

WOLASTOQEY

Edith Bélanger

Through the writing process I can express things that can never be spoken. Sometimes it's the only way for me to understand my emotions—as if by putting words on what I'm feeling, it becomes real, offers an explanation, a new perspective. In chaotic situations, if I'm feeling lost, the process of creating meaning through words is even necessary for my balance. Over time, I've come to understand one thing: there are stories that you want to write and stories that need to be written. This one falls into the latter category.

PARTICLE MEMORY

“We only begin to live through
other people’s eyes.”

– MICHEL HOUELLEBECQ

The last months before my death were what made me more alive than ever. I see it now, from the spirit world. I have no regrets about the choices I’ve made, but all of this is because of him.

He’s an honest man. He is thorough, meticulous, and especially very intelligent, much smarter than the average bear. He wouldn’t necessarily stand out in a crowd, but there’s something special about him. It’s obvious when you get close to him, it’s like he makes the space around him vibrate. Some people feel uncomfortable around him, particularly those who lack confidence. Not me.

The first time I saw him, I fell under the spell of his eyes, which shine with an unusual intensity. His gaze can be full of laughter or completely cold: it changes you, it lays you bare.

Most of those who know him admire him, though they might not show it. They try to keep their cool, and comfort themselves with the thought that he's just honed the social skills that are crucial for his work. It's true that he's approachable, and rather humble.

But the fact of the matter is that few people would dare confess to the fullness of their feelings, preferring to let themselves be lulled by them. Those who shine on the inside are often overlooked by mere mortals, or else rejected because they don't conform. Secret intensity, hidden under the surface, can be scary. But not to me.

From the first moment, I saw something in him. He wasn't just a simple human, like all the others. I saw that, in spite of appearances, he was just like me. I was like a raven drawn to something shiny: I wanted him for myself.

I didn't think about it; I'd already wasted enough time. All those years spent living a half-life, pretending, running away from myself. All those tepid days, that indolence—passion's amnesiac sister. He was the one I was waiting for.

From that moment on, I began to follow him. I lived in his footsteps, paced my life to his.

Every morning I woke up thinking about him, and at night I fell asleep with the thought of him. I devoted

my life to watching him. I was driven by an irresistible force.

In the morning, I woke very early. I walked in silence to his house. Through his living room window, I watched his shadow head to the kitchen. Some days, especially on weekends, I had time to watch him for longer. He would drink his coffee and stay there, sitting comfortably, reading on his tablet. I had time to sit down, to savour the moment, to imagine a thousand things that might capture his attention on that blue-lit screen. I hoped that one day he would look at me like that, with that much interest.

The weekdays were much drier. He left very quickly, without letting his shadow settle anywhere in the house. I felt his absence keenly, and sometimes followed him to his office, but that was nuts, completely reckless. At times like that, I was barely aware of the extent of my madness. I was helpless against it. My spirit wanted to meld with his. I was like a tortured soul drawn by the abyss. I took all kinds of risks.

At other times, he left his house before I even had time to come to him. He went out in the nip of early morning with his suitcase, disappearing for days and weeks. In spite of the savage strength of my will, I couldn't follow him that far, or for that long. I roamed around like a lost soul, watching his empty house and waiting patiently for his return.

While he was gone, I felt myself withering away. I could only imagine the landscapes he was contemplating, the hands he shook. He had so many chances for discovery, so much novelty was offered up to him.

I imagined him happy, at the top of his game. People needed him, and he was utterly devoted to his work. He wanted to make a difference, to help those in need. He solved impossible situations and righted wrongs, his wages the complicit laughter he collected at the end of his various missions.

Yet I—the little sister of those children of the earth—I didn't even dare go near him, bring us together. Never had he held his hand out to me; he didn't even know I existed. I knew all too well the sting of rejection to risk being hurt by him.

Only when he went into the woods could I come closer to him. Sometimes, he would spend hours chopping firewood. The task seems sacred to him, and he was so focussed that even if the earth had opened up beneath his feet, he would have kept working. On those days, the forest swallowed us both, we were truly together. I would settle nearby, a few trees away, downwind. I could see everything and hear everything; I could even smell him. I let myself be swathed in sensation, numbed.

Once, just before the rain, the sky was heavy, the air thick. A blue jay landed above my head and started playing informer. It started jeering incessantly, flitting from branch to branch, as if insulting me. I tried to stay still and convince the blue jay of my good intentions, but its cries only got stronger, and soon three colleagues came along, joining in the strident choir.

My alter ego got up off the log he had been sitting on, alerted by the squawking of the treasonous birds. Curious, he set off in my direction. It felt like the end. I didn't want half of my universe to collide with reality

like this. I wasn't ready, not yet. And what must I have looked like, tousled in the humid air, stained by the soil? When you hide in the wild, you end up looking wild. I was frozen. The more anxious I became, the more I managed to convince myself that with a bit of luck, I might actually turn to stone.

After a few seconds that felt like they lasted forever, a clap of thunder sounded, followed by an almost supernatural rain. My soulmate hurriedly gathered his tools and his bags, and covered the wood pile with a large blue tarp. He turned his head one more time in my direction, and, if not for the curtain of rain between us, he would have seen me there, hoping against hope that the Creator, somewhere in his big book, might have written a page of history that belonged to us. He took off toward his cottage, running.

I am a passionate creature, genuine and untameable. It is in my nature to submit to destiny, as it is to submit to love. In the thick of our earthly incarnation, we must recognize that these forces are so powerful and mysterious that they defy comprehension. I bow humbly before them.

That's why, on a moonless night that heralded an encounter with destiny, I let myself be led by my instincts, which burned the invisible threads of my restraint. My man had been gone more than seven nights, a taste of eternity. I felt increasingly vulnerable in his absence, like a fish without scales. I followed the call of his unconscious spirit, which absolutely had to meet mine that night. The stars were aligned, the ancestors knew. It had been written.

I walked with my eyes half closed, drunk on the euphoria only known to those who are truly conscious of their death. I didn't doubt for a single instant that in that first glance, as soon as he laid eyes on me, he would understand. The world at last would stand aside to let the truth come out.

I didn't even feel that the softness of the forest floor had given way to the asphalt of the road through the Parc des Laurentides. I saw the headlights of his car and I was not afraid. For a split second, the squeal of the tires and the dull sound of impact made me doubt that the long-awaited miracle had in fact taken place.

Although I was in shock, I called on every spirit available to sustain my energy during this last stretch, as I ran to shelter in the trees to die in peace. As life ebbed out of me, I was serene, I accepted this as reality.

For a moment I hoped he might follow me to say goodbye, but he didn't stop. I don't hold it against him; animals get hit every day on the road around here. And I am only a she-wolf, a child of the forest who wanted to transcend her wild nature to become complete in the eyes of a man.

Apparently, every living being on earth is made of the same cosmic matter. We share a Matter-Mother. And so, when two particles cross, even just once, in the universe, they hold the trace of the other forever. Twin particles.

On the bed of moss, I fade away in silence, but I am at peace, because for an instant, I held his eyes in mine, and our atoms became fused. From that day on,

in his gaze become even brighter than before, I live on,
a spirit wolf. United, forever.