



Yes. Yes. Yes.

(I)

It was magic. They both said so. It hurtled towards them. Pinned them to the ground. Them wriggling. He said he wasn't going to let anything destroy the magic, not his ego nor his moods nor his big foot in mouth syndrome.

She told him about the numbers. Seeing numbers come up in threes and fours and how it was angels trying to let them know they were there for them. *'It's angels and that'*, she'd say. She glimpses at the clock: it's 13.33. He sends her a WhatsApp: it's 14.44. She replies: it's 15.55. Signs from everywhere. *'Hey, I dreamt of you last night.'* *'Hey, SNAP, me too...'* *'Hey, the 'Yes. Yes. Yes.'* *Molly Bloom thing of ours is everywhere. Have you seen the Red Cross in Spain have taken out a lottery called: 'Yes. Yes. Yes?' I have the badge.'* And it's true, the Red Cross girl took the *'Yes. Yes. Yes.'* badge off her lapel and gave it to her because she'd said she liked it. That same afternoon they bought two Smoothie Juicers in the summer sales. One for him. One for her. Engagement juicers, she teased. They laughed. He carried both of them. One balanced on each shoulder as they rode the moving stairs. Laughing. They were glass juicers. Not plastic. All the better to preserve things in, they said. Preserving: Smoothies. The Magic. Them. The Yes. Yes. Yes.

(II)

She had come late to Molly Bloom's *'Yes. Yes. Yes.'* soliloquy. The beach walk with Joyce. Molly coming down on him. When she used to say the Spanish *'Si. Si. Si.'* version of *'Yes. Yes. Yes.'* to him on the phone twenty years earlier, her mother would tease her about her nodding head and her *'Si. Si. Si.'* exclamations while speaking to him. *'You're always saying 'Si. Si. Si.' to him, what does it mean?'* her mother would ask and she'd feel huffy and tongue-tied and give a shy grin.

(III)

When they did meet again after twenty years, it was wind and rain and him wearing a scarf like her dead dad's scarf. They liked to think that W. B. Yeats had reunited them. Some of Yeats' poems had been translated to *Galego* and published in a book alongside their English version. On the afternoon her dad was dying, he sent her a message asking for her address to send her the book. A year later they visited Yeats' grave together and laid some daisies there. She took a photo of him posing behind Yeats' tombstone so that he appeared with only his head visible, erect yet slanted as if dislocated from his body and sitting like a crow on a tombstone while he faked a daunting look. He said he had imagined the words '*Tread softly because you tread on my dreams*' written in paint on a wall, not carved in metal on the ground. She said it made more sense to have the words on the ground.

(IV)

He sent a video to her WhatsApp. It was Paul Mc Cartney's '*My Valentine*.' Afterwards when he rang her, he admitted to not really understanding the lyrics. She said she hadn't listened yet. An hour later he said he found the translation and that she was to listen. She listened. The song sang of lovers making the other better, of lovers rescuing the other. Johnny Depp plays the guitar. Natalie Portman does the sign language. A phone call later he asked her if she'd listened, she said she had. He asked what '*Valentine*' meant. She said 14th of February. He said: '*Oh so it means a lover?*' She said yes. He said that the small gecko sculpture she had given him on their first meeting, after twenty years apart, stares at him when he is on his own in bed at night. He said he would take it with him to wherever she is the next time he visits. He does. They are in a hotel room on a weekend of storms, a full blood moon, an eclipse and a comet. He puts the gecko by the TV they never turn on. The storm shakes the shutters in their bedroom. They stay in bed. They don't open the shutters. From the living room window, they see the sky stay dark all day.

(V)

She imagines sending him a '*Goodbye*' WhatsApp beginning with the words: '*Well, well, well.*' The nightmare she'd have previously would be about all the old insecurities, her in a room

without a lock and trying to hide. Breakdown stuff. Her whole nightmare-being would shake. She would be trying to tell someone. There'd be no one left to tell. There would be stuff that she should have shaken off years ago. Buck teeth and a crooked fringe had been the source of her torment. The primary school bullies on the way home would say: *"You stay behind that ditch, you ugly little bitch."* *"Repeat after us, 'I'll stay behind the ditch, I'm an ugly little bitch."* There were rods snapped off branches and whisked at her in an elevation of air. Her yellow, Shetland jumper itched. The yellow ribbon on top of her hair was a defiant shout-out of: *'I'm pretty.'* She was a Yellow Rose of Texas. What had her parents and granny been thinking, sending her out like that?

(VI)

Next in her imaginary WhatsApp message to him, she'd write: *' I go. You go. And no, no dicky-birds. My question to you is an intoned and question-marked '¿NO?' Is your answer to that intoned question-marked '¿NO?' an exclamation-marked '¡NO!?' If so, aren't we entering into the 'No. No. No!' stage, leaving behind the 'Yes. Yes. Yes!' stage?'*

(VII)

It wasn't until she started reading on Facebook about lovers and a love that felt as-true-as-god that things started clicking. The lover had written on her own Facebook wall: *'I've run away to the West to experience 'the outside' and be with the one I love. In this photo, that small dot at the top of the mountain is the one I love and the person I share the West and 'the outside' with. The person I share the West and 'the outside' with is asking if dinner is ready from her standpoint as a dot at the top of the mountain. And I, her lover, answer: 'Yes, it is.'* She read that exchange between the lovers and knew she was witnessing true love. She wants their love to be true love too but is it him or is it her that doesn't quite know how to crack open the gaps to let the light come in, the way Leonard Cohen sings about it?

