

narrative

Sybil Plank

récit

ce récit porte-t-il sur l'amour ? elle parcourt les rues de montréal, pendant une tempête de neige, en route vers un bar de la rue sainte-catherine, en route vers un commencement. dans la ville, dans la tempête, dans le bar, elle s'interroge sur la signification des noms de rues et sur les signes de l'amour. dans le bar, elle rencontre des femmes, des femmes qui se parlent et se touchent parmi les tables de billard. elle s'assoit près de deux femmes, marissa et "tu". est-elle en train de tomber en amour avec "tu" ? comment savoir ? peut-être n'est-ce qu'un effet de la nuit ? la nuit est un désert sous un clair de lune, dit marissa. on peut tomber en amour en un instant, pense-t-elle. beaucoup plus tard, après le commencement dans le bar, elle regarde "tu" marcher vers elle. s'agit-il d'amour ?

is this about love? is this about falling in love? i watch you walk down a hallway toward a door i am standing behind glass, looking through. is this about the moment of recognition or a continuation of what began at another time? as i watch you is it a voyeuristic moment or the instant of recognition? you open the door and we move toward each other. is it now, when you are near to me, this gentle pulling and the knowledge that i am slowly coming toward you.

or did it begin at another time. is this the beginning? on the night of history and warnings, images of trees blown down and oceans smashing over walls, city streets disappearing buildings engulfed into white. the storm of the century. i shut off the television and leave the apartment, closed in walled with writing piled up on the desk, strewn over the floor. i go out into windrush rattling the streetlights, shaking the trees. snow shining hard as grit into my eyes. cold cresting and i almost fall as i look up the sky is white as day that stretches glowing over. as i wade through drifts and reach the road, snow falling like a kiss.

waves shatter into mountains. i wait for the bus grey shape is the space of a door folding open. warmth inside, brightly lit, dry seats and

the other people who smile and say hello. the bus drifts down st urbain becomes a desert this is not sand this is water frozen into movement silent screen as i look out of the window the landscape unrecognizable. the driver talks to a woman who is standing next to her, she stops the bus and waits for a group of people who struggle to reach the road. we joke with each other about the storm and how beautiful it feels, greeting everyone who boards.

a solitary car passes like a ghost. i leave the bus and walk along st catherine. cold against my skin, the storm giving me momentum. a woman is singing and running the other way. the three men who laugh with me about having to pull the doors open against the snow banked as they go into kox and i go to k2.

what is the significance of the names of streets, the names of bars? to situate them in montreal, to place them in a specific context? on this night that is wind and whiteout, streets obscured the city changed. i look back, once, before i go inside.

maya leans over the counter and smiles, zorah puts down the bottles she is rearranging and kisses her on the cheek. we talk to each other while i wait to gather myself, catch my breath, warmth into my body. shifting beams and colours shuttering in an empty space, the deserted dancefloor filled with strobes and lightening.

marissa walks toward me, embracing. everyone is here, she says.

the pool table, a counter squaring off the back wall. women are talking to each other. virginia embraces emily holds antoinette's hand, colette buys renee a drink, nicole tells simone, angela and audre a story. rebecca and vita play pool, moving to give each other space, poise and balance, the sharp crack of spheres are planets stars moons suns colliding going awry. the two women laugh.

marissa and i sit close to each other. i want to paint this night, she says.

you are here. the three of us, conversation, gestures. women are dancing together. what it means when we can look and smile at each other. i have seen these women on other nights when the floor is crowded and it is difficult to move, until now it has been impossible to speak with them.

what does the gaze mean when we are moving there are no words between us anything can be said. it is beautiful outside, i am looking, we recognize each other, is it desire or is it this night. the conversation makes it possible to hold the gaze. and what we do not voice.

and what the women say to each other, we are in a desert sandstorm and covering, nicole tells simone, you are beautiful in the morning sunlight washing golden over you, vita says to rebecca, when you come you are suspended, your body arcing and i am holding, virginia answers, i am saying that i love you when i tell a story we are walking down a street sun going down gold and crimson bricked into darkened buildings against a night city sky. we know that you love, natalie says, the sky was red at the horizon the moon was silvered round and caught in the branches of a tree. renee says, snow glitters blue flame of sparks falling.

tonight anything can happen, marissa says, this is a desert seen in moonlight. you say, waves cover the street an ocean frozen.

outside the bar the snow gusts against walls. water crystalline prised blue as the sky falls.

this is the night when everything will change, this is the beginning is it the beginning.

it can happen in an instant to fall in love.

we talk outside, snow covering our coats, shining blue sparks in our hair. our plans to meet again.

marissa runs laughing into the storm, her voice swept back as she calls goodbye. you and i briefly kiss and do not look back to watch each other leave.

i walk home, snow whipcurls along the street. it takes an instant to fall in love. this night washing over white and stretching out. and i think do i think of walking with you. wind bending the trees, shaking the streetlights. my footprints are almost gone, snow streaming down and covering the traces of my presence.

inside is warmth and wooden floors, the window i stand behind glass and watch this sky as bright as day.

is this about falling in love? is it the moment when i see you again and wait for you to walk down a hallway to open a door. what does it mean when we look at each other. breath, heartbeat, suspended. what does it mean when we move close to each other. i am moving toward you.

and i think of you as i walk down a street, trees heavy with leaves, grass and sidewalks glistening. i think of how you touched my face as we looked at each other outside a bar on st catherine, desert drifts against windows, blue sparks in our hair, the gesture where we begin are we beginning to find the words.