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THE TOWERS

OR THREE LETTERS TO ROLAND BARTHES & TWO PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

BY GITA HASHEMI

11.05.1998

LETTER I

*< Ol' man sunshine listen you / never tell me dreams come true /
just try it / and I'll start a riot. >/'*

Dear Professor Barthes,

When Angelique introduced us some months ago, my hair was very short. I used to cut it at this hair place around the corner from the second story apartment where I have been residing for the past three years, one month and eight days, by now nine because it is twenty-two, no, twenty-three minutes past midnight, Saturday, the ninth. My hair, as I said, used to be very short, somewhat stylish, as much as seventeen dollars a coup, with patches of gray running through it. Tripping over the language, I know. The gray is actually white because my natural hair colour is pretty dark and dark hair goes white when it goes. I used to go to this place around the corner once every six or seven weeks - that's as long as I could go without a haircut and still be presentable - and have Miroslav or - after he quit in favour of selling used cars - Maria cut my hair really short. It would usually take them a long time because I'd keep asking them to cut it shorter, thinking it's got to last at least six or seven weeks until I can splurge another seventeen dollars on my looks. See, when it is short, my hair grows very fast like it's the end of the world and it's got to get to the curling up stage before time runs out. I personally don't mind curls; the only time my hair was straight was some years ago, say, eleven, when my sister sent me to this training session for barbers-to-be, who were soon going to be called stylists, where I forfeited my authority over my own hair in exchange for a free haircut and style. Straight hair was prominent in the fashion system then. Days when I used to go to Miroslav, and later Maria, to cut my hair always started the same way; I'd get up late in the morning

after a late night, knowing that I was going to be late for one thing or another that I had promised to do the night before. I'd run into the bathroom, jump under the shower and stay under the hot water for ten minutes or so before I could open my eyes to look at the cracks in the tiles, count them - anticipating new ones - and run my fingers over the one stretching from the southeast to the northwest of a three-by-three square. There are seven big cracks in the walls of my bathroom but this one is the biggest. I don't know where the water that seeps through the cracks ends up. I don't care to know either. After all, it's not my building and my landlord, Tommy the Greek, doesn't want to spend a penny in this place. He thinks he is doing me a favour because the rent is cheap. It's not really, when I add the Hydro bill. Besides, he wouldn't be able to make any more from this place considering the donut shop downstairs and the young Vietnamese guys who hang around there all the time. But he doesn't understand that. His habit is to tell me You wanna move as soon as I say something about the work that needs to be done in this place to make it decent. He knows I don't want to move because I haven't got the money. And I put up with the cracks, donuts and young Vietna

*< I never want to hear from / any cheerful Pollyannas / who tell
you / fate, surprise, a mate / it's all bananas. >*

mese guys I have to open my way through every time I go out or come in because I'm tired of being on the move, and goodness knows there are cracks, donuts and packs of young guys wherever I go so long as I'm in this country. I have already drawn a map of the cracks in the walls here. I know them very intimately because I run my fingers on them from time to time on days when I look in the mirror and think I should get a haircut today. I used to go to the corner hair place every time this happened. I'd go there and wait for Miroslav, and later Maria, to sit me on the chair by the sink, wet

my hair and wrap a towel around it. I don't like their shampoo which has a very strong scent that makes me sneeze non-stop. Then they'd sit me on a chair in front of a large mirror and ask me how I wanted my hair cut. Always the same: short but not like soldiers', no layers, no rigidly defined lines, nothing that would require

