

the river sings



day mattar

NEW MOON SCORPIO ●

I don't think I could bear the Irish Sea
at the backs of my knees reaching
for the soft inside of my thigh
white froth forming a garter
crease just under my butt cheek
licked cool at this point
shuddering the sweetness of tremble
forced out by the guttural 'shud'
steel gate of my body slammed shut
pushed hard against and still
she rises swarms the tender places
as if with love as if in apology
for absence and in my life
i have never been so forgiving
is this what the artist intended
when he stationed one hundred iron models of himself
at the mouth of the Mersey offered his likeness
one hundred times to the tide one hundred tall promises
to imagine what love
leans into the cold hand closing around its neck
what strength sealed in sand stands still
while rust unfastens its face what truth
while gale force while gull shite
while everybody watches drowns gently
surrenders gestureless

WAXING CRESCENT 🌙 1%

the river
of your body
punctured

by the blue
arrow
of a fish

the punctuation
of bird song
the swaying

reeds
of the hair
on your forearm

WAXING CRESCENT 🌙 4%

screen reads *death in the thousands*

sun lowered at the window

pouring into my mug tiny cream eclipse

eddying in the blackbrown of coffee

i try my imagination for one thousand bodies but

five magpies shuffle across the window ledge

d'you think they wonder where we went?

key change in the song

one dives and the others follow

nonsense no emotional sense about any of this look!

a man in red socks! walking his sand coloured dog!

do you think wind understands barrelling after him

that it's against the law to hold his hand

it is forbidden to touch his face

WAXING CRESCENT  10%

the touched
pond
of your eyes

windows
of sky
gazed through

dot-
to-dot
of rain

thunder
clearing its
throat

WAXING CRESCENT 🌙 19%

three ivy's hang lifeless
over their pots root rot
forgot to water them high up on their shelf
then panicked and watered too much waterlogged
the lovely hearts of their leaves soured yellow
by neglect dry paleness
more like dust barely casting shadow
lamp light from both sides of the couch ivy
saying look you killed three living things
but sometimes the things we love! [stop]
don't make this a love poem
this isn't a love poem it's about grief
write the poem about grief
about the plants you drowned in it

WAXING CRESCENT  28%

the valley
of your back
abandoned

its lakes emptied
of boats
and the oars

of tongues
its surface
scarred now

only by the
spooked geese
of wind

WAXING CRESCENT 🌙 39%

streetlamp outside my house
strains against the sun's raised fist
refuses to dim quietly stoic
quietly sad one bleary bulb
searching the quiet street i think about sex
about its body if it had one sustained only with want
i think about the sweet stupidity of its bright mouth teased open
its dazed and truly beautiful face
snuffed in the open palm
of any available man sex
panicked now by sudden neglect
frenzied in this famine of touch
apps deleted contacts wiped
dragging the match of itself across the wantless sky

FIRST QUARTER 🌕 49%

moon's

thumped eye

wincing

through

the parted legs

of a steel bridge

river reaching

for the open palm

of a brown leaf

lowered

lightly

in kindness

WAXING GIBBOUS 🌕 60%

[in this order] take off any clothes
nudge open a gap in the window turn the tap
and hold a finger under the running cold [allow yourself
to become cold] allow wind
to titter in through the window's slim parting
[notice it] circle the room lightly then harder louder
until a succession of excited swallows [do you see?]
looping your shoulders [can you feel?]
flipping your collarbone
clipping your elbow arousing goosebumps
in ripples up from forearm to tricep
right down along the seams where the muscles meet
this is your skin
huddling hardening
against the world and its threats [see
how far you've travelled how protected]

WAXING GIBBOUS 🌕 69%

translucent

helmet

of the waxed moon

resisting

the blue sky

tree root of your

raised brow

stirring the sleeping owl

snoozing

in the hollow

of your parted

mouth

WAXING GIBBOUS 🌕 78%

where is

everyone? question marks

gush down my face *where are the*

people where are the bodies?

the question marks sprout legs and stand up

where's my brother?

my sister? i straighten an escaped question

into a scalpel scribbling

where? into my torso

i sweep the runaways with a brush and shovel gulping

mum? dad?

into the pan *you can't*

have gone far where

are you? tipping question marks into the sink

pouring boiling water in to watch them shrink

shrivel like hair held over a flame *what*

is we? hiss the puddle of writhing questions *what is*

i? gooey syrup of their bodies sucked

into the open mouth of the drain *what*

is you without them?

