

April 30, 2021

Thank you so much for the drawing of Judy, you captured his beauty and soulfulness exactly. Your drawing ranks up there with my succulent plant as one of my most favorite things. Isn't it funny how little things can fill us with such pleasure? Give me a thriving plant and a dog (or a picture of a dog) and truly, I'm nappy. I wish I could always hold onto that happy feeling of little things. It might be the secret of life.

When I look at this drawing, especially the eyes, it's almost like Judy is with me. You really do capture his trusting nature and vulnerability. In fact, Judy went missing three days ago. I'm sick about it. I'm not even sure what to say ~~about~~ about it. I've just been praying that he'll somehow make his way back to me. I let him out of my trailer in the morning so he could pee and I took a shower. When I left the trailer he was no where to be found. It was so weird. No one had seen him. I looked everywhere—the main house, the construction site, the grounds all around the farm. I even went to town and looked for Judy there. I hung up signs. No one on the farm, but Sammy, helped me look. "He's just a dog," Candace said. "Dogs roam around." And Bob said Judy will come back if he wants to. He said that I should approach this as an opportunity to deal with my issues around rejection and being alone. Maybe, but I really want Judy to come back. Winnie has offered to sit with me to help me process my feelings. I told her I'd think about it. I mean, maybe it's silly, but I love that dog. A small part of me wonders if someone did something to him, but I know that sounds crazy. He's probably just roaming around, like Candace said. But do dogs really do that? Do dogs that are being fed and cared for... roam?

It's spring and the world is definitely coming alive again. I've watched the ice melt away and now, sometimes, it's almost warm. Or at least, it's not cold. There's all these rolling hills that I never noticed before. It's nice to see the world move toward green again, even though it's been raining a lot. Remember how rainy Moody gets in the spring? It's like that. A lot of the trees are still brown and branchy, but the ground is thawing and soft. I've been going on walks whenever I can get away. Sometimes I can take thirty minutes or so to walk beyond the fence to the pond near the farm. I walked there by myself yesterday because Judy's missing. I'm just praying that he didn't get hit by a car or stuck in an animal trap or something equally gruesome.

A lot of folks didn't like having Judy around, but some did, and I just don't understand why folks aren't more upset. How often do dogs go missing? What if he's dead? It's been disappointing that no one is willing to help me look for him. I'm grateful to Sammy. Grateful enough, in fact, that I had sex with him in the shed yesterday. He was sweet about it. He asked me if we could get together and I said okay. It was right after breakfast and when he kissed me, he tasted a little like oatmeal and green tea. We did ~~it~~ it in the dark, up against the door. It was fine, I mean, good, but I was kind of in my head the whole time, wondering about Judy and wondering if anyone was listening to us in the shed. Others have had sex in the shed and we can generally tell if folks are doing it in there because it shakes. A rake fell over while we were doing it. It's a small shed.

I know that the farm may seem confusing to you. I can just picture you saying, "Bea had sex in a shed. Who does that? And what about the other women Sammy has sex with?" But I had sex with Sammy because I'm so lonely without Judy. It doesn't matter to me anymore that Sammy, and all the other men around here, has sex with other people. Bob has shown me that men may not be built to be sexually monogamous. Men can be loyal and good, but I think loyalty and goodness means something different to them. To be RAD, this morning I felt grateful that, for a few moments, he wanted to have sex with me. Maybe if I had given Chris more freedom, he wouldn't have left me. I think I have hangups about sex, although I don't know where they come from. Where do we get our ideas about sex? I may have gotten mine from Hollywood films. Anyway, if I get pregnant, I'll be even more grateful. I'd just love to have a little baby all my own. Anyway, I hope I've explained things in a way that you can get it. It's just how we do things here—we're all about free love. Sex in a shed is not a big deal.

I really believe that we're reaching for our best selves here. I've realized that I'm wrong about a lot of things and I feel grateful (even when I'm embarrassed or annoyed or freaked out) that there are people who care about me enough to correct me. Sometimes I don't know if I really belong here (everyone is basically really cool), but if not here—where? I'm not like you, Ona. I WANT to be tethered to something, I don't want to feel like I'm hurtling through space by myself. I want

solid things. A plant given to me by someone who cares about me. A dog, or a picture of a dog made by a dear friend. Freedom doesn't make me feel secure at all, it just makes me feel alone. I want to think of myself as being so woke, but maybe I'm just as basic as everyone else back in Moody. I've realized that I don't care about politics that much. I just want a family. A dog. Friends. A community. My dirty little secret is that, while everyone else is here because they want to change the world, I'm here because I don't want to be alone anymore. I think being alone so much during covid lockdowns really did something to me.

I've been thinking that I should go back to Moody to take care of some things. It might be a good time to take a little break from Black Feather. Along with Judy's disappearance which I've been really upset about, things around the farm are a little off right now. It started because people in town have been complaining about the drums at night. The drums scare them. Police officers drop by every few days to speak to Bob. We were actually fined last week. Since they started coming, Bob has been railing about the government and how corrupt it is. Like, how DARE they interfere with our lives and our mission towards betterment? There are also rumors floating around about the city threatening to foreclose on the land Black Feather Farm sits on because Bob doesn't believe in paying property taxes. He hasn't paid any in the whole four years since he's owned the farm. Isn't that wild? I mean, I hate taxes too, but... still? we've got the house, the barn, and now three completed tiny houses, along with the trailers and the couple of tents for new people. We've had four people join us since I've been here. Now Bob could lose everything he's worked so hard for because of pride and I just don't understand that. Anyone who can give money for the growth of the farm. It's been arranged so that Sera sends a few hundred dollars from the Natural Straight to Bob every week and I'm happy to contribute, but I can't help but wonder why some of that money can't be used to pay back taxes. We have meetings all the time, but we don't talk about money except in relation to how much it will cost to buy more timber and groceries and stuff. Lately, Bob encourages us to play the drums LOUDER at night to let everyone in the area know that we're not animals and that we will not be tamed. He talks about the chief of police being an agent of the devil.

