

# THE BLUE-COLLAR SUN

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*For Luisa*



Thinking how the strands of love convolute.  
How the strands of love plead their diffidence,  
wince at the blinding teat of the sun, which is yellow,  
which is yellow. I've been in love with you since 7.

It is now 8:30 in the p.m. I guess you could say I'm committed.  
Listen: The sound of a creek bed, bone-dry and motherless,  
silences, like a spider, its capture. Seasonally.  
Love's furious lines of latitude unreel,

thereby honoring the occasion of first-light.  
We can't wait for the next choice phenomenon to appear:  
the bare-chested clouds. The bare-chested moon.  
An éventail of empathy that the blue-collar sun,

that the blue-collar sun drags above the screen.  
Rises, unforgiving. How it gives and it gives with its bare hands.

Like fireflies we excused ourselves horizontally through  
the fields.

Vendors of hearts in the stadium of night.

I used to think the bird migrating through my memory  
was the lone offender.

My mother's was an arctic tern whereas mine was a  
common snow goose.

Each time an explosion sounds, another wing retires to  
the field.

We tell time by the habits of a greater falling.

I've spent my life detecting, with increasing difficulty,  
the reverberate thump, my scalpel scabbed over, eft-red, having  
stabbed at the rain having *scalped* it.

When I perform the little surgeries, she calls me  
*miraculist*.

Then we set the hearts in glass boxes and seek out the  
buyers.

She calls our line of products *see-throughs*.

At night I hold onto her so I don't lose myself to the  
Shoulder Elvis.

The fields are overgrown they're six feet tall.

I used to think my bird would not get lost but now I  
don't.

The world is hard to find once you start looking for it.

It's hard to tell anything when it's just me.

When I'm the lone offender.

But she is with me. She calls me a textbook gamester. A  
Franklin County felon. A regular snow goose.

To think the bird would lose its way.

We hold on to each other and the fields spin round like pinching the nose and blowing your lights out.

It's midnight. You can tell by the erratic sway of the paraplegic moon. It's in its *numb-from-the-hips-up* phase.

O god where is the textbook on living.

We measure the heights from which the hearts fall and she charts the results in her planner. The fields at this hour pulse prophetic like the lungs of venting hens. Like the surprise sidestreets of the moon. The old man was our very first buyer. He's the one told us if the bird's thump resounds skyward before the echo of the explosion subsides, we should consider ourselves on the right side of luck.

There's a misfortune in the eyes of the dead but not the dying.

I used to think it was the other way around but who can say. One lacks the element of surprise whereas the other migrates north according to the angle of its encounter with light.

I am a man. How can life not be happening to me, too. I go on pat-drying the sweaty temples of the blue-collar sun with a rag I can't keep clean. At night I hold onto her like a seeing eye dog. We invigilate each other's breathing like fields of tall handsome men O won't they just love me and think of me. In my dream I come upon the girl cradling the migrating bird and my grip on the scalpel slackens and shudders,

O this is a serious thing.

Up north we can hear, when the winds bed down, the apologetic wheeze of the righteous.

We haven't encountered a buyer in weeks. It's a job trying to keep the days straight. Some make a career of it I do. I dream the bird is mine and I can't get a hold on my nerves. Faith's a liquidrushings through seams of a whiteknuckled fist.

Stains the hardwood floors of night.

The next buyer's blindness was white as leek-root.

White like the sorest throats in America.

White white white white white.

Hallelujah.

Stung like Braille the newborn hand.

A young woman from the Midwest whose default mode was that of flattery. Young enough to plant a garden for. I told her what do you call a moth this big.

A bird.

Haha.

She carried away two days' worth. The explosions occur in unison only on the solstice. Love minus the weather. Two negatives make a positive isn't that just the heights. I never know if it's the moon eclipsing the sun or what.

The moon steadies a firefly between its front teeth. Arcs forth a flickering loogie. Floors a stand of New England hardwoods.

There's a certain regionalism that inheres despite intentions. Remember that. Gestures betray. For instance, males of one species of firefly mimic the flash-patterns of another so as to pat-dry the sweaty temples of the beautiful rival.

