

At the Edge of Sweden

i am six hours away from you. at the edge of sweden cannons fire over the sea, on each other and on fields of yellow flowers. marks in certain shapes to certain eyes become words become language become ideas, sorry sartre. he wrote a tragedy once, a story about misunderstanding and misrecognition and tragic flaws, but someone thought it was a triumph of understanding. darling dies alone, and someone thought it was about two people who know each other so well that they don't need words or pictures. nobody would buy a book without pictures, he says, and in the next breath: i have no desire to put more images in the world. you're ruining the joy of discovery. he says i have no desire to put more images in the world.

he writes beautiful books that nobody reads. beauty has nothing to do with its insides, he says; its insides are rubbish. sweden has nothing to do with you. he collects failed relationships in a box, left alone until the seeds rattle, for rainy days or other times which demand evidences of Things That Weren't. (always with majuscules.) in between yellow fields and swedish meatballs, six ways to say the word "lovely" and none of them translate quite properly. faux pas déchirer mon cœur. he sighs, lamenting books that nobody reads.

lovely because of once or twice, maybe three if you stretch it, but it was late and neither one of us paid attention, twisted inside quilts and flannel and not quite warm enough. the lovely who can't or won't slow down, so i lie next to him and close my eyes and maybe i can slow down for the both of us. i think you should leave now, over and over. relations of others are not relations of knowledge. i think maybe we don't know each other as well as you think we do, he says from the other side of the ocean, from the other end of a cannon, voice crackling with static. a danish king hiding his silver in a swedish cave to guard it from pirates, in the smallest closed set containing *a*. (please don't leave.) i lie to you all the time. everything threatens its own existence.

i think you should leave now. four months is enough to say goodbye (enough time for the skin of a pomegranate to become a hard shell). Something is equal to the opposite of Something Else. across yellow fields, across the water, a story which confuses its characters, a story whose incomplete sentences make up an inconsistent plot that ends with a beginning. paragraphs about nothing or about very little. a stargazer fool who dreams pictures of things that weren't; an arrow which never reaches the apple because it only travels half the distance at a time. (i am six hours away from you.) the transient nature of even this relationship.