

## Blankets for Sunset

Thomas Daniel Valls

I want us at a forever Sunset,  
On a wooden deck overlooking the lake we forget was a reservoir  
With a slipping slide that would lead us straight into the water.  
There are sofas everywhere, pointed in the direction of the slide, towards the lake, and tables too,  
With cups of unmeltable ice, made of unshatterable glass.

The sea is somewhere always near. Your nose can taste it.

The sky's light's like you're in a grapefruit  
ruby red towards the very center of it all,  
clouds of pulp trace the flight-paths towards the places never been.  
There's indigo of course, brimming in place behind the Angeles mountains, beyond the Oz of  
Glendale.  
They're unsure whether or not they should be turning on or off their office lights and radio tower  
signals because of the perpetual Sunset you know, so it's like  
Every seventeen seconds or something there's always a set of lights turning off and another set of  
them turning them on,  
The emerald city twinkles.

Throw in the sounds of airplanes while you're at it.  
Occasionally.  
And the wind of the exhaust from down under when you're walking the Williamsburg bridge  
towards Lucky Dog.  
In fact,  
At all times, like at 20  
Percent, 15 percent even

People in the distance with their dogs, walking them, walking at least, a  
Couple minutes apart from one another.  
Let the cycle last a month,  
then stick with them and let them grow and age and once all the dogs are dead you know fuck the  
owners and start with a new set of frenchies and then run the cycle again.  
On what used to be Sundays, we'll play Willy Chirino, whenever to whenever, because the family's  
coming over with a bevy of shit from *Islas Canarias* (the one on SW 26th) and we'll dance and drink  
black label and shoot the shit while *tia* talks about the time Alberto did the thing for Franco at his  
*Valle de los Caídos*,

There will be trumpets to play and pianos to touch, *abuela's* got *La Comparsa* down like she was seventeen, and dad's playing the Strad like we used to.

And then they'll go home and they've left us all of the leftovers and now we've got like a hundred *croqueticas de hamon* until the next time they get here and we'll do our fucking all-boy workouts while we sleep before we wake and we're greeted with the bounty of the lay so who gives a shit how many we eat

We're tending to the self-watered herb garden,  
We're pouring Havana Club into buckets of mint because that's how much our self-replenishing herb garden presents us with every morning,  
Whenever it is we decide when morning will be at our Forever Sunset.

Not that we're only drinking on our deck, in fact we've taken a liking to water and our infinite supply of Crystal Ice, the drinks of orange chemical you used to buy for four for seven at Gelson's.

But there's also a self-scrubbing grill (I know what you're thinking, don't worry you'll chop wood for fun like they do in the movies) and,

There's also a self-scrubbing grill eleven feet long and beneath that  
A huge fridge of (you guessed it) self-stocking food items,  
Items mostly including those square slabs of ground beef you buy at 365 when you're looking to impress with the plastic wrapper,  
And  
Anna's corn dip  
and his chicken salad  
and  
those beers we like that taste like mango  
And

And cold macaroni maybe  
Or pizzas we could slap on the grill if we ever learned how,  
Same thing with chicken wings, really, but

That's okay!

Cause

When the friends come over in between the time the parents come over and, you know, separately,

They'll know how to grill the things we still can't admit we don't know how to work with.

Now,

These friends come at different levels.

Different speeds.

Different groups,

usually the ones we'd always wished would work,

But also sometimes they were entire tribes, incapable of breaking a goddamn thing, not even spilling a drink and yet more miraculously (somehow),

We're already, always ready for them. It sweeps something within us, this Sunset, fingers for its rays, prying us open before entering to indoctrinate,

Until for once and suddenly always (or instantaneously forever) we suddenly believed everything would always be okay and we were finally able to like who we lived to be,

Even at the moment,

Especially going forward.

When they've gone,

We'll read. We'll also write. We'll

Try recipes and eat ramen over a 97-hour session of roller coaster tycoon 2 on the biggest, best graphics computer screen

*if*

*Possible,*

And we'll use the French press while the Mr. Coffee's coughing up his brew and we'll

Just for fun,

Without the need of a wank, a nap,

Until waking up to having been already edged by our dreams.

We've got the dog with us.

He leaves the room when it's time to nap.

And you know, there's also the TV in the living room,

That you can access through the wooden deck.

I suppose the wooden deck is part of a larger home, okay, we're at a home with the lake and all that shit but we *prefer* the deck but also, yeah, you know

There's a TV in the living room. And a fully stocked kitchen. And the bedroom, with the master bath and the swing, throw in a solarium, sure.

But be sure when I tell you this:

There  
is, for certain,

One  
Other

Room.

Always been there, even before I started talking to you about our deck and our slide and our lake of  
a cement hole.

It's the bit of the sky that is beneath our feet.

Should it be accessed through the garden, the garden accessed through the wooden deck then round  
the back, past the hot tub and tetherball court,

Or,

You know,

Through the house, too,

Whichever way you see it fit and work for you,

Us,

It's where he's at and it's always there man always ready for you when you're ready for it cause I  
dunno if that part of us will ever change.

