



THIS IS
WHAT IT
IS LIKE
TO BE LOVED
BY ME

JARED WHITE

This is what it is like to be loved by me.

A poem of only observation of you and you observing and you hungry. You sleeping doing an impression of me sleeping. You moving the hand at the wrist. Hinging at the waist. At the elbow. Bending at the shoulder and neck. You hunched and articulated. You with stripey shirt and legs. Bending knees hipward so the fabric bunches because the material has to be preserved. With a biggish buckle. And a natural strand that is yellowy, not willowy, roots in the soil to bicycle over and go bumpety it is okay we can walk up this next hill. I do what you do. A poem of being slightly in front of or behind you. Of bounce in step bespoke. A poem of me sitting up and you lying down. It is October 7. It is difficult to notice too much. New boots. New silly I you say constantly. The dimples little curves I touch you there and the caressed divot makes a tiny hum of breath. Another hum is a song but which song I don't recognize. Songs spoken aren't necessarily poems. Silent hum, silent chew. Peer is always hungry chew. Peer must be edible chew. We can also cross at the crosswalk but why not cross in the tunnel flooded with water only the first part is flooded. You put out your hand and offered me something.

You cupped.

Have you seen? Have you seen

Where are my? Up

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if my breath went down into my stomach and my food went down into my lungs. I chased you for an hour then I sat like a reader reading a book but not an actual reader an actual book. My poem my novel is one sentence long

I hope I hope

and I am surrounded by evidence

and I am an evidence maker

I could read the words in my mouth because the words have words written on them each word inscribed with the word it is and each mouth tattooed mouth color with the word mouth in the language the mouth speaks, not mouth as it might be celestial and expensive but affordable mouth, adequate and obvious and constantly available. Happy character, mouthing ablutions of words read and knowing how unlonely it is to be the same in Philadelphia as in New York.

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in another city where decisions turn into money and Peer is a capitalist. I know I should be angry but the thing is, I'm not angry; I don't even exist! I rewrite, I correct, I forget. What is history in the face of amnesia? The editor in the coliseum chose who would face the beasts next, and wearing what armor. Originally it was the armor of vanquished enemies. Dying is expensive. Punishment is never satisfied, nor is fear

who wouldn't rather ache less longer

or be happier for a while

or feel more

the subtlest feelings. Anxiety of already, of the potential of the chair to be sat in. Farrah tells me my voice is lower speaking foreign languages.

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writing a poem of not you. Starting to talk beyond conceiving since already I felt so happy at the rhythm catching up. Musical metronome. The length of time of a feeling. Exhilaration has levels. I was excited and it made the car drive excruciating. In the bathroom planning my naked surprise I pivoted.

“Can I pee?”

bladder and prostate

fingers like rain

And the sun over the sea onto my body simultaneously. A molecular reception. Me me-made of very deep skin all the way through. Almost smacking kissing smacking. The bug moment when I jumped, something unexpectedly grazing my hand. And where is your every chicken pox scar and how immediately can I find them?

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in a pool on the seam where the shallow end meets the deep end and it is not a very big pool it is a hotel pool that seen from above makes a divot on one side like a heart or a kidney. You did not notice until I pointed it out and then you knew something you had not known previously though soon you would forget and I would forget and only this sentence would remember. And in this sentence you and I would go on remembering and swimming in the pool that is inside the sentence and breathing in the pool underwater looking up at the world above the sentence from which you can look down at the sentence like a heart- or a kidney-shaped pool

without reading

what you have written

and without remembering

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once the light that cut through the fog has stopped cutting through the fog and now the fog is the fog around which what I see depends on where I stand. Some kind of intuition that I am running out of time, after which the mood I bring to the room will paint the room colors both wonderful and irritating. Like Gertrude Stein's *Stanzas in Meditation* read during a week of grieving, hugging a statue made of ice while wearing many thermal layers, hot in winter, cool in summer, as it is never summer or winter here, only a fog of late spring, early autumn, late spring.