*< They're writing songs of love / but not for me. / There're lucky
stars above / but not for me. >*

spending a lot of time to make it look good, definitely not feminine. And, remember, my hair is naturally curly and the curls choose their direction of curling of their own volition. Miroslav is from Poland. He came here when the iron curtain opened seven, eight years ago. He is fairly young, in his early thirties, and I think he is gay, but I can't be sure. It's only from the way he dresses and acts that one thinks he might be gay. He is an odd person and you can see in him his passion for money and all things American. He wears cowboy boots with long, pointed toes and has a beeper hanging from his thick leather belt and his gestures are somewhat effeminate. A bag-full of contradictions. Of course I don't know what he looks like now that he is selling used cars at a lot in Scarborough. I don't know if he can wear his tight jeans and black Pink Floyd t-shirts when he tries to convince Mr. Patel or Mrs. Jones that they are getting a good deal on the nineteen-ninety-one Ford sedan they're considering at six thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine dollars, guaranteed. Miroslav and I exchanged very few words when I used to go to the hair place around the corner to get a hair cut every six or seven weeks. He never looked at me directly. His gaze would be fixed on my reflection in the large mirror I sat in front of when he cut my hair short, very short. It was easier to convince him to go shorter because he liked short hair on me. At least that's what he used to say. Or maybe he preferred all women to have short hair. But Maria, who is also from Poland, thought I'd look softer

if my hair was a bit longer. She is very soft herself. She has the face of an angel. Light blue eyes, pale skin, soft, blonde hair. I told her once that I had shaved my head clean the previous winter and she couldn't believe me. Why? You have such beautiful, thick hair. I said I was tired of it. It was heavy and it made me look old and unhappy because of all the grays, sorry, whites. It looked like a layer of dust had settled on me and people always thought I was tired even when I wasn't. Maria thought I should dye my hair. Dark brown, maybe even dark red. I told her the only time I had altered my hair colour was when I was a child and had very long and curly hair that I liked to let hanging loose around my face, over my shoulders, down to my waist. My mother put henna on my hair every two or three weeks. Henna is good for your hair. She'd send me to collect wild pink or purple hollyhocks from the grounds around our house. She'd boil the flowers in a cop

*< I was a fool to fall / and get that way. / Hi, ho, alas / and also
alack-a-day. >*

per pot until the water found a syrupy consistency, then she'd soak the henna powder in it for a day. By the way, why did you and Professor Foucault have a falling out? Angelique said for a time you used to have supper together every night, then you'd go out to night clubs, even go together to Morocco or Algiers for holidays. But then you suddenly stopped. I know you never wanted to talk about this publicly, but did Philippe Sollers ever tell you about Professor Foucault telling him one can't be friends with both of you? He thinks it was because Professor Foucault had a very jealous nature, and at the time you were more famous than him, Professor Althusser and even Professor Lacan. I guess that was when you were *directeur des études* at École Pratique des Hautes Études. A few years before you, still a structuralist, escaped the May 68 student riots in Paris and went to teach in Morocco. In the year

you spent in Rabat, did you enjoy fucking dark Moroccan boys on your nightly excursions to town with George Lapassade? Did you pay them graciously? Did they serve you well? Dear Professor, please don't be upset. Your ideas are still being discussed at the universities. Angelique really likes your *Camera Lucida*. She even designed her entire course this year around the notions you have touched upon in that book. She started by giving a biographical lecture: from the time that you were a sickly boy who had to spend a lot of years in sanitariums down through the years you lived with *maman* to when she died and you wrote *Camera Lucida* still in grief. I love that book. I've talked about it to Merlyn, Michael and Omid. Michael doesn't know you yet but I keep telling him you've gotta read that book, there's a lot in it that relates to us. But he reads Lacan instead and asks Do you understand what the fuck he's talking about? I tell him Nothing that can explain your nig

*< Without you leading the way / I found more clouds of gray / than
any Russian play / could guarantee. >*

ger skin and my fuzzy black hair and Aryan descent. He gets off on the word Aryan. I tell him it's true, most Iranians are descendants of the Aryan tribes who moved to the arable lands south of the Caspian sea. That's why the Shah called himself Aryamehr, to prove the superiority of our race at the Gates of the Great Civilization; although his big nose and his Arabic first name, Mohamad-Reza, gave his genealogy and ours away. Michael laughs and says Aryan my ass, you're a fuckin' snob and can't deny it. I tell him there is no use denying historical facts, it's not my fault our ancestors used to move around fucking every indigenous woman and child who appeared on their way. If their pants weren't so loose I could have blue eyes and blonde hair like Maria, but thank your lucky star my roaming ancestors spread their semen so thin that the indigenous and Indian genes eventually won and I ended up with this kind of hair that

puts me in the same underdog rank as you, and don't you worry, babe, I ain't leavin' you alone here. Besides, even if I wanted to bleach and dye my hair blonde and wear colour contacts, vat could I do viz dis fuckin' accent: vy der iz zo mani horsis asis dan der iz horsis asis? But Merlyn has carefully studied your *Mytho*

