

“I Miss You” by Ana Blandiana

When we're far apart and I say 'I miss you', I make no claims that you are greater than the world around me, that you stand for something higher, cleaner, closer to truth and virtue - I say only that it is *you* that I need, that without *you* I cannot survive. This world of ours is full of wonders, but you are my own miracle, the only one that binds me to this earth. Our bond, like a taut cord, vibrates painfully when I am proud of you, and even more so when I am not, but if it were to snap I would be hurled, desolate, into the universe. Our tie is essentially ineffable: I could never find the words to explain it to those dwelling on another planet.

I could say that 'you're dear to me' but that would express almost nothing of all I feel, because love is built on grand, precise laws, because I love you like a daughter and I love you like a mother, because my love melds together contradictions like the explosive elements in lava: rebellion and submission, embarrassment and esteem... Should I try to judge you, I would end by condemning myself, as I feel accountable for your every breath, for each awkward quiver of your wings. I only say 'I miss you.'

You are the ultimate abstraction. You are not the street - long forgotten - of my childhood, or the names of the mountains I learned by rote, or a particular seashore; you are not a contour on a map or the ancestors that filed through your land before I was born; none of these haunt my mind when my eyes flood with baffling tears as I call out your name.

I say 'I miss you' yet I know not the destination towards which my nostalgia surges, whether it's a forest, a field or a river. I say 'I miss you' and I feel your grace descending from above, enveloping me, I miss you when I'm far away and I miss you when I'm in your bosom, I miss you because I can never get close enough to what you are, I miss you interminably and dread that cruellest moment when we might drift away from one another and I cry out: 'My country, where are you?'

Translated by Gabi Reigh

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