

TEN OBSERVATIONS OF THE PEOPLE THAT I LOVE

MIRROR PIECE

Instead of obtaining a mirror
Obtain a person.
Look into him.
Use different people.
Old, young, fat, small etc.

Yoko Ono, Grapefruit

I – James, Mick, Billy

We are in James's house, salty from the ocean and faces dry with heat. I know that this open kitchen, safe from the hot streets, is a home for these boys. I sit at the counter, a fresh face to the wood that is worn by their lives before I knew them. Mick fishes through cutlery drawers that he knows almost as well as his own. Billy already knows where to take his shower. I drink the kombucha that James has poured for me, and cast my gaze idly to the jars of honey on the shelf. This could be a home for me now too.

II – Beth, Mick

The music is loud in here and I like how I look tonight. This helps me dance. Beth is across from me and we move through each other with adoration larger than ourselves, anonymous to all but one another. Mick joins us, and I laugh at his boyish charm as we unite familiarly through the music.

III – Beth, Patrick

She holds my book in her delicate hands, unaware of the multitudes it contains. Her fingertips flit across pages of writing, and I point at a page I know well. Patrick smiles. Beth begins to read. She flutters over the sentences with subtle grace, and as she arrives at one written about Pat, she looks down at him to hold his eyes in her own. I can feel their hearts beating as one.

IV – Billy

I am in Billy's kitchen. I am sitting at his bench while he ambles around and cooks me my dinner. He chops onions, and he forgets the garlic. He does all of this clumsily. There is a familiarity in the way he stands back and puts hands on his hips as if either he is happy with himself or is wondering why I haven't left yet. He remembers the garlic. He laces it in clumsily. We argue about the music playing and we laugh over his lack of grace. The bottle of wine is finished. It is time to go. I catch a glimpse of myself in the glass on the way out. I am smiling in a way that shows I have forgotten myself. This realisation makes me feel vain. Billy gestures out the door. I forget my vanity.

V – James, Mick

It is dark in the living room and this song has been playing for seven minutes now. James and Mick are moving around the space, shirts off and sweat on their backs, engaged in a dance that is beautiful in its gracelessness. I begin to invite the process of losing my body, allowing my form to be forgotten. There is finally no-one to perform for.

VI – Peta

I think of Peta, with her short blonde hair and her open smile, the teeth that fill her mouth and the breath in her voice as she says your name. I think about how she is just the right amount of pretentious, and how she knows this; how she lives in wilted metaphors and of control and twists gentle lies to hide her slow agony with the world. I think about how I was quick to write her off, how her public perfection accidentally becomes cold, and how I felt as if our interplay could only fall into the shallowest of pools. I think of how alike I am to Peta, and how I almost didn't know this. How we floated around each other for so long, unbeknownst to the vanity connecting our smiles. I watch her move in this crowded kitchen, taken over by the public ecstasy I know too well.

VII – Beth

I stare at Beth from my seat across the table. She drinks black coffee and fumbles through a book. I am reminded of what she said to me last night – how I think in squares and she thinks in circles. I don't think

that is quite right. I think we are more similar than this. I think, rather, that our minds are both populated by dark smudges; by invisible threads and orbs of fuzzy light. I think where we depart is instead in our expressions – she is round, I tend to tessellate. A soft qualm settles across my back. This is the only way we know how to talk to each other right now. In written sentences that sound like whispers, in pages ripped out of diaries, in thought over pleasantries, in routines, and in cups of coffee, and in morning time saudades. We are doing what we can, what we know best; gently setting alight flames in front of mirrors – reminding each other quietly of our alikeness. I think of this as she sits across from me at this wooden table. I love her. She knows this. I have to go buy fresh fish.

VIII – Billy

I will love him forever in that house; where we learnt how to be people and treated our lives with more importance than they were worth. The terrace in that pocket of Chippendale where I first understood our togetherness, and then later, remembered how to love him again. Where we fell gracefully into what felt like adulthood, even if only for a moment, and drank coffee and lemon water in the morning. One day, when I am older, and have lived a full life in spite of abandon, I will catch a remnant of his scent; of pine, and of sweat, and of mornings in the woods. I will remember him then, and blink softly in the light of fallen love. A child runs across the grass, I wonder quietly if it could've been ours.

IX – Eve, Peta, Lou, Mick, Patrick, Beth, Billy

Everyone else has trickled out of the party and it's just us left; Eve and Peta, Lou and Mick, Patrick and Beth, me and him. The lot of us are loud, loose and forgetting what we look like. Beth spills the wine, Peta is laughing. Our faces are open with glee and we paint the night with our souls; their beauty almost only in their youth. Something is telling us that this is the way it's going to be now. Sweaty backs and dancing in living rooms, extending ourselves into the arms of summer evenings.

X – Me

The morning air is warm and I feel quietly aware of my own beauty. I float around the kitchen and the living room, painting my mind with softer projections of myself. It is mornings like these where the air smells sweeter, and I can grace my home with a kiss still resting gently on my mouth. The sky is still orange, December falls deeper, softer, somehow. I love, and am loved. It is hard to forget this. I turn on the kettle, and begin to peel a lemon. The summer morning and I fall into each other, mingling in the open dawn.