

10.

(The moors.)

(The MASTIFF and the MOOR-HEN.)

(She eats. He guards her. He's never been so at peace in the world. Mid-conversation.)

MASTIFF. ...But then sometimes I think, who would I be if I weren't depressed?

You know?

As if the thing that is making me myself is my own constant and unyielding misery. As if happiness is some sort of altered state, in which you're no longer quite yourself.

MOOR-HEN. What's "depressed" again?

MASTIFF. The squashed grub.

MOOR-HEN. Oh! That's right.

Why do you want to be a squashed grub again?

MASTIFF. Forget it.

MOOR-HEN. Say it again slower.

MASTIFF. You know, it actually doesn't matter.

MOOR-HEN. It doesn't?

MASTIFF. You're here now, so it doesn't.

MOOR-HEN. That's nice.

(Reflective beat.)

Is that nice?

MASTIFF. It's nice.

MOOR-HEN. Okay.

(Beat.)

MASTIFF. How's your leg?

MOOR-HEN. Still hurts.

MASTIFF. Are you sure you don't want some soup? Or a blanket?

MOOR-HEN. I'm fine.

MASTIFF. Or something sweet?

Or I could pick you some flowers.

MOOR-HEN. I'm perfectly fine.

MASTIFF. Or I could make you a bed out of hay and you could sleep in it.

MOOR-HEN. I'm okay. But thank you.

MASTIFF. I just want to help. I want to do things for you.

MOOR-HEN. You're already helping.

MASTIFF. Am I?

MOOR-HEN. Well, nothing has tried to eat me while you've been here.

MASTIFF. Well that's true.

(Beat.)

MOOR-HEN. Why do you want to do things for me?

MASTIFF. You make me feel good.

MOOR-HEN. You told me you feel like a grub.

MASTIFF. No, that's all the times that I'm not with you.

When I'm with you, I feel like the sky is much smaller, or else I'm much bigger, and all the things that were ready to swallow me are now possibly weaker than I am.

MOOR-HEN. *(Shy.)* When I'm with you...

(She stops.)

MASTIFF. What?

No what, say it.

MOOR-HEN. It's dumb.

MASTIFF. No it's not!

MOOR-HEN. You don't even know what I was going to say.

MASTIFF. It's not dumb.

Come on.

MOOR-HEN. I was just going to say...that when I'm with you... I can't.

MASTIFF. You can!

(They're both laughing.)

MOOR-HEN. This is so stupid.

MASTIFF. I won't look at you.

MOOR-HEN. Okay don't look.

(He looks away - in a rush:)

When I'm with you I feel like the space between taking off and landing. The sort of rush. The part before everything hurts.

MASTIFF. *(Very soberly.)* Do you really feel like that?

MOOR-HEN. I do.

MASTIFF. That makes me really happy.

That makes me feel like something I don't know how to describe.

MOOR-HEN. *(Gently.)* It's not forever though.

MASTIFF. What do you mean?

MOOR-HEN. It's just for now. Right?

MASTIFF. What are you talking about?

MOOR-HEN. Everything is a season. The rains are a season and the cold is a season and the heat is a very short season. Everything happens and then something else happens.

MASTIFF. The way I feel about you is not a "something else happens." It's an always.

MOOR-HEN. Listen.

You're wonderful.

But you're a very large dog, and your diet generally consists of...well. Things like me. And I know I'm not incredibly intelligent, and my short-term memory is - well. Short - But I don't really see this ending well.

MASTIFF. I would never ever hurt you.

MOOR-HEN. Every time I get up into the air, there's a moment in which all I feel is the wind rushing past me. It's very exciting and it feels very good. And I

believe that it is good. But even though I intend to stay UP UP UP, the DOWN always hits eventually.

MASTIFF. This isn't like that at all.

MOOR-HEN. All I mean is...

MASTIFF. *(Upset.)* This isn't gravity, this is love!

MOOR-HEN. Okay.

MASTIFF. Okay?

MOOR-HEN. Forget it.

(Beat.)

MASTIFF. I'll get you some hay. I'll make you a nest. And I'll take care of you. And even if it rains, you'll never get wet, and when the moor-wind blows, you'll never be cold, and I will stand over you and we will be so happy. Okay?

MOOR-HEN. I guess so.