WAXING GIBBOUS 🌕 85%

sleep's white

page torn

down the middle

trumpet siren of seagulls

harping

on concrete

grounded

by hunger

one desperate rogue

protecting its ripped open

bin bag six others circling

closing in

WAXING GIBBOUS 🌕 91%

the sun goes down over the Mersey
i pull ten keys from a miniature piano
and fix them to my eyelashes with glue
i play an overture blinking madly
leaning into the black paint-cracked railings
madly blinking a polaroid slips out from a tear duct
and it's you love smiling at me adoringly from the floppy film
but then love it's me smiling adoringly
gillette razors for teeth bar of soap for a tongue
sirens whining every time I open my mouth
and every time i lift a finger a puppy loses its breath
turns into a coat which i slip on to murder you to murder me
i am never going to be able to write properly about love

WAXING GIBBOUS 🌙 96%

dagger
of lightning
stutters across the

quilt of sky
storms seams
split

hail
clattering like
teeth

the suggestion
of touch
of violence

WAXING GIBBOUS 🌕 99%

even if the curious sound tells you to [touch
your mouth] do not touch your mouth!
oval shaped cavity in the skull [i might
bite you with it i might tell you
that your hair smells nice and that i love you]
we use our mouths to deliver our expressions so
are we the mouths of the earth? what it uses to express itself
is the earth the mouth of stars? one blue flower
in the garden of stars our one bright expression
and on this earth our mums in their gardens
planting their bulbs and we
the plea they express over and over
[do not touch your mouth]

FULL MOON LUNAR ECLIPSE GEMINI 🌕

circle
of torch light
through bed sheets

or moon
lost adrift
in fog

WANING GIBBOUS 🌘 99%

outdoor seated café pandemic

i write the wrong date in my diary four days into the future

seagulls stalk the rooftops the grey sky slides

across the dark reflective glass of a volkswagen

we are going to die this doesn't devastate me

chirp of baby chuckle a family

leaving through the front door of a café child held up

by its mother kissed on the forehead by its grandfather

i bump fists with a man who walks the streets tells me

he doesn't take off his coat even in summer

afraid it might be stolen we are going to die

and some of us can forget this briefly

some of us carry its smooth stone around with us

the cool fact of its weight

round a neck pressing soft

reminding us

to get the living done

WANING GIBBOUS 🌘 97%

sweet moon

moaning

lonely

through dark matter

sad white coin

eternally tossed

solitary stalk

glowing

at waters edge

dipping

as if in prayer one gulp

then another

WANING GIBBOUS 🌘 93%

i pee against the turned backs of three evergreens
on a cold day in sefton park the piss leaves my body
hot through the limp tissue not raged
by blood pitiful and functional
it leaves the way so many things depart the body
stress sweat
song sigh
curse touch
and on a day where I am unsure of any goodness in me
my piss leaps smacks thrills each bold leaf
glossing its green skin bouncing
then streaming down stem the heat from my body
sprawling among soil rising in steam
like curious midges
alive and off

