

Morning Ritual

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Someone posted a photo of a red squirrel, pine cones in soft focus all around so it floats in the middle of the screen though it's perched on a branch. Someone else thought a white-tailed fawn was catching a bit of sun when it was probably doing just that. Three swans warp tissue-like above a green lake I've never seen, a place I'd like to take you, but I leave you to sleep, think of kissing you awake, don't do it because someone added a photo of a blackbird and titled it "John." That's all.

This is bothering me because I am not sure if the bird would look regal without being named. I am corrupt. Elsewhere snow has piled on dried twigs in cones like cotton and light cuts the sky in shards so I think of God on my Norton Anthology of Romantic Literature. The water is so pink in Tadoussac that the uploader had to say it wasn't edited. But we're getting too far away from what I've come to say. I dreamed of ten-foot waves in slo-mo, all foam and no water, airing out against a shore, muddy and brackish like holey sheets cut off a tired moon. Ghost waves.

Then a friend sent me a photo from work of the foamed beach in your hometown and I wonder what it means to take root, how plants endure shock being repotted. But I am not talking about displacement, I am talking about home. Can a guest ask a question that is a gift? I want to ask and ask and ask because I know we are at our best when we are leaving happy and giving, like the people who take photos and upload them, and the people who look at those photos not knowing why, possibly beauty, possibly hoping to step outside their worlds for a few minutes each morning like prayer, surrendering to life without our intervention - beside ourselves.

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I watch, let you sleep, sip my tea in the belated sun. I prepare to leave.

Someone posted a photo of a knobby green bud and said spring is coming. Someone snapped a lighthouse dead centre in the snow so it looks lonely and clean.

Someone snuck their dog in. Someone caught the red shock of a cardinal and announced the angels are close by. Someone named John uploaded a blurry photo

of a robin, toothy smile emoji in the caption. Someone caught a turtle sunbathing in the lily pads. Someone saw a sparrow just chilling in the shrubs.