




Anomaly  Press for the Dusie Collective  
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“And so for you there is no heartbreak”

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Dusie Collectiv  
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One's own loneliness is boring.

So is someone else's.

“And so for you there is no heartbreak.” And so for me there is no heartbreak. There is the world made of schedules and alarms, adjustments to schedules. Also not new is this not wanting to adjust. You get out of bed this time of year because you must, and then you get out of bed because you cannot stay in bed because you are used to getting out of it. I cannot get out of bed because I cannot go to sleep and when I sleep I cannot wake up. Or I do wake up and then I pretend that I’m awake because you are awake and I say things like “go to sleep” or “stop turning over.” When I cannot sleep I think you must be cold but I am the one who is cold.

It is hard to have dinner on Friday but we often do. It's hard this time of year when we hate everything and feel alone and act like we can only hate each other and can be alone. This is what we tell ourselves. We say we are orphans. On Friday nights we try our hardest to think of each other.



I don't enjoy these evenings when only one of us is alone and the other of us feels not alone—and loneliness is worse when we really are alone and cannot believe it when we tell each other we are not. But I believe enough often enough and you do too. And if we cannot believe on Friday night then we believe on Saturday morning over breakfast. Therefore, it is easy to take a taxi. Not easy, but possible.

The taxi driver once drove three Japanese rock stars from DC to Miami and back. They paid for his hotel in South Carolina and were jovial and tipped him well. It is August here and people going are gone except those in bus stations and train stations and airports. I am small in bus stations. I buy a ticket from a machine and try to buy water from a machine but can only by a very sweet green colored iced-tea.

I am small in the bus station but I have been small for several days now knowing that I must get into a taxi and go to the bus station and get on a bus. I have not wanted to leave the bed except to water the plants. I have wanted to discuss tomatoes. I have expected praise for my tomatoes.

The same things: leaving makes  
love easy—people, place.  
Emails with European evangelical  
Christians—don't finish your  
thought. I think I hate you  
one a week, once a month—  
you say it twice a year:  
"I hate you." "I'm through with you."  
Say we're through with not  
saying how much we hate.  
For example: Burning houses.  
Our expanding neighborhood.  
Our neighborhood sons. Dr. Phil  
says anger is "really only" a combination  
of three things: fear, hurt, and  
something I can't remember—  
don't finish my thought.

I am sitting on the floor of the bus station and everyone is charted into incorrect patterns. Perhaps correct, but ill fitting. For example, I loose my wallet for twenty minutes while trying to pack because I am trying to go to Romania. I loose my wallet and know that I am an idiot. It's clear that I'm taking a trip I'm not allowed to take and so I must be punished.

You used to believe that your closet was a portal that would suck you in randomly, so you'd tie your ankles to your bedposts. When your mom asked you why you did it, you told her you didn't want to die in the abyss.

You make eggs and potatoes after I find my wallet that was never gone. Now I cannot say I am crazy and stupid. Instead, I am tired and want to feel like I have always been tired. I remember that you will water the plants and talk to the birds and that you will watch baseball and write. Friends will be with girlfriends and we will all go on thinking about jobs and lovers as if the alternatives to jobs and lovers were endless.

I love animals.

Animal stories make me cry.

This probably means I think animals are irrelevant.



Knowing that lovers and jobs are not endless helps me get in the taxi and sit in the bus station and board a bus to New York. On the bus I sit up front and think of all the people I've sat next to on the bus before. Often they are older men who offer me sodas. Once I sat next to a young man who could not plug in his headphones. He was very thirsty and stole my gum. A young Latin American woman boards the bus and I hope that she sits with me and she does. I say Thank you for not being a strange man and give her my magazine to read and pretend I've heard of the fashion design school she attends in New York. She knows I'm lying. She is gracious.

We ate Satay and Laksa and drank Tiger beer until my shorts were dry and my socks were damp. When my shirt was dry we ate banana dosa for desert. We did not use the official European Union umbrella as we crossed the street and slogged up the driveway to the hostel, the first floor of which was flooded. Flip flops flowed out of rooms, into the lobby and over the porch to the driveway. Eventually they flowed into drainage ditches. We were on the second floor and I lay out all of my wet clothes and turned the fans on high to dry them. He was either polite or rude so no we didn't sleep together and didn't really want to but the next day we visited a large, golden, reclining Buddha. "This Buddha is 33 meters long," he said. He was reading from a guidebook.

