THE HOLE IN THE SKY

LETTER TO MARGUERITE DURAS

Désirée Jung

LET'S START WITH the truth: I regret. Let us attempt a truce: I insist. Resistances are drowned in a text that narrates the desire for devastation, and the assault it leaves. After attempting, a few times, unsatisfied, to end it, I return to write you here. You won't reply. That is expected. Yet your words will forcefully tour upon me. There is no purpose but the sprint of your force. I will disappear despite my own liking—or because of it. Not every mode of enjoyment is subjected to choice or devotion. I am not a devotee, but I respect the letters, the calligraphy that made us who we were in the beginning, despite our not wanting to know anything about them.

Should I introduce myself to you? I am also known as another woman. The ones you count one by one, distinctively. Have you ever heard of us? It is hard to realize our existence when you find yourself so immersed in being yourself. Difference is what disappears when we

ask others what they think of us. I do not seek to be recognized. Let this be clear between us. Something to warn you beforehand—I am very aware of our contraries, of the interior that watches us from the outside and brings us a messenger: the hesitancy of a scorpion about to leap with the heresy that kills its foe.

What if I told you that the woman you met in the suburbs of Paris, in a hospice, and who inspired you to write the stone woman in one of your most known novels, is not who you claim she might be? What if, in fact, she is more like me? Could you stand reading me? Could you sustain her gaze, if it wasn't yours? Could you read my letter with weight and voice?

Let's voice thy speech.

I wonder if you've ever thought what she could've become if she had a proper voice, or if she were beyond your cause of literary performance around love, affected as feminine madness. The absence of a trial is not an exemption. Some write because they have doubts about the act of writing. Others because they search for something habitable only to find the unbearable in it. The letter is a holt, hold it if you will. Lodged in another is the hole in the sky. In my view, we are merely distinct types of typos. Anger, love, and hate arise as circumstantial curiosities. Could you survive today's world? It makes me want to tell you my story, partially, despite the risk of being rejected.

I am not a homosexual—You know, the type you hated to love? Or am I? Tell me your thoughts. What is not a woman who has not given birth? Conceive these women. Can someone reset the letter? I can count with my own fingers. I do not dwell in gender bias. I don't need to finger someone else to prove who I am, let alone be the keeper of someone else's excesses. I cannot tolerate alcohol, let me tell you, I had cancer on the right side of the base of my tongue, and I almost lost my voice, not as literally as your absence of voice after your coma, but somewhat similar. The radiation treatment did more than kill my bad cells. They freed a story ridden by silences. Yes, this is my boulevard too. Ours?

Once I saw a bear in the psychiatric ward where I stayed. It was big and black, printed against the nightly sky. It told me not to worry, that the animals would protect me. What a bunch of bullshit: of course I did not reply to the animal at that time. Jung was too much of a hero for me then. What is in a name anyway? It should count for something. I should make it count for something. Ounce by once, a scorpion in time. Upon the collective, the bears alone will not save me. But they will point the direction where entitlement is not a land to be conquered: artisan is service. They count the story, the unpaved road of a leftover desire; the rest of a letter contouring, typesetting, betting the gain by losing the lottery's draw. Yearning the three tied to a tree where a boat of levers sails away, unanswered, despite the protests of potency and progress.

Who are those women who dare to speak? These unknowns, rejected into disconcerted fields, leaps ahead of time, ryes crisping and caping the eyelashes of the hole in their own sequestered and in breasted madhouses? My story is not that glamourous. If I were told from the point of view of a man trapped by your gaze, I would have been dead by now. Who are you? What is the cost of never letting go of one's mother? Never waking up.

One day, I woke up.

Many days I woke up.

But this particular day, later in my life, was one day like any other day except for its difference: it did wake me up. It woke, mother long dead, life's terror of death somewhat subsided; one needs to be aware of this longing for death, or else, the maniac thoughts can overcome the sudden gong of a bell: why on earth did I think these beings that created me were gods with special powers? Infantile as a question, no? Not really, not in terms of an answer that comes from a questioning: what jumps out of skin meddled by senseless threads? Mothers are just ordinary moths, and like them, make fine holes in our clothes. Paper dolls, little butterflies omens, where do you reverse the fortune and realize there is never going back—to what?