(VIII)

There was plenty of hugging between them. Sometimes rib-breaking hugging. The hugging could hardly be avoided because of the narrow breadth of his bed. They were hoisted up on

pillows sipping chamomile tea to help them sleep. He'd put small bits of ginger with the peel still on in the chamomile. It was his first time having ginger. He'd cut the pieces far too fine. She said she'd wanted chunks of ginger not small, floaty bits that could be taken into the mouth on a whim. He had laughed and proceeded to make them even smaller. Afterwards they lowered themselves down under the blankets. She began to feel something in the throat. She said: *'That's you and your bits of too small ginger with the peel stuck there.'* He laughed. She thought *'Oh to hell if I choke!'* And they hugged more. When she turned her back to him, he pressed in tighter. She pressed back, luxuriating in his pushes and her own receptivity to those pushes. Cats were crying outside. A heart-wrenching cry, a chorus to her heart-wrench thinking and the goodbye WhatsApp she'd imagined sending him.

(IX)

Days before the ginger peel in the chamomile tea episode, they were in another bedroom in a hotel. A large double bed with soft sheets and radiators on full blast. He'd had a headache. His stomach felt bad from all the paracetamol he'd been taking over the past two weeks because of dental surgery he'd had. She said: *'Why not take Aspirin? It's the medication of the 20th century. Even if we are in the 21st century.'* She said that every week they discover new benefits of Aspirin and named Prozac-like benefits, Viagra-like benefits, skin texture benefits. He asked if she had an Aspirin and she said she had an emergency one in her bag, the one she takes everywhere, on planes, boats and into hotel rooms. It was possibly out of date and squashed looking and its supposed dissolving qualities may not work but he could have it if he wanted it, she offered.

(X)

They were drinking morning tea in bed at the time. He popped the Aspirin into the remnants of coldish, leftover tea and it fizzled but it didn't make those Aspirin dissolving sounds that it should have made. They laughed. They huddled down again. The hugging started, each squeezing the other while she rhymed off into his ear the benefits of hugging: heart beat control, aging delay, happiness activation, immunity strengthening, self-esteem boosting, etcetera. All those little pushes were happening again. He pushing his penis into her ass, she pushing out her ass at him

to receive the penis push. Push, push, push. He pushed with his force and she met his force and upped her own force amidst the giggling, till she felt so wet like she'd burst her banks. He fingered her into near oblivion. *'Oh Jesus, the fingering,'* she thought. They turned to each other and he was inside her now and she was thinking thank god while furthering her efforts to plaster herself completely against him. She hoped the jagged hair molecules breaking through her just recently shaved pubic area and legs didn't prick him. He is all smooth. Oh yes, if there was one word to describe his body, it would be smooth, then soft. Absolutely no follicles of hair trying to break through his skin. He had hardened so much by now and she had wetted so much. She is thinking *'Oh my sweet Jesus, how I've missed this.'* She was wishing she didn't have legs. She was wishing her thighs out of the way so he could go deeper. Everything was becoming paramount to a massive Aspirin dissolving the world. The bedhead was shaking. The bedhead was threatening to break down on them. She stretched back so that she was horizontally over the edge of the bed and he did likewise, both of them lying over their own separate edge, horizontal, connecting in the middle, holding hands, the pushing still happening, the orgasms coming. When it was over they stayed still, horizontal, connecting, holding hands, the headboard quiet.

(XI)

Later that day, propped up in bed alone with her Macbook Air, she was exploring feeds on Facebook when she saw a post from The Warrior, it was titled *'3 Easy Ways to Die.'* It said if she puffs a cigarette daily, she will die ten years earlier. If she drinks alcohol daily, she will die thirty years earlier and if she loves someone who doesn't totally love her back, she will die a little every day. She hadn't expected it to go from cigarettes to alcohol to love like that. It did that punch in the stomach thing, that whack in the throat thing, that knock between the eyeballs thing, that sweet *'Jesus wept'* line, the shortest sentence in the bible thing. She didn't expect that. Her morning went haywire after that. From thinking she's got twenty four hours of grateful living ahead of her to a feeling of wanting to pull the sheets over her head and sink into a sleep that isn't a real sleep, a sleep where her eyes are shut tight but but her brain is playing *'Come Dancing'* with her head and it's one, two, three, toss and one, two, three, turn. Nothing. All the good intentions of the morning are being sucked into her chest cavity and reciting: *'Come on,*

soft-headed thing; get to it, dreamer; who loves somebody who maybe doesn't totally love them back; hey, a daisy petal a day, he loves me, he loves me not; he loves me, he loves me not...'
and in her mind's eye, she rips asunder a field full of innocent daisy petals until she gets to the last petal on the last daisy and it definitely says he loves her. Yes! Yes! Yes!