*< Although I can't dismiss / the memory of his kiss / I guess he's
not for me. >*

logies. She's scribbled all over the pages of *Myth Today*. I tell her I'm not a myth but a walking billboard. I don't know what I'm supposed to be signifying but I sure as hell am both the thing and the notion of the thing, and the two are sometimes so chummy I mistake them for each other. Then there are times when they get down into a good dirty fight and I get confused which clay face is whose. She says I guess it's not as clear for you because your skin is pale. I tell her about the times when out of the blue people start talking to me in Spanish or French, even Korean, Chinese or Japanese and expect me to respond in the same language, and the looks of disbelief, mockery, embarrassment or suspicion that come over their faces when I say in my Oxford English imitation Pa'don me, I don't quite unde'stand. There was this one time too, April fifteenth, nineteen-ninety-one, when I was in the subway train coming back from my refugee hearing at the Immigration office on University Avenue. The adjudicator told me I don't believe your story because if it was true you shouldn't be alive today. I said under my breath You go down there yourself if you think your fuckin' truth is worth dying for. But he approved me anyway because he felt sympathy for me, I didn't particularly look like the kind of woman who could live under the hijab because the women in my paintings were all naked. I guess he also approved of my breasts because he was staring at them throughout the whole twenty-two, no, twenty-three minutes of the hearing. I was crying in the subway car coming

back, and there was this Iranian couple sitting across from me. They kept talking about me in Farsi: Shayad ba doos-e pesaresh da'vash shode (perhaps she's had a fight with her boyfriend). Na baba, khodesh mese pesaras, doos-e pesar kodoome (neah, she's like boys herself, what boyfriend)? Akhe pas che marazeshe (then what the hell is wrong with her)? I didn't stop crying but as I was getting off the train I said to them Rooz-e khoobi dashte bashid (have a nice day). I wish I'd turned back to look at their faces. Merlyn says people are so narrow-minded about race and identity. I tell her Yeah, we don't belong, and ask her if she thinks I'd look good as a blending blondy. You know, Professor Barthes, what I wanted to ask you, if History is simply that time when we were not born, how come it catches up with us as soon as we start crying?

Announcement 1

Is was will be is was. Time is, time will be, time was. Was of is, is of will be, time of you, time of me. Time will be time won't be. What will we do then? Time is time is will soon be time was, then what will it be? Will it be? Will it won't? Was our will be won't when I thought you thought will? Was of me, was of you, was of won't be, was of let it be, let it go, let it pass, let it rest, let it live, let it be will be, let it be is, let it be was. Let it be. Let it pass. Let it rest . . . the sea will be was one day too.

LETTER 2

< Hush now, don't explain / just say you'll remain / . . . >

Dear Professor Barthes,

Not all texts can create pleasure, in writing or reading. Some texts are very painful even to think. Some texts defy words. It is often considered to be the strength of the author if s/he can write about *heart-wrenching* matters and still give you pleasure when you read it. Photography is text, but is it an exception to the rule? I don't know. I don't know if any of our signifying tools can really be independent of words. In your *Camera Lucida*, you seem to be of two minds about this question, but I don't want to get into this right this minute. And I may never get to it later. See, I've got all these things I want to say and I have very little time for saying them. See, I'm a practitioner. Or that's how I'd like to envision myself. And I'm in this strange place right now where actions seem to be more urgent than words. I don't really know why I feel this urgency. Perhaps it has something to do with where I come from. Jargon: Where my subjectivity originates. This place is full of contradictions and conflicts. Ricardo thinks we should learn to live with our contradictions but I'm not sure about that. Even Nadia seems to think the same way as she tries to conceptualize a paper that's about forgiveness. I tell her this certainly has some Catholic connotations. She agrees. I admire that in her: Spirituality is not a taboo. I, on the other hand, am still preoccupied with vengeance. See, I don't like to write from any place of falsification. Call it moralistic, modern, dated. That's fine. But then, why do I seem to be so concerned with the aesthetics of textuality if that's how I think. Unless we consider aesthetics and morality floating in the same bourgeois hang-outs. I can't back this up, but I tell you, this is how it seems. But, you know, what I'm really interested in is the Story. Trin has written an entire book that intellectualizes stories. She's probably taken after you, except that occasionally these voice come into her writing that tell

