

**Sometimes I make the shape of a
hug with my arms and imagine
you inside it**

by Tom Dugdale

May 1

I walked and I saw you
I saw you in the light
It was dark, it was night
But you were o so bright
And you shined with the power
Of a thousand stars in my eyes
You say fat chance, but my baby
My visions would not lie

Lay me down, on the ground
Where I may flail and falter
Just like you, like an angel
But no snow, something softer
Like your hand, which I know
even all these years on
Like your hand which I know
even all these years gone

Lay me down, on the ground
Where I start to understand
As my darkness has been endless
So your company will be grand
When we dance once again
With the fireflies in our hair
As we did in the fountain
Back when we didn't care
What they said, what we did

No

May 2

I don't need to do narrative
If you don't need to do narrative
I'm fine with nonlinear and circular and
wispy

I don't need to do narrative
If you don't need to do narrative
I'm cool with silly or lippy or singsong

Lighter touch is cool
Finding it as we go feels novel
You know?
When everything's so much about naming it
these days
And you get it all worked out on a napkin
(You know I like to draw on napkins)
To the point that I look up,
And you're gone...

May 3

Don't skimp on the frosting
If there's anything a cupcake needs, it's
frosting
After you safely extract it from the pan

Can I – do you mind if I –
Show you ?
No, of course, I know you can
But, just sort of like –
Show you ?

See, um, like that there –
What are you laughing at?

I know you can do it,
I never said you couldn't!
Never in all my life,
Never in all your life

May 5

How do you feel about Marguerite Duras? I started watching *Hiroshima mon Amour* the other night, and I ordered *The Malady of Death* through Interlibrary Loan.

I have some more thoughts on this impulse that I would like to share. Not about Duras, but the Interlibrary Loan part. But anyway, back to Duras – she's the genius here

Now I'm watching a YouTube video with a professor lecturing on Duras. "It's the quintessential literary film in the sense of being literary," the professor says. Now what the f#\$k does that mean? Does anybody have any idea what that means? F#\$k – sometimes we really should just listen to ourselves.

Chorus

I think this book especially could be inspiring, or at least Duras's process, I'm into process right now, Wikipedia says Duras drank six or seven liters of wine a night on this one. Interesting

How do you feel about Marguerite Duras?
How do you feel about me asking that a third time? How do you feel about high art references in the state you're in?

Or the state I'm in, maybe that's fairer. Not to, you know, put it all on you...

May 6

When I hear on the radio this morning's
depression, that two hundred thousand
glaciers are all melting and raising the sea
levels by a fifth, it makes me strangely think
not of global catastrophe, but the way tears
well up in your eyes. How when they do,
that's really where I feel like I'm drowning,
and I would be, if you weren't as beautiful in
those wellings as I have ever known you

So cry cry cry cry

May 7

Sometimes I feel like talking to you,
Sometimes I just don't
It's not that I don't want to,
Just that everything around me feels small

Like this

May 8

I love when people have the perception they're trending new when they're just doing what they've always done. We've sure got a way of surprising ourselves with things that have always been there in the corner, don't we

Actually, this was something I thought you'd find interesting, an artist who said he still wanted to work with words. But he was tired of his own words, so now he's working with others' words exclusively. I mean, I get it: quotation. But again, there's nothing new. And the way he framed it as a revelation and watershed realization felt a little like discovering you could order takeout and call it dinner

I mean, sure. Why not...

Which reminds me to ask you, What are you working on these days?

I'll take my answer off the air, as we are decidedly off the air

May 9

...How you were with your mom,
that was familiar to me, too, and I thought
that it meant we were going places. You
know, in that *Oh the places you'll go* sense

May 10

No there's nothing wrong with asking
how we can hold each other,
That's not what I'm saying –
Again you're putting words in my mouth
I think the question's fine,
Except when we know we can't forever –
Then it starts to seem a hair cruel

But this is where we disagree,
and that is fine with me
I love it when we scream and shout, so
Come on baby, let's have it out

I don't care whoever wins,
Just as long as I can pore over your face,
I can pore over your grace

I don't know how to hold you cuz I don't
know how to hold on,
But I'm makin' sure I'll see ya even after
you're gone,
I'm makin' sure I'll dream ya even after
you're gone

May 11

When we stood on the platform a half hour later, you looked deeply in my eyes and you said, "The reason why people look into each other's eyes so long in Siberia is the distances are so big, and they must be able to remember each other across all that distance"

May 12

I held you in my arms and watched you go,
I said this can't be so,
I held my freeze disgustingly long,
until you touched me on the shoulder,
and said "Come along"

May 14

“Baby, you are such a light in my life. I miss you just not being near you for 1 whole day. I love talking to you on the phone. Thank you for the love and support you give me. You make me feel listened to and loved. I want you to know what an incredible man you are, and how lucky I feel to be with you”

That’s what you said...