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wait wait, deletions. Lag between entrance and the light on the embarrassing tomato captured at one million frames per second. Theoretical brown shadow made of cave and fury far exceeding both 2012 and 1867 proportions. Lateness. Parallel blocks of identical brownstones. The ribbon ruler. I used to hang a still life in which the unnecessaries obstructed the object. Now I'm only tempted to hang, alone in the house with binoculars, bathtub, and the windows' rattling, escaping from good apocalypse into chintz,

cloud bisected by shade

blue of the moon

Venetian plaster

Throwing pieces of paper into the volcano, the other volcano. Some experience! generating my own internal after-the-fact quake.

This is what it is like to be loved me

carrying around a tiny container of nutella which I don't even like but you do. What is more important, patience, fortitude

or focus? My backpack has fused itself to the sweat on my back, my bicycle groans below me with the weight of children, Peer is sitting in the basket, and no work gets done or at least no work I want to talk about. Some sort of glorious holiday has been announced weekly or even daily and so although the bread we eat is good for cheese but not for sandwiches we picnic, leg over leg, and unexpected leg, for no leg is ever expected when a leg is unimaginable.

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total Romeo total Peer. Begun as a comedy it ought to end as one. Affection, particles and filaments making a syntax of making

I kiss a number

into your scalp

and it overgrows with hair

The cult of movies. Wedding the yarn and the needles. I love you because I love everybody but I love you more. It is a competition. There are auditions. The actors portraying us tell us how we look each morning. They study our trash to fill us with hope. What will we do when words are no longer about us as the stars are, liquids that having flowed now bubble. To be astrophysicists or cinematographers, studying the white balance and the red shifts. How I long for such positions.

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as Rimbaud said—You's another. You's with empty open mouth pocked near splitting. You's neck. You's poem of the skin not being totally attached to the ribs and the music of that object placed object over object, A over B, B over C, and so on through the alphabet like a piano under a blanket turning out

to be unlocked. Like a salt flat in Utah but only if something useful could be buried underneath a salt flat. There used to be an ocean there but that was on top. Have you learned how to sail? Once you get seasick it never lets up. Sleep it off? Time's own baptism— Sailboats in the desert— Utah in Africa— Africa in the car— What does the radio play this time? A poem of what used to be on the radio and what hasn't yet been on the radio

You's you

You's another you

You's another another

This is what it is like to be loved by me

translated from grammar into arithmetic and agriculture. But the close people are good people. Are an excuse for incomprehension but also sideways. As if you could instead work some click click machine. Good is what's alive. Public policy! I told you how plants work and how they need you to stop listening. Then I thought about all the things I think about. But it scares me. The possibility of sideways. My greenness becoming sleepy. Do you hear yourself?

The animal forgot—

some kinds of trees

are also flowers.

What was it like to do the numbers? Gelatin. A red handbag. Foliage without roots, derangement of the light punctuated by coupledness. Is Peer remote asleep? Explaining some other factor in telling versus sleeping regret regrets. Sleep for a week. And then the grain. Most plants are vegetarian.

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in a dark forest midway though my life. The road to the place may or may not be the road through the place. In the birches the branches make a net to fall up into and there is a hole in the bark of the tree a hole that goes straight through through which I can hear you breathing. How do you always do it! You only move your legs into legholes arms into armholes headholes

breastholes

boneholes

holeholes

And meanwhile I snag in the hole in the tree. Being with you is a trust. What the bed said. What the head said. What the cinematographer said. Welcome to the beehive. Welcome, Peer. I came to a desert without a horizon at noon but at sunset you could see clear to the other side. Gulliver tied down by dental floss. Winnie-the-Pooh stuck his I love you in his I love you I love you!

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in the periphery, everywhere your eye is, isn't. I am watching you sleep as I write so you should be sleeping as you read. What is written in the dark should be read in the dark but will be read by necessity in the light. Being away is a time-based ritual like gardening or sex. On the walkway to the house in which I grew up the hidden key was concealed inside a plastic shell painted to look like a rock but that bore no resemblance to the rocks that had been placed around it for camouflage. Another key hung on a shoelace behind the tools in the unlocked garage and was always covered in cobwebs. Break a window and you're in

Even though I know no one is there

I look out of the windows

expecting nothing

Paintings of landscapes, objects and portraits are equally compelling, but photographs of people are always better.

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on the edge of the ocean or in the middle of the ocean, below decks, the rocking action interrupting the pendulum swing every time. Sitting is a detriment but when you stand up you don't have a lap anymore and I want one.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

question mark

Is this what it is like to be loved by me?

that is a different question

what is it like?

