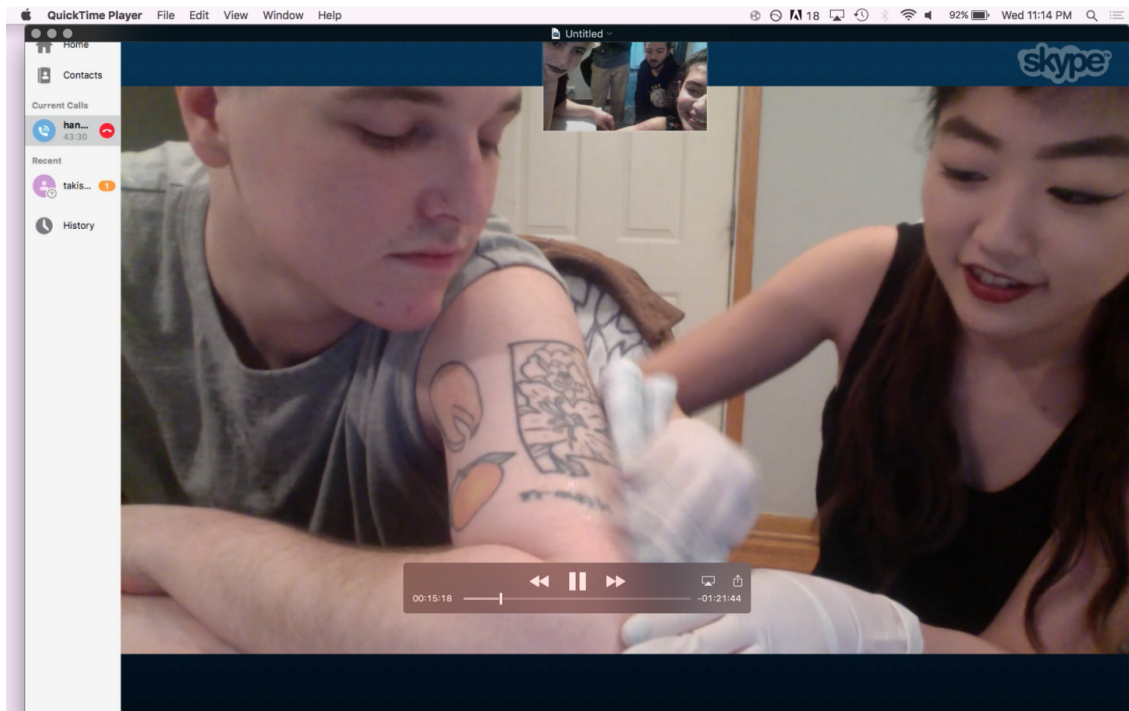




## *Close Enough* (March 2016)

Written by Tannaz Motevalli and Violet Eckles-Jordan



there are two men in my apartment. well not actual men but two imagined men like I am thinking about two different men who have some differences and some similarities. they are similar because I am attracted to both these men and because I can presume that they both enjoy having sex with me. I think I have a thing for narcissists. like I think I love to love someone who at least thinks they are above most people. but I'm on top of them so I'm also above all of those people that they think they are above. that's the difference between these two men I am imagining in my apartment. one of these men does not let me get on top of him.

'that's too wild'

~~

The circumstance:

Two sets of eyes morphing into one, I am now sitting, watching the synchronicity build as the two learn to dart around, observing everything together – complete vision. I believe these are our eyes, but I'm not sure, they are not very familiar.

I'm afraid of how little control I have now that I've admitted there's something else other than just us keeping our eyes together. Something outside of us both, but still as intangible and unreachable as it began. I keep saying "it's something more" and really I think the reason I say that is not solely to maintain the integrity of the circumstance itself, but to repeatedly shock myself that two can become one and in an instant one begins to fill the past, present, and future of the other, to sit and watch in awe as the two move past the world, way into the stars and dust, and still not miss a thing.

The winter is a hard time to learn to let go, because you always end up letting go of quite a bit of body heat in the process, despite a preconceived notion that letting go is only a process of the mind. Every procedure of the brain has a physical manifestation. If you look hard enough at someone and everything their body is doing, you might just be able to learn how to read minds.

~~

I currently still have your hair in my shower, each time i cut your hair i keep it because i know that someday you will want it. you talked a lot about how it would be nice to make sculptures with your hair, and i always thought it was a nice idea.

"what ever happened to those bone dresses? maybe now that we can be strangers again you should make them? I would still model them for you."

you asked me a lot of questions i didn't feel comfortable answering. (i.e. where did you get all this weed butter) i thought about telling stories that you wouldn't want to hear. I wanted to tell you about all the cats i've met since we broke up.

i've met :

hippie  
miss  
snowball  
&  
Dunbar!

I thought about telling you about how Dunbar! had gummed my fingers but i remembered halfway through the story that the context for how i knew this cat was that his owner fucked me. or more so didn't fuck me but it's difficult to convince your ex let alone *anyone* that you are 'just friends' with a man who can tell you stories about all his friends who died of AIDs in the 80s. I also remembered that there isn't much remarkable about a cat gumming your fingers and that this story was bland without the full context.

"jesus it's been two years, do you think i still have those coyote bones?"

~

The night was hot and sweaty and I barely got to sleep with you snoring in my ear. I wasn't sure if I should be worried or not, you were shivering but your body was burning hot and feverish. I don't think I'd ever felt dirtier than when we got on the blue line to head to school after rushing to pack our things and put our clothes on with only fifteen minutes to spare before we would be late for class. You held me on the train as if we were still in bed, like the glass wall separating parts of the train car was your mattress. It was weird, you've never been that tender with me, especially in public. And before I got off at my stop you thanked me, you're not one to do that

It's been a year now, I'm still washing out the smoke from your cigarettes in my hair.