stories in a much more sincere language. Sincerity: That's what I'm interested in. And if I want to be sincere at all I can't avoid talking about the pain. Although, I lied to Ricardo about this. I said I had great fun writing this text. That was before I had gotten to these lines. I guess I did it so he wouldn't think that I was going to subject him to reading a boring *academic* paper right after he's done grading god-knows-how-many papers and exams. But perhaps he enjoys that pain. Who knows? I sure don't. I find myself doing these strange things that I don't take pleasure from, like writing this text, and miss out on the beautiful night I'm writing it in. I think you were wrong: The pleasure is not in the text: It is in the stories that are live while the text writes itself. That's what I think. This is my stance. But how is it that I'm negating myself, even as I write these words, for I could be walking by the lake with Omid instead of sit

< Hush now, don't complain / you're my joy and pain / . . . >

ting here, staring at this devilish screen, my fingers punching keys without requiring much thought. Is there a question of significance here? I don't know. All I know is that I'd rather be out under the sky. *I was thinking that we are only real in our nightmares when I heard the knock on my door. I knew it was him, not because there was anything special about the way he knocked, but perhaps because I desired him there. I went down the stairs and opened the door, smiling. He said Hi, may I come in. I stared at him for, I don't know, maybe a second, and said Why are you here then? Walk right in. I thought I saw no malice in his eyes. And he came in. I closed the door behind him. He was waiting for me to show him the way even though he knew my place already. I did, I led him up the stairs to the landing which becomes the kitchen and gestured for him to go into the living room, two more steps but in the opposite direction. I said Please, sit down, can I get you something to drink? He said*

No, I just had one. Unless you have vodka. I did. I felt it was pointless to continue pretending that I didn't know what he had come for. But I kept pretending, as a perfect host might do. He followed me back into the kitchen and said he would mix it himself. He took the bottle from me and grabbed the mug that was sitting on the counter. I said No way, you are not going to drink vodka in that. This is my house, after all. So, I looked straight in his eyes, pale-blue, and took the mug away from him, saying You yuppies can't stay away from mugs. Don't you think? He took a step toward me and my legs took me one step back, but then I remembered he had taken the same step in the dream. So I fixed myself where I was, exactly the same place I was in the dream, at the center of the triangle of the stove, sink and kitchen table, ample room to maneuver in. He took another step and now he was standing very close to me. I felt the air between us pressing against me and thought C'mon, this is for real, it's not gonna work. So I opened the cabinet door and picked a shot glass and handed it to him. He poured the vodka and drank it in one breath. Then he poured another shot. But in the dream he put his hand on my shoulder, bent his head sideways and kissed my lips. It was a short, dry kiss, but it ran a shudder down my pits that made me wet. Smooth beginning, he said, Don't you want a drink? I was already wet in the dream. So I agreed with him and got myself a glass of water from the refrigerator instead of taking the shot he was offering me. Standing where he was in the dream, he followed me with his eyes. His gaze pressured my every move, every muscle, every breath. I asked him if he preferred to make love on the floor or in the bed. He stuttered I . . . I don't . . . I don't know, wherever you want, I guess. He had a puzzled look on his face. But in the dream he said In the bed, of course. I approached him, took his hand and led him toward my bed at the southwest corner of the living

room. There, with my back against the bedside lamp, I began undressing. That was what I had done in the dream: The soft light illuminating the curved contour of my body, leaving the details mysterious and only dimly recognizable, making me tempting and desirable. He just stared at me. In the dream his chest moved up and down in an increasingly faster rhythm. I took my underwear off and straightened my spine. I had to be ready, I told myself. He is only real because of my dream. Then he started taking his clothes off. I helped him with his pants. His erection was pointing slightly off center. We embraced and kissed. It was a wet kiss but I was dry.