WANING GIBBOUS 🌙 87%

mum's face

swaying

in the yellow

of a flower

goldfinch looping

ellipses

around its tree

the clouds receding

are a language

the lapping water

is your laughter you cry

and the river sings

WANING GIBBOUS 🌘 79%

it keeps nearly bolting up out of me

love you like an escaped balloon

into the blue afternoon

but tugs tethered to its shame

i can imagine it's bright sequin catching light over the rooftops

love you exposing itself sputtering on the stoop

its raspberry face gleaming embarrassing me

embarrassing you cross legged on your cushion

calf like mango knuckles like grapes

that one pointed nail on your thumb that weirds me out

used for strumming the part of you part song

sat here with me quiet and grateful for a little sun

a little company no thought or feeling to chisel into language

any love you might have passed between us casually

the way music is heard but not really understood

not understood but experienced

WANING GIBBOUS 🌘 71%

freckles
on the dome
of your knee

its smattering
of caramel stars
in a sepia sky

the sheer drop
from the cliffs
of your shoulders

into the
brook
of your elbow

pluck
of guitar string
like a fence

dove from
the thrill of birds
scattering

then merging
murmuration
coiling into chord

WANING GIBBOUS 🌘 61%

[look] how you hold
this phone [look]
how your hand
adapts to protect
weight evenly spread
along fingers [feel]
how the pillowed pads
of the tips lightly
press into its back
thumb curled
stroking soothing
mimic the shape
[do this]
with your other hand
acknowledge the softness
of the palm [consider]
what small animal
might sleep here?
[wonder] when
did i last embrace
a living thing? [now
raise your hand
to your cheek]

LAST QUARTER 🌘 51%

moon

balanced

on the neck

of a chimney

like the pale melons

mum loves so much

take me to the garden

sun on my white ankles

white school socks

wedge of honeydew

wet on a

white plate

WANING CRESCENT 🌙 40%

candle flame shimmying against green glass
the suggestion of dance
in two jugs two gifts from a lover
splashing colour against a white wall
takes me back to Townsville Australia tent life
my best friend's silhouette
thrown up in lamp light against the tarp
winding her hips hair wrapped in a towel
i am in love with her face
straining against pixels on my phone screen
against poor connection against distance
against the sting of my history cracking its whips
any softness falling about me like frightened fawn
sometimes i'm in love with my life in love with these pains
which pass between us the shores of our bodies
marked by their movements your pain
into mine yours mine

WANING CRESCENT 🌘 29%

a bee
hesitates
before landing

on your hand
it's wing breath
cooling

the soft spot
between finger
and thumb

WANING CRESCENT 🌙 19%

scar on my knuckle an opal comma
embossed to remind me to pause
before splitting the shower panel
white lines on the page of my wrist
so that i might ponder
longer consider otherwise
the ploughed fields of my pale thighs
these days i'm more careful with my body
or maybe it has more to do with pleasure
the two candles of my nipples glistening
untouched in the collapsed church where i pray
forgetting what it feels like
to tip the glass jug of my face toward a
truly wanting mouth if there are any gods
they did not put us here to talk they put us here
to touch and if all we have is talk
then put my actual voice inside you tell god
*i would exist without my religious upbringing i would exist
without my parents as the thought of a person
i am the gesture of touch on a downturned face
in some lightless window not the hand
but the flower behind it*

WANING CRESCENT 🌘 11%

the stars sit still
and observe us
the flowers undress

and nod
with the bowing trees
your body

rolls into the curves
of mine calm
and large as blindness

or death i'm aware
of the great atlas
of you

WANING CRESCENT SAGITTARIUS ●

open the window tie yourself to a balloon and let go
leave an eye on the windowsill watch yourself pirouette
slowly away into a cloud
become a cloud!
spongy chunks of knee skull shoulder
softening pulling apart like continents
pass quietly over your house waking no one
sail over a mountain that cannot be climbed and crown it
anchor at the river trapped in its bed sigh into a downpour watch it flood
the earth you love the people you miss charge back to them
touch everything swamp every letterbox fill every phone-booth flush any open mouth
pelicans everywhere glugging mouthfuls of you down their long white necks
find mum in the garden
crouched over the soaked buddleia
and anoint her worried head