

First thing: i exhaled too hard, and the  
hands covered in dots like  
pollen oozing geraniums melting into the air  
and i itch and i swell and mucus makes its way back into my life.

i had to hang up the phone  
it was far too much.

my teeth kiss each other  
as they spasm  
to the beat of my heart.

Second thing: Where are they? All those gratuitous gestures—blue Guernicas and daffodils  
and potholes and swords. Cigarettes I smoke to stop being cold, so I can sit beside you  
AND the Blue Guernica, which will only be reserved for our encounter. Only in retrospect  
does it take that meaning.

The only time we sat there, with the company of the Blue Guernica, was after the movie. It  
was windy and we left quickly. The second time we went, it was no longer there. You  
thought you'd gone to the wrong place and circled the building a few times. I showed up  
late and didn't notice it was gone until you pointed it out to me.

Why did it need to be blue? There is only one Guernica, and it is in Spain. There is no need  
to wake a poor García Lorca by placing a blue image of the Spanish Civil War, right by where  
he lived and wrote those poems. Every time I see it I'm reminded of the dynasty that was  
lost along the way—caught by a bullet, a text, or by the unprovoked thought disposed on an  
empty Saturday afternoon. It's 5:36 PM and the sun begins to touch you and provoke a dull  
ache in your heart, but you don't have to worry about that anymore because it's winter, and  
sunlight in the evening is a thing of the past.

Everything is reread. Find these words all around you. Store it under your nail like a clump  
of soil. Who was it that came to me in a burger shop in Washington State to say,  
“Remember me before I have to go”? Was it only said to announce the disavowal that  
would happen later—when, on a boat amidst the mountains, I saw my face in the clouds,  
only to ask my parents if they saw it too, and they replied no?

And the song which came to be on a July morning two years ago (the day after the car  
crash), only served to outline the position of your hands on a remote day, as they held

themselves back from grabbing a cigarette from my lap while I talked about god knows what. And that the hesitation with which my fingers played the keys was an anticipation of a moment of uncertainty to come; a suspension in the key of A major starting with a C# making its way up to you and your hands and, then, back down to these words. I'm okay with the fact that the song wasn't made while I was looking backwards—toward the image of those poor people in the car, not knowing what was waiting for them at the end. But as I faced toward you, I collapsed my way through the melody I would later recognize and recall that day your hands made their way toward a cigarette

And I totally forgot about the man standing on the highway, watching it all happen with the enormity you can only see when you're really close to something.

I'm so lost that even these words can't make their way toward you. But you already know this because I walked right instead of left when I left the movie theater at your side. I was equally disoriented when I checked my watch because the movie was abominable, and I kept getting a faint smell of your perfume. I never know why I do things anymore.

...You probably would have held your face differently and not known what to do with your arms. I have a video of a hand playing with the metal tricycle from a bracelet in front of a print of the great .... I'm sure you don't know who that is, but it probably brings to mind that story in which I told you of a medium who said that he should keep that print in his room for his entire life. Now it's mine. And his watch, which I've happened to scratch over and over by roughhousing with my friends.

Many people like the way it looks, and I can imagine that you—yes, you, pay attention and don't disguise yourself by urging my fingers to type “he” instead of “you”—would raise your chin with that subtle sense of pride you used to hold with such grace and humility, like a street dog.

I miss the way whiskey would smell on your breath. An old man shouldn't smell so sweet, but that's the way a guajiro, as natural as you, carries himself. I haven't thought about you in so long, but I drank a few rum and Cokes two nights ago and I got carried away.

I'm a broken record, and I've only ever made one song. The strangest song I've ever heard was the loud culmination of that boom senza attrezatura that woke me up and off the desert floor during that windstorm.

Maybe this text will make sense to me after a few months. But I don't know who I should dedicate this to as we make our way to the end. I can only leave you with the immense disappointment I feel in knowing that there is a phrase in Spanish that I can't translate into English to close this thread. You showed me the diptych your dad made and it only served to remind me that what you read—if it comes from this—will always need something else.

I repeated this story to myself, using fewer and fewer words each time. By the end of this process all I was left with was: "The narrator meets someone in front of a Blue Guernica. The next time they met, the painting was gone. Anticipating further losses, he begins to write but he stumbles on his words, reencounters his old losses, and at the end, he is left mute."