

Diary of a Stranger

Brandon LaBelle

The one who is standing apart – *or wishing to leave*
To face the other – *who is that over there*
Or to disappear – *is this the way to the park*
On the threshold of recognition – *but never fully appearing*
Of being in the crowd – *being within and without at the same time*
But alone – *but also required*
Or lonely – *circling around, but never encircled*
Who's there? they ask – *over there, no, there*
Sleeping on a bench – *a figure in the trees*
Staring from the back table – *the shadow might be an image of the stranger*
Circulating – *somewhere and nowhere*
But without connection – *yet searching, a figure amongst others*
A voice – *the whisper that might become more*
No, a silence – *which language is this*
In the dark – *black blue grey*
Or into the light – *then, reflecting the last colors of the day*
Both a location for confrontation – *the one who is standing apart*
Sudden – *and without knowing*
A glimpse – *a broken window, a break in the clouds*
Overheard – *the sound which is always in the background*
And then, quiet – *quiet*
The teacher asks, why so quiet? – *the one who has no voice*
How to reply – *to speak would be to step forward*
Where are the words – *to lose place*
Language – *to suddenly have a name*
No, just a sound – *a whisper*
To be known – *with a shape*
And to remain outside – *slippery*
Alien – *ambiguous*
Foreign – *your other*
But wanting in – *in moments of despair*
Maybe – *maybe*
To introduce a break in the system – *not passion, but energy*
To rend the operation open – *without hope, only a long road*
To split the orchestration of input and output – *an ongoing tone*
As pure functionality – *like a current of electricity*
To drift – *to inscribe without meaning*
So as to disrupt – *to haunt*
Noise – *quiet*
Or the soft murmur of a kiss – *as a moment of loss*
Love – *intimacy which appears and then escapes*

The sound which comes from behind – *tick*

The feeling of despair – *like an itch*
To be called another name – *which is never one's own*
To be brought into the center without knowing – *stand up the man says*
Or, to remain without – *the blue of the sky*
The sound which might be unheard – *as an opening*
The sensation of anger – *that also closes*
Everything moves without progressing – *again and again*
The one who stands still – *to receive*
The figure in the night – *and to give away*
Or in the day – *a body in half*
A lost body – *a feeling of desire that never rests*
A ghost – *no, a skin*
In search of a name – *in search of another name*
But knowing it will never come – *and that it must*
The figure that is never complete – *that withstands*
And which is also free – *to find and lose again*
To float – *soft pain*
To roam – *tick*
To drift – *trembling*
To make friends – *with pleasure*
And to lose them – *the empty blue sky*
The sound which is both beginning and end – *she kept trying to teach me to tie my shoes*
An interruption – *the one's kept at the box at school*
A loose thread – *the first lace goes here, and then the second, it goes like this*
A gap – *then back again*
A shadow – *black grey blue*
The one who is standing – *or falling*
And who can always move – *in and out, back and forth*
Itinerant – *broken shoe laces*
Without home – *or too many*
An island – *a highway*
Yet always among others – *festive, energetic, ambivalent*
An in between – *how to bring together so many threads*
That makes possible other connections – *the sound which brings others together*
And which breaks away – *to flee, to interrupt, to break*
A composition – *of differences*

You – *him*
Them – *she*
Us – *someone*
Here – *another*
Or – *no*
Come over – *leave this place*
Send me a message – *when you arrive*
Don't be late – *or early*
The table is empty – *against the wall*

There are flowers – *red yellow red yellow*
A quiet place – *rain outside, no, sunshine, all over*
The meeting occurs – *with hesitation*
From here to there – *and back again*
The one who is standing apart – *suddenly now so close*
And leaving – *again, or, for now*
The train rolls passed – *into a distance*
Anybody here – *in the dark, in the light*
They meet – *as planned*
Across the table – *the chair is warm under the body*
Hands on the table, no – *on the glass*
Street outside – *trams go by*
Empty – *full*
Minutes – *hours*
Whose voice is this – *against my ear*
Soft – *or, pointed*
Everyone laughs – *drinks all around*
The body fidgets – *time passes*
As it must – *as it does*
A horizon – *going up, going down*
You – *him*
Them – *she*
Us – *someone*
Here – *another*
The night unfolds – *in the morning the noises begin*
Nothing happens – *something opens up*
Time passes – *like when as a kid the days feel like a long stretch*
Everything flows – *and then stops*

What kind of performances unfold – *with the one there and the other here*
Where are the points of connection – *I see him across the street*
When does the moment come – *she sits in the tram, and stares out the window, everything passes by, in a blur, she daydreams, or thinks about the class from the other night, the topic of contemporary politics, and how her friend wanted to go for drinks after*
Or, when does the moment give a new perspective – *she was tired*
Though she decided to go, to try and find a way in, to participate, to enter, to bring herself into the spirit, which is something she often wonders about – *how she can often withdraw*
I see him across the street – *but she knows this is also what she needs*
He stands without knowing where to go – *she tries*
He wonders – *she dreams*
He disappears, or – *she goes to the shop*
He looks for a friend – *potatoes, cream cheese, no, eggs*
To be in a bar alone is always difficult – *should she pick up some wine*
Shall he cook tonight, he wonders – *when she leaves, she thinks about her trip to Portugal*

The one who is never there – *and she thinks the sun will do her good*
To create a horizon – *the long evenings, of color*
For meeting – *and searching for a quiet beach*
To share – *to be*