

Letter to J. Wishing I could be there.

Copenhagen June 2015

I think about that afternoon getting drunk in your backyard this spring. About the sense of family we felt, all together again. I had come for a kind of queer nourishment. I needed to feel comfortable in my own skin, a sense of home. Skype was no longer enough.

Last year I moved back to what I for years had left, when my mother became threatened by illness.

And now I am back in the fortress of Europe. Denmark just saw the results of the general election. Racism and homophobia prevailed like never before.

I'm often asked, what's it like being back. I avoid answering that I can't escape the nagging feeling that I'm putting my life on hold to be here. Yet, there is nowhere else I would want to be right now. I need to be held by our little family and be with you. But it also holds me in a specific way, to borrow Maggie Nelson's words. The complacency, racism and heteronormativity here take a toll on me.

The rest of me, if our beings can be so neatly divided into sections, needs my queer LA family. And yet these are geographically incompatible.

How do we balance our lives according to this nourishment. I can only go on, I can only flourish, if I have this. This is not a small thing. I am sick of being told that this kind of nourishment is a privilege, it is not.

When José Muñoz speaks of horizons I think about layers — we sink into, are surrounded by, and dream of. And how these layers don't align and mix in a palpable horizon.

In cancer the horizons keep changing; was it a good result, or a bad one. Cancer disrupts any notion of horizons, its unknown, its deceitful, its promise can change at any point, good or bad. But what it does promise is the importance of the here and now. I'm held in this concreteness.

I dreamt of J on her way to the pool. Happy. And encouraging.

I dream of having kids around and with my friends. As I write this, I hear the judging voices in my head: *you are so spoiled, so selfish, woman, have you given up on men*. Feminism has a long long way to go in this country. I sometimes dream of being Swedish. In J's video Dean Spade talks about building a family more open and inclusive of kids, when having kids can be so isolating.

During a walk at the summerhouse, after a particularly bad scan, I blurt out how I want to have a kid before you are no longer here. I follow up this statement by how ridiculous it would be to rush into such a thing. While we are both weeping, you tell me you wish to be here for all of this too. We settle on finding comfort in the uncertainty of our horizon and continue our walk. What I didn't say to you so directly was how frightened I had been to find this urge. This urge to somehow fit the heteronormative mold, as if it would provide you with a promise of my happy future, if you were no longer here.

One is supposed to be hopeful. But I somehow find comfort in the paralyzing state of a kind of preemptive grief. Allowing myself to be sad. Only in the scenario of the worst possible outcome am I able to meet this sadness and go into it. Which is perhaps due to the fact that our society is all about prognosis, therapy, efficiency, productivity, and happiness. I don't wanna be fucking efficient with my emotions. I don't want to manage them.

The rhythm of our made-up routines at our monthly long-weekends at your summerhouse is what gives nourishment. This time together, - long walks, food, more food. The conversation around illness enters, but it is not at the center here. It is rather a space organized around the much needed love there is in just spending time together. Time which may not be abundant in the future.

These made-up routines give the illusion of something simple that is forever. It's what is shattered by a bad scan. To an outsider the rhythm of cancer is confusing. How some weeks are very dark and hard, and then in others normalcy comes around and it just becomes part of everyday life.

J, I really wish I could be there and spend this time with you, but I'm grateful to be a part of it through writing. I'm always amazed at your generosity and your sense of community.

Miss you greatly and promise to come for a visit soon.

Much love,

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