

Dedications

Katie Moulton

Two cities later, while deciding what to take and what to ditch, she stumbled over his dedications again.

1994 – ATLANTA

SARAH—	(He wrote in small capitals, and drew
WORD ON THE STREET CLAIMS TONITE'S	S's like graffiti tags)
MOON MARKS THE COMMENCEMENT OF	(His bottomless
A NEW ERA OF LEGITIMATE CIGARETTE	pockets of cigarettes,
PURCHASING AND RAMPANT CASTING OF	it's how they'd met)
BALLOTS BY ONE OF THE HYPEST HONEY-	(How she'd teased
POTS TO EVER WRITE CAFFIENATED	him for his slang,
HATE-MAIL TO 12TH CENTURY PERSIAN	before repeating it)
MYSTICISTS AND IT CAME REAL CLEAR	(Rumi had meant some-
TO ME THAT A SPICY BOWL	thing to her, she almost forgot)
OF OKRI SOUP MIGHT JUST BE THE	(He never sounded cool, five
TICKET FOR THE EGGPIE OF MY EYE.	years older and outside of
HOPING MY HONEY KNOWS TO KEEP HER	time, but his words
HEAD UP...SEEING, YOU KNOW, AND LETTING	felt like an echo,
HERSELF BE SEEN.	a vibrating voice in her head—)

LOVE, D

He had loved her, to be sure.

This book's dream-cycles, its mythological logic, had meant something to her, too. This, and his assertions that despite their age difference, they had always known each other, would always know each other, that their connection was more than a trick of "physiology and contingencies"—were truths that her mother and then-best-friend Alecia had forgotten or never understood.

She was older now than he'd been then. She could hardly remember Alecia.

Once, still eighteen, she had written to him on a title page:

These books are bricks. Together we build the steps into the temple.

He had smiled, nodding, yes, exactly.

If she read that syrupy sentiment now, she thought, she'd vomit into her so-called handbag. She disowned it, like that phone number he'd seen

scrawled on her arm her first fall at college. Later, there had been tears in the receiver, she recalled, and his belief that if he could only touch her—

But what, after all, were the dimensions and pressure of his hands?

She couldn't say.

She was hopeless with names, faces, phone numbers. She belonged utterly to the linear—it was perhaps the truest thing about her. She couldn't remember the doorways that opened from one city or self to the next.

She sat amidst empty boxes. Some things she would ship back to her mother in Atlanta. What to take and what to ditch, what falls away without your noticing, what sticks. His fingers had been tapered, golden, and when he pressed his palm into her jeans, she had hoped the threads might take on the particular whorls of his skin. What unexpected vibrations. What would she, if she could?

She slipped an index finger down the spine. She found a piece of white paper and pen. Using the soft cover as a flat surface, she wrote:

Used, but in good condition. ~