

The Forget-Me-Not Letters: V

Pseudo-Tiresias



1 She Sets Herself on Fire

Being and unbeing, form and void—by loving the latter, by emptying oneself and becoming it, we may ascend into love of the former. Like the moon in perpetual eclipse of the sun: we know it by its silhouette, its absence, a hollow in the light. I want to be annihilated. I want to drown in the nothingness of the divine. I want to burn.¹

Stares, insults, slurs—they seem to fall now aside, dissolving into the absence behind the world. They attack a shadow. They strike at a phantom. I want them to see the beauty in the vast nothing over which and by which being flows, to see themselves in its darkling mirror. If I could set myself on fire just to put that light in their eyes.

Burning, burning, burning—we must burn our possessions. We must burn our comforts. We must burn all luxuries which blind us from the suffering of others. We must burn our self-importance; our grand narratives; our notions of entitlement, of deserving, of earning. We must burn our shame. There is no one I ought to be, no burden, no masks: I find my joy in the relations, in the absences, which constitute womanhood. There is no mark of gender upon my soul—nothing adheres to nothing—only the transient states of my body, my biology, my bliss. When these are ash, there will remain in the world an absence in the shape of a woman.²

1. Do not mistake this for a proclamation of suicide. I very much intend to live.

2. I know.

Burn your Self. Burn power. Burn wealth. Burn triumph. Burn ends. Burn beginnings. Burn the Other. Burn the State. Burn the Market. Burn borders. Burn nations. Burn life. Burn death. Burn all the social and psychological anchors which keep you from true, radical action. Burn embarrassment. Burn loneliness. Burn anxiety. Burn fear. There is truly nothing to be feared. Burn politics. Burn morality. Burn all that you can live without. Burn aversion. Burn suffering. Set yourself on fire and become a light for the world.

2 She Falls Into Love with the World

Love may save us—love of absence, love of loss, love of nothing. I love the end of the world inherent in all its beauty. The seed of each tree bears furred within it the extinction of all life. Every caress, every kiss, the end of love.

It is too late now for prettiness, for clean hands, for peaceful revolution. The longer we wait, the more our light wanes: the circumstances for a better world are slipping right now from our fingers. We have been watching for decades, centuries, and we continue to say: “I still have my comforts. The risk is too great. There is still time.” But there is no time. Luxury is a blindfold you choose to wear. You carry their greatest weapon, your ignorance, and you tell yourself that to act would be to overturn your world, and you are right, but they are overturning your world already. It is just a choice now whether you will let them decide or take it in your own hands. Your career, your friends, your family, your rights—your life as you know it is being stripped from you, shipped away, automated. You fear action because inaction seems safe but it is precisely that blindfold which lets them exploit you. Because you fear loss, they can take everything. You fear ostracism, and it keeps you in the hole they have put you. Their world is built on fear. Strip it away and see: they are only men, and every man can be killed.

Plant trees on their graves! Capitalism depends on infinite growth on a finite planet. There is only so much Earth, and they will churn the soil and tear up all that grows in their pursuit of profit. If they have their way, your children will not know the beauty of nature. They will pave over every forest and blacken the sky. They will construct data centers and coal plants and fill their lungs with smoke. If you care for your children at all, you cannot wait. You cannot say “at least I am providing them with a future.” That future will be bleak, grey, lifeless unless we act now. We must be brave for those who are too young to fight for themselves.

The system of exploitation they have created depends on our consumption. We excuse our excess as necessity, but we have so much we do not need: lavish meals, lavish clothes, lavish technology. This glamor is how they control us. Freedom, real freedom, will not be pretty. It will not wear diamond rings and watch 4K TVs. But by cutting them off, we starve their machine, like cutting gas from the engine. Reduce! Reuse! Build alternative sources for the things you truly need or at the very least source them locally, ethically. Consume as little as possible. Bleed them dry.

It will be uncomfortable. It will be plain. It will take sacrifice. It is not enough to wave signs at peaceful little protests or merely boycott a few select brands. It is not enough to write dissertations or journal articles analyzing the minutia of late-stage capitalism. We have convinced ourselves that this is all we can afford, that our few good actions justify our indulgences. But we are out of time: we must rise up now.

In America, they have fed us this narrative that if we just wait, if we just agree to their rules, if we just kiss their asses a little harder we too might be rich one day. That dream is a lie they use to keep their boots on our necks. Oh, they let a few rise up,

now and then, just to give the lie a tinge of truth, but this is only another way to control us. Capitalism depends on us buying into that lie. It gives us false hope and keeps us chained to it: withholding food, shelter, healthcare unless we comply. We can break it, together. This world is rich: we can ensure that everyone has equal access to all they need to thrive, and we can do it without government. Government always serves the rich, anywhere it exists. So long as there are rich people and poor people, powerful and weak, none of us are free. We will always be watching our backs, always fearing that all we have could be taken away. If no one was forced to live in the streets, if everyone was given equal healthcare, if no one starved—there would be nothing to fear. You would not have to live with all this anxiety. No bills, no insurance, no healthcare premiums. It is precisely this artificial poverty and the fear of it which they construct in order to keep us in our place. Break your chains, break the chains of your neighbor, uplift one another and storm their board rooms, their mansions, their seats of power. Throw out the cops who belittle and harass you, who abuse you, who kill you without consequence. Break open the gates of prisons, let free the people put there for made-up crimes, people who dared to do what they had to to live. So long as they can put you at gunpoint, put you in chains, put you in debt—you are not free. You cannot become free alone. We can only free each other. See that same struggle in another's eye. See that fire in them. Recognize that underneath our bodies, underneath the world, we all share one soul.