



narrative

WENDY TREVINO

KRUPSKAYA • 2017

NARRATIVE

It's snowing.

Someone says, "It doesn't count as sex, if you don't orgasm."

She looks skeptical.

She always keeps a skirt she aspires to—one day—feel good in.

The cops came & took the trailer.

That video of Nico hotboxing to Sublime.

He just sits there not saying anything.

He was a broke white boy with dreads.

The very sight of him pissed off her father.

The trailer hadn't even been there long.

She keeps waiting for things to be fun.

A few months was a long time.

Money meant skiing in Steamboat, Colorado over Spring Break.

The coolest girls were at Lillith Fair.

There were the free outdoor shows in Austin.

The String Cheese Incident.

People believed they were going to die.

She's never seen snow.

Even a little counts.

There were porn shops & strip bars just outside town.

She tripped walking up the dark steps to the gay bar.

It didn't seem that serious.

She eats Burger King in Madrid on her birthday.

She's aware of the decadence.

She eats one grilled chicken Caesar salad a day for 10 days.

She learned with no one taking care of her she felt better.

She learned feeling better was possible.

It makes many things worse.

Club clothes are just cheap.

The beach is cheaper than the mountains.

Her boyfriend hordes food.

His bathroom smells like urine.

When they turn the corner to his house, she sees a stray dog sunning in the street.

Her friends throw parties around the pool at the center of their apartment complex.

They have no electricity, but they have beer.

There are so many apartments.

She doesn't even bother telling her boyfriend they've stopped dating.

She can't say what happened.

She just never talks to him again.

Weed's illegal but easy enough to find.

It's not even noon & she's met a man in a bar.

As soon as she feels better she always meets a man.

Then it feels like pretending all over again.

what sucks the most about loss

when you lose someone
you don't lose them all at once

you lose them in pieces
over time so that a long time

can pass & wonderful things
can happen & one day you

smell or hear or see something
& remember & not only is it painful

to remember the person missing
it's painful to realize it's been a while

since you've remembered, that your
surroundings are more & more

reflecting your life without them & that
in a sense, you're still losing them

& that the grieving process might
in the end, be about learning

to live with the ongoingness of that

LETTER TO MYSELF AT 15

Most days you will forget you were ever in love.

It's OK.

Someone will say there was a black bloc in Richardson, Texas

& you will know exactly where that is

& not know how you know

Is through heartbreak.

You will close your eyes in the middle

Of an argument & feel a million miles away

Aware of no other relation before this one

In San Francisco, California.

Someone will fall out of love with you

Again & you won't be ready.

SUMMER 2016

It's 11:30 in San Francisco. Britain has voted
To leave the EU. Last week, the Golden
State Warriors lost to the Cleveland Cavaliers
In the NBA Finals. We watched the game
On a flat screen TV set up outside a bookstore
In Downtown Oakland. Right next to a vegetarian
Chinese restaurant that had been shot up
During a vigil the week before. Josh wanted
Cleveland to win. Mostly for Tamir Rice.
Mostly hoping Black people in Cleveland would
Finally get their riot. I want that, too.

This is the week after I turn 38 & 49
Gay & queer men & women—Black & nonblack
Latino, nearly half Puerto Rican—are killed
In a mass shooting at a gay night club
In Orlando. Right down the street
From where the contestant of a popular reality
Television show had been shot & killed by her stalker
The night before. Not too far from a Disney resort
Where 5 alligators are captured & gutted
By authorities looking for the remains
Of a 2-year-old boy who is dragged

By an alligator into a lake a couple of days later.
This is the same month a gorilla born & raised
Where I was—in the Rio Grande Valley
Of South Texas—is killed at the Cleveland Zoo
After he drags a toddler who falls into his exhibit
Around. Later that week, Jane Goodall calls
The zoo to say it looked like the gorilla was
Was trying to protect the kid. I don't know.
This is weeks before white nationalists
With the Traditionalist Worker Party stab antiracists
Who stop them from holding a rally in Sacramento.