In avoiding an acquaintance  
and a tree and a homeless man  
and a man collecting money  
for the environment, Hero cuts  
her cheek with an umbrella edge.

She cannot avoid insistent  
Beethoven, nor can she avoid  
the good Jesuits who invite  
her to dinner. She says yes to  
every dinner invitation, urges the  
relatives to call and when  
they do she is displeased.

Jennifer Lopez is a maid and I laugh when I am meant to laugh. Her love interest is a republican. Half way to New York there's a thunderstorm and we enter it and drive in it and through it. I entertain myself by thinking of ways the bus might have an accident. Being struck by lightning is the least likely and so I dwell on it. I think of our mothers. I think of the bus from Salamanca to Porto and how it bounced and how the traffic was so slow that my haphazard pictures out the window came out looking like something.

After the hero talks to his  
relatives, he adjures little men  
no longer little to climb with  
unprecedented vigor and frankness.  
He rides a bike around ring  
roads in search of former  
military men who do not like  
their former leaders. He says,  
“Behold! The brilliant Technicolor  
background, the cigarette smoke!”  
The hero calls for an active  
participation in what he calls “living.”  
The hero says, “why produce  
life to sing from swings if not  
to sing from them as long  
as possible.” This indulgent  
sentiment is contradictory, he  
knows, given his diet, but it is not  
easy to love people and it is difficult  
to protect those who are small.

I think about how I used to think that bravery was essential and how if I wasn't brave someone would see me and know it. Now I think of awful things like I think about the need to have an income. I think of abduction and electrocution and I think of my chair at work and how there are many ways of dying. When I am small this is what I emphasize. I am on the bus and then underground in New York and I am small and dying. I must remember how exciting it is to be small and alone and dying but not dead. This is comforting and negative. I worry about how negativity sanctions certain forms of happiness and not others.

The sun is too—  
The wind is too—

Men in the sun.  
I am not in the sun  
and so cannot sit and read.

Hear a bird and think “bird.”  
Then, “dead bird.”  
It has not been a good year for birds.

Men playing boule in the sun in suits.  
Men with suitcases smoking  
say “good afternoon” to  
other men with suitcases.

Underground I go the wrong way first but then go right. In between wrong and right I eat a banana. There are abandoned tunnels and tracks mostly full of water and mud and rats but I am happy to be here and not in Target although I love strip malls and feel guilty about it. I understand alienation best in strip malls.



A and B know that if B goes out for wine she will meet me on the street or on the steps. She does and I go up with B, past the window with the large parrot estranged from its mate and its flock. It eyes me through the window but does not call an alert call because I am with B and the bird knows that B is ok. The apartment is full of books and plants and light from windows at the front and back and a small skylight in the kitchen. There is a typewriter and a computer. A and B read and write books and they know that I read and write books and everyone is ok with this. The apartment is cleaner than ours and has less piles and more care has been given to the decoration. A feeds me food and B returns with wine. I am pleased to be near people in love.

You used to have 3 imaginary friends--1 girl, named Ashley, and 2 boys, called Peter and Jon. You decided the girl didn't like you because she was a girl and you didn't think girl liked girls, so you always got into fights. Peter didn't like you because Ashley was prettier and Jon was always talking to you about liking Peter.

I have been trying to write a story about people who are not in love. They are not in love in part because they do not understand motive, I think. I understand motive a bit better than my characters, but not much better. I have been writing to understand why they do not yet understand. They are all very smart, or smarter than average. I am having trouble with a young male character—I think he is an orphan. Or he thinks of himself as an orphan but I'm not sure he's even a loner. At the end of the story he is supposed to go to Asia. He goes there in part because he does not understand that a woman he has been spending time with is even more maladjusted than he is. Or maybe he sees this and that is why he leaves for Asia. Somehow he does not value the woman he has been spending time with and the woman does not value him either. Somehow they never have sex. Where in Asia does he go? The woman wants to be the girl he never had sex with. He remembers her this way. There is another woman, a friend of the first, who is disappointed with the young male even though she hardly knows him, but she is interested in his stories of sleeping with older male poets. This second woman believes that poets are especially picky about who they have sex with and why.

