

(DEAD LOVERS)

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writing through
Anais Nin***

DEAD LOVERS

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Select Anachronica

Kate Morgan

I

You sit on the step, in the sun,
and you spill your coffee, apologise.
Their eyes are shut to the heat the warm,
they say *don't worry, it's your loss, none got on me.*
Their socks are dry still.
The coffee stain runs clean the following day
with the rain.

All the above are facts, true blobs that record events
that happened in that sequence. They are listed facts,
chronological. Yet — the fact is only fact in the action
of its moment. After its moment, it is just a truth that
was true at a certain time,

and that time is in the past.

The oldest fact is the first: *you sit on the step, in the
sun*, and it prevails for most of the sequence. But — in
time, it becomes false in a number of ways:

with bodies moving,
with weather being what it is,
with *you* peeling into you and me.

Them and you.

In the days that follow, when you're separately alone
both truth and fact begin to ellipse...all these true

blobs of your time together, you and them, concur to something other. Later still, when they try to write, happened things try to get committed to language and what was *present* can only be written about as they are encountering it pressing into the past. This pressure is also a funnelling, a snorkelled heightened thing.

Deeper still, the slick of a moment pours away, from you, from itself.

*You can write the past, and you can write the future,
but you cannot write the present.¹*

Can you write in the mind while an action is going on, though? Can those two fingertips, a feeling and words for it, touch in unison? Can a phrase, an act, be tongued and written in synchronicity?

— And, can you even spell it right
if
we are living in another world?
if
our having bodies is a farce, an anachronism?²

You wonder how to use their body,
how to carry it, how to enact it,
if they believe that its very being is a farce — a lie,
and a lie too that is anachronistic: that's out of time.

You injure yourself
send them photos of the scrapes on your
shoulder and side
and these are as explicit—

Your body is open to the cold of your room,
they can feel the cold.

What is anachronic is that their body's presence exceeds the time you are together, that they do feel this cold, from distance, and from the vantage too, of hours later. Anachronism is things off-kilter, maybe an offsetting, or — two bodies running parallel but not to the same metre because your metre is not their metre because

time is convulsed.
Out of time with itself,
it knows neither of its elbows.

They realise that for minutes, longer, they've been thinking of your mouth's volume as two times, three times, their own. A being whose actions seem anachronistic (they think the word), that alters its location. This is not a mouth but some extra-worldly vehicle, this smudges over, this moves freely, refocuses, escalates. Spatially a kind of ship.

Later, they ask if you've thought about Wednesday, and you have, but — only of the way they acted, how they stood on the top of your feet, not

of words spoken.

Of pressure,
of the pads of each of their toes,
of the weight of their two heels against the tops
of your toes.

Now, unspeaking across a table, sharing alone a line between two eyes, two eyes, you both think about that Wednesday. That day widens into the space of this day,

a moment, a beat. Its cadence lifts, lengthens...you
paste Wednesday into the now, recur it again again,

'til, you both have the cadence of a bulb flowering,³
that cadence that is applied to the memory of the thing,
that cadence that exists in the whelk of the silence
between you.

As hindthought repeats each statement (silent),
each action (static), they become stamen, flossy with
pollen...and maybe all that the anachronism is is that
you are *both* in another world, different from the one
you seem to be in, but one in common.

We are living in another world.

It's still day. Time presses into you through the front
door. Your anachrony meets the chronic daylight. To be
anachronistic is to be out of sorts with chronos, god of
time. In disagreement about what is time. Unfeigned
by their metrics, not just out of sync with time, but
outwith it altogether: antagonists to the notion of
it all. You do not know if you and they tried to time
any thing you'd get it right. No thing can be itemised
or peeled-from to a human minute, because each is
happening at once, unfielded:

together and apart.

Words got down to show total surface brittleness,
where temporal material tenderness, from object to
object, matter to matter, to body, to matter, to object's
all flung up — and keenly recognised: the lukewarm
coffee's uneven spill and quickening cool against

the sun-heated stone step, each changing each's surface qualities. Then the pleasure of the way the rain, usually so aloof in matters of people, thought to intervene, washed these evidences clear away. Things (rain, stone, a cuff) are desirous, contain the momentum of agency, seek to kiss in their own ways. Somewhere, they read that the lamp whose oil drips and burns the sleeping cupid, waking them,

*wanted to "touch so lovely a body – to
kiss it in a lamp's way."*⁴

A lamp-kiss is contact.

The light of the lamp kisses you, the handle of the nice knife as you slice kisses you, the floorboards kiss your soles singly and in pairs. You move across them. The chair in which you sit kisses you, returns a little of your pressure on it back. The sheets kiss at their corners. They are dry from hanging, can feel their own crisp salinity. You kiss the sheets together as you fold them, in half, in half, in half again, each becoming a loose even self-contained thing, not flighting like an open sheet. Stacked in the chest, these folded kisses are longer, more intentional.

A lamp-kiss is pressing.

Night, too, presses, gloaming. You are in the kitchen together. You read from their cabinet, in their hand, a list of words to describe the ideas that might fill this body of writing. They've written, in phthalo green, *Pressing Weight*, then added, in pencil, + *specificity*.

You ask for this.

—might contact, then, pressing, be a form of anachrony? A counter to time that holds the farce of their bodies? When time (or anything else) is pressing, it means imminence, which is maybe as close to being in-time-with as we can get. Closer than a clock. An assurance of a tied reality, even if it isn't this one.

You survey their belly like it's a plate of pasta,
maybe shells,
where you can singly pick but where each bite is
ostensibly the same.
Picking judiciously what bit to kiss with
a concentration unnecessary.
You attends to this,
your face serious, thinking.

Is contact the only measure of time we can rely on?

Our having bodies is a farce.

We are living in another world.





Biographies

Evelyn Wh-ell (they/them) is a researcher and writer, currently completing a PhD in butch and transmasc aesthetics. Their critical and creative writing has appeared in *Another Gaze*, *b l u s h lit*, and *Cambridge Literary Review*, and they are the host of 'The Disenfranchised Things Talk Show' on No Bounds Radio. They are interested in plot-holes and plot-twists, theories of cultural transmission and bad parodies.

Natascha Nanji (she/her) is an artist and writer whose research unearths speculative histories from the future and the past. She is interested in nomadism and the migration of people and objects. Natascha is co-editor & publisher of *LAY IT ON THICK*, a literary magazine about queer desire and erotics.

Kate Morgan (they/them) is a writer and artist based in Glasgow, interested in things we do with our hands, in the words that we use, in the labour of work and its effects on the body, and in what's for dinner.

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Sticky Fingers is an intra-dependant publisher based in London. It consists of designers and writers Kaiya Waerea (she/her) & Sophie Paul (she/her).

Sticky Fingers leave the residue of the body on paper; Sticky Fingers thinks referencing is a love language; Sticky Fingers reads masturbatorily; Sticky Fingers is learning; Sticky Fingers is feminist; Sticky Fingers is filled with dread; Sticky Fingers is nauseated from scrolling; Sticky Fingers is concerned with the sensuality of being, feeling, writing; *Sticky Fingers are on the tip of your tongue.*