I could only make up the occasional word in the soft murmur that rose from the apartment downstairs. Everything else was quiet. Even the smoke coming out of the hospital's chimney behind the block of houses across the street seemed to be frozen in its vaguely serpentine thread. I lied wide awake beside him, mechanically drawing circles on his chest with the tips of my fingers. He was asleep with his right arm around me and his lips still touched my forehead. I turned away from him and faced the wall. Our shadows mingled and formed a hilly landscape on the wall. I curled up and tried to find him in that landscape as I knew he was now; contentedly sleeping on his back, a few strands of his blonde hair scattered on his sticky forehead, his pink face exhibiting a satisfied expression, his arm still bent as if holding me, his breath smelling of me. But all I could recognize in the flat darkness of our shadows on the wall was my own two hands mimicking the heads of two dogs barking at each other at the top of a hill. When I got tired of watching them I felt a deep hunger. But I didn't feel like getting up to fetch something to eat. I tried distracting myself. I closed my eyes and remembered him when he was panting on top of me. He was squeezing his eyes in deep concentration and his mouth was open. His forehead, his neck, chest

and arms felt clammy with a cold sweat, as if his effort to reach the depths of me was confusing, even frightening, him. That was when I decided to take matters in my own hand and started sucking on his nipple. He sighed. Then he arched over and kissed my forehead. I moved to the other nipple, and let the tip of my tongue circle it as it likes to do when tasting something new. He moaned and loosened his grip on my arms. I turned him on his back with very little effort, then sat on him and guided his penis inside me. He held my shoulders, raised his head, kissed my lips and then started sucking my breast. I tried imagining what our shadows on the wall must have looked like then. A cobra dancing over a scorpion. I turned around thinking about waking him up, feeling cheated out of that special moment when the woman in the movies falls asleep with her head resting over her lover's chest, reassured that he would be masterfully guarding their nest in his watchful wakefulness. All the men I've ever been with fell asleep as soon as their penis did. I grinned at my own vulgarity. That's what he would say, Do you have to be so vulgar? I would tell him that a bit of truth never hurt anybody. But the truth is that I was feeling very empty when my body began rising in the air all of its own accord. As if I'd turned into a balloon that had reached its maximum capacity of hot air. From the distance of about a meter, he didn't look much different. But as I gained more height he began looking smaller, more insignificant. His penis was lying to one side, shriveled like the used condom he threw beside the bed when he was done. He looked like a baby who is dreaming of sucking his mother's plentiful breasts. I felt a bit of shame watching him critically when he was unshielded. Then I remembered my own position: My head touching the high ceiling and my feet dangling in midair like those of a corpse hanging at the end of a rope. I smiled, chuckled and then broke into a laughter that became so loud it

woke him and my neighbour's dog who started barking as he always does when he feels my presence. He looked at me at first with the confusion of a person who is not sure if he is still dreaming or if he is awake. But the dog's incessant barking pulled him out and the real confusion set in. With his mouth open in a mixture of bewilderment and fear, he jumped to his feet on the bed and his hand moved up to his head. That made me laugh harder and louder which made the dog barking harder and louder. By now my neighbour was alarmed: I could hear her yelling at her dog, asking him what was wrong; as if he could answer. He managed to utter *What are you doing up there*. On hearing this my laughter became so hard all I could do to keep from shooting through the window was to hold on to the ceiling lamp. I thought I would have asked *How did you get up there* because it was quite obvious that all I was doing was laughing, but I couldn't stop laughing long enough to share this thought with him. I heard my neighbour banging on her ceiling, my floor, with the long broom handle she keeps for this purpose, the way she always does when she can't take my noise any more. I knew she had to go to work early in the morning but I couldn't help the situation. He thought that was a knock on the door and went to open it. His placid penis now flapped from side to side. He tripped over the table near the foot of my bed and knocked down the statue of the woman who always watches over my sleep. I looked at his skinny pink ass close to the floor as he bent on his knees to pick up the headless woman of the statue. And I was overcome with a new wave of laughter so strong that I started crying and nearly choked on my laughter-turned-sobs, so I let go of the ceiling lamp and floated toward the window. From there, I turned around and looked at my room. The niche to my immediate left, my workspace was lit only by the outside light coming through the window. It was too orderly in

