

I want to hold something


*that will last forever*



Harley Bell

ramblings from the depths of winter





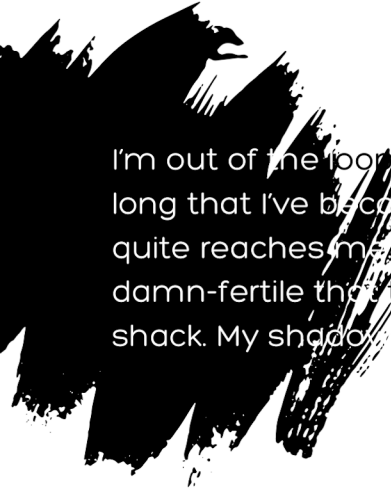
Shit, you still there man?

I keep hearing things on the grape vine. Terrible things. Life is closer and closer to the line. All of us trying to put food on the table. The future feels so far away when I'm hungry in the now. I've been hearing about retirees sitting in the dark because they cannot afford the power bill. I'm terrified of growing old. What have I been doing with my years?

I've been isolated. The city was too much. Too many people. But honestly, the cost of living pushed me to the fringes. Or maybe, I ran away. Shit. You were always better at this than me.

When did I start complaining so much? Shit. I keep waking up in the night. There's this black puppy, scratching at my door. It's barking. Always barking. The type of bark that pierces the heart. I don't know where it came from. But it lives with me now. Nothing will calm it down. No pats. No belly rubs. Nothing. It's always there, trying to lick my face. Is that love?





I'm out of the loop. I've been living in a ghost town for so long that I've become a ghost. The sun is there but never quite reaches me. Like the neighbour's soil is so god-damn-fertile that the trees have grown taller than my shack. My shadow, shack, man.

I need to get out.

I went for a walk today. I thought it would do me good. I've been craving connection. I can't keep talking to the trees. I need people on the street, a local café, a pub. I miss the early risers waiting for the bus. I want to be a straight shooter but I don't know what the truth is anymore. I keep hearing about these people, man. They're buying up everything. It's out of control. Stockpilers. Investors. Rich cunts. Fuck, I shouldn't use that word.

Don't hang up. Shit. It's fear and greed. Nausea and anxiety. One man with two houses, a holiday home and a boat. I used to think it had meaning. I used to believe in beauty. The type of beauty that wants to be polished on a Sunday afternoon. Does anyone know what it means?

Have you ever looked in the mirror and seen everything you loathe?

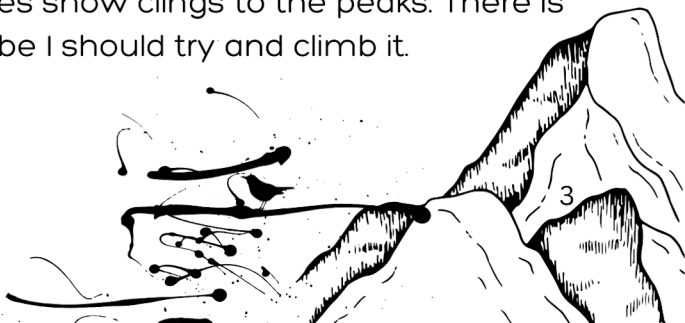


It wasn't always like this. I remember seeing universes inside my irises. Now, I feel like a black hole collapsing upon itself. It makes me nauseous.

But you know me, I'm trying my best. Trying to stay positive. It's good to talk, man.

I keep checking my feeds, hoping for good news. Shit, I've been trying to find a moment of peace for weeks now.

There's this mountain range, I can see it from the end of the street. Sometimes snow clings to the peaks. There is ice on the wind. Maybe I should try and climb it.



You got somewhere to sleep tonight? Yeah, I know. I know. I never thought I would miss cradling a briefcase to my chest. Shit, I'm even starting to miss polishing my shoes. But you're right. There is no going back.

Once the night has descended, it's a long wait till dawn. I never really appreciated the safety of sleeping on a soft mattress. I don't know when it happened but it's like all the dreamers suddenly awoke to the barking dogs in the night.



Any moment now, the winds could erupt and sweep clean our stake on sanity. I remember being attacked by billboards and posters and neon. I was hounded by cars driving up and down and I'm just there, smoking exhaust fumes, thinking, thank fuck I'm alive. I'm alive with the sight of security guards behind glass doors and swipe card access and always the smilers are smiling at something. I'm alive with the sweat forming on the brows of receding hairlines. I'm alive in the scaffolding erected to repaint buildings, buckets being dropped to splatter the pavement in white. I still can't bring myself to comb my hair.

