



Tearless

The background of the entire page is a dense, close-up photograph of purple flowers with green, lobed leaves. The image is semi-transparent, allowing the text to be clearly visible over it. The flowers are scattered throughout the frame, with some in full bloom and others as buds.

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Tearless

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loss noun

1

the act or an instance of not having or being able to find

He was upset over the loss of his wedding ring.

Synonyms for loss : *mislaying, misplacement*

Words Related to loss: *deprivation, dispossession, privation, forfeit, forfeiture, penalty, sacrifice, bereavement, absence, lack, need, want*

2

a person or thing harmed, lost, or destroyed

The journey across the ocean was made without any losses.

Synonyms for loss: *casualty, fatality, prey, victim*

Words Related to loss: *loser, underdog, martyr, sacrifice, collateral damage*

3

failure to win a contest

We're discouraged by our loss on Friday, but we're training hard for next week's game nevertheless.

Synonyms for loss: *beating, defeat, drubbing, licking, lump, overthrow, plastering, rout, shellacking, trimming, trouncing, whipping*

Words Related to loss: *collapse, debacle (also débâcle), failure, fiasco, fizzle, flop, nonsuccess, setback, upset, lurch, shutout, washout, whitewash*

4

the amount by which something is lessened

He was determined to stay on the diet until he showed a loss of 10 pounds.

Synonyms for loss: *abatement, decline, decrease, decrement, dent, depletion, depression, diminish-*

ment, diminution, drop, drop-off, fall, falloff, reduction, shrinkage, step-down

Words Related to loss: *deduction, subtraction, downturn, slip, slump, curtailment, cut, cutback, retrenchment, shortening*

5

the state of being robbed of something normally enjoyed

Her loss of sleep meant that she would have trouble concentrating at work the next day.

Synonyms for loss: *deprivation, privation*

Words Related to loss: *absence, dearth, lack, need, want, dispossession, denial, forfeit, forfeiture, penalty, sacrifice, bereavement, deficiency, inadequacy, insufficiency, paucity, poverty, scarcity, shortage*

6

the state or fact of being rendered nonexistent, physically unsound, or useless

The loss of the oil tanker was more significant than the loss of its cargo.

Synonyms for loss: *annihilation, decimation, demolishment, demolition, desolation, destruction, devastation, extermination, extinction, havoc, mincemeat, obliteration, ruin, ruination, wastage, wreckage*

Words Related to loss: *depredation, despoilment, despoliation, breakup, collapse, disintegration, dissolution, assassination, execution, killing, massacre, slaughter, dismantlement, effacement, eradication.*

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Part I

The Fall

When I started working on my thesis in late October 2020 we were already six months into the pandemic. Surrounded by my failed plans and lost wishes, nothing was as it was supposed to be. Looking back it felt like it was longer ago, and it was just last semester when life was interrupted by terrible news. I remember the fear, and this striking feeling that I have never experienced before; for a moment it felt like the world was worried about the same thing: the virus. I imagined that was how people felt during important historical events like wars. Every aspect of our daily life was affected. Many restrictions were enforced causing schools and public places closing, and we all hid at home, experiencing the big unknowing of the future, while trying to maintain many parts of our lives online. My life was not necessary all about the crisis in the last couple of months but the mark of its beginning has become a point of navigation for me. There was a strong sense of transition; like a border being drawn between before and after. I went through a lot of changes, I'm still trying to comprehend some of them and some of them started unavoidably and are yet to be observed.

Why do I want to write about loss? There are so many kinds of loss, not only the bad kind.

But also, there was so much loss that happened! Since March, loss has been almost constant—the bullshit just kept coming. I feel like I aged disproportionately. How to write about loss? How to be honest but not too sad writing about personal losing? How to start dialogue about what we lost collectively, how to grief in the time of uncertainty? The notion of the world being a troubled place, but comfortable for the group equipped with modern technology and information has fallen. Illusion of a safe, comfortable and connected society was shattered; perceived and real dangers consumed us.

With the economic crisis that followed, and the travel restrictions, many of my friends left the country. In Amsterdam and worldwide ravers stopped dancing. This loss of the dance floor was painful. The moment when I realised that safe, equal, queer spaces and institutions were so fragile, was even more painful. The club I was working for was broke and cancelled in an online execution amid accusations of racial injustice and nepotism. Those who were already disadvantaged were even more vulnerable. In my home country of Poland, democracy and human rights are in danger. People took to the streets, despite the pandemic, to protest against the anti-abortion law in the biggest protests the country has seen since the 80s. Observing it as I was in the Netherlands was heart-wrecking. As the dramatic situation developed it was all about whose work was more essential, which

freedoms were to be prioritised and who's life mattered. At times it was overwhelming to follow the information. Everyday choices were made to navigate the change. And it is the time of change indeed: the state of the world is turning, or rather we are forced to acknowledge the reality of 2020 with all the consequences, and issues now disclosed.

I was thinking, how can I, being very much still entangled in it, write about what it means to “lose” and where the losing can lead to? I can try to reconstruct my own experience, and share the voice of others, but I'm neither a sociologist nor an astrologist. I'm an artist, I make art. I'm also an emotional, human being with a limited human perception. Trying to be an artist has shaped how I react to things; it is my attitude towards the problems that pass my mind and pass my hands. I don't feel like I'm very different or special in any way, the opposite: I hope that many things I experience are universal. I try to equip myself with critical attention and to feel everything that I can. In a troubled world the artist is here to make a mark, to voice what they witnessed and transform it. I'm here to engage.

I believe that writing about one's grief and hopelessness has to suck, has to feel fearful and difficult and that is when you know it's true, when you're poking wounded heart and looking for truth where it hurts the most.

Somewhere in August, amidst the emotional disasters, I got a feeling that everything that has personally happened to me was somehow connected to the global current intent to move me. I had come to realisations of what is really important for me, what needs my engagement and my protection. Who I was and where I was going? Was I lost? Or finding myself? I wanted to trace the notion of losing in the conversations with people in my life. Approaching my thesis I felt like I was standing in the middle of the road, empty-handed, with little mental clarity.

The Search for The Words

I discovered the music of Patti Smith when I was a teenager. I rediscovered the poet and writer in the autumn of 2020. *M Train* is a 2015 memoir-dreamscape by Smith in which she largely writes about transiency, loss and grief. She is a storyteller who stays bright even when mourning the loss of places and people: her husband and her brother, her great writer heroes Sylvia Plath, Roberto Bolano, Jean Genet or friends like William Burroughs, Lou Reed; her cafes and her house.

Things we desperately grasp and hold on to are so mundane and yet we never fail to develop the attachment or sentiment, hoping they would stay forever, clinging to every evidence of constancy. In an uniquely careful way Patti Smith observes the very human longing for permanency in the state of a world driven by perpetual change and inevitable loss.

M Train is her second memoir, following *Just Kids* from 2010 which recounts Smith's early life, the beginning of her career and particularly her relationship with artist Robert Mapplethorpe. *M Train* is a four decade journey beginning in 1975 when she released *Horses*, one of the best and most influential album in the punk rock music genre and beyond it. *M Train* is an unusual book which opens the door to many, many other. Smith writes about many losses she experienced including the death of Mapplethorpe in 1989 of AIDS, losing her hus-

band, guitarist Fred "Sonic" Smith in 1994 and her brother Todd a month later up until losing her newly purchased home to hurricane Sandy.

The book also covers the Detroit period of time during which Smith was not performing; instead, she was living in a house with her husband and two children, spending her early mornings writing stories before her family awoke. The title, *M Train*, refers to this imaginative trip of thoughts, symbolising "mind train" that "goes to any station it wants."

I got on that train somewhere in late October 2020 to follow her on various journeys through time and dreams and literature. I wanted to read this memoir because of the story of Patti's Smith lost coat. Later I understood it wasn't really about the coat.

"Every time I put it on I felt like myself. The moths liked it as well and it was riddled with small holes along the hem, but I didn't mind. The pockets had come unstitched at the seam and I lost everything I absentmindedly slipped into their holy caves. Every morning I got up, put on my coat and watch cap, grabbed my pen and notebook, and headed across the Sixth Avenue to my cafe. I loved my coat and the cafe and my morning routine. It was the clearest and simplest expression of my solitary identity. But in this current run of harsh weather, I favoured another coat to keep me warm and protect me from the wind. My black coat, more suitable for spring and fall, fell from my consciousness, and in this relatively short span it disappeared.

My black coat gone, vanished like the precious league ring that disappeared from the finger of the faulty believer in Hermann Hesse's The journey to the East. I continue to search everywhere in vain, hoping it will appear like dust motes illuminated by sudden light. Then, ashamedly, within my childish mourning, I think of Bruno Schultz, trapped in the Jewish ghetto in Poland, furtively handing over the one precious thing he had left to give to mankind: the manuscript of The Messiah. The last work of Bruno Schultz drawn into the swill of World War II, beyond all grasp. Lost things. They claw through the membranes, attempting to summon our attention through an indecipherable mayday. Words tumble in helpless disorder. The dead speak. We have forgotten how to listen. Have you seen my coat? It is black and absent of detail, with frayed sleeves and a tattered hem. Have you seen my coat? It is the dead speak."

