

It Isn't All For Me?

Dearest,

Why have you not responded? This is my third letter this month, but I will continue to tell you what I have done for you.

Last week I was an auburn tongue, and I dragged myself across a stage of red dirt, dry and cracked, and wedging itself between my teeth. I was born of a white bolt of heat, spat against brown grass carcasses in the breath of a pale lightning strike. I uprooted withered and whimpering vegetation, singed it and smoothed it back into a cradle of charcoal ruin. In the finale, I was magnificent. I was unprecedented. I grew so large and so tall, and I towered over the Banksias and Bottlebrush, over the forest canopy. I tore through the Eucalyptus, threaded myself through an undulating mop of silver leaves. People stood at my edges, where flame dipped down into small orange dancers, but their limp bodies and caved knees only let them sink into the ground. They did not drop in admiration. The cries were not celebratory. There was not even an applause. I am writing this questioning. Do you know why?

Maybe I did not grow large enough? Or burn at the right intensity? Did I let too much fauna slip out of the side curtain before the final inferno? Elude my blazing grasp before the closing act? Should I have reached up to pluck the fleeing birds out from an ashen sky? You made the landscape dry and the temperature scorching even in spring, even in autumn. I know, I should have used that better. But, I promise, I will visit more often. I will continue to change the forest composition. I will decrease vegetation diversity. I will diminish the seed bank.

This morning, a family ran from me, and panicked, panicked, there were soft whispers uttered against my cheek. They said *how could you*. They pleaded with me to *take it back*. So much desperation and repulse in the inflection, I had to tell you.

They were warned of my arrival, saw me fall from the sky for days before I transpired into a running body, cool and brown and feathered with fallen trees. An elegiac chorus, the unheard monologues of seized cars, drowned power lines, and unearthed soil contaminants. The family watched me crawl closer to their property, and just as I wordlessly slipped through the chicken-wire fence, their hollow eyes rolled up into sockets of dread, clear liquid running from each blank stare. They stood with a group of others on a nearby hill as I surrounded their house, took the old white panel-board walls into my arms and dragged it all beneath me. Their mouths flung wide enough that I could see the outline of their sobs before they were thrown into the air. Why did they cry? I took it gently, gently, but with such power. I unfurled my eddies into unopposable currents, tidepool fingertips circling a most ethereal destruction. I was strong and unwavering, and I did not falter or fail to consume it all. Why did they, then, leer at me with faces honeycombed in horror? Why were they so gutturally pained? I do not understand you.

This was a letter to tell you what I had done for you, but I cannot help but question your actions. Why do you make the atmosphere warmer, if it is not to hold more precipitation? Why are the rains so full, if I am not to become a flood? Why are the forests so dry, if not to be burned?

Why does the vegetation cry, if not to be kissed into silence?
Why are the oceans rising if I am not to sink small islands?
Why do you continue to burn coal, if not to increase global temperatures?
Why do you continue this cycle it appears you do not enjoy?
For every ardent act of fulfilment, why am I never met with praise?
Why don't you commend me when you are the one who has given me every stage direction?
Every perfectly constructed environmental condition.

Have I not done what you wanted me to do?

This is an unrequited love. And this is my love letter to a race that has birthed me, fed me, and is afraid of me now I have eaten. I have consumed, I have consumed, I have consumed. Everything you have given me. The emissions. The UV radiation. The desiccating soils cursing your name. I have bathed in the warmer waters and drunk the excesses of your insatiable actions. Swallowed it all down. A sea of anthropogenic alterations left in the nail marks of an unrelenting exploitation.

What, it isn't all for me?

Despite your confounding behaviour, you have my love, foreseeably into the future.
Your Changing Climate.