

STILLP • INT  
A MAGAZINE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

# YOUR LOVE IS A TRANSIENT DREAM

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## CLARIE GOR

I. Your love is a quiet, arrogant thing in the pit of your abdomen when you come to me. I'm standing at the entrance of my building unsure as to what my only meal of the day will be. I could go right and get a coffee cake, or left and get chips. You're so stealthy, I only notice when you're right in front of me, your worn out sneakers grazing my pedicured toes. I push but you are immovable, so I look up instead, and something in my chest cracks. You stand there beaming, waiting for me to gain some composure and then you take both of my hands in yours. "Listen, I saw you standing there and got butterflies in my stomach." You bring my hand to your abdomen. "Do you feel how hot it is?" I yank my hands away. You go back a few steps. "I'm not kidding, I still love you." Man, fuck you.



*How I Choose to Spend the Remainder of my Birthing Years (still) – Sarah Lasley*

II. Your love is a patient, tireless thing waiting for me to exit my building. It is two minutes to seven on a Thursday morning and I am late for class. At the school gate, you tap the back of my head, then the back of my neck, and finally the small of my back. I turn around. "I need you to have an amazing day." Your right hand, promise ring and all, is on your chest. "I didn't get a chance to look at you earlier ... like really look." Your eyes are teary. It must be the morning breeze. "God! Look at your face!" I stare at your moving lips, my eyes dry and unblinking. Eventually, I turn around and continue walking. "Have a great day," you shout

after me. I resist turning around for as long as I can, but right before I get onto a different path, I turn expecting not to see you, but you're only a few meters behind. I walk quaking, all the way to class.

III. Your love is a smiling, annoying thing when you appear outside my door. I am struggling with the padlock, cursing, when I feel your breath on my neck. "Baby? Your keys fit." My toes quiver and of course my keys fit. I lean against the door. "Aren't you leaving?" "No. I hate it here." My tongue shivers inside my mouth. "Please leave." "Please no." You brush your thumb against my upper lip. I let it linger for three seconds then slap your hand away. It is slapping air. I look down at my hands. "I don't want to see you." You vanish quietly. I stumble into the house and lie on the floor, heaving. My roommate lies down beside me. "Who were you talking to?" I try and try but my mouth refuses to say your name. She understands me just the same. "Oh honey, still?" "He won't go," I sob into her neck. "Just give it time. Just give him time. He'll move on."

IV. Your love is a still, silent thing in my bed. You are lying on your back, just your head turned to me. Your eyes are open, your eyeballs rolled all the way back. For a second, before I remember to be terrified, I am tempted to poke at your eyes, just to see how quickly the pockets of white can fill with blood, if at all. And then I scream and you jump out of the bed and I run to the opposite side of the room and slide, shaking, onto the floor. Your lower lip twitches. "I just ... I don't understand why you're so scared of me." I'm sorry. I'm crying. You hover around the door. "Do you want me to leave?" I don't know. "Where's my roommate?" Something between confusion and exasperation crosses your face. "The fuck? I don't watch over your roommate?"

V. Your love is a cautious, hopeful thing standing outside my house. I start to run to you but stop halfway, realizing I couldn't possibly reach you. You stretch out your hands, beckoning me to you. I close my eyes and wish you away. When I open my eyes, you're squatting by my side, holding my face. I panic, thinking I can't feel my face but I soon realize that it is your hand I can't feel. I get my phone and with sweaty hands, call my roommate. You snatch the phone away and it clatters onto the floor. A single tear drops down your right eye. I don't wipe it off. The work of erasing a loved one is, after all, internal.

VI. Your love is an elusive, evanescent thing when my roommate finds me curled up on the side of the highway, trying to scrape you off the tarmac. I am limp when she drags me away and puts me to sleep. I dream of you, running across the highway, too impatient to get to the footbridge, swearing you're faster, even bigger than the oncoming Vitz. I giggle at first, then again wake up before the screaming and screeching and cursing. I stay awake afterwards, peering into the darkness, imagining it stretching and spinning and swallowing me whole.

VII. Your love is a familiar, frightening thing when I open my door the next morning. Here you are, lying on my doorstep—as dead as you've been since June.

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*Clarie Gor* is a Kenyan writer and Journalist. She creates work that centers African women and feminisms, that is an exploration of the various dynamics of violence and the possibilities in conversation and collective imaginations. Her writing has been published in *Equipoise: 2020 Anthology of the Nairobi Writing Academy*, *Catapult*, *SmokeLong Quarterly*, and *The Audacity*. Her flash nonfiction essay "Spectacle" was nominated for the Pushcart Prize anthology.

*Sarah Lasley* is an artist from Louisville, Kentucky. She has screened internationally at film festivals and universities, notably the Cairo Video Festival in Egypt and National Chiao Tung University in Taiwan. Her museum and gallery exhibitions include the Katonah Museum of Art and Leslie Hellar Workspace in New York and LAXART in Los Angeles. Recently she was awarded the grand prize for Blue Star Contemporary's Projection/Projektion video program in collaboration with Darmstädter Sezession. She holds an MFA from Yale School of Art and a BFA from the University of Louisville and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. The artwork shown here is a still of the full work shown at stillpointmag.org.

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