On the 13th of February 2021 I wrote in my journal:

Now I understand why I was putting off the thesis. I chose this emotional subject because there was nothing else in me. Until recently I could not read what I wrote before, it was too painful. I guess the whole reason for completing this thesis (other than graduating) is to make me cry again. So I know I can still cry.

Thank you for your memoir Patti, I think out loud. It has found me when I needed it.

If the words could save lives they would. But it's always too late or too early or not in the

right language. Not the right words are being said at the wrong time, all the time. Where they should sound out loud they are whispered but unable to reach the ones that need them. Because we need words like we need people. Words can't save you, but if one will live long enough words will find them one way or another so they will hear what they need to hear if they learn how to listen. I had hoped for one day that I would hear what someone failed to tell me, maybe coming from the mouth of another person, or a book.

I have learned about the importance of journaling. A lot of times I find myself unable to find the words or strength to write. But I believe in the importance of sharing stories. The act of sharing stories is an act of care and love even when it involves pain.

I came across one of the works of Sophie Calle - French writer and conceptual artist. A heartbreak was an inspiration for her project and book titled Exquisite Pain.⁵ She and her lover had a trip planned. In three months she would travel to Japan, Beijing and Hong Kong and meet her lover at the New Delhi Airport. She was looking forward to seeing him, but the meeting never happened. She was desperately trying to get in contact with him for hours not knowing what had stopped him. Finally, on the phone he told her quietly that he wasn't going to get on the plane to Delhi. He had met another woman. Calle spent the next month talking to everyone she could, telling them this story over

and over until it became less painful. She asked strangers and friends to describe her the most painful moments of their life to her. Everyday before the heartbreak she took pictures that later were collected in a book, and captioned with the amount of days left to the unhappiness. The second part of the book consists of all the days after, and stories of loss of the people whom she had shared her story with, nearly hundred times. After publishing of the book and the exhibition of photographs Sophie Calle was done with the story. What was the most painful loss of her life at the time, had become less painful through repeated storytelling. What was remaining was a deeply personal and valuable archive.

I would speak about the events of the past year when I couldn't bring myself to write about it. Here I want to thank my family of housemates and my teachers, and my friends old and new and strangers that listened to me. I'm grateful for all the painful, uneasy, beautiful energy that we are able to share.

I appreciate the time you are taking to read my stories in this form. This is a piece of creative nonfiction, sort of memoir of the past year, an attempt at understanding the value of loss.

Dear Reader, I want to tell you a story. It might make you cry.

Part II

The Dream That Never Left

“How many more times will you remember a certain afternoon of your childhood, some afternoon that’s so deeply a part of your being that you can’t even conceive of your life without it? Perhaps four or five times more. Perhaps not even that. How many more times will you watch the full moon rise? Perhaps twenty. And yet it all seems limitless.”

Paul Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky*

In October 2019, I was spending the night in my grandma’s house, in the village. I slept for quite long and had a lot of dreams which I couldn’t fully remember, just the sense of eventfulness. I was sleeping in the living room of the three-story house in the middle of the village. I could hear the trucks passing by on their way to the Slovakian border. The lights of the cars would enter through the window on the right, above my bed and slide on the opposite corner before leaving through the other window. As a child I would watch this light show from an old sofa bed I was sleeping on with fascination and some sort of urgency to depart: to get transported with one of the light shapes and fly.

That particular day I woke up cold and with a bittersweet taste in my mouth. What I remember from the dream is that I had a little dog, smaller than a cat, a bit chubby. The dog

was really cute, I liked to carry it around and felt protective over it; I had to care for it. I wasn’t fully sure about its identity. It had something to do with my sister, Julia. At some point the dog changed into her and then back to the dog, but it wasn’t her either.

Later, I was on a side of a canal, running through the grassy terrain next to it and overlooking the place from above. It was a monumental harbour side, there were whole rows of houses and lots of boats with people on them.. I was sitting on the grass next to the water. Around me there were some people, too. Suddenly I saw that all the boats and houses were turning around and upside down and sinking. A lot of people swam out of the water climbing canal walls. Close to me there were two young men in the water and one of them couldn’t get out by himself. I reached and pulled him out of the water while holding to the edge of the canal wall. He was quite thin and naked. I noticed I was naked too. He lay down on the grass next to the other man, who had saved himself, his companion. At this point I was having a conversation with my dog, who was intelligent and able to speak. On the grass there were snake or lizard-like creatures that looked like sticks, small tree branches, grey and brown. I wasn’t sure what they were. I wondered if they were venomous. Then, I looked up and noticed that the place around me had suddenly changed. What used to be a human settlement, has turned to a dried out, dead forest, mostly grey, full of bush-

es with no leaves. I couldn't see any water in the lower part of the terrain, I could guess it was previously when the canal was. It felt like we had been here for a really long time and only noticed it now. The man who was lying on the grass next to the boy I had saved has turned into a pile of sticks. The boy was still there and he was dead. They are both dead, let's go, I said to my dog and we left. We got to some kind of house, I don't remember that part of the dream

well, but it was really hot and dry inside and I felt that my dog's body was fragile and soft and sort of loose, like sand. I was holding it in my hands in front of me and it fell apart turning into rose petals. Loads of them. I felt something in my mouth: it was full of rose petals. I started to take them out and I woke up.



Because the Night Belongs to Dancers

A year into crisis - a year of isolation - I still miss my job in the club so badly. I clearly remember the last weekend before March 16th 2020: I was working a twelve hour shift managing the toilets, which was the best place to have conversations. The club was full but you could feel the tension lurking in the conversations. It turned out to be the last club night.

I loved the crowd, people coming to me and chatting, that was a part of my job. In 2019 I started working for De school club in Amsterdam and for the first time I had the feeling of arriving, despite the fact that I had lived in the Netherlands for several years. The intensity of the night work, music and people would sometimes bring me to a very blissful state. I would bike home very slow through the park, passing by people on their way to work and I would laugh quietly to myself, deprived of sleep and happy. The strong feeling of celebration of life at that time was everything to me. It was able to erase all the tiredness. I've never felt more cool in my life than when I worked in the club, although it was never about this. After that first high has passed, I realised the importance of creating spaces for queer nightlife to be safe and free. Being present in the darkness, dancing, clubbing - all of that is political. I religiously believe in the ability of music to transport people to new states of perception; change them emo-

tionally. I guess I am serious about such non-serious things as partying.

I've met many people: friends, lovers and strangers who encouraged me to pursue my dreams of being an artist. They were the first people who I felt saw me and recognised me. That was a great environment to be in. Now that all the clubs are closed because of the global health crisis, those nights seem so far away and some part of that is gone forever. I have faith that we will dance again when the time is right and it's going to be beautiful.

During some quiet nights, when there was more time to pass my mind would wander. Somewhere around January or February 2020 I wrote a poem. I scribbled it on a piece of napkin in the food bar where I was serving grilled cheese to the crowd of half-naked intoxicated techno heads.



Untitled

My foggy brain
It's like watching a football game
From across a river.
Immersed in the surroundings
I stop noticing how brutal some colours are.
I'm sunbathing in the darkness
On top of an old hotel
that used to be a hospital
and it's now a place to be
For sometime
For some people
I think we're losing the game.
As they come and go,
I'm losing the
track of
the sentence
of the word? Of the mouth?
of the dark
Animal-like thoughts
Sliding off the sides of an oily forehead.

I wish I was less light sensitive.

Never Just Hair

In March 2020 I entered the state of creative paralysis. The only thing I wanted to do was to watch tv shows, smoke weed and sleep. Lockdown hit me hard, I was so numb I spent the first two weeks staring at the wall in my room. I had no understanding of what the hell had happened. Sometimes I would go to stay with M on the boat and those were the best times. In May I was getting really stressed, sitting anxiously at home burdened with unknowing of the future. I bleached my naturally dark brown hair because of lack of control. Every week I would mop around the house sadly for a few hours and then change the shape of my hair or dye it a new colour. I began to document the changes of this self-editing project which inspired me to work with video images and sound. Doing so resulted in the multimedia approach of my practise now.

It occurred to me that I should apply the process of bleaching on to the garments I had made during the previous semester, pre-pandemic. I wanted to do it to be able to start over, not because I didn't appreciate the past, quite the opposite. I had to think about Helmut Lang destroying his old collections to quit fashion and become a fine artist.

