

Johanna Breiding: Souvenir

it all starts with the water.

i tell you this on the eve of your birthday while you suck, your body big now, and we, the only two things in the whole of the dark night. and it is true, water is where it starts. on the sofa, watching the movie with the fish and water comes like a trickle then a river then a wave and it streams and does not stop and the water comes from me...

and who can sing for loss and how much loss to make a life and how can you lose when every mère-sized hole in the universe leaves a space for something else to come in like a cat on a wooden box in the midst of a great wave and this i dredge up from the deep: the cells of siblings are in the mother long after they leave her body (we are each other) so the baby at home asleep on a sunday is singing through me scribbling in this concert hall and that is it: it starts with water and there is a second movement.

a second movement not like the mother not like the first and she is beautiful in the video Johanna made and tall and lean and loved and praised and the ghost of her haunts and lives in the features of my friend and the second movement is nothing like the first and it too is love and cradle and sound and it's like Rilke says it's like loss, and cruel as it may be, it does nothing against possession, it completes it, a second movement—he calls it acquisition—nothing like the first, "this time wholly internal and equally intense."

and that night i did not know how far i'd die so you could come. and you follow the cat on the wooden box and her eyes tell you that you will climb out of this water and, too, that it will never let you go, for you have been marked by the waves and marked by my waters, and you will live in the story and the sound again and again—the swell—and how to end and who to tell and how to know except to live and loss and lust and roam, and try to breathe in water.

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and when i listen all i hear is all that is unsaid.

and all that is unsaid lives in the pauses and the silence and the ums we edit out. and in the things we carry up and that are wrested from the deep, like waking up in water with no thing that you take home but your feet are bare and open, palm the floor boards with your soles, and you will not be the same but you will ride the waves again. and again. because you still have more to ride and still have further out to swim.

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