

Beginning again

Maame Blue

We enjoyed a summer of love. A clichéd, all-inclusive, friendship-turned-romance journey into heartsickness, until we inevitably had to say goodbye.

You stood syrupy-sweet in a sundress one Wednesday afternoon, waiting for me in the local park on our lunch break. How did you always look like light? Like stars were burning around your edges, beckoning me into your arms, up to the best, final moment I could have hoped for?

And we always sat apart, because eyes were everywhere and we were keeping it between us. Us and the ever-ticking clock of farewells. I was travelling to distant lands with more than just a suitcase; my heart was getting heavier with every passing day that I knew I wouldn't see you anymore. You assured me often, that this was a time for us, and we'd have more time later, when my journey was complete and we were ready to mould a future together.

I remember you kissed me softly when I let a tear escape, as we lay pushed together on your sofa; never quite close enough, both aware that eventually the distance between us would be a marathon that only the best runners could complete. You had bad lungs and I huffed and puffed in stairwells.

Still, when we leaned into one another, whispering the plans of lucky, intertwining fingers as if your hand were mine and vice versa; we forgot time. Instead, there were the nights we spent together, and everything else was outside of that.

Remember the postcards? How I trekked through Amsterdam during a city break, under a high heat, searching first for stamps, and then the

means to deliver my messages. I plundered the time looking for a transporter of sorts, some red, maybe green box to let you know how I missed you beside me like gravity, keeping me upright and helping me fall. Eventually I found a slot, hoping I wouldn't beat the message home, but also hoping that I would.

We began writing our love letters at home, only hours apart. They covered the holes, the gaps between us. They took us through until I was seated on an aircraft beside a stranger, the screen inches from my face as I negotiated steamed chicken with a plastic fork. I watched the flight map track the 10,000 miles that would soon be between us.

And you were still at home.

Only the sound of your quietly tired voice kept me company, on a pre-recorded video where you said goodbye from a bed we'd shared only hours before. I replayed our end of things until my thumb became a hook and my eyes reddened with the blurry tiredness of trying to remember you enough to feel you again.

And when I finally landed, finally called you from the car that you had secretly arranged, I felt flush with warmth and nostalgia. But I was also out of my depth without you, until the driver played our favourite song and you told me that you'd see me soon; that we would see us again, soon. And somehow that was right. We had ended only at a point in time, when we still had parts of ourselves to explore.

Soon enough, in time, we would begin again.

Maame Blue

Maame Blue is a Ghanaian Londoner based in Melbourne, Australia. Her short stories and creative non-fiction pieces have appeared in *AFREADA*, *Litro magazine*, *Memoir Mag* (USA), *Storm Cellar Quarterly* (USA), *The Good Journal Issue 3* and *Black Ballad*. Her debut novel *Bad Love* will be published in April 2020 by Jacaranda Books as part of their #Twentyin2020 initiative. She can sometimes be found tweeting sporadically at @maamebluwrites.

A recording of this talk can be found on the WritersMosaic website at

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