Bleaching was a metaphor. It meant the stripping bare, the letting go of dark things that burdened me. Revolutionary moving forward. Getting real to get free. Clearing the path to crawl out of my self-consciousness trap. The

boiling, sizzling pot of Look-at-Yourself soup with hard to swallow pieces coming up to the surface. I wanted to be confronted with the ugly, the hurt and the humiliated self; to see all the wounds and all the mistakes, missed opportunities and dreams that didn't come true. To arrive in a space of love and say to myself: You have lost so much but you are free from it now, to shed another layer.

It is actually not easy to destroy your own work. The garments that I made, they were so present, a piece of work. I was in love with the process of developing the shape and manipulating the print over the textile. The garments weren't perfect, but as good as I could make them at the time. I remember I ruined a very nice jacket when I was printing on textiles in the graphic workshop. The micro collection consisted of leather chaps, green hand-dyed shirt, black side-less beach dress, and a blue-green boxy vest. I was sweating cold thinking how far can I go. Why should I hold on to it, if my creativity is a flowing energy, why should I be worried? I should aspire to do better and better like Yayoi Kusama who burned two thousand paintings before moving to America. She swore to herself that she would make much more and better, art. I decided to use sulphuric acid to bleach away the most beautiful shirt I made and completed the second year in the Academy.

Bags

“People always leave traces. No person is without a shadow.”

Henning Mankell, *The Troubled Man*

Between 2014 and 2018 I used to live in a small apartment in Indische Buurt in East Amsterdam with my ex-partner. The place was full of bags and boxes filled with what I brought from Poland. My clothes and books and shoes didn't have a designated space in his bachelor apartment. So at times I would find myself fantasising about a burglar breaking in and taking all my possessions. So I'm free from caring about these objects and the maintenance of them. To me there were precious: second-hand H&M clothes, cheap uncomfortable shoes, two mediocre coats instead of one proper. Not impressive I know, but our belongings tell stories. I arrived in the Netherlands with one bought for the occasion suitcase. Later on when I accumulated more objects and somehow landed in that small apartment with all my history I felt trapped: those were the traces of the comer-from.

Vilém Flusser in *The Freedom of The Migrant* has worded it better: ***“Changing the question ‘free from what?’ into ‘free for what?’; this change that occurs when freedom has been achieved has accompanied me on my migra-***

tions like a basso continuo. This is what we are like, those of us who are nomads, who come out of the collapse of a settled way of life.” This collection of his writings helped me pin down the reflections about identity and homeland.

In a way that urge for change and rejecting the familiar was part of my emigration. People who emigrate not only want to start over but unavoidably have to rethink everything they do, who they are and to start at square one with everything in the new country. Once in that process, things went fast for me and together with the construction of new a lot of things had to go to trash, both metaphorically and literally. When leaving I was ready to part with so much, but there was even more I was about to lose; in that sense it was more like a moving from one self to another. *Terugkomen is niet hetzelfde als blijven* (Coming back is not the same as staying), I read under the bridge close to Central Station. Probably I need to take a close look at the both of me - the one who stayed and the one who left - to better understand myself. It is really more like trashing something and looking back at it and seeing yourself in it, although you are free from it now; you are not split, but simultaneously existing in different mind dimensions. To emigrate, or to transition or to burn down, to trash, to bleach is not a loss (to me).

Two Grandmothers

My dad has just called. Babcia Helena was in hospital. I thought about the time when I spoke to her in the summer and the advice she gave me. She never accepted that I moved abroad and my sister followed me. My paternal grandma was born during the second World War in a small Polish village on the east borderlands. She grew up in a house without electricity and started working in a glass factory when she was 16. She had always been smart with an analytical mind and a great eye for detail. She took evening courses of accounting while working and taking care of two little kids. Later in her life she divorced while it was still pretty uncommon for women of her background. She stayed alone the rest of her life in a tiny, clean apartment in my hometown of Krasnik. She had never been abroad in her life. Once I made two phone calls to both of my grandmas, on a Sunday. Helena said she wishes I'd come back and be with my family in Poland. Babcia Weronika, has expressed how happy she was that I was abroad. "This country has gone to shit" she said. Those are two mixed messages, and my grandmothers had indeed very different personalities. I often wonder what traits I took on myself, what positive qualities and mental ailments were passed onto me. I've had a close relationship with both grandmothers. I grew up with three siblings and I always liked to escape the busy apartment

of my parents for a sleepover two streets away at Babcia Helena's. And I used to spend the whole summer holidays in the south-east mountain lands of Poland with my Babcia Weronia.

When my dad called to say that grandma was lying unconscious in the hospital after a stroke I thought about that time when I didn't call her back, because I was too depressed I didn't want to talk with my family. It would have been our last conversation. Instead, as the last memory I have a portrait of her and me together, sitting in her faded-pink apartment. She has this wit and sparkle in her eyes. She was happy I was visiting. We had spent roughly two hours drinking coffee and eating cake. This was my only visit in the span of a year. She passed away in January 2021 after eighty years of life.

I haven't gotten used to her being gone. It still seems unreal, like it hasn't really happened, or was all a dream. The grief hasn't set in yet. I start talking about her and I forget she passed away. Maybe if I could have seen her burial I would be able to understand it. Instead, I think from time to time about what I wanted to ask her. Why didn't I record her voice? She had this incredible memory, she would tell me detailed stories of her childhood and life. I can't remember everything now. Why can't I remember? Why are the dearest memories so fragile? Clearly I haven't gotten my grandma's amazing memory and now I'm losing the history of my

family forever. I never asked her if there was anyone else after my dad's father... She was a very discreet and elegant woman, she would always fit her clothes and fix them according to her fluctuating weight. I never asked her about regrets in her life...

I've had two grandmas: the one with the great memory is gone, the stories gone with her. The one left alive is starting to show the signs of dementia. I am far away and not coming back, not having kids, not having anyone to tell family stories to except my friends. I can live a life that my grandmothers haven't even dreamed of

The Box of Tissues

In autumn, just before the second lockdown I went to see the work of Evelyn Taocheng Wang. It was a part of the exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum called In the Presence of Absence.⁶ At that time I was in some sort of emotional limbo, I had lost the enthusiasm about most parts of life. I hoped that the medication my doctor prescribed me for depression was going to help. I was working for a friend, Chinese artist named Ting Gong, helping her with some exhibitions. She knew Evelyn and told me to visit the museum. I went alone.

The artist had offered pieces of her own wardrobe in exchange for personal letters about elegance. Some of them had even the envelopes and I could clearly read the post addresses. I read most of the letters, some really hard to decipher. One of them really resonated with me, and I tried looking up the author on Facebook and Instagram but I couldn't find them. Their name is Mila, and they live in Amsterdam.

“When an elegant woman cries she would show emotion preferably in a few single tears. They would run down her cheek but there would be no whaling, no muscles moving, and not too many external signs of pain. No sounds or expressions too unpleasant, unsettling or disruptive. It’s admirable, the way she calms herself down, swallows her emotions, digests them and internalises pain.”

I guess restraint is a form of willpower and the elegant woman is powerful in the way she directs the gaze of others. She knows that others are always looking and to an extent she is in charge, in control over her perceived image while it controls her.

I like that fashion is a powerful tool, especially for women, the way we dress is a way to direct one’s perception of us. It is a way to take back the power.

You know you are looked at, read like a book. Through the clothing you wear you can co-write the storyline.

One that is elegant doesn’t snore, doesn’t sweat, she is titillating but not sexual. She is not bodily. Like a bouquet of freshly cut flowers, she is removed from the living source for decorative use.”

How coincidental, I thought, that I found myself here. I thought about the therapist I had met the same week. When I arrived at the meeting room of the mental health facility, the first thing I saw was a table in the middle of the room. On top of it there was a plastic partition, like a screen separating two sides. On my side there was a box of pull-out tissues. This image was so striking. Although depressed I wasn't really able to cry. Last time I remember crying was in the end of July, when my love was suddenly over and then again when they told us that the club would never reopen again.

Crying was never an easily accessible state for me. I was always feeling ashamed of it I guess. My sister Julia, whom I love very much, always has her tears ready to fall. I took a series of pictures of her to document crying; she probably hates me a little for that project. The therapist asked me if I cry often. I don't cry. I just don't, I said. But what do you do when you feel like crying? he asked. I couldn't find the answer to this. I cry when I'm either hopeless and helpless or deeply moved by something. Last July's tears had burnt my cheeks traumatically.

21st July 2020, Amsterdam
Untitled

My bed is made of tears.
It's a water bed
soft and wet
made of salty salty water
I live underwater
In the lagoon of pillows
Big eyed creature watch me
As I swim through
{seaweed forrest}
Only at night
I seem to lose
the direction
I dive deep
to dry my cheeks
in the morning [sun]

The sun hides between the seaweed and
strange flowers
Like a treasure



20th July 2020, Monday noon, Amsterdam

Dear M,

I'm sitting and looking at the clouds. I'm not crying at the moment. You just left. I hope we can both get some rest. It feels easier to let you go when you have acknowledged my pain. I don't think I've ever shared so many tears with another person. {at least as an adult}

I know love is incomparable so I know it is possible that you love me and also love someone else. But other things are comparable: time, intimacy, [?] attention, trust. You've hurt everyone involved.

