

Dear XXXXX,

no no, no SASE required, but I am having difficulty finding any writing to top what i already sent. XXXX and I just moved and there's been a bit of shuffling and kerfuffling to all my papers. They are, however, all in the same place now and I have few excuses, so expect something soon, but expect also that it may stray from the topic of influence...

Such a moving email you sent me. I woke up in my usual numb, dislocated mood and read it first thing, wearing my long red satin dress that i haven't even taken off the hanger in years. The place we moved into is this gorgeous, 100 year old loft, with wide moldings and old lead paint that crackles like a lizard's back. The sun pours in on the east end by the bedroom in the morning and the west end by the kitchen in the evening. The windows in the back look out on a rooftop deck and a series of rooftops beyond that feels very Florence, Italy. The shower is in the middle of the house (with a window looking into the house, and a skylight showing blue sky in the shower) and the ceilings are 16 feet tall. It's run-down but gorgeous. So I dressed up for the apartment, so I can sweep around and feel dramatic. I feel numb cause I have been (as XXXX says) eating my feelings again, which makes me feel a little bit out of body and lethargic. But your email! It is such a pleasure to hear you so clearly problem-solving - owning your feelings, making decisions based on your own well-being and not judging others, but taking distance when necessary. I can't even convey to you how it changes my feelings toward you. By that I mean that I have always loved you, but I have long since given up feeling recharged or invigorated or zapped by you in any way. I have felt for a long time that you were figuratively speaking, fondling all the old files (if the heart is a filing cabinet) just flipping back and forth, and the only expectation was that I say uh-huh sometimes.

Of course I know this has been changing over the past six months, but especially this morning, perhaps because I was reading your words instead of listening to them on the telephone, and therefore felt more room for my own feeling responses, I was overwhelmed with feelings of desire. Desire FOR desire really. It made me think about how so much of aging is about managing desire - about allowing ourselves to feel it in different ways and (hopefully) not stuffing and satiating it with drink/drug/food/sex etc. because desire is really something which cannot be satiated. It can only be stifled or silenced. Derrida or Deleuze or someone said this thing about love that love is the excess after desire has been met and reciprocated... I may be getting that wrong (misinterpretation is the best way to deal with the anxiety of influence according to Harold Bloom) but it works for me for now. The idea being that there is EXCESS, or too much, or Derrida sometimes uses the word supplement. No one understands this issue of excess better than you dear XXXXX.

Part of the feeling of desire was for the past we share - the highly decadent, romantic and sexy way we all had of living. Life was such theatre back then and I long for some of that lately - for the way we projected our desire and pain and beauty so large and enfolded each other in it. The feeling hasn't gone away for me, but all the accoutrements have, so I have a hard time making contact with it. But really, its not accoutrements at all, its the people, who let me see myself the way I wanted to see myself reflected in them.

You would think having chosen to be an artist I would be living quite free, but lately I feel so wrapped up in my expectations of myself - which are really quite academic and intellectual as usual, instead of sensuous the way I secretly wish they were.

Anyway, I am diving into nostalgia as you make strong, clear moves to leave the past behind. Maybe by doing so I am trying to ask you for something, or explain something to you. Its true you have to make a break for the future, but I really left a few too many things behind with grad school and my attempts to understand the 21st century, so maybe we can help each

other (just by being there) by showing one another the past and future.

I have resisted the Kills pretty absentmindedly. Thank you for sending the kissy kissy song. I love it, I guess I have felt threatened by The Cool since leaving it behind. I really thought for a while that I had to *make things* and stop making myself up. So I completely stopped dressing up or caring what I looked like. That worked for awhile, with the same leather jacket look, but it's getting old, I am too old, and as I try to throw together a style, I am a little flustered by very hip 20-something people. Lord I'm not satisfied. I used to think Capitalism was doing something TO me, but I finally began to understand a few years ago, how much I am infested with it, with monstrous desire, with NEED for something that can't be found. There is a book called Everything Solid Melts into Air (after the Marx quote) about modernity, that describes the inside/outside issue (as they call it in art school) i.e. is this feeling inside me or outside of me?

I am sorry things are rough between you and XXXXX. But I get it. Sometimes there is no one to blame, no one has done anything wrong, and yet for your own reasons, you need to have space from someone. It's your right. It is too bad that many negative things had to be said, but that is how it goes sometimes. It may just be another indicator that you both need space from each other. If the words are so close to the surface that they can bubble up when she is drunk and you are angry, then they must be still relevant to your relationship somehow. Not that you feel that way, but that you can still recall feeling that way... Or she can. I think it is really hard to maintain close relationships with people from your past when you are making major life changes. Remember XXX XXX? We all didn't get her for a while. I just saw her the other day and she told me that she was incredibly moved when you called her six months ago for advice.

XXXX loves you, she will be around when things shift more for you or for her. (At some point you will feel less alone and then XXXX and XXXX won't even make your eyelashes flutter) I know how it feels to be and feel that alone though. I love you XXXX. Keep up the battle, and the self-love, and the hard thoughts and the communication. It is working.

Love,
Molly