Let me take it from your mouth, let me fall, because dropping means counting oneself in the sequence of lines, farther from the threat of being lectured. This is not just a writing on the wall. You may whet it with your colours. I stopped pleasing others, tethering to their recognition. Writing the drive, smoother. The longer it becomes, the shorter the voice of the furies and their obscene quest for complete settings. Here is a cup of tea to your boredom, more than a figure of speech. Silent women: the camera pans beautifully in the solitude of their beauty, your home, all your characters who love you because you have silenced them, because silence means an enigma to have. I used to believe. And that was it: a belief. I have others besides women of intrigue—often nicer and prettier in fiction. Famines of women in regenerations, cuts embedded and disguised as knots. Traumatic wound: let me show you my cut—did you hear? Listening that marks but stops a word to be fully circumvented.

Life is an unthoughtful silence.

Living is bearing one's name: the fatherhood thread by the cut of a throat, haemorrhaging the lineage of beautiful minds. It is a long story, count all over again to three. Childhood: not the source. It would have taken a different mother to have a man narrate me. An altered lineage altogether. Not long ago I had to have my identity card redone. Expired, he said. And I had been using it for almost ten years: unnoticed. Filling the form, the dispatcher reads from my birth certificate. Question: were you registered without the name of the father? The real is righteous in its readjustments. Not worthy of a reply, for the revelation might stun

the sun. The anticipation of an ancestral realm striking half said truths. Thou may speak as if reinvented by a field. Logical time rests. The new identity card is circumvented. Fifty years after my birth, can it be? You tell me. A few moments later, he rectifies: Sorry, I did not see at first your father's name here. No need, I want to tell him. I never could find the name of my father inscribed anywhere either, much less in the certificate of my birth.

But that is another story.

Fields that come and go, expire and subside into other shapes and possibilities.

Ravished many times before, knotted, unlike your characters, tailed by biographers. Long gone is the thrill of dying in the arms of a mother language. I have not much saliva left. My taste buds irradiate the brilliance of their own desire: lack, do not kill the words in my mother. I meant to say, mouth. I meant to count in the meddling. But I have birthed the hole in the sky and have fallen from untameable places. Unreasonably, I was supposed to draft a paper on you. Letter by letter and here I have: littering garbage spreading our production out in the open, and the inevitable recycling of this evolution. That does not dissolve—had you let your mother drop from the sky, would you have seen the field beyond the mirage assembled into your characters? Type eyes. Dryness is what holds the span of its wings. Fairness and trusting for whoever flies.

We live in strange times.

When I was hospitalized at a psychiatric ward for the second time, I thought, many people, many people, a mistake has been produced. The truth of a breakdown: where does it start? Stars startle, as they have always, waiting for an opening in the sky. Speech is painful. Careful now. It was not always like so.

When I first decided to speak to a psychoanalyst, I was certain my questions were not made for answers. Like boy needs girl, isn't it like so? I have finished my analysis, but my analysis has not finished with me. There is a long pause. Let us make a long pause.

Breathe with me.

In time, and suddenly, shapes are growing, glowing a hole in the sky. These appearances, disappearances, I tell you.

What is wrong with a hole in the sky? She asked, and I replied: I don't know. Who said there was something wrong with the hole? Everywhere there are pronouns. Everywhen there are norms. Worms under the land, there were noms. And one day, there were none.

To be spoken by a man is not my first choice nor my last to circumvent the void. I have added an accent to my name. A place where I can assent. My father produced for himself the right to correct me—like most fathers do. There were too many accents in my name. One is plenty. Is that so? He made sure I wasn't able to speak to reinforce his argument.

Corrected to the letter, or so he thought. Letters are auspicious, with a consequence of their own, unlimited to counting. Father accountant, grandfather reaccounted, what can one do but redo the counts?

I did not count my father into the formula.

The closer, the more fragile it reveals itself to be. Let us hate some things for a while and be aware of how long this counts in space. The rest of this invoice should be unsayable, but not devastated, which is the least of our concerns here.

When I leave you outside of my account, I spend my time watching a dense fog surrounding Vancouver, British Columbia, where I live. Impenetrable in white heaviness, the horns awake me day and night, making me accustomed to what is not completely there. More often that I can admit, the gaze that blinded us together was unpainted by an understanding of who you and I were supposed to be, when all we knew (and morbidly enjoyed) was how to be ravished, as though characters in someone's (most likely) phantasmatic novelty. I ache this strangeness, and the body wakes up sweating. Nonchalant sublime ways of sleeping and dreaming, a flute being played by an archangel who tells me, sadness has long dislodged and it will sharpen your senses after it passes. This subsides with me. This warmth is the fruit of the letter I send you here now.