I was really happy and being with you was what I wanted in my life for a long time. I'm really sad that we didn't do all the things I wanted us to. Is it possible that we loved each other and wanted to be together but in fact we wanted different things?

Goldfish, a Love Story

“Love is a haunting melody that I have never mastered, and I fear I never will.”

William S. Burroughs


Somewhere in the midst of summer Mira came back home with a plastic tank and a goldfish. The fish was abandoned and nearly starved to death when the owners left the city abruptly in fear of the pandemic. We were about to become a foster family for the fish. This fish is one of the few things I can clearly remember from that period. The goldfish was named Amanda. We placed the tank in our bathroom/laundry room and Amanda became a witness to the daily toothbrushing rituals of my 15 housemates and me. The fish has made its appearance in few of the short films we've made with Nezhla, my Iranian roommate. We've placed various things in and around her tank: a piece of coconut shell she could hide in, small plastic sharks, a figurine of a cowboy (maybe the one from Pati Smith's dreams?). I had this picture torn out of German Vogue magazine depicting a couple about to kiss and I taped it to the wall behind the tank.

In that period of time, the weird and abruptly unsettling summer of 2020 I spent an awful load of time just looking at the fish tank.

I was feeling trapped. In the house, in the city and in the country. “Can a fishy get corona?” Asked a child of my friend. We explained that Amanda was a strong goldfish in the prime time of her life and that she was so isolated in her tank that she was not to be worried about. But Amanda was sad. She was so sad, she'd just sit in the corner of the tank facing the picture I had installed. Philip said she was lonely and one day he brought a plastic bag with another goldfish in it. In my head I named the second fish Sammantha, as a tribute to my dear friend Sammy from Sydney.

That time was the best. The two of them together playing around, eating and pooping and chasing the top of my finger dipped in the water. I filmed them a few times doing this and I filmed my then blonde self through the tank. Those videos are somehow further away from me now, it was before M had pulled the plug on me, and I thought it was cute, the two fishes together. But also tragic - their captivity and isolation.

One morning weeks later we discovered the tiny yellow-orange shape floating in the water and another one, swimming around it in distress. Love was dead. Sammantha was desperately trying to get our attention. The body of her companion was taken out of the water and the remaining fish was alone. As the time went and we were all growing more used to the pandemic ruining everything, she was gradually becoming slower and slower. She wouldn't react

A photograph of a goldfish in a tank. The fish is orange and white, swimming in clear water. There are green artificial plants in the background. The image is framed by a thick red border.

to people walking in the bathroom. We discovered she was sick; she had developed dropsy, a stomach infection caused largely by stress. It would make her float upside down, and she'd scare us several times because it looked like she was dead. We tried treating her and cleaning the water and so on.

The second fish funeral of the year was held after dark, on the side of a small canal nearby our house. We walked together with the body in a jar, smoking cigarettes. Alberto went down to the side of the canal, into the weeds next to the tiny pedestrian bridge. It was the Bessie Smith Bridge, and we went almost under it to release her into the water. I could see a spot of light shining on her for the last time.

Letters of Exquisite Pain

“There is no intensity of love or feeling that does not involve the risk of crippling hurt. It is a duty to take this risk, to love and feel without defense or reserve.”

William S. Burroughs

25th July 2020

God bless friends.

I have many conversations these days. About family, culture, language, oppression, trauma, anxiety, life experiences and future. Some of them shorter, some of them going on for a long time already. They make me agitated, shaking, they make me pissed. They make me laugh. They make me so tired.

Today is the first day when it feels lighter. Also so much heavier at the same time, existential. I cry my pain. I also cry for things so much bigger than my own pain, too. In a way I'm like a child crying because it lost it's favourite toy out of sight.

5th August 2020, Wednesday night

Dear M,

This is gonna be a short one because I'm tired. It seems like there's simply too much going on for me to just break down and lose it. It's two weeks and three days now that we are not together anymore. Also I've lost my job, as you probably know, the club is closing. There was an explosion in Lebanon, people died. People get coronavirus and people struggle to get by, everyone I know just wants to party, everyone is also anxious.

“I was born free and I will live free. I decide who I want to be” said smart, old black man on the Black Queer & Trans Resistance demonstration and crowd on Museumplein repeated after him.⁷ I cried silently and I felt so much pain, my own and that of others. The pain

that is impossible to understand, {only to feel} and people carry it for generations. And then someone else said "We are not our pain, we are so much more, we live." I felt my own pain was irrelevant in all of this. That was a good feeling. And a bad feeling because I felt our communities were struggling so much and needed help. First week after this there were a lot of conversations, some drunk, some dramatic, some casual. I've been told not to compensate for my loneliness. And to look at myself with love when I look in the mirror. That people need to deserve my love, the way I love them. Also I've been told I'm strong. I don't know if it's strength or madness of some sort that keeps me going. I want to feel and understand all the pain that I can, and when I can't anymore I take the pills to sleep. So far I haven't dreamed about you, I think my consciousness has placed a block in my head. In a way I was expecting that you'd leave me because of your visa, that something would happen and you'd have to go. That was always in the back of my mind, that fear of losing you. But at the same time I didn't want to listen to this voice. I had complete faith in our relationship, our love and friendship. You've left a hole in my life. Or rather, I thought, you were never there to begin with. I feel now lonelier than I ever was, in some ways unable to share intimacy and trust with other

people. This is a burden. But I decided I will not let this change me, or actually I will try to change with this experience that is already taking a toll of my emotional state, my mind, my health. You have hurt me so bad that for a short moment it felt like it was all over and I just wanted it to stop. It really feels like that when things happen to you, bad things that you cannot help, can't control, when it's too late. You've left me shocked and empty-handed. Also, you have made me really happy, inspired and more sensitive than I was. But I couldn't build anything with you if it wouldn't be based on honesty, trust, empathy and courage. Those you lacked so bad.

I believe we have a duty in life to live through our traumas, and grow, because we are not alone here, and we're not supposed to walk through life hurting people on our way. Because it is all connected, my life, your life, my story and your story. I will heal one day. I'm working on it. It is almost too difficult to say now, but I hope you are gonna be happy. I hope you will meet someone who would love you as much as I did and you're gonna be ready to love them back.

PS. I found that tab of acid we were gonna do together. I'm glad we didn't so I can do it with someone else for the first time. I almost shaved my head, because I felt lonely and ugly (You've left me), but some higher power

or rest of sanity stopped me and now I have really short hair. Everyone likes it.

Warmly,

G

9th August 2020, Sunday night

Dear M,

I'm so busy I barely think about you. I took five dish-washing shifts and I'm working my ass off.

Anyway, I don't know why I write this in the form of the letters in my journal, I don't know if you'll ever read it. I guess I'm trying to process it this way. I've sent you a message to ask about your thesis. I bet you're so busy, maybe you have forgotten about me, now that you have her. I'm turning my phone to airplane mode because I'm too scared you'll text me back at night.

I feel like I've been robbed of my dreams of the future with you.

I had this dream, or rather a nightmare, last night about the pandemic, the riots, being hunted, hiding and running. Rainbow flags were burning and there

was a sort of disease or virus of a complete mental surrender {submission}, zombie-like and people could psychologically infect other people. The only people who were safe and wouldn't turn you into a slave were the people who really loved you and that's how you'd know.

There was a bird that was half pigeon and half crow, vertically split in two colours. I can't remember more, I'm really tired.

Part III

The Coat is Gone

“There’s a bit of magic in everything, and some loss to even things out.”

Lou Reed

There’s a certain profound sense of loss, that I could feel here and there while reading *M train* but I think maybe I’m too young to fully understand this book. How must it feel to be writing about the late companions, loved ones, people and places that are gone, passing and lost? In mourning of the loss there is a healing power, the celebration of life and death. I want to think that when you lose something or someone, you also receive something else if you are able to see it through tears.

“Some things are called back from the Valley. I believed Reddy called out to Fred. I believe Fred heard. I believe in their mutual jubilation. Some things are not lost but sacrificed. I saw my black coat in the Valley of the Lost on a random mound being picked over by desperate urchins, someone good will get it, I told myself, The Billy Pilgrim of the lot.

Do our possessions mourn us? Do electric sheep dream of Roy Batty? I Will my coat, riddled with holes, remember the rich hours of our companionship? Asleep on buses from Vienna to Prague, nights at the opera, walks by the sea, the grave of

Swinburne in the Isle of Wight, the arcades of Paris, the caverns of Luray, the cafes of Buenos Aires. Human experience bound in its threads. How many poems bleeding from its ragged sleeves? I averted my eyes just for a moment, drawn by another coat that was warmer and softer, but that I did not love. Why is it that we lose the things we love, and things cavalier cling to us and will be the measure of our worth when we are gone?