I have watched you while you are sleeping so I know something about you that you don't know about yourself. What do you know? Do you know much? Do you know some? Do you know anything? Do you know if there is anything that can be known? Do you know nothing? Do you know how much nothing you know, how much nothing about everything, or nothing about nothing, nothing at all except sometimes something, something like what it is like to know something, like what it is like not to know exactly but to be known about, to be known about by me and by me to be loved?

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Judaism. They moved Poland. They knocked down my elementary school. They rewrote my education. They went overseas. I watched a movie in which everyone was doing a version of something I remember us doing. Would it be a gift to have a lot of values if they were only temporary and the world were permanent. Bright object with its light turned off. Bright light with its object turned on.

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driving over the edge of the cornice and floating in the car fascinated by the slowness of the descent. The flashing somewhere overhead, the sky with its band-aids adhesived iffily to the gridlines. If what it is like is ours and if it is mine

is it yours

what is it like

totally without if

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what it's like to be what it is like. Things I did were scary things ideas. But the poet philosopher does not know how to declare war. Liquid retaining the shape of the jar lip of the jar lip on the lip. OK, can we at least agree on everything? Snow monkeys. Surf monkeys. My next summer's next winter's resolutions. I am upset I didn't know you were upset. Then I move to Japan but only if you are invited. Your experience of a mirror is not my experience of you my experience of you is better.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

under many ticking clocks, for there are many clocks if even

two clocks tick, or two tick louder than a third so that the third's tick is inaudible and small, and the two clocks' ticks tick not at the same time all of the time necessarily. The big gears move slowly and their turn is almost imperceptible and yet they drag forward

a machinery of tiny gears

which spin so fast the teeth blend together

into a perfect circle.

and we dance to the tick tick-ticking, or we don't dance. But if we are not dancing as the ticks tick, if we have chosen not to, what dance is the dance we aren't dancing?

This is what it is like to be loved by me

on the run. I run for health not for cover. I run for my office. I run for implements. I run towards and away from. I run a string across the hypotenuse. I run in footprints. I run from surf. I run stopped. I run my finger across your nipples. I run down my chin dripping onto the floor. I run with pants around my ankles. I run on food, I run on batteries, I run on sentences. I run to run, and when I don't say something and when you don't say something it is because we are running side by side out of breath.

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by my beard hairs, which are longer than usual, growing more out than down, like a Russian prince. I have decided not to shave my beard until I finish *War and Peace* and then I will not shave it until I read *Anna Karenina* and then *The Brothers Karamazov* and then I will shave and my cheeks will be raw and loving. The skin will have skin all over it up to the very edge of my mouth while the filaments of shaven beard hair will be hairy in the sink

Kings!

Princes!

and the single subject they share

down first on one kneecap and then the other, totally promiscuous, demanding health as counted in omissions, commissions, inputs, outputs, repetitions. When you can't lift ten pounds. Some minutes are longer than others, like the feeling of looking at an object at the edge of the distance where the object becomes impossible to distinguish. To hover at that horizon, extended further yet by eyeglasses, where the terrible differences between nearly identical things fade away and all things, scrawled over and over their surfaces with words so small they can never be read even with the tiniest eyes reading through the tiniest eyeglasses, mere instances superimposed over each other so behind it, there it is again, eye, beard, mouth, beard, eye.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

asking a question that is supposed to be answered with silence, and receiving instead pure truth, wet shirt, limp in the chair my rivets have scratched. Where I leave my residue, you pass your finger, sometimes in judgment, sometimes merely in recognition. There is an area on you where your moles make a perfect isosceles triangle now find it. This is what is I am. This is where is I am. This is who is who.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

amoeba prokaryote goo in a stew of organic compounds. I'll race you back. In the swim sea in a swim suit you remember to be overwhelmed are you creative can you breathe with the gills you were born with can you do a handstand one-handed can you seduce a thousand molting seals? But those are sea lions. Do it over do it underwater. The salmon relents

imagining all that perfect darkness that irrelevant safety. We are too little and adorable to be afraid.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