Before a frightening number of people argue
That the rights of the white nationalists were
Violated like that's a bad thing. This is after
A crowd of mostly teenagers—mostly nonwhite –

Chase supporters of Donald Trump's presidential
Campaign out of San Jose. After someone takes
A picture of a white kid running frantically away
From a group of nonwhite kids running after him.
This is the same month it's announced
Puerto Rico's water will no longer be monitored
For quality, because having defaulted on its debt

The country can't afford it. After the murder of 2
Activists who exposed the contamination of Flint
Michigan's water supply. After militia men "open-carry"
As they deliver bottled water to Flint residents.
& I'm writing from the future, where all over
The United States Black people are blocking highways
& carrying guns to protests where the cops can see them.
This is the week cell phone videos of 2 Black men
Being murdered by cops go viral on consecutive days.
Before Micah X. Johnson kills 5 cops in Dallas
During a Black Lives Matter march. This is a couple

Of weeks after teachers block highways in Oaxaca
& an anarchist is arrested & run over by cops. & I keep
Thinking I will call this "11:30" because that's the time
I started writing one night a month ago & it's
Something I'll come back to—more like a workday
Than a ray of light through a cloud. I guess that's
What feels different – like highways full of people
There's no way around & barricades & teenagers setting
Cop cars on fire. It's inevitable. Maybe we'll see each other.

KILLER WHALE

Tilikum is “people”
As in “my people”

Or “family” or “tribe.”
Would it have

Changed anything
If Tilikum had been

A machine?
Would you still

Find yourself
Talking about him

Like he’s dead
When he’s just floating

In a tank of water
Surrounded

By security cameras?
It’s hard not to see us

Seeing him
On the news

Looking up from
The scene of a crime

At a helicopter—
No one’s Shamu.

VERRUCKT: THE WORLD'S TALLEST WATERSLIDE

The safety
Netting

Isn't there
To save you

More than
Keep you

From killing
Someone else

Call it
Protection

Insurance
That costs you

Ten times
The maintenance

Of the ride
To contain

Your death
& pay off

Your family
The park can

Be closed
No more

Than 3 days
Before a park-

Ending loss
Of profit

Before everyone

Who witnessed

What happened

Starts to think

Something

Went wrong

It wasn't anything

You did different

A contingency

Plan was prepared

In the case

Of you

These kids are

Service workers

These jobs

Are seasonal

At this point

The machines

Basically

Run themselves

“TRAMPA DE DEDOS” / “FINGER TRAP”

after & for Raquel Salas-Rivera

Should

you

put a

ring on it

spiral out, forget

this is another becoming

you turn in, like Lucille Clifton “turning into [her]

own / turning on in / to [her] own self / at last / turning out of the /
white cage, turning out

of the / lady cage / turning at last.” A person born with twelve fingers
isn’t a metaphor for anything, but if you would like her to

she’ll read your palm. When you meet her, that’s what she says. It’s 2008.
Not too long before the stock market crash. At a poetry retreat in an
offensively named town where timeshare people go to ski & dream about
Aspen.

Around this time, you love Charles Simic’s translation of Vasko Popa’s se-
quence “The Little Box” more than just about any other book of poems.
The little box can be anywhere & nowhere. You can store & lose the en-
tire world inside her as the little box falls in love with herself & conceives
a little box that falls in love with herself & conceives...

Infinite little boxes! You maintain that sequence is good, but in retrospect,
your love of the little box seems like a compromise. So many young poets
you meet between 2004 & 2008 have been influenced by Michael Ham-
burger’s translations of poems by Paul Celan, but you can’t read those
beautiful translations without remembering what the poet Joe Wenderoth
said about Celan’s suicide note to his wife. All it said was her name &
“all light.” It may be written in French. The historical context of Celan’s
poems—you can’t stop thinking about that.

At the same time, a significant number of young writers—many of them teenage girls—are chatting online with Tao Lin or some other depressed man in his early 20s. They call this “Alt-Lit.” This is before one Alt-Lit woman turns up in an anarchist space in San Francisco & starts sleeping with one of the editors of a communist journal called Endnotes but after Kenneth Goldsmith, taking a page out of the neocon playbook, “transcribes” the September 11, 2001 issue of the *New York Times* & publishes “The Day.” At the same time, more & more young artists & writers move to East Austin. It is recommended that you spend a few good years teaching English in Korea or Japan. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians are killed by the United States. If talking about the past historically doesn’t mean recognizing it “the way it really was,” to what extent does it involve something like translation?

