

No snowflake ever falls in the wrong place \*

Let's make it dusk. C stalks the narrow medieval streets towards the water, unstoppable and absolutely heading East. Let's make it contemporary. The busted old cobblestones give way to a pristine promenade of cafes serving Red Bull cocktails, white wine spritzes, and overmilked lattes with dry cake. Let's make it summer. C glides on, weaving between the lurching tourists with determination. Bridges in different styles dot the river: an unspectacular one for cars, a suspension bridge for pedestrian businessmen, another one for cars, an old iron bridge decorated with heterosexual padlocks, one more for cars, then an art deco one, a railway bridge, and finally, a vast green area devoid of connections. Underneath is the largest and most secure data bank in Europe. Far from any designated zone of misbehavior, the area is manicured and glowing almost a forbidden Viridian. There are rollerbladers and spikeball players and CCTV. They blink their red eyes.

The unhinged stroll began earlier with an unsavory meeting, mild lung infection and that very last straw - a bad nectarine. A vow to stub out one final cigarette butt in the oyster shell on the balcony was what followed. Quitting required commitment and commitment required affection for the self and affection generally required affect which required spectacle which required... a good pop playlist and the dedication to a simple principle: sometimes an audience-of-one is all you've got. Upholding this principle demanded a sublimation previously inconceivable to C. Two things are never interesting to other people: dreams from the night before and impulsive attempts to quit. The journey was lonely. Snacking was an age-old sublimation strategy but snacking messed with the waistline which messed with the wardrobe which messed with the bank account, which spurred on existential crisis. Dissociation was one option, walking was another. Both methods historically worked hand in hand.

So C walks, and abandons that loneliest of principles on the banks of the river Main. Sometimes, we have no choice but to go public. C travels past a modernist playground which looks like a scaled up BDSM contraption and is vacant of any happy children. Corrupt finances and state secrets buzz underground as C reaches a supple patch of grass. Could life ever be more than just a Scratch-and-Win lottery, where we didn't have to fear what is beneath the surface? The CCTV cameras whirl in unison towards C. In typical fashion most people look away, embarrassed beyond explanation on behalf of a complete stranger. Standing now still with arms outstretched, the eyes of C flutter closed.

*Fold the document into six equal parts. Cut a corner for all the corners you cut. Then cut another. How we decorate the margins is up to us. Cut four corners for the painter, and cut a piece for every actor, sleeper, smoker. For every weeper. And their plus one. Cut towards transgression and cut towards the dead-end. Cut towards drama. Never lose your grip on the scissors. The ventricles of any heart are a one-way street. You see what is taking shape here? The ornamented arms have their predetermined geometry revealed. (There can only ever be six and this is a law.) Now cut towards the crux of the matter, cut towards the center. Cut a piece for each stain against the linen. Cut one more. And then cut another. Cut again. Take a look at the scraps beneath your feet. Now unfold.*

C has fallen to their knees, gazing at the ground. The willow trees are bowing. The oyster shell is on the balcony. It had been very difficult to pry open. It had caused indigestion. It had come from Malaga, sentimentally smuggled from the dinner table last vacation. It had stunk up the pocket of an expensive suede jacket on the way home. It was decorated with nicotine tombstones which dutifully soaked up the weather and dried themselves out in the sun over and over again, turning a beautiful chestnut brown like a good horse. Looking up, a fat juicy tear forms in C's eye, the plumpness of which defies physics until physics can no longer be denied, and then pops into a steady stream of diamonds down C's cheek. iPhones are unlocking and Samsungs are unflipping. Security cameras keep whirling. A rapture multiplies across many screens...one. Two. Three.

Water can drop singularly and controlled, like from a cowboy's face, or splatter chronically like rain - unique crystals form under both circumstances. And it will never be the same.

—Written in Seville and Granada by Elif Saydam, November 2023

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\* For a snowflake to form certain conditions must be met: ornamented possibilities, secure attachment styles, faith in six figures, and a very frigid reception. Plus water. Lots and lots of water. Most importantly, a protagonist is required: a particle of dust, floating alien and alone in a colorless European sky. A saint with rounded edges. And a nasty habit. Tears must follow. Tears must flow.