May 15

I'm writing again even as the words feel
empty,
Barely more than the shape of their own
skeletons
But that is something, that is not nothing,
And it's in line with this other therapy:

I try, really try, feeling a chair next to mine,
And another plate, and a glass,
with a couple sips of wine
I know it sounds ridiculous, like
I might be losing my mind,
And I might be, but I got a friend
in the theatre who says
"You gotta try it... miming life..."

I'm writing again even as the words feel off,
Barely more than the shape of their own
skeletons
But that is something, that is not nothing,
And anyway I'm in no shape to judge:

Chorus

May 16

When I see how you look at things, and hear what you say about them, I feel my heart strings tighten, tune up, and then some music starts to play. I really hope you aren't hearing it because it's kind of embarrassing with lots of strings. I'm a sucker for strings

What I'd like to do is stand in a gallery with a thousand paintings, art objects, minute sculptures, and prints all around and watch you pick through them. They shouldn't be strewn everywhere but set and composed like Sarah Sze – do you know her? I want to show you her if you don't – with these lanes and alleys down which I can follow you, maintaining distance of course, and ponder you pondering every last little thing

Pondering you pondering might be even more exciting than just pondering, which is different for me than usual

You're unusual

May 17

Today I had a dental cleaning and I found myself thinking about how frankly intimate the whole thing is. In more ways than one

Of course, the obvious: you're tilted back practically laying in somebody's lap, and your mouth is open the whole time, and you're drooling and wearing a bib.

It's about the only time in adult life, come to think of it, when we find ourselves wearing a bib – except maybe for lobster eating

And there I really need that bib, for I've a tendency to fling things around. It's all so delicious and inhumane, I really get worked up and go a little insane

Anyway, back to dental cleanings: it's an instance where you're very exposed in the presence of a stranger, unless of course you always see the same hygienist

But even then, it's only every six months unless there's, um, something else going on, and I could be wrong, but I think we stay estranged meeting only twice a year at best

Anyway, today I pondered an energy I hadn't before: being prodded gently with picks and hooks is actually rather hot...?

Because potential catastrophe's right there:
she could hook my cheek or snare my eye,
but she isn't, and she doesn't, and out the
office window, the morning mist gives way
to bright blue sky

I bet you think this is where I admit in all this
I was thinking of you

But you know what, Sweetie?

On this Monday morning, it just wasn't true.

How 'bout that? Realizing in your dental
cleaning that you're turned on, as a certifiable
sign that you've moved on

Or that you've lost it

May 18

Hey, come on, there's no time to spare,
let's hop on a plane and go there

Hey, come on, you say you don't care,
so what're you waiting for, if you're aware

You gotta go

Hey, come on, there's no time to spare,
lemme be the wind in your hair

May 20

I'm just curious, do you like this music?

I improvised all of it, just played to see what would come out on a Thursday morning

I'm not asking you to like it

But if you did...

If you maybe listened to it on your headphones while you worked at the circulation desk...

That would be pretty cool

May 22

I couldn't sleep last night,
I couldn't stop thinking of you
I don't understand my feelings
Though maybe actually I do

I'm really not afraid to name it
I'll name it any old day
I'm just afraid of holding you back
And gettin' in your way

Maybe next time
If there's a next time
Maybe next time will be the time
I speak my mind

Ok – maybe I am afraid
Afraid of people judging us
Of being just another cliché,
Because we would be, in a way
Wouldn't we?