Does translation require a person or just language anymore? What is the legal age of consent in New Jersey & New York? These, perhaps, were some of the big questions some people were asking. “Providing scientific articles to those at elite universities in the First World, but not to children in the Global South?”—that was another. Aaron Schwartz left Reddit. Open access is nothing like an exhibit at a museum. It’s not even like a museum membership. Not even like a highway shut down. The tech buses have been around longer than many people think. Fukuyama had predicted an obsession with form removed from anything like political life, as if the hipsters of the mid-aughts would invent nihilism. Some poets begin to speak in terms of a sincerity / irony binary. It’s possible the binary doesn’t apply to anything of note—not even in the always late United States where young people in black fuck up Starbucks & the Gap during the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle. Then again some of them claim a swastika can be ironic, while others claim it’s merely cultural, which is to say marginalized people should calm down, which is to suggest a swastika is a swastika is a swastika, which is to say it’s the swastika you’re afraid of, what the swastika can do & not the history of the people who make it what it is, which is not over, which is dead wrong

WRONG BUT ONTO SOMETHING

The last time you see her she's with the friend who watched the Twin Towers collapse from his office in the Empire State Building.

This is before he moves to Dubai & makes a lot of money & loses it.

He says the last time he saw her she was like a cracked egg.

It had been like everything inside her was seeping out, but still, she'd been able to hold it together—the egg of her.

That was before.

This is after she takes you to an abortion clinic in Houston.

You remember that morning—the traffic, the woman with her hair in a towel, doing her makeup & driving.

This is after she hands you a fistful of birth control pills & says taking them all at once is like taking the morning after pill.

She was wrong but onto something.

This is before you miscarry while studying abroad.

You remember walking around like an exposed nerve.

Thankful.

This is before you leave the money your ex-boyfriend gave you for an abortion on the kitchen counter with a note telling her to keep it.

This is before she develops an allergy to beer & keeps drinking.

You remember the night you stayed up listening to her breathe, making sure the hives didn't spread to her throat.

This is before she leaves another long-term boyfriend

& he tells you he keeps thinking about her with someone else & the gun he keeps in his car.

This is after your ex-boyfriend peels out in front of your apartment, turns the corner & crashes into a parked car.

You remember how much you didn't like him.

This is after the guy she likes kisses you while you're sleeping & you don't know how or if you should tell her.

You tell her.

This is after she gets a tongue ring & you get your tragus pierced.

This is before her plans to spend Spring Break in a trailer on the beach fall through.

You forget where she stayed after that.

This is before you start pitching in for the keg.

This is before your ex-boyfriend is the guy who hooks up with your roommate in your room while you watch TV & find out Princess Diana is dead falling asleep on the living room couch.

You were more interested in how many people seemed to be interested.

It was the same with South Park.

This is before she tells you the best thing for a hangover is to keep drinking.

This is after you come home to find your roommate watching a kid be pulled out a second story window of a high school in Colorado.

You remember the idea of anyone being a fan of Hitler's was beyond your comprehension.

This is after Jasper, TX.

This is before she accuses you of sleeping with her boyfriend.

This is after someone steals your passport & an entire case of someone else's Phish CDs out of your unlocked car.

This is before you buy her a new Dark Side of the Moon CD.

This is after you see The Wizard of Oz set to Dark Side of the Moon a few times.

This is after she starts driving.

The Doors always seemed to be playing in that car.

This is before it becomes nearly impossible to work in a city & go to school at the same time.

You could fill the tank of your mid-sized sedan for \$20 or less.

This is before the apartment where everyone got acid burns down & the guy who could do backflips dies in a car accident.

This is before she moves to Austin to take a job in hospital administration.

This is before a man tells you to smile at a Crystal Method concert she invites you to.

This is after a couple of people you know make a killing in tech in San Francisco.

This is before those people lose everything & have to move back home.

This is after she says you broke her windows.

She's a house with broken windows.

This is after you suggest therapy.

