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## An Animal With No Memory

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*EXCERPTS FROM*  
***AN ANIMAL WITH NO MEMORY***  
LAUREN KORN

**MISSED CONNECTION: AN OPEN LETTER TO THOMAS SAYERS ELLIS**

Dear Thomas Sayers Ellis — :

You don't know me, nor do I know you, but I've read your poetry, and I've been inadvertently following you around Missoula, Montana.

Tonight, at the Good Food Store, five minutes before close, I was standing at the register next to yours, wondering if there is ever a good time to interrupt someone's everyday to tell them you love their work. Before an answer could come to me, however, a woman in a spaghetti-strap tank and in pants of an indeterminate color (probably purchased at a fair trade shop with bumper stickers lining its walls) sidled up behind you with a box of tea in her hand, placed it on the conveyor belt. The tea collided with the last of your groceries and you made a comment I couldn't (over)hear. The woman, though, said something like, "I wanted to buy chocolate," and now I think she was buying some sort of strange chocolate tea.

You bought her that strange chocolate tea, Thomas Sayers Ellis, and she told you that she would pay your good deed forward. You misunderstood and told her not to worry about it, as though you believed that this strange white woman would have the wherewithal to track you down, shove \$4 in your hand for her inevitable disappointment: not having real chocolate.

## **B-LIST**

Wrote a piece about Anne Carson called, “What I Talk About When I Talk About Anne Carson, Hypothetically,” ‘cause it was for a class in college, and I didn’t want my poetry professor to know that I’d actually (and not hypothetically) had an affair with an older man—a man he had taught four years prior. Didn’t want my professor to know I was writing “What I Talk About…” with a broken heart and stumbling fingers.

Prefaced the essay with four quotes unrelated. Got a B.

## **WHATEVER-IT-IS**

I’m reading Sarah Vap, standing in the open doorway of my kitchen—an act likely to exacerbate this whatever-it-is-I-have, but I’m feeling a bit too bored of the warmth of my house and the comfort of my bed.

## **QUICK ‘N’ EASY THAI PEANUT NOODLES**

Ingredients:

Any type of pasta on-hand;  
an unmeasured amount of soy sauce, Sriracha, and peanut butter;  
sesame seeds, if available.

Directions:

Cook pasta, drain. Throw in other ingredients. Stir. Enjoy.

Two days ago: my roommate says, “Peanut noodles are a sign of hard times at our house.”

## **2+ YEARS**

Look longingly at this room in this house at 921 Stephens Ave. (Missoula, Montana) while “She Used To Be My Girl,” by the O’Jays, runs through your head, and think of the really bizarre and lovely 2+ years you’ve spent here: sea foam green and cum on grey flannel sheets.

## **IN DEEP**

We were trudging around the summit of Lolo Peak on my birthday. The snow was thick and high—powdery—and the sun was at our sides all day.

My friend and I were talking intermittently, focused more on whether or not this trek through unexplored terrain would lead us to the mountain bottom, or whether we were wise in deciding to bring our headlamps in case we ended up shoeing in darkness, lost on Lolo Peak. In each silence between observations said aloud, my thoughts revolved around the man I was currently sleeping with. He was due back in Missoula later the next week, and after a none-so-subtle hint that he’d need a ride from the train station in Whitefish, I had offered to pick him up and bring him back to Missoula.

“Want to hear a secret?” I asked my friend, whose legs were deep in powdery snow.

## **COMMUNITY CHEST**

My sister and her husband gave me a greeting card for my birthday. Inside, from a now-in-complete Monopoly game, a GET OUT OF JAIL, FREE card: their promise to pay a triple-digit, five-year-old municipal court fee—a fine that held my name hostage on an online “Arrest Warrant List” in Helena, Montana. Happy Birthday to me.