But maybe it doesn't matter?
Because what do they all say anyway?
There's an ocean of truth
In every good cliché

Chorus

All this is a long way of saying every time
you put your hand on the table last night,

I could have found a way of brushing up
against it, or in that long pause, after we had
that big laugh, after you did the funny
voice – remember that? And your Smile Face
faded to just Your Face – beautiful

Why didn't I just come out
And say it right then?
We were so totally Right There

Chorus

May 23

U r all right

U r OK

U r , u r...

i'm gonna drown out the doubt,
i'm gonna scream & shout
we're gonna drown out the doubt,
we're gonna scream & shout

We r all right

U r OK

i am OK

we r OK

etc

May 24

I'm tired of feeling like I can't say what I feel, so here it is tucked at the end of the track. I loved you more than I ever thought it was possible for somebody to love somebody else. When I held you, I felt my guts and organs — like this organ playing right now — twisting, turning, grinding. My body trying to understand how it was so proximate to something so Powerful as you. I found you beautiful in every moment, but most of all, when you looked at me first thing in the morning, and it felt like the whole day was before us, and if we wanted, we could draw hearts in the sand, or swim in the ocean as naked as a newborn baby

May 25

We're coming down the homestretch here
and I'm getting scared
we won't have much more opportunity
and then how will I talk to you
if you're
still feeling like you need
to be on the road
forever ?

Any chance you might reconsider
coming
back

to

life

?

May 26

This is coming to you from Noble County,
Ohio

I'm in a hotel now traveling for work. I
remember how when we were together traveling
always felt like this sick preview of how it
would be after you had gone. Not just being
alone, but the generality and blandness of
everything

A bedspread that says 'Hello Sunshine,'
cubes of soap in little boxes, glasses wrapped
in cellophane, that crisscross aluminum thing
in the closet for setting your suitcase on

But why, when the floor's just as good for a
suitcase?

The ice container,
The prints on the wall

Nothing depressed me more than hotel room
wall art, because you know how unoriginal it
is, that it may even hang in the next room
over, and the next one after that, all the way
down the hall, and down the hall of the next
floor, and the floor after that, and if you're in
a fairly tall hotel, then my God, you've got
two, three, four hundred people all gazing at
the same acrylic lilies with the same cheap
blue sky beyond

And that's a travesty

Instrumental

And that's a travesty

But none of that gets me down anymore,
because now at least it's been actualized

Because now the void's materialized

May 27

I have a ritual now where I get up in the morning and I write, and I write until one of three things happens:

1. I think of you
2. I stop thinking of you
3. I cry

Sometimes these things overlap, admittedly, for instance it happens quite regularly that I think of you and I cry

It happens somewhat less frequently that I stop thinking of you and start crying, although that does occasionally happen, too... some kind of release, I guess

But on one very unique morning last week, I swear to you all three happened at once. That really was something

It was a paroxysm – is that the word? I always used to ask you the words

Anyway, it was a Thing. A performance of excess – certainly that

And all I could think to do in response was to put *Two Hands* on loop – especially “Not,” your favorite track – and bake a big-ass loaf of bread

May 28

I imagine meeting you again in a café years from now, in a small café clinging to a cliff above the sea. Ours is the only table. To the left, a narrow alley cleft in the rock, leading back to the square, to civilization. To the right, the sea, stretching out for eternity. I arrive first (of course) and contemplate the sea. You sit down so quietly, and with the surf crashing below, I don't even notice, until you say, "Tom," then I see you and you see me, and you smile a little before gazing out at the sea yourself, and I have all of a sudden, and without a chance to prepare for it, the magic moment of seeing you seeing, which always bowled me over, and I almost lose it right then and there, except you turn back (to save me?) and smile at me, and I know I have to hold it together. I look down at the menu to collect myself and manage to say, "What are you in the mood for?" and you say, "Something with anchovies," which is puzzling because if there was one thing you hated with a vengeance, it was anchovies, and I wonder if you're f+&\$#*g with me, but you look up and smile and say "What?" and I can tell that you're not lying, and I feel a pang of the deepest woe, realizing for this dream to ever work out, I'm going to have to forget and let go, forget and let go...

And I fall for the briefest moment down a
hole again, until the biggest wave yet breaks
on the rocks below, showering us with mist

May 29

Warmth is what we have

All we have

We are chemical reactions and our byproduct
is heat

When we hold each other, our heat doubles
and multiplies,

Warming the world

But not in a way that's bad for the planet

No

In a way that's good

In a way it needs

In a way it craves

May 30

If I had it to do all over again,
Would I do it again?

I would

I wouldn't change a thing

May 31

Sometimes I make the shape of a hug with
my arms and imagine you inside it

The end

But I don't want it to be over

I don't

I don't want it to be over

What can I do?

I'll do anything

Just tell me what to do

Just tell me

I'm open,

I'm open to anything

I'm an open book

I'm really collaborative

The end .