This is after you've been in therapy.

MY BOYFRIEND LEFT TO GET ICE CREAM & RAN INTO
SOME FRIENDS SO I'M NOT SURE WHEN HE'LL BE BACK OR
IF WE'LL HAVE ICE CREAM.

When I was 21, I lost a day.

I mean Thursday I said goodbye to my boyfriend, who was driving south to deal with a drug charge, then I went with my friend to visit these drug dealers she knew, took Valium, Xanax & Rohypnol & eventually smoked weed & dropped acid.

My plan was to make the next 2 days go by as fast as possible & I met someone.

I remember my friend saying I'd lost her wallet.

She'd left the apartment & since I was too high to move, she'd left her purse hanging on my shoulder.

& now her wallet was missing.

She was furious.

I couldn't remember anyone standing next to me after she'd been gone, but I'd been eating chicken wings & not really paying attention & couldn't say for sure.

I don't know where she found it, but she found her wallet.

She hadn't left it in her purse after all.

I wasn't expecting her to still be mad.

The problem was she could see me letting someone steal her wallet.

She could see me doing something like that.

I was confused, but I'd met someone who got me away from her.

He took me to visit his friends.

They were a couple.

I remembered them from high school.

They said I was tripping & gave me a pint of half & half out of their fridge.

That they would have half & half to spare made them seem very mature to me.

I'm not sure if that was before or after the pool.

The water flashed like any kind of light does, before your eyes adjust to the dark.

I remember holding on to someone I'd met, who'd started to become this warm presence I wasn't afraid of sinking into.

I couldn't tell you what I was wearing, let alone where or how I'd put it on.

For the life of me, I don't remember getting out.

There were two cars.

My boyfriend had taken my car on his trip, after his beat up Honda Civic broke down.

That car continued to be an important part of my life long after I left my boyfriend.

The point is my car was more important to me than my boyfriend.

At the time I lent it to him, I trusted few people more than my car & for good reason, he was not one of those people.

Still, I let him take my car.

He'd been charged with possession & couldn't miss his court date.

Even though I'd just found out he'd been using cocaine & selling it to our friends, I couldn't stand by & watch as he missed his court date.

But I wasn't happy.

I wanted to forget I had a car & this terrible relationship I felt powerless in, which is why I'd said yes when my friend invited me to hang out at this drug dealers' apartment & why I'd said yes to every available drug but cocaine.

Can't say if this was before or after the abortion, but it was definitely after my boyfriend showed up to pick me up at a friend's house 4 or 5 hours late.

In any case, I'd met someone who also had a car.

I think it was a Lincoln.

He could start it with a remote control.

I was impressed that he'd taken the time to make that possible.

I think he liked how much I didn't know.

He hadn't expected to hang out so long & somehow he'd lost his computer.

I remember him in his car looking everywhere for it.

He said it'd been lost in the acid hole.

I was surprised it had a name.

Every time I remember there's such a thing as an acid hole, I picture a white Lincoln with a red leather interior, which reminds me too much of the interior of my parents' silver Oldsmobile to be right.

3 days later I woke up next to someone I'd met.

The friend I'd gone with to the drug dealers' house had followed the cocaine.

I called my boyfriend.

Everyone had been looking for me.

My boyfriend had called my parents.

He said he'd pick me up.

Many years later I'd befriend a 21-year-old woman who would ask me if every woman who's into men has a story that involves them waiting for a man who's asleep at home.

I'd tell her about the time I lost a day & woke up to everyone looking for me.

I didn't know how long I'd have to wait for my boyfriend, which wouldn't have been so bad had I not remembered I had a car & a boyfriend.

I waited outside at a picnic table in the courtyard of the apartment complex where someone I'd met lived.

I didn't know how long I'd be there.

Someone I'd met sat down next to me & when my boyfriend came, he was gone.

I'd tell my 21-year-old friend I could still remember my boyfriend crying as it hit him that I might never stop tripping (I guess).

I didn't think I was tripping but didn't know.

I called my mom & told her all the drugs I'd taken.

She opened some government handbook on illicit substances & read me the effects of the various drugs.

It helped.

