

Letters

Judith Fitzgerald

maudlin *a. & n.* 1. *a* Weakly or tearfully sentimental, esp. of tearful and effusive stage of drunkenness. 2. *n.* Weak or mawkish sentiment. [a. f. n. (w. ref. to pictures of weeping Mary Magdalen), ME f. OF *Madelaine* f. eccl. L *Magdalena* MAGDALEN]

We know this. Thursday evening depression descends, a blanket of tiny scars and knives, simply passive, adverbial at best. West, west: Why do you refuse me? My head aches, my hands splinter, my heart consistently shatters in the frame of your reference, antecedent to far too many years to reify, rectify. Hard times, hard music, each of us hardened against the beautiful psychic vulnerability, the open note, the pure pitch of pain.

Yes, I confess, my friends know my name but you may call me *Maudlin*. Hurt—no—stunned, I stumble through days and nights with the silence of self an interior exile. Abdicant. Supplicant. My hair intuits your destiny. May I? I ought. Teach me to transcend the fiasco, to learn penitence, patience, consciousness.

I always (all ways) love you. From the moment you stop me that brilliant spring day. Confident. Dazzling. That summer, watching and catching glimpses of a yellow windbreaker returning from Ireland; my heart a fragile bird, unnamed, yellow. I always love you and you always disbelieve me. I always want you and you always want a sideshow. My body a book of matches; my mind a vessel. Year by year I live without you here in my hands, in my heart.

And these men. I want to erase you from my arms, remove all traces of your beautiful cunning. Flesh a shroud of love these times. Some women forget; others do not fall; my spectacular misfortune: Loving you until I forget me. The attempts to lose, not myself, but you, in other men. The night on Belvedere? I remember motives; recollect actions; but memory draws a blank when it comes to the act of sex. Amnesia in spite of itself. Love in spite of love.

You taught me to hurt with hard clarity. The ex-hypothesis of my existence—*if he was fire, then she must be wood*—predicated on the futility of belief. We disappoint, grow old, discount. I love you and hate you for loving you and hate myself for the same reason.

*Let's leave these lovers wondering why
they cannot have each other. . .*

I ask too little: To open your hands and find love blossoming; to open your heart and discover a raging need for calm, and silence, and safety; to open your eyes to the pathetic love in which I wallow. I ask too much: Consume. Consummate.

I slash away at my hair and ribbons of blood bathe your feet.

Références

¹Maurice Blanchot, in *Marguerite Duras*, Paris, Editions L'Albatross, 1979.

²Annie Leclerc, *Parole de femme*, Paris, Grasset, 1974, p. 8.

³Jacques Derrida, *Spurs, Nietzsche's Styles*, translated by Barbara Harlow, Chicago, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 55.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵Claire Lejeune, *L'Oeil de la lettre*, Belgique, Editions Le Cornier, 1984, p. 31.

⁶Derrida, *op. cit.* p. 11.

⁷Roland Barthes, *La Bruissement de la langue*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1984.