

The Month of March

Kristin Vukovic GS '06

13/3/03

Paris will always remain a tingle on my tongue. Chandelier cafes, beautiful men, croissants for breakfast. Espresso, thick and dark. I will miss these things.

It has been two months already. It has been a task to force myself slower. I still wake up at six o'clock and feel that I need an office. Now, there is nowhere to go, nowhere to be. It's been difficult adjusting, not to have to do anything. I've been writing when I can, taking in the sights, alone. Walking foreign streets stricken with spring rain. It's been good to get away from everything. I've tried not to become careless with time.

17/3/03

Took a stroll down the Blvd. St. Germain early this morning. Window-shopped. It's cold for spring. I made patterns with my breath on the glass, like when I was young. Frosted store windows and everything new for spring. My nose pressed up against the glass. It's cold on this bench. My new routine, sitting and smoking on the benches with views of Notre Dame. Early, before the city wakes up. Watching myself exhale white, watching passers-by evaporate into moments. Everyone is coming or going somewhere, everything is moving. I'm finally standing still.

I made peace with the morning bells. Still, it's impossible to separate their sound from the Exchange. Like I'm still missing a bid when I don't stand up, raise my arms, start shouting numbers. Ah, those days of dreams and delayed happiness. The people are coming now, walking in pairs. A woman's dog that has strayed too far sniffing at my feet. She calls him Sam.

19/3/03

I met someone today. A beautiful man with hazelnut eyes, dark skin. Ahmed. His lips. I cannot forget his lips. His voice matched their thick softness, pulsing and resonant. We had one drink. We talked about life and love and art. I said I had to leave. He begged for one more. I felt rude not inviting him, but it wouldn't be fair.

20/3/02

Last night, I dreamed of Ahmed. There was a table with six legs. On top of the table, a circular plate

with brass, stripes, and Cuban cigars: six empty brass cups and Lebanese wine. There were bottles, all of them shaped differently. One was an electric lamp, another dripped with candle wax. They are his collections, like the Cuban cigars. All lined up.

A shisha stands as high as I sit and as small as he squats to light it. We smoke, and our exhales curl towards the ceiling. I kiss him in-between breaths.

Inhale. A moment of rose hips. We exchange smoky words and too much wine. The candles burn and I watch the wax drip. He stands up and walks to the window. I feel myself melting into the floor. The carpet starts sinking lower. I am choking on smoke and his back is turned to me. My head is the only thing remaining above ground. My arms are trapped at my sides and I cannot emit sound. Before my sight turns to darkness, there is Ahmed's back, silhouetted by the window, his hands clasped behind.

25/3/03

Today, I returned today to the bar where I met him. I didn't go there to see him. I went there to feel his memory, to imagine him sitting beside me. I'll allow myself this fantasy. I'll allow myself to think what it would be like to be with him, for longer than I have, longer than it would be fair to dream.

29/3/03

I keep imagining him, our life together. I can still feel the way he touched my arm. I masturbated to him last night. I tried to make my hands his hands, wrapping gently around my penis. But his hands are not like my hands. His hands are young and supple brown, and mine are dry, white and twiggy. When I hold myself, there is no flesh to harden. I lay limply, and cannot fall into sleep.

30/3/03

I have made the arrangements for my ashes to be sprinkled in the Seine. I don't know how it feels, or if I believe in a god, or where I'll go. I don't know if I'll feel anything, or if I'll be able to look at this world one last time. I don't know if I'll walk this earth without a body, stuck in some in-between, a ghost among the living. I don't know what other last things to do. It is strange to think of my body on the seventh floor being carried down and burned. I don't know my last thoughts. But if I can think, I will be thinking of him.