I'm so sorry that someone hurt your dad. I should have written this first. It's just so fucked up and so typical. "Don't act afraid, don't act like a victim, act like you belong." Your father's philosophy is close to my mother's. Why are people of color like this? It's like we've convinced ourselves that it's strength to ignore any pain we might feel, or deal with it in any way. Showing our pain is a humiliation. We swallow it and for what? So often, it's for nothing. I heard about the shooting in Atlanta and immediately thought of you. Why can't people of color, and women, just LIVE? Why are we punished for just living? Sometimes I just want to scream into the wind, CAN I LIVE?

If it's not one thing, it's another, and although I've been thinking about leaving Black Feather Farm for a while and going home, things like what happened in those Atlanta spas make me afraid to leave (as well as filling me with a rage that I don't even know how to begin to deal with). These women were just working and were killed for being a "temptation" Their job was to make people comfortable and relaxed and somehow they had to die for that. People just keep dying and dying and dying. Did you hear about the Black man who was shot "accidentally" by the police officer who says she meant to tase him? Or about the Black man who was shot because the police officer thought his cell phone was a gun? Or the Black teenaged girl in foster care who was shot like a dog on the street?

God, the world is a scary place. I mean, I've been working on being in a state of peace and gratitude, but to be RAD, most of the time I'm just managing my fears. I'm afraid of getting stopped by police officers for a broken tail light or being five miles above the speed limit. Sometimes I'm afraid to drive. And I don't know if I'll ever go to a spa again. I've been trying to do the work, I've been trying to deal with my issues, I've spent the last four months away from my house and business on a FARM for Christ's sake, pushing myself as hard as I can, but I don't think enough other people in the real world are doing the work. Sometimes things can get intense here at the farm, but it feels safer than the world out there. At least here there are people who are TRYING to be their best selves. There's a lot of laughter, a lot of touching. I get and give hugs several times a day. Before I got here, I was so starved for touch.

I'm not sure I agree with him on this, but Bob doesn't believe in victims. He doesn't believe that we should "indulge" ourselves in victimization because there's too much work to do. We have to keep pressing forward. But my question is, what do you do when you DON'T belong and will never belong? What do you do when the people around you don't play along with this act of belonging? What do you do if you call the police and instead of helping you they kill you because they don't think you belong? What do you do if you're exhausted? Even here at the farm where I thought I could just be myself I'm finding that I spend a lot of time trying to fit in. I'm committed to my growth, but everyone around me feels even MORE committed. It's all I can do to keep up. Sometimes I just want to go to sleep and never wake up. I know that sounds awful. Don't worry, I'm not suicidal. I just wish I could take a vacation from trying so hard to be good enough all the time. Am I even making sense?

Your roommate situation sounds so nice. "Talking shit about nothing" sounds awesome, lol. I can't imagine just sitting around, having a beer, chatting and gossiping with anyone here. We would never. First of all, there's no alcohol allowed. But also, everything's always so intense. Everything we do here is in service of our personal growth and making the world a better place. Our conversations are always about what we're learning or about our plans. When we talk about the past, it's always in relation to how we're trying to grow beyond some past hurt or limitation or something. We encourage each other to leave the past in the past. I haven't told anyone about my mother. It's weird. I feel really close to everyone here, but they don't know me very well at all. Not like you do. They don't know about Moody except the little bits that I tell them. I told Bob that Moody has beautiful sunsets.

I spoke to Sera yesterday. She told me that everything is fine with the Natural, but I don't know. She says that more customers have been coming in as COVID restrictions are loosened up and business has been better, but I don't see that in the bank account. Sera told me not to be a micro-manager, she's got it, but I really do want to check on the Natural. To be RAD, I miss my little cafe! I miss picking the playlist for the day and buying flowers to put in the little vases I put on

the tables and turning on the coffee maker. I miss the light that comes in through the window and the sound of the blender going for smoothies and... all the rest of it. I need to hire a new baker. And beyond the Natural, I guess I miss a few things. There are a few folks I used to have drinks with at the bar. Suzie, Jake, Laura. You don't know them. There was this one cashier at the food co-op, Guy, who used to hum this old Sam River's song "Beatrice" whenever I came in. He'd always say, "I'll hum it for you because there are no words." It was really funny.

I need to get vaccinated and it might be easier to do that in Moody. It's a pretty anti-vax energy here. People don't believe in putting anything that's not organic into the body and they don't trust the government. When ~~any~~ anyone brings up covid and getting the vaccine, Bob talks about the Tuskegee experiment. "You know the Tuskegee airmen trusted the government," he says and just shrugs. I had to look up what Tuskegee was. Bob hasn't told people NOT to get vaccinated, he's just questioned whether or not it's safe to let the government put some random chemical in our body. NO one, so far, has gotten a vaccination. I want to get vaccinated, though. I mean, my mother was a nurse.

Bea xo

P.S. Sammy is the first Black man I've had sex with.
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