as daily practice. Peer had to find another profession besides reporting from beyond the grave. Happiness, a form of memory. A form of detail. The buzz of taking it with you through the passageway into the courtyard, vines grown so thick on one wall they became a bush performing person as lover-mediating chink. Easy as the wind makes waves, but not tides. So I I learned. Waves would not carry me home, waves already teemed inside with babies, their bald scalps and grooved teeth and first birthdays. Only the tides of my stealing and being stolen from, my even accounts balances in the red book and the red-and-white book. Inside the message a curse from the future: this is what will be. The word unlocked the pyramid before the door fell off its hinges and Peer inside did not even look up at his desk from his work, the work of loving, of making making possible.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

as best as I can tell based on what it has been like to be loved by me previously. The leftover yes on me still a little glimmer. I was the mother of an animal. I carried her to maturity, in the itch. I was the father, I met her later after much preparation. How easy and how terrifying it was, like the portrait of the cardinal and his glasses. Flowers in the ears and the nostrils. History is. Making what works for me work for you. By stealing these affectives

repeat

take it home

do more later

You know my secret. Smile in the dirt. Fingers at the end of a foot. Patience. I ought to make a body out of you. Continuance of termination. By narrating my exploits. A poetry of boundaries. A poetry of pottery, of earthenware jars and Ming vases and lumps of clay from the cliffs I swam under, grazing my feet on the rocks covered with mussel shells.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

I say as the spotlight I shine in the mirror illuminates myself. We told each other how much we owed each other and that we would pay each other back once we were paid back each in turn and then we went off to them to monetize the debts. Like a dictionary is a relationship. They have none. You have your intervals but they have other geometries. Being a sector of a circle. Being a corner of a sphere. Against the spirit of such names, the first, middle and last, only in the ignorance of sentences can there be safety. *The Last Tycoon*. I frighten looking at handiwork, one handyman to another. The red hand of everybody who figured it out. The blue hand of disinterested friendship. A gap in agape. Agreement ends the conversation.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

in the Odyssey when most of the time in the epic is spent safe on the island of Calypso, having a lot of sex, wherever the island is, and everywhere is the island. Sex-style sex, going from rhythmical to metrical. Then calm of concrete. Calm of asbestos. Spray calm consolation. My moustache gets too long before my beard does. Fat ass of a god. Everyone is neurotic, everyone is eventually dead. We don't know you but we will, ancestors, patrons, pets, brides, gentlemen, carpenters, sailors.

modem

beeping on the sailboat:

map of the eye of the hurricane

All possible pleasures. Navel, tree scar rock hole aluminum music. Miró and Ibsen in a tug of war over you.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

on the Trans-Siberian Railway, which takes six days to travel from Moscow to Vladivostok. There is always somewhere we have never been but what it is like to be loved by me there already exists. Inside scribbly circles on parchment, a marble. Woodedness of our woody material. And it ends as a contrast. Holy icon from Constantinople, counting one two three four until it became too blurry to signify. Thumb over thumb, wrist or shoulder. Everywhere, fingers of new. Fingers of not for awhile. Fingers of again and again. We have learned the game so now we can change the rules.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

again. Everything happens twice. The army gives back Mexico again. The discovery of radium is once again announced. The Indian summer is again Indian. The rewriting is rewritten. Imagine your arm. Now imagine your arm without your arm. Now imagine imagining. In the car with the engine off I steer the steering wheel. I practice I one-handed I diddle practice. Screw activities! Screw events! Seriously, screw art! I am from New York City and that's where we're from too.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

danger danger every itch feels reasonable. Like which knight am I in tin, aluminum, bronze, steel, titanium. More people die in car accidents more frequently than in any scenario that scares us. From hot rocks come metals the ground threw up the opposite of puke. Of animal and/or vegetable and/or plastic. Good for incorporation. Good for riding horses. Good for the big bend the big band.

Me:

You:

Me:

You. Are there mountains in Massachusetts? Are there mountains in the Berkshire mountains? If we see a horse you say zip one point zip two zip zip more than three zap ten points zap like a defibrillator. Wake up, happy me-man! Wordsworth: Emotion in a car recollected in tranquility in a car in the mountains. That was clunky that came later I married a woman I passed in a stable. I still can't canter. Cantorian infinities of different infinite sizes. Dardar. King Arthurs sleeping under a hill next to sleeping horses, and motorcycles.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

thising and ising and whating and inging. Here traveling up the valley we know what it's like to be inside houses and we will be, plant growing in the window box, hope of a sibling to sible, a morning to morn, a king to k. Morning of the morning, it is morning you are morninging but what do you do with her in the meantime? Do you want to wake up early enough to make the morning?

