.
Yes, to believe that *at this very time*.
At the very same time.
From within we open,
or open up,
to what you offered us,
as the wild beyond.

Because this you see, is a farewell,
to progress,
this is a farewell to *then*,
to *there*.
To one day . . .
To some day.

This is a farewell to *but*,
to *maybe not*,
to *unfeasible*,
impractical,
non-viable and unworkable.

A farewell to logical,
to rational,
to well meaning and well meant.

For our dreams will be wild, will go beyond your confident smiles, your civilising lines, your whispered lies.

And if to learn, means to lose.
If to move, means to step back, for you to step up.
Yes, if to move means to lose, so we (as you said) can make the crossing.

(And at night, you whisper not to worry, since mostly, this is a surrender, into the project of living.)

But when early in the hour I wake,
the crowd is still drinking.
Carrying their bodies so gracefully,
expressing their arguments so thoughtfully,
fluently casting their comments on one topic,
to the next.

And lowering my gaze away you whisper what if I do not want this world either,
in which there is no place for—

And instead to sleep next to you,
waking up to your perspective,
to the sounds of your thoughts in your language,

And in the last moments of your lecture you smile to say, there are only collective answers, to collective questions.

(To be formed of many.)

And early in the hour when I wake,
digital sunshine fills the room.
The body mute, virtual spaces through which we stroll.
And your voice, reinstated, resonates:
“She who finds no way to rest,
cannot long survive the battle.”

(But to know, is not to act.)
(To dislike, is not to intervene.)

And after weeks of intellectual exchange,
I turn to you to make love in the dark.
Merciful gestures,
increasing impatience.
But when early in the hour I wake,
the crowd’s still smiling,
expanding their bodies so graciously,
announcing their opinions so eloquently,
sipping the import white wine from—

And when early in the hour you wake up to the sounds of my worries,
to calm us both you narrate,
from the top of your head, Oedipus Rex,
who blinds himself,
after learning the truth,
so long suppressed,
of his own implication,
in the crime.

And what is needed for me to see the violence,
of the corporate cocktails,
double-faced monsters,
a deep need to stay blind.

And the rivers, once frozen, end in harbours.
Metal church bells, melt into cannons.

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