~

I woke up drenched in Matthew's sweat. he was large and none of it was mine. all of it was his, he was a sweaty sleeper which most people I know would think was gross but it just reminded me of Alabama so it wasn't really a problem.

he asked me what my agenda was for the day. I said I was going to the MOMA and he told me the only good peice of art was 'Starry Night'. he then made the motion of what starry night looks like.

"you know the one right?"

I was actually going to a small sound art gallery that I didn't remember the name of but I felt like he wouldn't know what it was and was not about to explain the history of sound art to this man.

I watched Matthew browse his Facebook for a few minutes. his looked very different than mine. the main difference was that he followed my high school.

"that's my high school. I went there."

I then remembered that at some point in the night before he had mentioned being from enterprise, a neighboring town to where I grew up in Alabama.

I thought about asking the universe why it keeps pairing me up with men from a pretty small radius from the hospital I was born in, but I didn't because I didn't think Matthew would think it was as funny as I did.

~

I read your poems this morning and only cried a little bit. I don't think any of the were about me though. the man whose bed I was in didn't seem to notice. I thought about asking if he wanted to hear your poems. he touched my ass and asked me if I was still on to get milkshakes before he had work. (it was 9am)

I said give me a second and took a snap in his bed. I evaluated whether or not it was obvious I was not in my bed and if it really mattered. I decided to take another, one that didn't flaunt the large bite mark on my chest quite as much.

you texted me about your event. I thought about bringing a date but:

- a. which one, my love life is getting complicated
- b. I'd like to be able to talk to you while at the event

the funny thing is I don't even like poetry.

~

Every time I get in a plane I think about how much more cramped they're making these things. But then I realize it's probably just me who is getting larger and taking up more space. Did I ever tell you that my first plane ride was as a 6-month old, asleep in a basket on my mothers lap heading to Iran? Planes were enormous then.

I'm currently sandwiched between two men who, had I not just spent an entire hour and a half flight thinking about their bodies next to mine, I could swear were just the same person. They both wore jeans and polos, headphones in and watching sports, and roughly the same size. The only difference is their hair; the man to my left has blonde, almost white hair, the other to my right is dark-haired and that one difference makes me instantly more attracted to him. I think it's because dark hair on light skin reminds me more of myself, is that weird?

I become even less attracted to the man on my right after we lock eyes while looking through windows on the opposite sides of the plane. His eyes dart straight into mine reminding me of my cat who is a very light sleeper and also hates me.

At this point, I've decided that the man to my left will be my protector on this flight if anything goes wrong. I let my mind wander and fantasize him holding me. I wonder how nice it would be to use him as my pillow for the next hour. then I hear him say:

"Diet Coke please."

and I decide to break up with him and find myself a man who doesn't drink nasty diet sodas.

~

again i am thinking of the two men standing in my apartment but now they are more similar and only one is the same as the last time i imagined these two men. i want to say they look the same but they actually don't they just act the same. one is a man who if i leave out one detail my parents would probably be really into him because he is sweet to me the other I just don't have to leave out that detail. Is convenience a reason to love someone? I mean it *is* a reason but is it a *good* one? I mean the less convenient man has a cat but the least convenient man (not imagined currently but was previously) actually has three. The most convenient man has no cats. I already have two cats, but i guess i can never have too many.

the least convenient man commonly makes his way into these conversations. its very inconvenient.

~

a man with a walker and cup full of change sits outside the pharmacy doors. I do not acknowledge him until he says "nice jacket."

my hand on the door and head flipped around to thank him for the compliment, he adds "could you get my a Coke or a Pepsi, either works."

"I'll get Coke."

by the time he responds I've already entered the building. I do my business, get my prescription, and as I walk over to the cooler full of sodas I think for a moment if I should not and just exit the other side of the building. I grab hold of the neck of the Coke bottle, determined.

by the time I'm waiting for my receipt at the register he has already entered the pharmacy and is waiting for me.

"I really do like that jacket. Thank you lovely."

"of course, have a good day"

in what felt like one long stride, the procedure was finished. this man's compliments and probable trust cost me exactly \$1.87 + tax.



~

today, I ran into a blind man.

by ran into, I mean I was cornered. I thought I was prepared. I saw his walking stick. I heard its gentle and slow scraping against the pavement. I saw the pack of girls, eyes glued to phone screens, giggling loudly. I saw how they refused to make room for me. it was like watching a traffic collision in slow-motion, waiting for the moment of shame and guilt when my body would inevitably hit someone else's. I flattened myself against the glass of a citi bank window. my ass pressed up against the cool plane and a man I imagined on the other side at his desk (only inches from my thin and invisible body.) the girls past and the moment of truth...I thought I had made it when I finally decompressed my body and shifted ever so slightly off the glass, but it was my backpack, my goddam backpack, that lightly hit his shoulder. and i was silent, stretching across my tiny space of collision-prone sidewalk with some sort of stubborn forward momentum, until he uttered the words "excuse me."

my response automatic, head whipped back as I quickly utter, "no, you're fine, sorry."

it wasn't until I turned the corner that a wave of embarrassment caught up with me and I thought to myself "was that an 'excuse me' that suggested he believed he was at fault, or was he mad at me for not using my privilege of sight to avoid bumping into him."

I replayed the scenario in my head enough times to make myself believe it had gone down differently. but even if it was a pissy 'excuse me,' there's no way he could ever know how any of it happened, because for fuck's sake he's blind!