Hope you can hear me.

The next buyer we encountered was a mechanic. His grease rag was like mine only it had a red stripe run lengthwise across it like a row of apple trees athwart a distant hill. He was my mother's mechanic.

O the bird was on some kind of course, alright.

When my girl greeted him her voice caved in and the grass some ten feet away sneezed and shook. Swayed like the back of a clockmaker's eyelid. Pendulous blindspots. We stopped and looked for whatever it was but there was nothing.

Silence.

I could hear the ringing in my mother's ears, what she called her Shoulder Elvis.

The mechanic's name was Bob. He possessed the nonchalance of a seeing eye dog, which never failed to give me pause even as a grownup. You can't outgrow reactions. You can only account for them with increasing difficulty whereas birds can be taught migration. By the same token, it is known that older birds are more successful wind correctors and therefore. A bird's heart resembles a human's but is slightly larger in relation to its body-size. The fields of New England resemble those out west save for the fireflies.

What do you call a firefly this big I asked him.

Run!

Haha.

Before we sold the Buick I'd accelerate to eighty along a dirt road out of town, alongside a field of wetland fern, eighty-five ninety, and suddenly the lanterns would smear horizontal, blur and bend hell-bent on astronomy. Then, at a certain speed, on a

moonless night, those astral smears would begin to circle back in on themselves.

It's hard to know what to do with myself.

How to live and in which direction.

A bird's heart, like that of a human's, has four chambers and an ascending aorta.

A bird's pumping is slightly accelerated due to a heightened metabolism.

Nautical-twilight fierce.

The science of it all so impressed the mechanic that the stretch of landscape within reach of his energy field went berserk.

I believe the blind can experience mirages greater or equal to.

Look, sometimes we know what others are

thinking even before

do. Like leaving a weather report on your gravestone because, hell, anything can be predicted.

And sometimes the other is you which I think about a lot actually, I think its wild.

The solstice realigns twice a year and when that happens the girl and me we hold onto each other the way we hold onto each other's failures.

Which is neither fair nor amendable.

Anyhow, when her voice caved in and the mechanic smiled, I watched his gold teeth converse with the sun which was stinging the eastern sky like the spanked rear-end of a child.

That's when I knew how many years we'd shared.

The bird was on some kind of course alright.

White white white white white.

Finally the damn turkey ten feet over reared its head just above grassline like a floretless flower, like a black-eyed susan.

My girl was lightheaded so I handed her the bottle of milky water which was nearly full through it was late afternoon again which meant we were dehydrated-ascetic. She took it and put it to her lips.

Sometimes we don't have to speak at all to know what the other has been meaning to say all his or her life. That's a certain candidness about experience I've come to appreciate. That and watching the birds we've saved disappear behind some low-lying cloud thereby revealing what our love stands in relation to.

Go like that with your.

Now with your eyes like when you're a kid.

Make two of anything like take for example this field this heart.

The Shoulder Elvis sure is turned up volumetrically by the buzzing life of these acres.

Listen.

There's some augmentation going on which she took note of in her planner. She handed me a look that said I know about you and cicadas how they make you think of bathtubs. And how bathtubs make you subsequently think far too intently on your mother Each night carrying pots full of boiling water from the stove in the kitchen to the black porcelain tub out in the yard.

Did you hear what was firstly brought manmade into space. Left it bobbing indelibly through the void.

A birdbath by God.

Yes, the bird that migrates through memory has about it a blackness and a roundness. Think: an overripe cherry in the throat of a robin. En route from the lower esophagus to the born-again tree. Like how these old philosophers went from conjecturing a flat earth to a round one. Via negativa. When I think about that with my body, my posture stiffens.

The turkey went lost to the thicket.

The mechanic was so impressed by the anatomy of his bird, by the very specifics of its living, of its having lived and died, the whole ninethousand yards of it, that the landscape surrounding us went berserk. That's how hard he was trying not to show what certainty meant to him.

The sun slid on its blue collar, which is another way of saying the sun rose and I could see again o couldn't we just see the sad lot of it.

