

The Morning Wind

Don't you remember how the wind used to come up in the morning? Almost every day it would.

Yes, I remember, he says. It came up yesterday.

It blows in from the lake, cold, and the dogs lie down against the chimney at the back of the house, to be out of it.

Well, it's warm there, if the fire is lit. And it's good shelter.

The wind did not come up today, she says. But that's not why I feel this way.

They stand in the center of the town, near the fountain, and wait for the bus to come. She stands with one hand on her hat, though there is no wind. Then she looks up the street and says to him, I think you are going to hurt me.

No. I never would.

I don't believe you can help it, she says. You are going to make me cry.

He looks away at pigeons in sunlight, and says believe me, nothing could be farther from the truth.

Nothing is very far from everything, she says, but the truth is that you will break my heart.

Please don't say this. Don't give up hope for love. You are hurting me, right now.

You see? she says, and now she turns to look at the side of his head. It's inevitable. Just as every day the wind comes up and brings bad news.

No, sometimes good news, he tells her. Clear weather and the smell of fir trees.

Usually bad, though some days it's just that the moon has lived another night and set, and left that dull expression on the lake.

You should have gotten more sleep. Your mood is a tempestuous dark green. I tried to tell you, step away from the cello, stop slicing bread and apples for the lunches of children we do not have.

No fault of mine, damn it.

Oh God, where is my peace? He slumps onto a concrete bench beneath a tree, an ornamental pear.

Don't bring God into this, if you know what's good for you, she says.

If I know what's good for me? I will bring Him into it, by God. My peace I leave with you, God said. But all He left with me is you, and your bottomless melancholy. You dead moon. No drifting, lightless rock alone in space has more pity for itself than you. Why the hell do you need more pity still from me?

Now she does begin to cry, and bows her head and looks at her shoes. Dust. And the tears run down her face and drip from her chin and fall upon her shoes and on the earth.

You see? You evil, awful little man, she says, it proves me right.



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