Then it occurred to me. Perhaps I absorbed my coat. I suppose I should be grateful, considering its power, that my coat did not absorb me. Then I would seem to be among the missing though merely tossed over a chair, vibrating, holey.

Our lost things returning to the places from where they came, to their absolute origins: a crucifix to its living tree or rubies to their home in the Indian Ocean, The genesis of my coat, made from fine wool, spinning backwards through the loom onto the body of a lamb, a black sheep a bit apart from the flock, grazing on the side of the hill. A lamb opening its eyes to the clouds that resemble for a moment a woolly backs of his own kind.”

The extraordinary thing about Patti Smith is how sensitive she is to objects and places, often graves, that carry some meaning to her. Gracefully sentimental, she looks now like an old shaman, the witness to passing times. She is emotional and curious like a journalist or detective moving through the sensitive matter. The photography is a big part of that unusual memoir, the *M Train*. “Truthfully, I don’t really

think of myself as a photographer” she said. “ I don’t have all the disciplines and knowledge of a person who’s spent their life devoted to photography. One of my great goals when I first started taking photographs or showing them publicly is that people might want one for over their desk.”

To me image making is an essential part of the art practise.

“Ever since, the Paris wherein I have tried to retrace her steps has remained as silent and deserted as it was on that day. I walk through empty streets. For me, they are always empty, even at dusk, during the rush hour, when the crowds are hurrying towards the mouths of the métro. I think of her in spite of myself, sensing an echo of her presence in this neighborhood”

Patrick Modiano, *Dora Bruder*

22rd September 2020, Wednesday afternoon

M,

*Turns out I have to let you go,
over and over again.*

*On a mountain top,
in the stream of water like I'm trying to wash you off of
my hands.*

*Every time I laugh, drink, and sleep and wake up to be
alone.*

*{I sit in the back of my friends car and I look at the
empty space next to me. I have this a lot. I lost you, and
you're never coming back, so why is the absence of you
still with me, at all times?}*

It's post-missing you.

*I long for the time I didn't miss you. I wish I never
knew you, or how you taste, how does the air taste like
when it comes out of your mouth and nose so close to
me.*

I feel so ugly and lonely.

*[Don't get me wrong,] I have dreams, plans, I work
hard and have things I'm looking forward to, but
there's pieces of me that feel broken? Shattered ? I know
I'm not broken, I can't be. There's too much of love, too
much of life in me for that, you could never do that.*

23nd August 2020, Saturday evening

*It's really sad how wrong you can be about someone,
it's so sad that almost no amount of valuable life
lessons is worth {all these tears.} But then, what's being
sad good for? To say I'm sorry is ever gonna change the
damage that has been done. But then I still live. I hurt.
I live!*

*I'm in some weird bit shitty place of peace. I'm done. I
have no decisions to make {regarding you}, no doubts
to carry. {It seems I can't reach the point of tears no
more, I passed the sign.}*

My (probably incomplete) inventory of loss

Our **Stability** was lost.

Education was in survival mode.

Structures were falling apart.

Safety was gone. We were in danger, not in the unspecified future but now. The whole world was in danger.

Love was dead. **Love** was poisoned.

The **connection** was broken.

Trust was nowhere to be found, personally I didn't think I could **trust** anyone again with my feelings.

[To a certain extent Gosha, as I knew myself was gone.]

I've lost **my job** in the club.

I've lost most of **my hair** one night.

My **health** was falling down the stairs. I was unable to get clarity.

Freedom of **movement**

Freedom of **touch**

Freedom of **dance**

Gone

Spirit of Communities

Relationships

Spontaneous encounters

Life now required more planning but was less predictable

Lost possibilities

Lost futures

Illusion of safety

Illusion of inclusivity, of a **good place**, safe queer space

Illusions of systems working

(...)

Was lost.

Have you seen my coat?

Have you seen my lover?

The acts of love

“There is a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in.”

Leonard Cohen, Anthem

I used to run into Anto at various places. We met for the first time when I was running around the academy asking people to put on the army uniform that I had made. I took a picture of Anto looking back over his shoulder, wearing a laminated cap and shiny army jacket. Then another time, during a very busy weekend I searched the cloakroom at the club back and forth to find his yellow bag. Anto’s face lights up when he smiles in such a disarming way. One day we were having lunch in the canteen and he told me about preparations for the graduation performance he wanted to do. We talked about lip syncing and wigs.

“That was an act of love”, he said to me. I was deeply touched when I saw the performance a few weeks later and I understood that feeling of finding yourself, or finding out who I could be, finding joy in existing as various states of me.

I can’t fully describe the change that I felt being there. That’s also why I don’t really believe in documenting such works. You had to be there. I sat on the floor in the middle of the

room in Lab 111 Cinema. The words carried by the voices of Anto and Rachel hit all the little pieces that I was fearfully holding deep inside.

At that moment I realised I was okay. I was ready to feel things beyond pain and this joyful message was long awaited. The grief has slipped away like a lost coat, probably to come back on one of the gloomy days. I went home. The longest year has ended leaving me with gray hair and a deepest gratitude for all the ephemeral moments of understanding.



27th February 2021, Saturday night

Untitled

The sky cracked open
to realise few planes
and birds.

I await in my window
hoping for the sun
to reach me.

I want to see the sun
One more time
Rising in the dry mouth
full of night.
Stars aligned,
We will dance again
when the time is right.

After Tears

“You can cut all the flowers but you cannot
keep Spring from coming.”

Pablo Neruda

Over the past year, I have had periods of time that I don't remember. Memory loss is a natural survival skill, a defence mechanism that humans developed to protect themselves from psychological damage. Violence, sexual abuse and other emotionally traumatic events can lead to dissociative amnesia, which helps a person cope by allowing them to temporarily forget details of their trauma. It happened to me after I discovered that M was in love with someone else for a long time already and M had failed to tell me the truth. My brain luckily protected me.

I cried for a few days and then suddenly stopped completely. The only thing I had to trace the events of those days were the letters that I never sent and the notes and poems left in my journal.

It took a few weeks before I could remember more. From that moment, I began the bumpy road of dealing with this loss. It brought me to unexpected conversations with people about the last year, the closing of public spaces, the world crisis that followed, the Black Lives Matter protests. In a way I was happy that this crisis brought more attention to social problems.

For a long time I felt unable to write about it. It's much easier to talk about nothing, Patti Smith writes and I have to think about this. What does she mean, is it death, is it loss, the absence of being or living or writing? I am reading the book again now trying to follow her.

At some point of my healing I felt there was so much suffering all around me, so many things falling apart. The fear and mistrust will be a trauma of the generations. Permanent scars on the fabric of society will stay. But scars are not loss, scars are preserved memories. During the pandemic, we have glimpsed at a kinder society that understood how much we are connected and how deeply we depend on each other.

The tracing of memory has become an important problem in my art practice. I started working with an archive of photographs - pictures of places and my loved ones I took in the past. I'm transferring images to physical carries or projecting them and photographing again. To see the face and to remember it and to see it again and so on. I'm not sure why I have to do this - maybe I'm chasing after some sure identification. Last year apart from scars has provided me with a new perspective of my work. I embraced the intuitiveness of my process. But I also realised that I must provide myself with resilient structures of self care to be able to fully explore the potential of my projects. I hope to be an autonomous artist and never stop working.

Anex: Found on the M train

The complete list of references to literature, film and more from Patti Smith's *M train*, in the order of appearance. Collected and edited by G.Woch

*"I can never read all the books I want;
I can never be all the people I want and live all the lives
I want. I can never train myself in all the skills I want.
And what do I want? I want to live and feel all the
shades, tones and variations of mental and physical
experience possible in my life.
And I am horribly limited."*

The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath

1. ***The Divine Comedy*** (Italian Divina Commedia) a famous poem by Dante Alighieri from the beginning of the XVI century.

2. ***The Beach Cafe*** by Mohamed Mrabet. Mrabet (born 1936) is an author, artist and storyteller of the Ait Ouriaghel tribe in the Rif region of Morocco. The beach cafe together with *The Voice* is translated and written by Paul Bowles who listened to Mrabet's storytelling. Mrabet is mostly known in the West through his association with Paul Bowles, William Burroughs and Tennessee Williams, although he is also an important painter of the post-colonial period. He is 85 now.

3. **Paul Verlaine**, 19th century French poet associated with the Symbolist movement and the Decadent movement. He is considered one of the greatest representatives of the

fin de siècle in international and French poetry.

