



Linus and Paige

by Christina Eng

Part i

Linus is 25, 5'9" gainful employed,
not religious but spiritual, non-smoker,
likes long walks on the beach -
so he told me, as we sat at the
kitchen table together
to author an online dating profile
that was sure to keep his bed warm.
I paused, to say, "Do you really?"
"Who doesn't?" he cooed.
So I inquired, "When was the last time,
Linus, you walked,
long, on a beach?"

He looked up and to the left, loosened
his collar, and smiled slightly in his
typical way: never quite revealing
anything, but for the glint in his eye
that revealed everything. Inscrutable
man,
happy guy, Linus. Among house plants,
he kept roses,
He collected things,
he read the stoics.
I was among a precious few privy to
the raving heart that knocked around
in his barrel chest like a boulder in the
bed of a truck.

"Just the other night actually," He
finally replied,
"I walked, long, on a beach. I wanted a
clear view of the moon."
"Just you, alone?" I asked him.
"Just me... and the moon, so not quite
alone... but lonely."
he breathed a beat too slow and
exhaled the final words all at once.

Some men will see themselves
become
animal-mad when they're left alone.
But not Linus, not anymore.
Lonely hearts happen in love too, and
they do ache.
They ache so, a man will make his
anger sacrosanct,
and consider the time spent on
sadness - a waste.
But not Linus, not anymore, anyway.

There was something funny
in his eye that day.
I think his heart
must've been cracked open.

Because he had met a girl, Paige.

Part ii

She was alone, too, with the moon that
night.
on her way home from work,
She slowed her pace in the cool damp of
the parking lot
Till she stood in the direct path of the
moon's affection.
She didn't dare blink lest she miss even
a moment of good company.
Upon her butterfly stomach, she
crumpled the loose fabric of her uniform
in a ball with her hands, Paige always
had to stop and stare into the glow.
It must be so, she thought, I am in love
with it.
For the light of its face had been the
only company she kept
that seemed to keep her in return
ever since her lonely man left her.

She knew, lovers come round, good ones
too,
Lovers who are so beautiful, just looking
at them
causes this kind of pain that makes one
want to bark.
Lovers who deliver wisdom, wisdom
you've heard before,
and now, you hear again, for the very
first time
from the lips you've been kissing.

"Let me be your comfort," they'll say
between sweet sighs. Warm,
Like dreamweavers, they'll follow you in
sleeping and waking.
passing back and forth through your
chest,
penetrating with needle and thread.

O, your stained silk, now rendered with
holes
The lovers, they'll sew up the tears to
your soul
and they do all their dreaming in you,
beware,
they do all their dreaming in you,
So it's a terrible undoing,
when the thread comes loose.

Paige was already lonely creature, so
afflicted with a lovesickness,
but bore a natural talent for melancholy
that always eluded Linus.
She could hope against hope, talk to
ghosts in the day,
She could love the moon truly,
For its feminine ways.
But it couldn't keep her bed warm.
Not like Linus, she intended to do her
loneliness alone.
Who was better off?
And how should I know?

I've my own loneliness to contend afterall.

Part iii

Each day, as the sun disappears,
the world gets what I call: *plum dark*.
For a few precious moments in late
afternoon,
the horizon bleeds blush
before losing color altogether,
and regular people drag their heels 'long
the pavement like Paige
to linger in the streets.
They walk long like Linus
slow enough to drink up the hue.

Commuters with weary heads – are put to
sleep at the wheel
And drive, dreaming
Warm in purple, sweet shadows
blanketing them,
deepening all the time;
And still, somehow,
They make it home alive.

Sometimes I come-to in the driveway,
sit in my car, and write.
I feel clear headed there in the once
rosy nightfall.

I wrote feverishly last night, how I'd
realized something.
It came to me at a desperate time.
There in my room, I was stricken again
with pain,
and was lonely in the feeling
of no one but me there to bear it.
Not my sister, nor my father, nor my
friends, nor my lover.
With sore eyes, I turned towards the
mirror, confessing,
confessing: I think I miss *god*.
The secret one I knew when I was small

Not god the father, god my friend,
and that feeling of never being alone.

As a child, there was always a
companion there to bear with me -
my lonely nights.

*In the blackness that fell just after
plum dark,
I'd feel around for the slot and
feed the payphone with prayer,
press my ear to the receiver,
and call up god - just to talk.
I didn't mind that there was no
response, not at all.
I seemed to find the answers I needed
in the silence.*

I was calling night and day.

Now, I call up Linus, I call up Paige.
and I think loneliness
must be made for us.
Something so human,
No matter what you do,
in the quiet of the night,
it's just you and the moon.
There is a solitude no good loving
is good enough to undo.
I think that *god* is simply what we call
Who it is we've been speaking to,
all this time, alone, in the dark.

So close your eyes,
You're alone.
Feel the weary arms of your soul
outstretched in every direction
of your longing.
Be pulled by it, now where are you
going? Love and glory?
Peace, art? Good -
Now reach out even farther.
Feel without fear: the grasping
fistfuls of air,
Yearning is made of some fragrant stuff
That slips through your fingers, silly, it's
something you breathe,
so breathe. Breathe it in, now exhale.
Good.

Lay side by side, lovers, tonight:
unsatisfied, tonight
have your affair with the moon.
You've always wanted to.
and soon, you'll curse every latitude that
lies between you.

Stay
in the loneliness of that,
soon you'll feel
it's not so bad.