

## 3.

*(The MASTIFF. Out on the moors.)*

*(He stares up at the sky.)*

*(The sky is bleak.)*

*(The light is very sharp and clear.)*

*(All of it extends forever.)*

*(Birds fly, high up and far away.)*

*(The MASTIFF is utterly alone.)*

**MASTIFF.** The pursuit of the ephemeral.

There is joy in it. To be sure.

Your fingers close around the thing,

it eludes you,

you desire more,

more eludes you,

frustration and ecstasy are nearly the same sensation.

Whole religions are based on this.

Also, it appears, relationships.

*(The MASTIFF closes his eyes.)*

“God.”

“Hello God.”

This is called prayer.

I talk, and you are silent.

Whole relationships are based on this as well.

*(A bird drops from the sky.)*

*(It is a MOOR-HEN.)*

*(It crash-lands.)*

**MOOR-HEN.** Ahhhh!

**MASTIFF.** You!

**MOOR-HEN.** I hate this!

**MASTIFF.** God!

**MOOR-HEN.** Flying! It's the worst!

...Sorry?

**MASTIFF.** It's you!

**MOOR-HEN.** Do we know each other?

**MASTIFF.** *(Double-takes.)* You look like a moor-hen.

**MOOR-HEN.** I am a moor-hen.

**MASTIFF.** Are you God, and *also* a moor-hen?

**MOOR-HEN.** This is a very circuitous line of questioning.

**MASTIFF.** I'm confused.

**MOOR-HEN.** I am a moor-hen. I hate flying. It makes me queasy. I hate landing. Well. No. I hate the take-off and I also hate the landing, but the actual part where I'm in the air, albeit brief, is not as hateful to me. In general. What were you asking me?

**MASTIFF.** Are you God or are you a moor-hen?

**MOOR-HEN.** What is...“God.”

**MASTIFF.** Or did God send you?

**MOOR-HEN.** Nobody sends me. I make my own decisions.

*(Beat. They take each other in. Cautiously.)*

This...“God.” It lives in the sky?

**MASTIFF.** Did you see Him on your way down?

**MOOR-HEN.** Is it a very large bird?

**MASTIFF.** I don't think so.

**MOOR-HEN.** But you saw it fly over?

**MASTIFF.** No, He lives there. The father of my house knew Him intimately.

**MOOR-HEN.** *(Baffled.)* Were you going to eat “God”?

**MASTIFF.** No! No. I just wanted to talk.

**MOOR-HEN.** I don't understand you at all.

*(She turns to go.)*

**MASTIFF.** Wait!

**MOOR-HEN.** What is it?

**MASTIFF.** What do you think of happiness?

**MOOR-HEN.** Of what-now?

**MASTIFF.** Happiness?

**MOOR-HEN.** I don't know what that is.

**MASTIFF.** It's this feeling like a clench, like a fist, like right where your heart is but further underneath. It hurts and then it's gone, and then you want it again.

**MOOR-HEN.** So...indigestion.

**MASTIFF.** I don't think...

**MOOR-HEN.** Or hunger.

**MASTIFF.** Not exactly...

**MOOR-HEN.** Like in the winters when there aren't enough berries or seeds or anything really and the clench-knot-fist in your stomach area hurts. And then spring comes! And there are berries and seeds. And bugs. Fat grubby grubs. And it goes away.

**MASTIFF.** No.

**MOOR-HEN.** Oh.

Then...no.

*(Turns to go.)*

**MASTIFF.** Wait!

**MOOR-HEN.** Wait what!

**MASTIFF.** I just want to talk to you.

**MOOR-HEN.** You're very large. You look very large. You look like perhaps something that might eat me.

**MASTIFF.** I don't intend to.

**MOOR-HEN.** But you admit that you are very large?

**MASTIFF.** I guess so.

**MOOR-HEN.** Well, there you go.

*(The MOOR-HEN turns to go.)*

**MASTIFF.** I'm very lonely.

**MOOR-HEN.** You're...what-now?

**MASTIFF.** Lonely. It's that thing - that clench - that fist in your stomach except this time it *doesn't* go away, and you *don't* want it.

**MOOR-HEN.** You're hungry. And I'm small. And I think I should go now.

*(The MOOR-HEN leaves.)*

*(The MASTIFF sits alone.)*

**MASTIFF.** Well.

That didn't go very well.

The moors swallow all the sound.

We don't even hear our own intentions, after a time.

We're just filled with the sound of things getting lost.