4. ***Thief's Journal*** is a 1949 novel by Jean Genet. It's part fiction and part autobiography, telling stories of "holy crime", homosexual love affairs and journeys of Genet. Smith visited the grave of the writer in Larache, Morocco. Genet was one of her "vagabondia"-free-spirited writers, true artists, world dwellers.

5. **William S. Burroughs** was an American writer, visual artist, spoken word performer and chaos magician credited as a primary figure of the Beat Generation and a major postmodern author who influenced popular culture and literature. He passed away in 1997. Patti Smith knew him since she was 20 years old. There's a really good and honest interview/conversation from 1979 with Burroughs in which Smith explains her stand on her music career, being an artist and rock and roll.

6. ***The Harder They Come***, Jamaican crime film from 1972 that has Jimmy Cliff starring in it and an amazing reggae music soundtrack.

7. **Robert Luis Stevenson**, who is mostly known from the 1886 horror story ***The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde***. Patti Smith mentions his poem about convalescence from ***The Garden of Verses*** (1885). The poems are about his bedridden sickly childhood to which I believe Patti Smith could relate. The poem that I think is worth mentioning is *The Land of Counterpane*.

8. ***The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo***, movie that Smith mentions, although it's

not clear if it's the 2009 Swedish adaptation or a Hollywood production from 2011 (probably the second). It is based on a psychological thriller novel with original title in Swedish: *Män som hatar kvinnor*, meaning literally 'Men Who Hate Women.' Published posthumously in 2005 by Swedish author and journalist Stieg Larsson.

9. **Roberto Bolano** was a Chilean novelist, short-story writer, poet and essayist. Smith mentions two of his novels: *Amulet* published in 1999 and the work of last years of Bolano's life novel **2666**. It was published in 2004, a year after Bolano's death from the first draft he sent to his publisher. Very dear to Patti Smith author to whom she dedicated a poem.

10. *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 1964 Italian biblical drama film in the neorealist style, written and directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini.

11. *The Killing*, tv series airing between 2011 and 2014. Originally *Forbrydelsen*, was the Danish crime drama tv series created by Søren Svestrup. The American remake *The Killing*, was developed by Veena Sud and produced by Fox. Patti Smith is a fan of the series and she appears in one of the episodes of the last season in a small speaking role as a neurosurgeon.

12. **Alfred Wegener** and CDC (Continental Drift Club). Wegener was a German polar researcher, geophysicist and meteorologist, mostly known for the Continental Drift Theory. CDC is an obscure, now-disbanded society (of which Smith was a member)

dedicated to the memory of Alfred Wegener.

13. *Wings of Desire*, romantic fantasy film from 1987 (original title in German: *Der Himmel über Berlin*, lit. 'The Heaven/Sky over Berlin'), directed by Wim Wenders.

14. *The Third Man*, British film noir from 1949 which is considered one of the best movies ever made.

15. *The Favor Of The Moment*, poem by Friedrich Schiller.

16. *Master and Margerita* by Mikhail Bulgakov, great Russian novel. Patti Smith mentions Bulgakov while writing about vodka drinking in Cafe Pasternak in Berlin.

17. *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* is an American police procedural drama television series set in New York City, where it was also primarily produced.

18. **Bertolt Brecht** (1898- 1956), German theatre practitioner, playwright, and poet.

19. *The Saint*, British mystery spy thriller television series that aired between 1962 and 1969. It was based on the literary character Simon Templar created by author Leslie Charteris in the 1920s and featured in many novels over the years.

20. *Winter Trees* is a 1971 posthumous collection of poetry by **Sylvia Plath**, published by her husband Ted Hughes. Along with *Crossing the Water* it provides the remainder of the poems that Plath had written during her state of elevated creativity prior to her suicide.

21. *The Master Builder*, (Norwegian: Bygmester Solness) is a play by Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen.

22. *Cracker*, British crime drama series from the 90s. The series follows a criminal psychologist Dr Edward "Fitz" Fitzgerald, played by Robbie Coltrane, who works with the Greater Manchester Police to help them solve crimes.

23. *A Touch of Frost*, is a television detective series airing between 1992 and 2010, initially based on the Frost novels by R. D. Wingfield.

24. *Whitechapel* is a British police procedural series, in which detectives in London's Whitechapel district dealt with murders which replicated historical crimes. The first season premiered in 2010 and the show ended in 2013.

25. *Spellbound*, 1945 American psychological mystery thriller film noir directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

26. *Ghost of the Flea*, a miniature painting by William Blake.

27. *After Dinner Declarations*, a poetry book by renowned Chilean author and "antipoeta" Nicanor Parra. Poems or "verse speeches" show the authors critical perspective of the modern world in a playful, conversation-like language.

28. *Letters from Iceland*, a travel book in prose and verse by W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice, published in 1937.

29. *The Petting Zoo*, novel by poet, musician, and diarist Jim Carrol. The Petting Zoo tells the story of fictional character of

artist Billy Wolfram, moving back and forth throughout his life as an examination of one artist's personal and professional struggles.

30. *After Nature* is a first book by the great German author and academic Max Sebald, known as W. G. Sebald.

31. **Albert Camus.** Patti Smith mentions a photograph she owned portraying the writer. She also refers to *The first Man*, which is Albert Camus's unfinished final novel. On January 4, 1960, at the age of forty-six, Camus died in a car accident. The incomplete manuscript of *The First Man*, the autobiographical novel Camus was working on at the time of his death, was found in the mud at the accident site.

32. *Eyes Wide Shut*, is a 1999 erotic mystery psychological drama film by Stanley Kubrick.

33. *The Lady from Shanghai*, is a 1947 film noir directed by Orson Welles and starring Welles, with Rita Hayworth and Everett Sloane. It is based on the novel *If I Die Before I Wake* by Sherwood King.

34. *Midsomer Murders*, detective drama set in modern-day England.

35. *Luther*, is a British psychological crime drama television series starring Idris Elba as detective John Luther.

36. *The laughing policeman*, Swedish mystery crime novel from 1968 by Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö. The laughing policeman movie from 1973 was loosely based on the novel.

37. *White Wedding*, song by Billy Joel

covered by Serbian hardcore punk band KBO!.

38. ***War of Man***, song by Neil Young.

39. ***Radar Love***, a love song by Golden Earring.

40. ***Your Protector***, song by Fleet Foxes.

41. ***The story of Davy Crockett***, kids book by Enid Meadowcroft that Patti Smith read in secret when she was in second grade.

42. ***What a Wonderful World***, song by Louis Armstrong.

43. ***The Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus***, is the only book-length philosophical work by the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein that was published during his lifetime. It is recognised by philosophers as a significant philosophical work of the twentieth century.

44. ***The Little Lame Prince and his Travelling Cloak*** (often published under its shorter title *The Little Lame Prince*) is a story for children written by Dinah Maria Mulock Craik, first published in 1875. It's another one of Patti's beloved childhood books.

45. ***Anne of Green Gables*** is a 1908 novel by Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery. Written for all ages, it has been considered a classic children's novel since the mid-twentieth century.

46. ***Daddy-Long-Legs*** is a 1912 episodic novel by the American writer Jean Webster.

47. ***A Girl of the Limberlost***, a novel by American writer and naturalist Gene Stratton-Porter, was published in August 1909.

It is considered a classic of Indiana literature.

48. **Henning Georg Mankell**, was a Swedish crime writer, children's author, and dramatist, best known for a series of mystery novels starring his most noted creation, Inspector Kurt Wallander.

49. **Haruki Murakami**, Japanese contemporary writer. Smith mentions these works of Murakami: ***A Wild sheep chase***, ***Dance dance dance***, ***Kafka on the shore***, ***The Wind-up Bird Chronicle***.

50. ***Moby Dick*** or *The Whale* is an 1851 novel by American writer Herman Melville. Although the novel was a commercial failure and was out of print at the time of the author's death in 1891, its reputation grew immensely during the twentieth century. It's considered one of the Great American Novels. Smith also mentions *Billy Budd*, a Sailor novella by Melville, left unfinished at his death.

51. ***Wuthering Heights*** is an 1847 novel by Emily Brontë, published under the pseudonym Ellis Bell.

52. ***Frankenstein*** or *A Modern Prometheus* is an 1818 novel written by English author Mary Shelley

53. ***Die Zwitscher-Machine***, lit. *Twittering Machine* is a 1922 watercolour and pen and ink oil transfer on paper by Swiss-German painter Paul Klee.

54. ***CSI: Miami*** (*Crime Scene Investigation: Miami*) is an American police procedural drama television series that

premiered on September 23, 2002, on CBS.

55. *A Dog of Flanders* is an 1872 novel by English author Marie Louise de la Ramée published with her pseudonym “Ouida”. It is about a Flemish boy named Nello and his dog, Patrasche, and is set in Antwerp.

56. *The Prince and the Pauper*, a novel by American author Mark Twain.

