



Momentum by Daniel Cheung

Julianna walking at night

Isobel Sinclair

I know a girl whose boyfriend has never made her come. They have been together since she was in tenth grade. She is now in her second year of university.

I shouldn't know this. I have looked her in the eyes. Her friend, who I was kissing and holding hands with at the time (things we no longer do), told me this as a sort of promise. In telling me this pitiful secret, I was a trusted person, implying that there was no future where I would not be the person that she would tell all her friends' painful truths to. That there was no universe in which I would have this in my head and yet never talk to her again.

How does one act as if forever could happen and yet know that it won't?

I have a friend that walks at night with a cigarette in her pocket. She does not smoke it, but it feels right to have it there. The cameras are on her, at a perfect distance to catch the ambient light and the chosen silence. She has a baseball hat from her hometown and a smudge of eyeliner. She is the feeling of looking out a dirty subway window at the world falling back. Her clothes never fit, yet in a way they always do. I covet her.

She ignores the omniscient stare, as if it's not in her head. It follows, lining up the shot, editing the footage as she walks. She is watching herself. She is watching herself watch herself. The people all pass by, but the focus stays on her. Her head nods to music that only she can hear. But we can hear it too. The Strokes, that one song your dad always turns up when it is on the radio, some instrumental from a cult classic movie. She kicks her foot. The night it is? hers in a way in it never has been before.

There is a girl with a sheet of plastic over a back window in her car. She punched it out herself. She says her car will break down any day now while she is driving me home in the snow. I bite my lip.

Three and a half hours in a movie theatre, shoulders touching. The sour candy burned at my tongue. Nothing felt stilted. Not like I had known her my whole life, but rather that we could begin that now. That lives could begin in the middle.

She has spiders in her hair. And an elfish smile that catches me off guard. Hopefully the goodbye is not too hard.

She knows the girl who over the summer between fourth and fifth grade decided not to be my best friend. It is only when I learned this that I realised the wound had completely healed. What is forever is not always forever.

To say I have a friend who is dating a man in his thirties is to say that we still speak.

He was in his early teens when we were born. He was learning about the female anatomy in biology class while she was still in the womb. She could not legally drink when they met.

My roommate has told me to look at her boyfriend's ass. I will remember for the next time I see him, but she might need to remind me. I don't make a habit of staring at men's asses. They offer very little in the way of entertainment.

She laughs through the wall. She talks for hours. I lay down and listen. It passes the time.

There was a girl who played violin. Because of me, she didn't have the time anymore.

Now I don't take up any of her time. I hope she is playing the violin.