

Complete Control
january - july

Hudson River Hudson Liner

I think it started—if I am being honest—when I was on the train. It was December. It was cold and it was brilliantly sunny. I don't remember why but I was exhausted. I had not slept. I have never been a good sleeper. The last time I was a good sleeper, I was a baby. You were so easy, my mother tells me. *Well then, what happened?* I wonder.

It was inside of me, a pulsing feeling. We had met up a few nights before. There was something so humiliating about the circumstances. He told me: Let's take a pause for the cause. This meant he had to pee in the middle of sex. I was close. When he came back we did not continue. Instead: he asked if he could sleep over because he didn't have a bed. He was—if I am being honest—homeless. But then he didn't sleep over. There was a friend's couch in Greenpoint. When he left I played my favorite album about Oxycontin. When I went on the train a few days later I played it again. Hudson River, Hudson Liner. There was something alive inside of me, I thought. I felt my eye get droopy and I pressed my face to the window. I was not hungover nor was I ill. The man directly behind me had a grand mal seizure somewhere outside of Beacon. I paused my music because he started violently hitting his head into the back of my seat. There was blood. Do you have your medication on you, for epilepsy? For seizures? Asked the paramedic. What seizure, said the man.

I texted him back in New York.

Horny. I said.

Show me. He said.

Maria Hernandez

It is off to a bad start. He is making me list facts about myself. What do you like to drink, he asks. Negroni. I say. What do you do, for fun, he asks. I don't think I answer that one. Or I joke that I have no hobbies, which is true. He tells me that he is nervous. I tell him the stakes are low. I tell him we can just have one drink. We have four each. You really shouldn't make out in the back of a cab, but we do it anyway. The cab passes warehouses where they have enormous pieces of tan carpeting. Where they slaughter chickens in a biblical way. When we wake up the next morning it is so cold. We each buy a coffee. I tell him about a famous rock star who has murdered someone. He says, no it's a different one. I say, oh yeah, you're right. At the M train he asks me if I can see him again. As the train goes over the Williamsburg bridge I think to myself: oh Jesus, oh fuck, oh fucking Jesus.

Diner

I accidentally eat a mouthful of glass when I tell them about it. The glass, which was full of grapefruit juice, shattered because I gesticulated at it. The glass, which was full of grapefruit juice, broke onto my waffle. It was like powdered sugar. It crunched in my mouth. I tell my friends: I have swallowed some glass. My friends tell me: don't worry, that's not how you die. In my brain I think: a girl eats so much glass that it all comes out. It comes out of her pores. Like blackheads. I tell them I feel fucked, not about the glass. About another thing. Don't worry about it.

JFK Terminal 1

When I start speaking French again, for the first time in seven years, it is like I am a babe with a malformed jaw. It is like I have marbles all up in here. The flight attendant asks me what I want and it is like a grunt that comes out of my mouth. I am either inappropriately polite or aggressively rude. I do not sleep. I am a bad sleeper. But my mother says once, when I was a babe, I was so easy.

E-mail

At one point, I write a note back to a friend in New York. I have just finished reading the book: *Wittgenstein's Mistress*. I believe Kate, that she is alone. That she is the last person left on Earth.

I know what this is like, I tell my friend.

To imagine the Earth depopulated.

There was a time when I was younger and I used to dream of biking to the edge of the Earth, and at this edge, everything was bright orange, like a tangerine.

There was a time when I was younger where it was so cold out. Where I was groping blindly in the snow in a slip dress.

I could imagine it so clearly: my own outstretched palm, holding a knife.

Lately, I tell my friend, I have taken to googling the Far Future.

I have learned that at the sites of nuclear waste, we will have to come up with a new language for toxicity.

Another thing I have taken to googling: his girlfriend. And how I look just like her. Lola, her name is Lola. It was so banal, what he did to me. It feels corny to write it, overwrought. It was such a boring rape. It is always boring to write these things as they really happened.

There's a photo of them in marshland. They are wearing their wedding clothes. The sky is a big pink streak. They look so happy.

Lola. If my brother had been born a girl he would have been named Lola.

12345

My unremarkable childhood was just like this: do you know how big trees look when you are young? In the creek I lifted up rocks to look for crayfish, leeches, minnows. I had short brown hair and looked exactly like my mother.

Place Edith Piaf

The loft has good lighting and is infested with small brown beetles. I find them everywhere. They are in all of the food. They are in the shower. They are in all of the crevices of every window. I am fragile and I am miserable. *Paris in March*. This is a fallow era, I think. I work on a new novel and realize I can't do it. I can't write about myself again, in that way. So I write something totally different. I go to a wine bar recommended to me by the friend of an ex-boyfriend. I have two glasses of wine and wear a white button up blouse. I read two books each week. Every night feels like a personality junket. Sometimes in the shower I think: *what strange topography is this!* And then I realize I am just confused by the site of my own naked body. We sit outside the Cirque d'Hiver in the rain. Greg eats brains in a broth with some scallions while Dakotah and I take pictures. I leave early because I have to meet two gay guys at Chez Prune, but one of them turns out not to be gay. There's another time where we split a steak and fries then we go to a bar where everyone smokes inside and a girl who is 22 tells me about how back in New York, the guy she is seeing works at this one famous bar with no windows. I tell her: same. I tell her: you are perfect. I let the skaters give me their poppers. You never let me see your studio out in Les Lilas, on the other side of the Périph. Some guys in front of le Comptoir imply that they want to sex traffic me and my friend all the way to Romainville. There was another time where I went to a fashion show and then its afterparty. Where I wore a long blue dress and there were celebrities and I didn't know how to talk to them so I just talked about myself.