57. *The Blue Bird* (French: L'Oiseau bleu) is a 1908 play by Belgian playwright and poet Maurice Maeterlinck. Mytyl and her brother Tytyl are a woodchopper's children who are taken on a magical trip through their past and then move into the present and then the future to find the 'Blue Bird of Happiness'. Blue Bird is also the name of Patti Smith's favourite coffee shop in Amsterdam.

58. *Five Little Peppers and How They Grew*, children story book by Margaret Sidney

59. *Little Women* is a coming-of-age novel written by American novelist Louisa May Alcott which was originally published in two volumes in 1868 and 1869.

60. *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, is a 1943 semi-autobiographical novel written by Betty Smith. The story focuses on an impoverished but aspirational adolescent girl and her family living in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, New York City,

61. *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* is a novel published in 1871 by Lewis Carroll and the sequel to Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

62. *The Glass Bead Game* is the last full-length novel of the German author Hermann Hesse. It was begun in 1931 and published in Switzerland in 1943 after being rejected for publication in Germany due to Hesse's anti-Fascist views.

63. *Lolita* is a 1955 novel written by Russian-American novelist Vladimir Nabokov.

64. *The Scarlet Letter: A Romance* is a work of historical fiction by American author Nathaniel Hawthorne, published in 1850.

65. *An Episode in the Life of a Landscape Painter* by César Aira - Argentinian writer and translator, and an exponent of contemporary Argentinian literature. Another work of the writer is Shantytown, described as “mesmerising and mad invention”.

66. *A Night of Serious Drinking* is an allegorical novel by the French surrealist writer René Daumal.

67. *Sherlock Holmes* is a fictional private detective created by British author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

68. **Friedrich Schiller** was a German poet, philosopher, physician, historian, and playwright. During the last seventeen years of his life, Schiller developed a productive, if complicated, friendship with the already famous and influential Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

69. *Winter at Eismitte* is an essay by polar researcher Ernst Sorge. Together with J. Georgi and F. Loewe stayed throughout the winter in Eismitte arctic site

in Greenland in a cave in 1930. Smith mentions the essay on the occasion of Continental Drift Club meeting and Alfred Wegener.

70. **Orphée** (eng. Orpheus) is a 1950 French film directed by Jean Cocteau and starring Jean Marais. It is the central part of Cocteau's Orphic Trilogy. In Orpheus a poet follows his dead wife into the underworld and falls in love with Death.

71. Peter Pan and Wendy, characters from 1953 American animated adventure fantasy film produced by Walt Disney Productions and based on the 1904 play **Peter Pan**, or The Boy Who Wouldn't Grow Up by J. M. Barrie.

72. **Frida Kahlo**, Mexican artist Frida Kahlo is remembered for her self-portraits, pain and passion, and bold, vibrant colours. She is celebrated in Mexico for her attention to Mexican and indigenous culture and by feminists for her depiction of the female experience. Smith photographed her personal belongings and her bed in Case Azul in Mexico.

73. **Medea** is a 1969 Italian film directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini, based on the ancient myth of Medea. Filmed in the Göreme Open Air Museum of early Christian churches, Pisa, and the Citadel of Aleppo, it stars opera singer Maria Callas in her only film role.

74. **The Fabulous Life of Diego Rivera**, book by Bertram D. Wolfe based on extensive interviews with the artist, his four wives (including Frida Kahlo), and his friends, colleagues, and opponents, *The Fabulous Life*

of Diego Rivera captures Rivera's complex personality--sometimes delightful, frequently infuriating and always fascinating--as well as his development into one of the twentieth century's greatest artist. Patti Smith describes both Rivera and Khalo as her heroes.

75. **LA Woman** is the sixth studio album by the American rock band The Doors, released on April 19, 1971.

76. **Java Head** novel from 1919 by Joseph Hergesheimer

77. **Antonin Artaud** was a French writer, poet, dramatist, visual artist, essayist, actor and theatre director, widely recognised as one of the major figures of twentieth-century theatre and the European avant-garde, and known for his raw, surreal and transgressive themes.

78. **Coffee Cantata** also known as Schweigt stille, plaudert nicht (Be still, stop chattering), BWV 211, is a secular cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach. He composed it probably between 1732 and 1735. Although classified as a cantata, it is essentially a miniature comic opera. In a satirical commentary, the cantata amusingly tells of an addiction to coffee. Patti Smith's love of coffee is a subject of many articles, so it's no surprise she mentions the cantata while writing about her caffeine habit. She also mentioned another work of Bach - Goldberg Variations.

79. **Shrimp Boats**, popular song from 1950s by Paul Mason Howard and Paul Weston

80. **Isamu Noguchi** (1904 -1988) was a Japanese American artist and landscape

architect whose artistic career spanned six decades, from the 1920s onward.[1] Known for his sculpture and public artworks, Noguchi also designed stage sets for various choreographer Martha Graham productions, and several mass-produced lamps and furniture pieces, some of which are still manufactured and sold

81. *The Confusions of Young Törless* is the literary debut of the Austrian philosophical novelist and essayist Robert Musil, first published in 1906.

82. *Women of Cairo* is a novel by Gérard de Nerval born Gérard Labrunie (1808-1855) was French writer, poet, and translator, a major figure of French romanticism, best known for his novellas and poems, especially the collection *Les Filles du feu* (The Daughters of Fire), which included the novella *Sylvie* and the poem *El Desdichado*. Through his translations, Nerval played a major role in introducing French readers to the works of German Romantic authors, including Klopstock, Schiller, Bürger and Goethe. His later work merged poetry and journalism in a fictional context and influenced Marcel Proust. His last novella, *Aurélia*, influenced André Breton and Surrealism. Nerval is one of Patti Smith's masters writers.

83. *Live at Birdland* is an album by jazz musician John Coltrane, released in January 1964

84. *Pastoral Symphony* or The Symphony No. 6 in F major, Op. 68, is a symphony composed by Ludwig van Beethoven and com-

pleted in 1808.

85. *Étant donnés* (*Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas*), is a last art work of Marcel Duchamp. The artist has left detailed instructions on reconstructing and exhibiting this installation containing a full wooden door with a very small peep hole and a sculpture of naked women laying inside the two meter sculpture.

86. *Astragal* (French *L'Astragale*), 1965 is a semi-autobiographical novel written by Albertine Sarrazin while she was in prison. The novel tells the story of Anne, who after jumping to freedom from prison fractures her ankle and is found by the side of the road by Julian (who also happens to be on the run), they journey together, quickly form a bond, and romance soon follows. Tragically Albertine Sarrazin died in 1967 aged only 29 due to complications from kidney surgery. Patti Smith wrote an introduction to the book and how it went on to have a big impact on her.

87. **B. Traven** was the pen name of a presumably German novelist, whose real name, nationality, date and place of birth and details of biography are all subject to dispute. One of the few certainties about Traven's life is that he lived for years in Mexico, where the majority of his fiction is also set. B. Traven's best known works include the novels *The Death Ship* from 1926, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* from 1927 (filmed in 1948 by John Huston), and the so-called "Jungle Nov-

els”, also known as the Caoba cyclus (from the Spanish word caoba, meaning mahogany).

88. *Flaming Star* is a 1960 American Western film starring Elvis Presley and Barbara Eden, based on the book *Flaming Lance* (1958) by Clair Huffaker. Critics agreed that Presley gave one of his best acting performances as the mixed-blood “Pacer Burton”, a dramatic role.

89. *Masnavi* is the epic work of Rumi. The poem is one of the most influential works of Sufism, commonly called “the Quran in Persian”. It has been viewed by many commentators as the greatest mystical poem in world literature.

90. *Vecchia Zimmara* is “The coat song” aria from act 4 of Giacomo Puccini’s famous opera *La bohème* from 1896.

91. *The Songs of Innocence* were published by poet William Blake in 1789, and he produced a combined version of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* in 1794. The *Songs* are now often studied for their literary merit alone, but they were originally produced as illuminated books, engraved, hand-printed, and coloured by Blake himself.

92. *The Journey to the East* is a short novel by German author Hermann Hesse. It was first published in German in 1932 as *Die Morgenlandfahrt*. This novel came directly after his biggest international success, *Narcissus and Goldmund*.

93. *The Messiah* by Bruno Schulz. In 1942, shortly before his death, Bruno

Schulz likely managed to smuggle a bundle of manuscripts – including *The Messiah* – out of the Drohobych Ghetto. After the war, the fate of this bundle became the subject of a fascinating inquiry, and today, it remains one of the biggest mysteries of Polish literature.

94. *Black Spring* is a book of ten short stories by the American writer Henry Miller, published in 1936.

95. *Nezulla the Rat Monster* is a Japanese horror movie from 2002 and *Janku Fudo* (Junk Food) from 1997 is a dark documentary of hidden aspects of Japanese society. Patti Smith mentions these films on occasion of her trip to Japan.