But you can go in, baby.

Cause that's where he's waiting for you.

And

Through the door, you know

Either of em,

You'll find Kokomo.

You're in the Keys. Bahia Honda. We've been there a couple times.

Bottom of the country, top of the Caribbean. The sand is white, Parrotfish kiss your toes

If only parrotfish got so close (but here they do) and

And it's all a little different. There's the sea and the palms and the sugar sand and it's after midnight but midnight's got this hue of purple to it now and on the far horizon you've got the teal neon of the end of Days

The stars finally scorch the skies as though every one of them were Mars and its hue marching towards our melancholy, the breeze is gentle and the mosquitos have gone extinct and there's a fridge of tacos and another fridge of tacos and *lechón* and his warm stew,  
And all of it's there for you should you come and sit with him on his couch,  
A couch  
Impenetrable to the polyp dust, should the wind ever dare blow in its direction.

All of his books are there. His magazines, his blu-ray player, his  
Chinos, and

He's wearing them too,

And he hears you coming and he's still reading and not to ignore you but because he just he wants to finish his intake before he gives you his attention and when he's ready to he smacks his book shut and down and his chin raises with his brows and then with his eyes that say 'hey I love you,' it suddenly

It suddenly becomes up to you  
unfortunately and forever

To decide if you're gonna sit there and eat tacos with him and drink the rum you've buried out of the sand and laugh as the neon of the horizon turns the night sky into a flash fire nuclear Costco while you hold each other's wrists and feet and the heat chars the heart of vision and the belly of the soul and together your bones burn before your guys's wedding bands and  
You're back at the deck. And he's still reading in his room.

Or

You decide to lead him out into the Sun. Knowing you can't keep him there forever. He's got his own wooden deck, his own room for you, or maybe not, beyond the garden path or through the woods of the laundry room, I think he's got us sitting on a chair by a pool.

And it's nothing personal, it's just,

Circumstances over there are always the same. Every dog has its own patio it crawls under when it's time to go

And unless he's really into that crossword and is gonna need a couple of a minutes before the world explodes so that he could be the everything you've wanted out of Heaven,

He'll come with you right away.

And his shirt is crisp. His skin is how you knew it to be.

He's kept the beard. But only because he wanted to for you.

He lets you smell the back-top of his head,

Years recounted as you comb your fingers through his hair.

There's a sticker on the bottom of his shoe.

A water stain just under his left collar.

You ask him if he's cold.

He says he wouldn't mind being a little warmer.

And so you wrap each other in blankets for Sunset.

And you're sitting together and there's a playlist going on that needs no curation and the both of you know to look at the same things at the same times,

And you hear the doggies with their walkers and you're guessing which of them's gonna croak next.

He asks for the moon and you bring it out for him.

You'll ask him if he wants some stars and together you'll map out the sky with them.

You'll have your meals together.

Take,

Day-long naps and wake up in time for lunch.

You'll take out the neck ties for ties for after dinner and after that

There's usually dessert,

Usually sorbet.

Eyes closed and chins on each other's shoulders you'll be dancing in Paris.

Eyes open and with thrusts on cold pillows and through the windows it's raining now in New York

Until refractory hits and coyotes dance for us in Joshua Tree.

And there's movies we've never seen.

There are songs we've never heard,

Drives from the garage never mapped, somehow always known, bridges built as long as our hands can hold.

Until it's time to go. Until the next time at least.

You guys will have the ceremonial goodbye, like the embrace before he'd walked down Cheremoya.

You guys'll listen to and rewatch the favorites,

On a cycle,

Depending on the light of a very dependable window out in Glendale that flickers on or off every thirty-seven years give or take.

The both of you have watched The Brood three hundred and seventeen times, today you mark another tally.

The two of you have an American Spirit that drags as long as an entire pack.

There's the final bites of Petit Trois,

Big Mec's like listerine our wiped mouths clean and ready for air

With one final embrace and locked-lipped kiss at once you both drown.

Lungs filling with the water of every day playing through every day that had come before, as

Houdini's chains wrap your legs together and suddenly hurl you down the slipping slide,

There's the slope but it's in freefall,

The both of you in the home of the car of the bed of each other's arms of each other's heads on each other's torso's,

before the both of you fly high into the air, eyelids closed but the both of you clearly seen through the light of Sun that pierces through the frantic flesh,

and break the surface of the reservoir,

Immediately, at once, falling deeper and deeper to the bottom of the sea,

The last of our bubbles the same as stars we drew

The water in our lungs now replenishing with oxygen, the womb of the couple

Hitting the lakebed with your feet

You're breathing like you used to, the both of you are and

The shirts on your both look like they've just come out of the dry cleaner's

And there's the deafness of the deep and as if for the very first time the both of you are able to speak.

Hours down below and looking at one another he'll finally ask, 'See you later then?'

You'll break if you hold his hand any longer.

And so you let him go and tell him that 'I'll see you always'

Something the two of you had finally ended doubting, for after a millennia it was something said that had always proven true.