If we'd met on a train between  
Vienna and Bucharest, and I were  
a prostitute, and you were you,  
would you have paid, would you pay  
still, to continue to keep my company?

This second woman is also an orphan. This is why the three spend time together but do not love each other. Or why they do. This is why they send each other away or go away. Possibly, the first woman will never believe she is an orphan. She will go on to marry a man she does not love—I think. It will certainly be boring. The second woman knows she is an orphan but not why or what that means.

A and B serve food that is vegan and kind. We eat in calm enjoyment. I am in a vegan apartment and I am in a plane nearly almost in Bucharest. The man across from me has put away his porno and I am sorry and glad. I am eating dinner.

I've never been in New York with poets without you. B assures me that their landlords are friendly and not overly Christian and that they live openly as a couple and you may visit whenever you like. C comes over frequently to play card games and discuss tennis and literature, though he does not stay the night. But he is a man, and everyone seems to think it's ok. There is a discussion about the bird downstairs. This happens the next morning. That evening other things happen.

I love you.  
Don't jump off the balcony  
I love you.  
Etc.



A newly single woman poet comes over, her skin is radiant and we are wearing the same shoes and for a moment I think I'm having an emotional connection and then I worry that all anyone can talk about is money and new TV stands and buying shoes. Eventually, we speak of garbage collecting and this is soothing. A and B and the woman with the radiant skin want to know why I am going to Romania (and I am nearly now in Romania). I say I am going to not join the circus, thinking of my promise to you. At midnight we hug and I think everything is lovely. So that's why I called you and woke you up to say goodnight and to tell you about the bird downstairs.

I am not very flexible and I wear pants when I do my morning yoga. There are birds singing outside and I think of you on a morning walk with A & B past a cheese shop and into a bookstore where I bought this notebook and decided to use it to write this. It is sunny and warm but not hot. In the cheese shop, people think us simple for wanting Parmesan and tell us oh it's in the back. B and A say they might not return because of this.

Some people have been riding long rides through tunnels and all over the city on bikes disrupting traffic and nearly being arrested several times. I like this idea more than chanting something about peace and think of you in your black winter hat during the presidential nomination and the rain.

I threw my wallet in the garbage can at Dunkin' Doughnuts and rode to the Temple of Heaven but couldn't by tickets so I rode back to the Dunkin' Doughnuts and convinced one of the cashiers to let me talk to the manager. "Comrade," I said, "you must let me look in the garbage can for my wallet." He found my use of "comrade" charming and told me that even though he would have to go into the back to get the special key to unlock the garbage can enclosure and that this process could take up to ten minutes he was happy to help a "special American friend." He said, "no one uses 'comrade' anymore except the military." "Oh," I said.

Contemplative in the desert, cave, the  
cell of a church, yes, but renewable only when  
open, connected to another. Thus amenable  
I go into regulation, wild oscillation, error.  
In savage, but also basically scandalous  
circumstances, the new blossoms as you.

It doesn't really "blossom." But you're in it, anyway.

The man who drives me to the airport says he is from the Middle East but will not say exactly where. He says he loves Egypt and knows many other places. I tell him the name of my airline and he knows I'm going to Romania. He knows the feeling of always having been in a place you've not always been in—understands how we sat and had drinks on the Plaza Major and felt certain that we'd always been having drinks there at 4pm on a Tuesday.

Now that I'm going to Romania everything is connected to Romania—the history of the European avant-garde, my former Chinese literature professor who is a low-level clergyman in the Romanian orthodox church, and a woman in my class who lived in Romania for several years first as a missionary and then as a student. She asks me if I know enough Romanian to feel comfortable going and doing translations and I say no.



One day I went into a covered market near the fourth ring road in Beijing to buy some vegetables and popcorn and I realized that the characters on the roof of the market really did say “market.” It was exciting. That night, I accepted a dinner invitation from a man who harassed me in the park. We ate tomatoes and sugar and he said “I love you. You have a very good body.” We shared four large bottles of beer and then he ran after me for a block or two as I road my bike away to visit a friend on the other side of the city. “You are an idiot,” my friend said.