96. *The temple of the Golden Pavillion* by celebrated Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima is a modern fiction novel.

97. *The Setting Sun* is a Japanese novel by Osamu Dazai. It was published in 1947 and is set in Japan after World War II.

98. *Master and Commander* is a nautical historical novel by the English author Patrick O’Brian, first published in 1969 in the US and 1970 in the UK.

99. Ryūnosuke Akutagawa is regarded as the “father of the Japanese short story”, and Japan’s premier literary award, the Akutagawa Prize, is named after him. He committed suicide at the age of 35 through an overdose of barbitol. He wrote the famous *Rashomon*. There is a fictional character based on the author in the anime and manga *Bungo Stray*

Dogs. He serves as a recurring antagonist slowly becoming redeemed throughout the anime series. Other work mentioned is *Spinning Gears*.

100. *Love Potion No 9*, is a 1964 song by The Searchers.

101. *No Longer Human* is a 1948 Japanese novel by Osamu Dazai. It is considered Dazai's masterpiece and ranks as the second-best selling novel ever in Japan, behind Natsume Sōseki's *Kokoro*.

102. *Hell Screen* (Japanese *Jigokuhen*) is a short story written by Japanese writer Ryūnosuke Akutagawa. It was a reworking of *Uji Shūi Monogatari* and originally published in 1918 as a serialization in two newspapers. There's also a movie called *Jigokuhen*, which Patti Smith mentions watching.

103. **Toshiro Mifune** was a Japanese actor who appeared in over 150 feature films. He is best known for his 16-film collaboration (1948–1965) with Akira Kurosawa in such works as *Rashomon*, *Seven Samurai*, *The Hidden Fortress*, *Throne of Blood*, and *Yojimbo*. *Drunken Angel* - a 1948 *Yakuza* film is considered the best one of these collaborations. Patti also mentions a film titled *Ran*.

104. **Setsuko Hara** was a Japanese actress. Though best known for her performances in Yasujiro Ozu's films *Late Spring* (1949) and *Tokyo Story* (1953), she had already appeared in 67 films before working with Ozu, working also with master Kurosawa.

105. *Ariel* was the second book of Syl-

via Plath's poetry to be published. It was originally published in 1965, two years after her death, with an introduction by the poet Robert Lowell.

106. *The Tempest* is a late play by English playwright William Shakespeare, probably written in 1610–1611.

107. *Nabokov's Butterflies: Unpublished and Uncollected Writings* is a book edited and annotated by Brian Boyd and Robert Michael Pyle that examines and presents Vladimir Nabokov's passion for butterflies in his literary presentation.

108. *Person of Interest* is an American science fiction crime drama television series that aired on CBS from September 22, 2011, to June 21, 2016.

109. *Doctor Who* is an iconic British science fiction television programme produced by the BBC since 1963.

110. *Hawk Moon* by Sam Shepard is a collection of more than fifty monologues, short stories and poems. Shepard who is an accomplished playwright and actor was a friend and briefly also a lover of Patti Smith.

111. *A Scarcity of Love* by Anna Kavan is a 1956 novel that tells the story of a young girl, rejected by her narcissistic and vengeful mother, whose life thereafter is a continuing series of betrayals that can lead only to the dead end of madness and death.

112. **Paul Frederic Bowles** (1910–1999) was an American expatriate composer, author, and translator. He became as-

sociated with Tangier, Morocco where he settled in 1947 and lived for 52 years to the end of his life. The *Sheltering Sky* is a 1949 novel about alienation and existential despair by Paul Bowles. Patti Smith has visited and interviewed him before he passed away.

113. ***Dead Souls*** (Russian Мёртвые души) is a novel by Nikolai Gogol, first published in 1842, and widely regarded as an exemplar of 19th-century Russian literature.

114. ***Kind of Blue*** is a studio album by American jazz trumpeter-composer Miles Davis.

115. ***Heroin*** is a song by the Velvet Underground, released on their 1967 debut album *The Velvet Underground & Nico*. Written by Lou Reed in 1964, the song, which overtly depicts heroin use and abuse, is one of the band's most celebrated compositions. Other mentioned songs: *Sister Ray*, *Walk on the Wild Side*, *Sweet Jane*, *Sunday Morning*. Lou Reed was a friend of Patti Smith.

116. ***Faceless Killers*** is a 1991 crime novel by the Swedish writer Henning Mankell, and the first in his acclaimed Kurt Wallander series. Patti Smith also mentions the last one of these series called *The troubled Man*.

117. ***The Rescuers*** is a 1959 British children's adventure novel written by Margery Sharp and illustrated by Garth Williams; The novel is the first in a series of stories about Miss Bianca, a socialite mouse who volunteered to lend assistance to people and animals in danger.

118. **Hart Crane** (1899 -1932) was

an American poet. Provoked and inspired by T. S. Eliot, Crane wrote modernist poetry that was difficult and ambitious in its scope.

119. **Rupert Chawner Brooke** (1887-1915) was an English poet known for his idealistic war sonnets written during the First World War, especially *The Soldier*.

120. **Delmore Schwartz** (1913-1966) was an American poet and short story writer.

121. ***Querelle of Brest*** is a novel by the French writer Jean Genet. It was written mostly in 1945 and first published anonymously in 1947, limited to 460 numbered copies, with illustrations by Jean Cocteau. It is set in the midst of the port town of Brest, where sailors and the sea are associated with murder.

122. ***Suspended Sentences*** by Patrick Modiano is one of three short novels – *Afterimage*, *Suspended Sentences* and *Flowers of Ruin* – written between 1988 and 1993.

123. ***Wittgenstein's Poker: The Story of a Ten-Minute Argument Between Two Great Philosophers*** is a 2001 book by BBC journalists David Edmonds and John Eidinow about events in the history of philosophy involving Sir Karl Popper and Ludwig Wittgenstein, leading to a confrontation at the Cambridge University Moral Sciences Club in 1946.

124. ***Heart of a Dog*** (Russian: Собачье сердце, *Sobachye serdtse*) is a novella by Russian author Mikhail Bulgakov. A biting satire of Bolshevism, it was written in 1925. It is generally interpreted as an alle-

gory of the Communist revolution and “the revolution’s misguided attempt to radically transform mankind.” Its publication was initially prohibited in the Soviet Union, but it circulated on the underground market until it was officially released in the country in 1987. Important position in Russian literature.

125. ***The Lover*** (French: *L’Amant*) is an autobiographical novel by Marguerite Duras, published in 1984 by Les Éditions de Minuit. It has been translated into 43 languages and was awarded the 1984 Prix Goncourt. It was adapted to film in 1992 as *The Lover*.

126. ***Murder, She Wrote*** is an American crime drama television series starring Angela Lansbury as mystery writer and amateur detective Jessica Fletcher. The series aired for 12 seasons with 264 episodes from 1984 to 1996 on the CBS network. It was followed by four TV films.

127. ***In Cold Blood*** is a nonfiction novel by American author Truman Capote, first published in 1966. It details the 1959 murders of four members of the Herbert Clutter family in the small farming community of Holcomb, Kansas.

128. ***I Had Too Much to Dream (Last Night)*** is a song written with music by Annette Tucker and lyrics by Nancie Mantz, which was recorded in late 1966 by the garage rock band The Electric Prunes.

129. ***The Metamorphosis*** is a novel written by Franz Kafka which was first published in 1915. One of Kafka’s best-

known works, *The Metamorphosis* tells the story of salesman Gregor Samsa who wakes one morning turned to an insect.

130. ***The Bourne Identity*** is a 1980 spy fiction thriller by Robert Ludlum that tells the story of Jason Bourne, a man with remarkable survival abilities who has retrograde amnesia, and must seek to discover his true identity. A 2002 Hollywood film version had Matt Damon starring as Bourne.

131. **Eugene Delacroix**, French Romantic artist

132. **Bobby Fisher**, American chess grandmaster

133. **Anna Akhmatova**, poet

134. **Vladimir Mayakovsky**, poet

135. **Isabelle Eberhardt**, writer

136. **Tennessee Williams**, writer

137. **Jane Bowles**, writer

138. **Mohamed Choukri**, writer

139. **Algernon Charles Swinburne**, writer

140. **Samuel Beckett**, writer

141. **Arthur Rimbaud**, poet, author of *Illuminations*. Patti Smith own the old house of Rimbaud in France.

142. **Robert Graves**, writer

143. **Gregory Nunzio Corso**, American poet, youngest of the inner circle of Beat Generation writers.

C a t e g o r i e s :
Children Books, Crime TV Shows and Literature, Poets, Nautical Novels, Cinema, Music, Artists, Japanese Literature, French Literature, Russian Literature, Classics of American Literature, South American Literature, Swedish Literature, German Literature, British Literature, Beat Generation, Post War Literature, Classic literature, Diaries, Memoirs, Autobiographical, Non-fiction, Philosophy, Academic, People