*

I didn't see him come in but a guy, who sold weed for the dealers me & my friend visited, walked into the apartment that time I lost a day.

Everyone was sure he'd stolen a pound of weed.

They beat him up on the balcony.

I wouldn't have believed it happened, if not for all the blood on the balcony.

I couldn't stop staring.

The blood started moving & I knew I had started to trip.

Someone I'd met pulled me away.

People are just great upon meeting.

Let's say you meet someone & lose a day.

It's like the day you lost.

Meeting feels abstracted, like it exists with a lost computer in an acid hole, where the tech bubble's burst & all these techies are leaving San Francisco.

Where everyone's watching Office Space & drinking through the supply of water they ended up not needing for Y2K.

All of your friends are about to graduate college & taking telemarketing jobs & the United States just persuaded Israel not to sell a fancy radar system to China.

The federal government might be cracking down on the sale of ecstasy & one of your girlfriends might be the connect for a narc.

& there you are watching Fear & Loathing in Las Vegas tripping with someone you met who calls in to CompUSA & gets out of work so he can keep hanging out.

Someone you met might seem so different, when your lying boyfriend is off somewhere in your car getting a discount on a lawyer because the lawyer's son wants to join your ex-boyfriend's fraternity & your ex-boyfriend will do anything to make you happy, which is something that tends to happen, too.

Someone you met will inevitably have to go back to work.

He might need a new computer.

He might have shot & buried his neighbor's cat.

5 OUT OF 13 WAYS OF LOOKING AT POETRY NOT BEING
ENOUGH

1.

If you were to wear a shirt that said LEAVE ME ALONE
People might not talk to you or harass you or assault you.
You might put them off. You might manage
To trick them, this time. That you weren't even trying
Is a terrible sign—like an intersection with signs
That say DON'T STOP KEEP GOING.

2.

It's the difference between ALL ROADS LEAD
TO THE KILL FLOOR & YOU CAN SEE
YOURSELF OUT. I'm talking about the promises
Of art & the promises of civil war. I'm saying the coldness
Of that adjective is no match for the heat in parts of the south
Or for being without water or running out of food.

3.

People make things that reflect how they live, where.
These things are not to be confused with the shadows
They cast. When I write a poem I write about things
Like shadows, execute certain tricks. I can see why
People have compared it to dance, but have you ever
Danced in the streets? It's better not to do it by yourself.

4.

Terrorist attacks are a consequence of wars
You're not supposed to know about. Planes
Flying into towers don't start wars more than you
Not shopping. It's no wonder you believe magicians are men
With magic hats that double as wormholes for rabbits
From galaxies far far away & magical women for so long.

5.

At most, I can see a painting being like a bluff, a view
Of the back of your opponent's cards when you're playing
For money & you've already lost more than you planned.
But your relationship with it isn't the most important
Or interesting one. Your love won't change what a painting
Is, which is someone's time spent working for someone else.

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Wendy Trevino is an anti-capitalist, anti-racist feminist who was born & raised in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. She lives and works in San Francisco. Her chapbook *128-131* was published by Perfect Lovers Press in 2013. Her chapbook *Brazilian Is Not a Race* was published by Commune Editions in 2016. Her poems have appeared in various print and online journals. Wendy is not an experimental writer.

Cybele Lyle is a California-based artist whose installation, video and 2D work reconstructs the architecture and natural environment around her into an alternate vision of interior and exterior space. Cybele graduated from Oberlin College with a BA in Environmental Studies, then went on to get a BFA from California College of Arts and Crafts in Printmaking and an MFA in Painting/Combined Media from Hunter College in New York in 2007. She has held residencies at Ox-Bow, Project 387, Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art and most recently at the Headlands Center for the Arts. Her works have been exhibited across the United States including at the 205 Hudson St Hunter Gallery, New York; Bemis Center, Omaha; Oakland Museum, San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; Et al. gallery, San Francisco, and most recently in the California-Pacific Triennial at the Orange County Museum of Art. Cybele is a recipient of the Kala Fellowship, the Yozo Hamaguchi Printmaking award, and the Tony Smith Award. Cybele currently has a studio in Los Angeles and is represented by Et al. in San Francisco.

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