The old man was the first buyer and that was before we knew we were selling anything, period. He gave us a year's worth which changed everything instantly. I quit my job at the service station, gave back the costume but not the grease rag.

In class I told my teacher and everybody else too that my special talent (because that's all they want to know) was not dissolving in the bathtub.

Which was a quote I stole from Pablo Picasso.

And here I was again thieving it to the mechanic, as well.

My girl smuggled me a look that said I know what you're up to you're fixing it so that this time next week that mechanic is going to realize the green depth of your persuasion.

Okay.

We sold him a couple of hen's hearts, a mourning dove's, a stellar jay's.

And in accordance with the memory of my mother, I offered up the heart of an arctic tern.

I spoke to him the details and she supplied the measurements which upped the monetary value don't believe otherwise.

There is the old habit of a greater falling gleaned in the eyes of the sun that is rising, and in the steadying eyes of the winged.

On account of man's ambition.

Try identifying with that kind of sadness.

Like how if we put our minds to it we can feel, can actually *feel* the ache of tern teeth, the migrating ones, which endlessly travel, from pole to pole, twice a year, grinding the light. They see and taste more of that blue-collar sun than any other living creature, period.

See it all the more clearly with their eyes closed.

I asked the mechanic if I could fold his grease rag into a square O won't you just give me this one thing.

Won't you love me and think of me.

The red stripe was thin as the heart's brakepad.

Delicate as tickling a moth's back. Like lulling it in the direction of some plywood dream.

It was clear by the way the creases took a backseat to the wrinkles that this man never kept his rag folded the way I liked to.

Nevermind all that.

I put my face to it and gauzed a quick prayer and felt the sun eyeing me. I inhaled for the sake of the dissolved many. I folded it into a square.

There is a certain kindness in all buyers is what I believe. Mother taught me that by way of her grievances.

Some see us for who we are, too.

Which is a certain candidness about life etc.

Bob gave the girl and me a month's worth. I was to learn all this afterwards. Via the girl's calculations.

Giving is like that, isn't it, she said, It's clementine strange.

I used to think she gave herself too hard a time about certain things but now I don't which worries me like maybe I don't love her as much.

I hope that's just how life is and not how I am.

And yet she's the only reason I go on doing what I do. Conveying the value of the fallen. The quality of our ability to love. Otherwise the bird winging through my memory would fear not the darkness but would substantiate it's claims over these fields and get the hardwon-actual buzzing electric, like the fireflies of New England, like mother's Shoulder Elvis, like the peeling back of that old adhesive sun from newly vacant stretches of the sky.

I told him o o o I can write the pants off an obituary

& then the weather held up some recourse where the joke  
should've been

I told him there's a cure for the hiccups/ just swallow  
consecutively for ten seconds like giving away the blues/ like  
blushing raw-belly-red at the thought of the moon's pot-bellied  
mistress

& the fireflies are mingling like it's the Stone Age/ like it's the  
girl with no hands inventing fire for the first time by rubbing the  
air real fast (the air that occupies the absence)

Like a blind man describing a sunset to a blind man and/or to a  
sunset:

*SUCH A THIN, LABORIOUS ARC*

Have you ever seen anything so beautiful she says (so help me  
god, I haven't)

For in the middle of all that darkness stands a cathedral, a  
cathedral that is itself spilling darkness, & in the middle of that  
cathedral, amid all that inner darkness, she's got her hands like  
this, and above her hands, though you can't quite make it out, is  
a mouth, an ordinary mouth, and right this very second in time,  
at precisely this spot on the planet, here in this very existence  
that we share without regard to the impossibility of it all, of the  
world's being here, of our being here, of our being here  
TOGETHER, that singularly expressive mouth is formulating  
some gratitude, is meaning to say, *I did this for you/ so help me/ I did  
all of this / for you*



LUCAS FARRELL's writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Boston Review*, *Jubilat*, *La Petit Zine*, *Forklift*, *Ohio*, *Handsome*, *Mid-American Review*, and elsewhere, and he's been a finalist for both the Sawtooth Prize and the New Issues Poetry Prize. He is an editor of the international poetry journal *Slope*. He lives in Vermont.

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