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OPEN LETTERS TO PEOPLE OR ENTITIES WHO ARE
UNLIKELY TO RESPOND

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SUBSTITUTE YOGA TEACHER WHO WON'T STOP WITH THE IMAGERY

by LI ROBBINS

Dear Substitute Yoga Teacher Who Won't Stop With The Imagery,

It's not like you're the first. Other substitute teachers have come out with some real dillys too. Who can forget "think of your spine as a flexible snake in space?" So I expect people subbing for the regular, non-imagery-inclined-teacher to spout wacky shit.

But the problem with you, Substitute Teacher Who Won't Stop With The Imagery, is that your lust for describing things by what they are not is like a runaway train careening through my body-as-temple on wings of steel. (Accompanied by bouts of psychotic ujjayi breathing.)

It begins as soon as you walk in the door. Like all of us, you've already had some mundane thing happen that day, but your mundane thing is inspirational, annoying in itself. Say you walked the dog and it was sunny. Sun + pet = return to simplicity and unbridled panting. Or maybe the dog ate lots of grass. (Filling the void, freeing the void... something about a heaving void.) Your daily life/revelation is difficult to ignore as you walk among us, a Lululemon clad priestess (to use language you might understand), dispensing epiphanies and the faintest whiff of dog.

Today you told us you played your flute at dawn, prompting the revelation that we are all instruments, all the time. As we began in cross-legged position you observed that our "sits bones" are like that prong thing at the base of a cello. Try as I might, thinking "my ass is a cello" did not help me sit up any straighter. By the time we got to forward lunge with inner thighs conducting prana so as to vibrate the jiggly bits like violin strings, I had an urge to remind you that strings can snap, but kept schtum since I was trying to play my instrument pianissimo. Forte gets you kicked out of yoga.

The first time you appeared it was on Canada's national holiday called, cleverly, "Canada Day." It has no traditions other than sleeping late and drinking. Us regulars dragged our sorry cellos out of bed and came to yoga anyway; little knowing that while in triangle position we'd be forced to view one extremity as Vancouver, the other as Halifax. (I guess even you aren't flexible enough to cross the Gulf of St. Lawrence to Newfoundland.) I had to do a meditation on vodka tonics just to try and block out the imagery, but the stress of trying to relax with you in the room made me strain a muscle in Halifax anyway.

So here's the thing. I don't want to think of my kneecaps rising like excited birds in flight just because you happened to see cormorants wheeling across the city as if someone were hunting them (which maybe someone was because they're really filthy birds). I don't want to embrace risk with my heart center because your house offer fell through. (Since when can a yoga teacher afford to buy a house?). I just want to do the goddamn yoga. So please stop with the imagery, already.

Sincerely,
Li Robbins