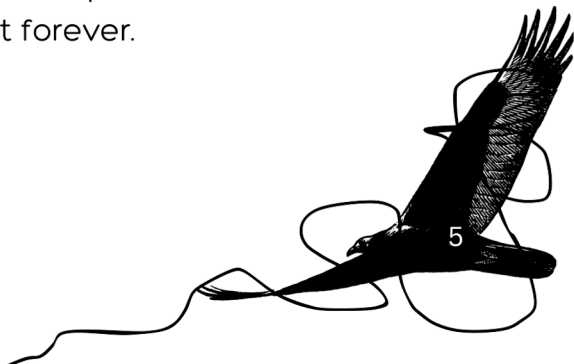
Fuck. It domesticates my devotion to the wild.

Look at me.

All around, I see puppies collared before they become dogs. Puppies leashed by the neck every time they want to go for a walk. Maybe it's safer that way, better that way. My way can't be the right way when the creatures do not understand the sovereign space surrounding our bodies. All those leaping claws. The beasts of the black jaw do not understand the word no.

I never used to think about the great expanse. Or how fragile dreams become, when you finally decide to follow them. I never thought I would miss driving up and down the petrol thirsty streets, assailed by stop signs and traffic lights: all signals saying slow down. But exhaust pipes speed up to the great plumes: beautiful, effervescent, whirlwinds that quickly fade from memory. Shit. I never belonged there. But it never bothered me until it bothered those around me. Then I felt dusty. Dirty. Unworthy. I never thought I would feel this overwhelmed. Have you ever looked into the eyes of a puppy and felt, guilt? Perhaps, I really should spend all my time running in the wild.

I've been having inner city cravings, man. Running across roads, McSnacking between traffic lights. I'm killing time. There is no place for a rubber wheeler like me. I'm nostalgic. I want a polystyrene cup of coffee. I want to hold something that will last forever.



Now I'm a compost heap, slowly degrading back into the earth. The hours are long and dark. If I really focus, I can hear the ocean. Shit. Maybe it's a lake. I can only hope there is a piece of myself floating in the deep. Shit. The wild held promises but I forgot about the cicadas in their choirs. Those maddening wings. I was dreaming beside the water and the waves were louder than my thoughts. I feel like I'm talking too much like my problems are more important than yours. Do you remember our Saturday morning missions to the market, jostling among the carrots?


Maybe, I'm just tired. The sun rises and it is time to get up, when moon rises it is time to sleep. I feel like a blank piece of paper that has been scribbled into a list. I've underlined statements like when the future feels far away, there are always more bills trying to find your mailbox. Shit. I'm noticing the decades wearing against my bones. I want to leave but there's nowhere to go. Shit. A full tank of gas doesn't go very far, not anymore. I am unexpectedly angry, upset, distracted, distraught, disgusted, confined, confused and intrinsically connected to the neighbours. I feel like a fly in someone else's web, like a clause in a contract like a human-product paying someone else's mortgage. It's like I'm at the beach and the sunscreen isn't strong enough and there are jelly fish in the water and the wind picks up and I remember the feeling of salt through my hair. Then there is sand in my eyes and I finally clear them to find my car has a parking ticket.



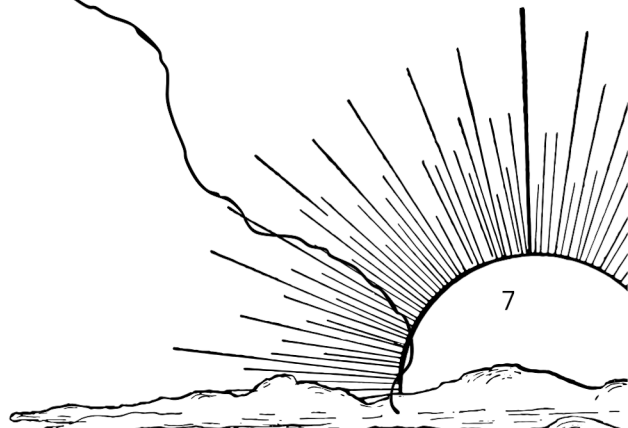


Shit. The world has become so loud and there is no way to turn the volume down. I tried to turn myself up. Way up. I've been talking myself busy for so many years and now I'm here and it's a stress all of its own. What if I missed the break in the clouds because I was inside, talking about the weather?

What if I kept changing the channel and all I get it is ads? Shit. When did I become the one that talks in the movies, that glares at strangers in the street?



Shit. You still there?



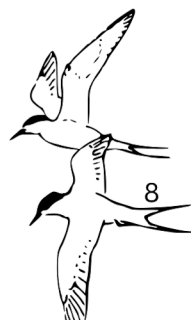
What were you doing bashing through the bush  
when the path had already been dug?

Why were you crossing rivers, bare chested, carrying a  
bag above your head when the bridge could have carried  
you to the other side?

Why were you throwing stones across the lake when  
they were already perfect upon the shore?

Why were you climbing trees, breaking branches, eating  
berries, making leaves into tea when you could have  
plucked the weeds, watered the flowers  
and become a gardener?

We're still talking throughout the years.  
I want to hold something that will last forever.  
Anyway, that's my shit. Tell me about you.







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