contrast to what was happening in the large painting that hung on the wall opposite the window. I had worked on that painting all week: The woman on the cross at the right of the painting was being attacked by arrows of paint from all directions. Her head was down, but her fleshy breasts and thighs displayed themselves in defiance. My hands went to my breasts. I had stopped laughing. Everything was quiet. My neighbour's dog had stopped barking and only uttered the occasional muffled growl. I knew she had put him in his jaw strap. He was standing by the post that separated the work area from the bedroom. He held the headless statue in one hand and pressed the other on the post. He looked like a flying buttress, except he wasn't flying. The light from the bedside lamp created a warm and cozy circle that partially covered my bed and illuminated the contour of his body from the back, leaving the details mysteriously dim. There was nothing tempting or desirable about him any more. He stared at me still in a daze. Then he let go of the headless woman and she dropped beside his naked feet, landing on her side. He said What is going on and I wished he hadn't said anything. The headless woman who watches over my sleep winked at me. So I grabbed the piece of canvas that was waiting to be primed from my work table, opened the window and flew out. Dear Professor Barthes, it's a beautiful night and Omid is coming over so we can go for a walk by the lake. The nightmares can wait . . . even if they are more real than the nights we live.

ANNOUNCEMENT 2

Future Freedom 55. 5, 15, 25, 35, counting. Will I be free? Will I be me? Will I be pretty? Will I be sweet? Will I be white, black, brown, red, yellow? Or

silver gray with a tint of blue seething deep in my roots? Future freedom 55, 35 and counting, 36 was last night, how come I'm 95 today? I bought the right kind of shoes, platform blue, and walked home with them, in the box. Ten dollars and fifteen cents less for Future Freedom 55. Tommy says Rent's goin' up. We'll talk I says and keep piling laundry quarters for a small pack of Future Freedom 55.

LETTER 3

*< Why did I wander / here and there and yonder / wasting
precious time / for no reason or rhyme >*

Dear Professor Barthes,

I'm writing to you because you are dead and it's easier to write to dead people when they are dead. I told Omid about your nightly roamings in Rabat. He didn't like it even though he really likes your writings. I ask you, can we separate the author from the text? Your one time friend, Professor Foucault, hailed the death of the author but you both continue to live and you shadow my life. Even Professor Althusser who murdered his wife keeps on living. Omid thinks there is something the matter with you all when it comes to your politics. I tell him Yeah, but they're all demigods in the academe, at least here in North America. Then I ask him if he thinks you can be viewed outside the colonial world to which you belonged. He says No, but you have to find traces of it in their writings. I can page through *Camera Lucida* and find your affected gaze as it touches people and places of memories, social and personal, objectifying them in an aesthetic rhetoric that Jameson might have called irresponsible self-indulgence. I mean I can ponder why it is so easy for you to talk

about photographs of Others which only interest you in a detail here or there, a pair of Mary Janes on a black woman's feet, an Italian-American child's crooked teeth or a Russian boy's funny haircut while you refuse to show us the Winter Garden photograph of your mother, *maman*, at the age of eight. But this seems to be a fu