London

I take a shit on the Eurostar. I am running through Hackney Downs in jeans and also a leotard. I think about a famous song and how it opens with a never-ending line of synthesizer. For dinner we have several and exquisite varieties of vegetables while sitting in the poorly-lit corner of a basement. The party starts at a club down the street. I throw a drink in the man's face because he says something heinous to me and deserved it. Everyone except for me is on coke. Everyone keeps handing me a plate of coke and I keep saying: no thanks. I haven't done it in almost a year. The last time I was swan diving. I was like Leda and I needed someone to break my neck. Three different men tell me I am being very sensitive, about the man who said something heinous. When I get back to New York I find out one of the men has told several more men of my great sensitivity. That I am so sweet and so sensitive! I imagine them all having some kind of dreamy colloquium about this. Concerning Sophie's Great Sensitivity. We go to bed at six in the morning. I fall asleep in my jeans. I leave my sunglasses on until eight in the evening. When I get back to Paris I eat cheap Vietnamese standing up.

Rudina

This was a very long time ago. A marble plunge pool and an olive tree. The coffee table probably cost thousands. We ate fried sardines. I meditated in the morning then I swam in the sea, the same temperature as the actual air. There was a profound lack of fucking at this time. I had made the decision to stop shaving my body hair. At a dinner party you noticed that I could not stop pacing.

Avenue Parmentier

The one brutalist block of apartment buildings on the Avenue Parmentier. They appear in front of me, suspended. Like they are hovering on a disc. Like the disc is hovering over a black pool. Like when I was 22 and worked at a magazine and the National Guard defended the computer store with submachine guns. How the black pool is dense and sticky. How I saw them with the Dutch woman. The beautiful Dutch woman. How a few days prior I found out, after a bottle of wine, that she had two perfect and radically different sized nipples.

Porte de Vincennes

A revelation on the Tram 3b: That in one year I would be one year older. That it would be a baroque interlude. That Belleville and the Porte de Bagnolet would become fuzzy and viewed in retrospect. Me in my dresses walking through Charonne and stopping at the bar with a bullet hole in the window. That I would open my mouth to speak and it would not even matter what it was I was saying.

Saint Lazare

Most of my notes during this time are usually an observation of someone on the métro having tourettes. One day I draft a note to my downstairs neighbors, who complain of my loud and terrible walking. In the note I write: I have very few friends here, in Paris.

Canal de l'Ourcq

Natasha and I are in our evening finery. The balcony is full of boys and they are smoking their cigarettes. Natasha says something to them. Something like *room for two more?* They signal us up and we drink Get 27 out of wine glasses. Elliot is my age, which is also 27. As we leave he says: I've never been with a foreigner girl before!

The lighting in his dad's apartment is very bad.

Gambetta

Once upon a time, a man tells me a story. When we first started dating, he tells me of his wife, we could not stop having sex. I took her to an Ibis on the outskirts of Narbonne. Narbonne! They did not leave the room the whole time they were in Narbonne. I tell the man that I have been there before, to that beach, as a teenager. Shit hole, he responds. Narbonne is a shit hole. I want this. I want to be in the shitty hotel room. I want the bad lighting. I want it to be a brutality. I want to go out only to watch someone smoke on the beach. The shit hole beach. I want it to be beautiful.

Fresh Pond Road

I don't really see beds on the floor anymore. Yours is on a cheap metal frame. I think we are in some kind of recession, where people are afraid of revealing their abject personality qualities in a front-facing way.

Marseille

You can see the Alps on the train ride, unless I am being stupid, which is probable. In Marseille, everyone is horny, I think. Pastis in a milk glass. No one talks to me. I hardly sleep. There is one song I listen to over and over, every day. Where it is loud guitars and they are like a lake and the woman is singing in French. It is like pointing a harpoon at a star. On the Corniche Kennedy you are like on this cliff and down below there are little houses and restaurants and there are no swimmers *and yet* the water is blue like it is during the summer. I could be one of those summer swimmers. I let myself believe it to be true: a red bikini, high cut. But instead: it is March, the weekend before the first nice weekend. I park my ass at a five star hotel and in my little green dress and I lie down on the deck in defeat. No one bothers me. I am not a guest.

Tago Mago

My lover is named after a prominent city in western Europe and he was born in a different century than me!

Fort Tilden

We are: Hopping the fence, merging onto the Belt in bad traffic.

On the roof of the building I think to myself: fuck, it's bright out.

We are: drinking a white wine from Jura.

I often envision myself leaned up against the mast of a boat, smiling in linen pants.

I think this is what people want to do with me, when they lack the context.

Complete Control

I think it has to do something with the letter I received one afternoon right before I left. He drew a comic of me and my head was in the shape of a heart, just like in real life. And another one where I have my very own race car, my favorite anagram. How back home in New York I was like a Toulouse Lautrec Sleeper. How Helen bleaches my eyebrows in her loft on the water. How out of New York I enjoyed a bowl of fruit on a wrought iron table. In the bar booth we don't even talk but we don't even have to. *I want him to take his finger and put it in my mouth then yank me like I am a fish on the end of a hook.* I have this thought while we are driving and it is the winter. The roof is in Hell's Kitchen and I am thinking: to imagine the Pharisees toiling over their books. There was a music video I once loved where they all wore togas. I would have been good as the owner of several papyrus scrolls. I think, sometimes, I am built exactly like a jar. My father sometimes rings me up just to say: I have a plastic surgeon friend who can remove that mole on your cheek for you! For cheap!

I call people up, too: it was embarrassing most of all when I called you. I was walking in my good clothes past the Cooper Union. It's not worth repeating what I said.

But I viewed the whole scene as if in black and white. I viewed it as if it was some kind of unshakeable fragility. As if I were one of those girls who is like in a movie. I wonder if you did, too?