When you were about 6 or 7, your older brother told you that you were a robot and you weren't really his little sister. He told you that your real family (the fridge, the toaster, etc...) were only guests at his house and if they got thrown out, so would you. At first, you thought he was lying, so you asked him "If I'm a robot, why do I bleed?" because you didn't think robots had blood. He said that your blood was really ketchup, AND YOU BELIEVED HIM. You were afraid that you would get kicked out of the house if one of the appliances broke. One day for show and tell you brought your dad, the toaster, and explained to the class that your family, though cold on the outside, were really very nice robots.

I am in Romania on the side of the hill and tomorrow I will meet a sculptor. Now that I am far away on the side of a hill in Romania I can think about how much I love C and A and B and how they are my friends.

The line to Romania is enormous, even though I am several hours early. Everyone has three or four large suitcases—they are going home. I am going to Romania to not join the circus.

I've become a paranoid traveler. I worry that the plane will be old—it looks small from the gate, and the motto of the airline “feeling in good hands,” does not leave me feeling good. I worry that the children will scream and that my stuffed animal traveling companion will be lost with my luggage. But none of this happens and I am neither disappointed nor relieved. During the flight I ink my skirt several times.

I am going to tell you the story of the man who broke into my room and woke me up, rather violently. On the second night he broke into my room I hit him on the head with a lamp, rather violently, and the light bulb shattered. He was surprised. I apologized to him as he lay on the floor and then ran down stairs to tell the front desk and the front desk told the manager and the manager called my boss and my boss called his friends in the secret police and the secret police came and took the man who broke into my room away to the Western Provinces where it is almost always either very cold or very hot. I would like to travel in the Western Provinces, and from them take a train through Central Asia. I would like to be a pre-WW I German-speaking imperial archeologist with dubious morals and a gun. Perhaps this is why the man broke into my room. This is how I reason at night. In Practical Chinese Reader Volume II or possibly III the hero and heroine Gubo and Palanka meet a kind, pathetic, hardworking, and meek man who has just returned from reform school in the Western Provinces. I like to think of this man as the man who broke into my room. Remember how I used to wake up punching you and screaming in Chinese? Well this is what that was about.

You used to believe that there were hundreds of mechanical chickens hiding in your wardrobe, when the wind made the door bump, you were so sure it was the chicken army trying to escape.

As small as I am in the bus station, I am not smaller on the plane, and small is not vulnerable. The woman sitting next to me offers me her tic tacs before eating and wishes me a happy meal that I do not have but not because of her. Across the aisle, a man is reading Hustler and I wonder how his wife and young daughter sitting on either side of him feel. I wonder if they mind him looking at the “hot young teens who take it up the ass” because they “want to keep their virginity until they are married.”



I notice the family that was behind me in line at check in. The woman described the man as a “great admirer of poetry.” She had a US passport and wore a gold cross. I couldn’t remember the names of the poets I’m going to meet. The safety videos are semi-technological computer animations set to ambient music. The great admirer of poetry is reading poetry on the plane, and the great admirer of “hot young teens who take it up the ass” is looking at a large veined diagram of an erect penis with blood-red arrows pointing out its technical parts and sensitive spots. Midway over the Atlantic there is turbulence.

I am occasionally attacked  
by birds of paradise  
That what's the matter can only be  
What's the matter still  
(But one can parry  
or foil  
or try to draw a measure

Bucharest airport is like many airports and not like others. It is not beautiful but it functions well. There are pictures of a Romanian composer on the wall—a man with deep brown eyes and wavy hair. The customs officers smile at me. I'd been dreading holding out my U.S. passport. The floor is gray tile and fairly new. I don't know with whom I'm meeting. I know the name of the organization and I know the name of one person. The one person I know is there with two other people, a tall young man with a shaved head who looks liberal and artistic, and a young woman in jeans and a black shirt, with short-cropped hair that has been tinted red. They are all young.

After I introduce myself and say “I’m—,” there is nothing to say. They try to take my bags but I only have a backpack, which is on my back. The presence of young Europeans in the Romanian airport, which has pictures of composers on the walls, makes me feel like a cheerleader.