< Isn't it a pity, / isn't it a crime, / my journey's ended? >

tile exercise. I don't want to spend the next ten years of my life digging into your psyche through the documents you've left behind. I've taken what I need from you and now I can move on. I'm a storyteller not a genealogist, and I'd rather live my stories and take to the streets with them. I didn't tell you before that Merlyn thinks you are boring. So do I. Now I'd much rather think about the confusion and contradiction of the East-West identity. I ran into Armina the other day and told her about my intention to work on a project that attempts to uncover some of the dynamics of our post-colonial misery through the stories of three individuals. She said Come on honey, you think they care? Did anybody send you a letter of apology saying we regret we wasted eighteen years of your life, please come back, we'll make it up to you? Did they invite you to their feasts with sabzi-polo ba mahi, shirin polo, khoresh-t-e fesenjan, and sat you at the head of the table because they're sorry you've been starving all these years? You're mad. You've missed the boat. You didn't just get off it, you never got on. The clock stopped ticking to your dreams a long time ago, babe. It's not the passage of time you've been watching, it's time going down the toilet and you want to go back in it thinking you missed something important back then? Well, love, got news for you, you'll be digging in the sewer, urine, shit, thick rotten refuse, slimy condoms, aborted purple fetuses, and shrieking fat rats chewing all. You think they'll give you a medal for putting a mirror before them? You are not Beatrice, honey, and your paradise is a garden of earthly sins nobody wants to wake

up finding themselves in. They all washed their hands a long time ago and they promised to keep their mouths shut. Your sister growing passion fruit in California, your brother lost in opium clouds, your niece singing Madonna tunes. They abandoned you on your cross many moons ago. Only you're still blinded by that silvery lure. Wake up, love. It won't be long before they set up colonies there, they've charted its waters. They're not building an altar for Ahura, my love. They're raising a silver temple for Warhol. A war-hole. Get it? You're the sacrificial lamb, and your niece the virgin dancing for the glory of his puny erection. Armina is making a film about this immigrant young Iranian woman who gets killed by a car when she attempts to cross the street still dizzy from her drags on her first cigarette. You know, I am looking for a clo

*< Here we are at last / it's like a dream / the two of us / a perfect
team. / Isn't it a pity / we never met before? >*

sure for this text, something that can bring together Miroslav, Maria, Omid, Michael, Merlyn, Nadia, Ricardo, Armina and I and all I can think of is our different hairs and our disparate origins as the source of our textual contradictions. *The origin is not a point. It is a non-delimited space constituted along all the conceivable axes, and those surpassing perception, of a universe whose material, intellectual and spiritual dimensions are inseparable. The origin is not a point. Nor a demarcation of territorial or temporal claims. It is constituted in a consciousness whose conception eludes language and rhetoric. The origin is not a point. It cannot be defined, explicated, represented. It has no fixed coordinates. No historical truth. No genealogy. No ethical primacy. No meaning. The origin is not the pronominal, the singularity or plurality of human being. The origin is not a point. It is a continuum. The origin has no origin, no point or moment of departure, and no point or moment of*

arrival, Thus, the origin has no duration or length of flight. What's the matter with you, girl? You blind or something? Think you put your head in your books the world stops running? It aint' going to wait for you, honey, you're no princess Di. You're some poor refugee from the back bushes. Why you go calling yourself exile? Exile my sexile. You're the puss under the skin of an abscess on the ass. Know what I mean? Nobody want you around. They figure if you had guts you'd stay where you were born. Why you come here? You come for what they've got. You're some parasite. Know what I mean? That aint' gonna change. Bag of books, spectacles, mug, can't hide who you are. Re...Fee...U...G. You didn't pay your way like decent folks. Ran away, fell down in your own shit. Had to grab you by hand and pull you out. But you still smell shit. *Departure is a direction not instigated by a single gravity or repulsion but by a relation between the forces of gravity and repulsion. A direction implicating a trilateral: Departing, Departing from, Departing for. Always departing. Departure is not a birth certificate, a passport, a ticket. It is all and none. Departure is a quest: a Practice, a Game, an Existence. Departure is not the opposite but the negation and at once the affirmation of arrival. Departure has no port of origin. You ain't getting any tears from me. You can't find your own patch of dirt to shit in you don't get no sympathy from me. You're less than a cat. I ain't walking after you picking up your turd. You're no poodle. Arrival has no place or time. No certainty, only a relation between uncertainties. Arrival is a flash of insight shrouding itself in gases the moment it is named. A home which is not home anymore but the confines of its occupant the minute it is raised. Arrival has no meaning without immanent departure.*

< It's an awful pity / we never never met before. >