

Birke Gorm

IOU

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We sat in(or outside/my flat/a park/a dimly lit room
a(cross from/next to/close to/entangled in/wrapped around
each other:

Blue rays of light entered the windows, where you'd neglected to install curtains, at the expense of the sleep of whoever guest would stay in your bed overnight. Turning the white bedsheets and nude bodies into canvases for projection. The images moving with every passing car on the street or rush of wind through the trees and electrical wires outside. You alternately watch each other sleep. Guarding companions in the wilderness at a fire after nightfall. Flames licking the air, causing shadow plays on: A burning face, in a frozen expression, of a sleeper. Your body begins to move in sudden jerks, your eyes start fluttering, opening wide: *Please tell me what's on your mind!*

I: want to be inside of you

I: want to know all of your most profound secrets, even if they are just like mine

I: want to dig into you, dig for your roots and extract your essence, to fill me up

I: was so empty before I knew you

U: could be inside me too, I have some space to offer

U: could become my content and I could share you as information with others

U: and

I: would reside inside of them and sponge on their assets, and they'd feel refilled like

I: did when I first met

U: and feel full and free to to pass on what we shared with them; what we shoved down their throats

O: ur experiences, our expressions, or gestures

When you start liking something, go deep: Start digging, build routines around it and perform rituals. Overdo it: Accumulate, accelerate and exaggerate until you're fed up. About to implode from the sudden internal pressure you've put on you. Subsequently: Relaxation or boredom.

Once, when we lived in a house with a tumble dryer, we'd play this game: You'd run from the dryer and throw the fresh laundry on me while it was still hot. I'd be cocooned by the pile of clean cotton and become somehow sedated. When I was caved in by all this soft matter, it was impossible to move. The game would end with you unwrapping me; shovelling through the heap of your own belongings, detecting my inanimate body at the bottom.

One day, you'd also become a pile of clothes – *a cloth* – by covering yourself with one. Lost in layers and a layer in the flesh. On the outside you were dull and woollen. Like a deflated, but soft and cushy piece of furniture: And like a piece of furniture you stayed at the same spot, as I walked past you day after day, only recognising you through your shapeshifting. You'd always look slightly different, somehow mouldable, like a chewing gum. An amount of matter that will never take the same shape twice, but can only look like itself. The smallest alterations of your second skin would remind me

of your body underneath, wrapped in sheets of withdrawal. Did you even exist when you were stashed away like that? Ironically, your dense surface was the perfect terrain for throwing reflections.

One day, when I'd had enough of my own projections, I pulled it aside, only to realise you'd left long ago. How did you manage to disappear under my close monitoring – did you really dematerialise?

I owe you, I should have protected us, I should have made us wear gloves, I should have covered our eyes with our glove-wearing hands, I should have wrapped us in sleeping bags, I should have put blankets, neoprene and bubble wrap around U.