Turnover from others in a final lament: nobody has ever told me what love is. I hear you say: here is your chance to understand what I is hurst after the land has been burned by an inevitable abandonment, at its most divine source. This is not what lies beyond the blink of an eye. Darkness aches with the moisture of the absence invaded by the ovaries of colours.

At Saint Paul's hospital, I am but many women diagnosed with anxiety. Nothing has changed in the quarry of minds. The psychiatric ward is crowded, and I am taken to the eating disorder quarters instead—what is the difference between an empty stomach and an empty mind? Do not, did not, does or did mind it. I occupy my attention, anything but myself.

Time passes between hospitalizations. Acceptance delimits what is unusual. Teenagers, mostly girls, thin as corn plants, elongated in their fields, stare at me. Was your character with me? I wonder if I missed all that long ago. I stare at the thinnest of their bodies and wonder how small one can become. I am the girl who hides Snickers bars (given by someone?) under the sheets. She eats. She throws up. She pukes the night. She trades the horizon for its lines. The hospital room has no walls, but curtains, a theater on its own, me and four other women awakened by the sound of vomit. Trying and not doing it is not quite all right, queering my rights, reeking into toilets, or for whatever other reason they say it counts as acknowledgment. Not scared, scarred by this stubborn survival of desire.

Mother had this too: obstinacy. Love and hate, eating and purging, nothingness is not a mystery to us, women of the wild boastful silences. Even though I had no eating disorders, I felt comfortable being there, locked up and consummated by the gaze of these women, eaten by their bizarre inadequacies, excreting and vouching for their non-existence, the real void of the mind.

There are unauthorized moments. Mom saying, you have a structure, you. This disappearance, in and out, that is what this is all about. How simple she made it sound. A road being written by someone else's desire. The title of the proper name suggesting one's written domain: she also had been spoken by others before I was born. She had been written, no choice in the matter. I have had many narrators in life; few have assumed the bloody feminine. I have always said, life is more important than writing but writing oneself in one's life is the gift of the living. This is the agreement, love given and ceded, the consent of existing.

Sunshine in the mind's hole ignites the flame of the day's descent into night. Do not resist, instead dot the dawn of its reverses. This hole in the sky—it stresses, speaks beyond erasure and devastation. Impressive printing of awes, caught by the breaks of waves, of unexpected drifts, jumped but unannounced—foreseeable, for immense is the ocean.

What did you expect, a never-ending calmness?

Faltering speech—I told you from the start: there is this opening in my head. Stars vault, burst out of sentences, puncture domes of reams. Blows sand air coming from all sides. Beyond definition, much closer to the speaking voice. Rio de Janeiro, Yukon, North of Canada, whatever else fits into our mouth, the air has gone through. The sign freezes in white smoke, it makes laughable borders. Between me and sometimes don't even make sense: holding myself in thy slips. One more trigger by the undefined dancers opens my heart's back alleys.

This is how it starts again: messy matters. Don't they? The unsayable urge of a durable name, contrary to the legacy of the ovaries, which breaches the inscription but cannot be heard in any book. This breaking of oneself apart from the coast of France until reuniting infinite particles back to the Brazilian Northeast waters. It is here I get off. I am going to descend, I am descending, descendant. The birth (or burst?) of repetition that won't stop, but makes another turn when this stops writing me, incognito time whereby a thousand other women, at least, unspoken unknowns, will be dead by a punch, bullet, or puke, also, but not just them, black, indigenous, abject, yes, this casual mortality that loves to hate difference.

We humans do those things with gust. These acts that devastate all attempt to speak, and what I tried to articulate here in my singular letter to you. Deep down, I admire you, with hesitations. I know I might have failed to grasp this in writing, in my half lines that cannot say it all. My uncovered traces dated and rated.

Do not follow me or dance in my name, for in this search you may find, also by the occasion, that you are where you think to be. Stabilization, perfect speech, is a mighty happening, but of devastating and mortifying force.

Renegotiate your way through, and we might meet again.

Until then, good night.