It is afternoon

all afternoon

and evening

People talk as if in this eternity all things are possible. But the second showing is more exact. The catalepsy travels up my leg once more but this time I know what is happening. White mixed with orange, white mixed with white, unnatural white that does not appear in nature, white that must be cultivated and acknowledged, white that must be chosen from a chart of

whites, white of the walls, white of walking into the room. You noticed! How every day you wake up a lion. And what kind of lion. The children go away and come back with their hands full. When I look for them I find only their toys and clothes folded in a corner of the lion's cage. Beware of cages. Beware of danger. Everything might be leaving the morning better than I found it.

This is what it is like to be loved by me

but I'm not me! I'm some wolf! I'm some random wolf at any other instant and a specific wolf, with a discernible personality and a place in the hierarchy. I have a territory and a wolf pack and the likelihood is that our paths will never cross. When my hair rustles it makes a ringing noise the noise bells make when we get married and Abraham circumcises everyone, including the slaves, the servants, and the servants' old fathers, who don't even bother to wear clothes anymore. Those dastardly patriarchs! Now I do dishes and get ready to leave everything like a ghost as if I were never there. In this portrait we whisk it all away. I walk off with the part of your brain that used to remember how to be my stranger, my colleague, my enemy. I know you now I know you. And meanwhile Interloper Peer only wants to ride the wolf, the wolf that looks more like a bear than a dog, the bearwolf he could ride west-to-east into the story. One by one his arithmetic generates maths. If we don't stop him he will reverse-engineer our mysteries. We saved them for when we'd sit down next to each other by the dim light of the fire but now we may have to read them aloud in the friction of the hot morning.

This is what it is like to be loved by me,

chaos and anarchy, freedom and bliss, two versions of the document I let you read. When they ask you that will be all you can tell them, the first two sentences verbatim perhaps

and you may try not to but you will

for their eyes are round

their mothers are fatherlong

A dog is not a baby, and again more sweetly, the anarchists plant their bombs. They park their cars in parking spots in parking lots in parking garages by parking meters and parking attendants. I root for their bombs and their amateurism. I root in the cheeks, eyes, buttocks. Every sentence should be as long as its ancestor, the judge who underneath robes of black fabric ruffles a coat of downy feathers. Like the dawn, Peer has no mother who breathed a mist not visible but aromatic. But outside the room the scenes go faster, overtaken with patterns of dialogue. All each unwitting participant knew was a bit of the plot which, unfolding in a series of hermetic conspiracies, each one sealed off from the next, grew as a conversation carrying the shock of song. I hum the genius of the earth erupting with memories.

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summed up in a single word that is neither adjective nor adverb used to describe _____. When he was thirsty Peer drank so now when he becomes thirsty he knows he will drink as plants drink both rain and sunlight. Philanthropy. The surface has totally repelled description, soaked into its marrow. When I broke the code I found the less/more languorous under a spiral staircase. I keep meeting people who know each other and they tell each other how. Like a shirt. Thoughts and pauses to express. Our cooperation was commemorated by an enormous unblinking eye.

Your liking improves me

so I lay on the ball

as it rolled in your direction

Metamorphosis toward improvements. A bird comes in the night and leaves my eyes intact so I can watch it dance masculine and feminine extremes. Control of circumstance. Harmony by another name. In the cold fire, in the ice white flame preserved for eternity and for the time being as I love you on a platform and your laughter and your breath prosthesis and an imported green carpet of permission. We walk down it arm in arm onto the pine needles.

Jared White's other chapbooks include *YELLOWCAKE*, published in the *Narwhal* anthology from Cannibal Books in 2009, and *MY FORMER POLITICS*, forthcoming from H_NGM_N. With Farrah Field, he is co-owner of a small press bookstore, Berl's Brooklyn Poetry Shop, and parent of a baby, Roman Field White.

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