

THAT THING CALLED SABLAY: NOTES ON FIVE NIGHTS

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1. Scarlet streetlight slinks through the rain-dashed windowpane and the flimsy, checkered blue curtains of the bus to fall dappling on your eyelids and the ends of your long lashes, your cheekbones, your thick, barely parted lips. I look away, lean my head against the cold glass, and start falling into sleep. I land with a thud as you wake and call my name.
2. I press my cheek against your blanket, still oddly warm and smelling of bread and sleep and home. You stumble in at midnight, throw a heavy quilt over my chest, and grab a pillow before stretching out on a rug on the hardwood floor. I consider kicking the covers off the side of the bed and onto your yawning face.
3. Waking up in the half-dark lying not quite next to you, I ponder the distance of dreams and the boundaries of skin as I count the hours to daylight. I listen to the low hum of your breathing and watch the small movements of your limbs pulling at the covers, sweeping across the bed, shifting the planes and angles of your body. Your left hand disappears under the waistband of your shorts, tugging and twisting. Your eyes remain closed.

4. I rue the rain, the dogs howling in the courtyard, the almost-empty house, our pitch-dark room, the chilly air, the warm shower, the soft linen, the matrimonial bed, and you lying what seems like leagues away on a bench against the wall. I turn away from you to face the dresser mirror and curl like an ear into myself.

5. I consider the repercussions of laying my head on your shoulder as you snooze and start while the bus lumbers on. I make two or three attempts, closing the gap between my hair and your throat, slowly, slowly. You stir and tilt your head toward the aisle. I gaze out the window, longing for home.