Again another package at the post office  
Dreaded slips to pick up test letters perverted  
love letters : spit-ash-linoleum-communication-space  
---- Come for the cold and it is cold and  
I can say "it is cold" in many languages

The airport is much farther from the city of Bucharest than I imagined. Normally, if I were traveling by myself, I would know this. I feel old and think about how when I was 18 or so being in a car on a crappy road in a strange country with no exact knowledge of where I was going and no knowledge of the language would have been exciting. The road to Bucharest is under construction on a beautiful fall day. I want to love my new friends like I've decided to love the bad road, but I cannot remember their names—I've only been introduced once. I am dazed from the airport of musician pictures and the buttons on the elevator to the parking lot and can only remember the person whose name I know.

Dear President (scratch) Dear Beloved (Scratch) O Dear, etc.

“It is difficult to notice anything, especially another person.”



The other new friends are a couple, though I don't understand this until later in the day when the tall man with the shaved head ruffles the red-tinted hair of the woman affectionately and teases her for her haphazard application of an orange colored eye shadow. She has gone grocery shopping. There are apologies for the traffic, the bad roads, for the truck which dumps cow dung on me, for the large gaping holes in the sidewalk. They say ironically "Bucharest must be interesting to you." And I say, "Yes, it is interesting to me," not detecting their sarcasm.

I'm going to tell you my story about the drainage ditch even though I've told you before. My temporary roommate loved the European Union and carried an official navy-blue European Union umbrella which could not shield the both of us from the rain as we crossed the street and did not prevent me from falling waist-deep into the drainage ditch and losing one of my shoes. He pulled me out of the ditch and we slogged across the sidewalk to a bar facing and open to the street but elevated a few feet off the ground. This happened in less than a minute and from our table in the bar I could see my shoe floating down the street so I took off my other shoe and threw it into the sidewalk and watched it float away. I did not throw my socks out into the rain.

And if we sat on the porch,  
in summer, in silk robes, if  
we promised to sit (in silk) on  
the porch together in summer,  
would you teach us to play mah-jong?

The young man half of the couple is tired and concerned about where to take us to eat in the evening and also, though I don't know it, concerned about his lack of job and money and the state of independent film in Romania. I want to tell them how happy I am to be in Bucharest and ride on the roads, which freeze and thaw each winter and spring and to eat in any restaurant they enjoy eating at. But they don't often eat out because they don't often have money and it is easy for me to love something I know nothing about.

“Pretend that the princess was walking to the witch’s house by accident!”

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Ok. “The princess was walking to the witch’s house by accident...”

Once I tried to ride my bicycle to the Summer Palace and ended up in the sun near the highway to the Badaling section of the Great Wall in the dirt from the construction of the Fifth Ring Road by a small sewage filled stream called “Bright River” where a middle aged woman squatted down next to me and said “This is the bright river. Do you smoke?”

Your parents used to tape record you talking and singing. When you heard the girl on the tape talking back to you, you were sure there was another you in the tape recorder! Despite your parents best efforts to convince you otherwise, you have a tape of yourself whispering, "I know you're in there. I'm going to press rewind and listen to you talk now."

Do I want some water? Do I want to send email? "I'm sorry." Am I tired? Dear Mark, I am in Bucharest. It is sunny. The flight was fine. I am in Queretaro and the weather is nice and today I ate some coconut and drank some coconut juice by the side of the road. I arrived in London last night and Dad took us to the market in Camden and there were people with pink hair. I'm in Haifa in a youth hostel at the bottom of the steps up the hill to the temples and the hostel is run by Christian missionaries who give me free hot dogs each Wednesday night and lecture me. There is a Russian man who smokes hash and stutters who last night insisted on conversing with me on the porch even though it was cold and he was shivering. I met a young Persian man who told me "every day I pray for a wife," and so I went to the shrine and said the marriage prayer three times and then worried about having said it for the rest of my pilgrimage and I kept thinking I was smelling drying rose petals from the shrine each evening as I walked down the steps. Dear G-d can I take it back? I'm staying with my friend in Pittsburgh and today we ate at Long John Silvers. The weather is nice here in Bucharest and tonight I am taking a train north.





