

LUBOV

Ella Rose Flood

Only Silver

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Thus the shadow of the object fell upon the ego, and the latter could be judged by a special agency, as though it were an object, the forsaken object. In this way an object-loss was transformed into an ego-loss and the conflict between the ego and the loved person into a cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and the ego as altered by identification.

— Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia”

It’s probably too late, but the artist talks a lot about melancholia and loss.

What it means: when you lose someone or something (through some kind of breach: death, betrayal, disappointment, or abandonment) and fall into melancholia, what is happening is different than grief.

In grief, the process is of slowly snipping each thread that connects you to the lost “object”. In melancholia, you don’t fully accept that the “object” is gone and you swallow the lost object or person into yourself. It’s like swallowing a potato whole instead of eating a bag of French fries. In both cases the potato is gone.

The “potato” object is not digestible and it makes you sick. It takes over your sense of yourself and you identify with/as it as something rotten, which is also “you”.

Ella Rose Flood returns over and over to these “lost” objects or people. And they seem ambivalent. This process can be energizing in a way, and can also have a sort of aesthetic. And a kind of masochistic pleasure as well. You own the past even as it owns you. You choose how to represent it, the paintings seem to be about reclaiming that kind of power over things that were once beyond you.

This “melancholic” way of being can take over your life. Or your art practice.

That’s what that sentence means. The lost object is taken in and displaces the person’s former identity. “The shadow of the object falls across the ego, emptying it until it is totally impoverished,” or something like that.

—David Rimanelli, March 2023.

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