

Lily Akerman
Dublin / New York

DEAR READER,

I'M ON THE PLANE BACK TO NEW YORK, OBSERVING MY IN-FLIGHT RITUALS:



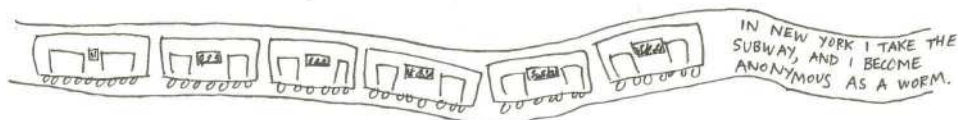
SOMEHOW DURING THESE RITES I'M TRANSPORTED/TRANSPosed/TRANSFORMED FROM DUBLIN TO NEW YORK, 2ND HOME TO 1ST HOME, FOREIGNER TO NATIVE...

LIKE AN ACTOR IN HER DRESSING ROOM, PUTTING ON HER OLD COSTUME



NOGUCHI (THE SCULPTOR) SAID THAT WHEN HE WORKED IN HEAVY GRANITE, HE BECAME HEAVY IN THOUGHT AND EMOTION.

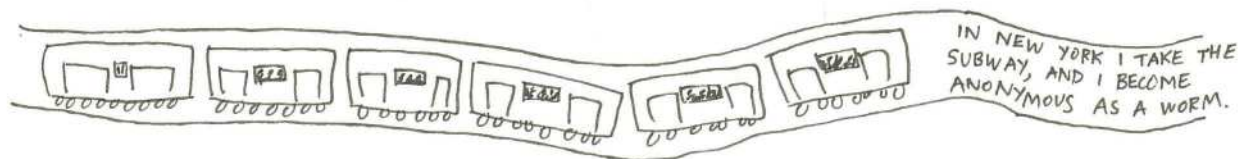
LIKE SO - I FEEL INSUPERABLE AT THE TOP OF A MOUNTAIN, AND HUMBLE AT THE BOTTOM, AND MY THOUGHTS TEND TO STAGNATE WHEN I'M AT MY DESK, BUT THEY BARREL ALONG WHEN I'M ON A TRAIN...



IF THIS PLANE IS MY DRESSING ROOM, I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I'M GETTING INTO CHARACTER, OR OUT OF CHARACTER, OR JUST SWITCHING FROM ROLE TO ROLE.

ABOUT TO BEGIN THE DESCENT.

YOURS, LILY



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GETTING INTO CHARACTER, OR OUT OF CHARACTER, OR JUST SWITCHING FROM
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ABOUT TO BEGIN THE DESCENT.

YOURS, LILY

¹ This is the first fully illustrated letter we've published, and it seemed appropriate to show it to you in full rather than stick to our usual format of a transcription with a teasing fragment of the original. But for those of you uncomfortable with even the neatest of handwriting (and Lily does have particularly legible handwriting here, we think you'll agree), here is a transcription of her text:

'Dear Reader,

I'm on the plane back to New York, observing my in-flight rituals: watch mediocre rom-com; attempt to sleep, head on window, head on tray table; wait for beverages to roll by; drink cranberry juice from plastic chalice; write...

Somehow during these rites I'm transported/transposed/transformed from Dublin to New York, 2nd home to 1st home, foreigner to native...

Like an actor in her dressing room, putting on her old costume.

No-one will notice me changing here, because the changes are internal.

Noguchi (the sculptor) said that when he worked in heavy granite, he became heavy in thought and emotion.

Like so – I feel insuperable at the top of a mountain, and humble at the bottom, and

my thoughts tend to stagnate when I'm at my desk, but they barrel along when I'm on a train.

Winter hardens me.

Spring makes me angsty.

Cycling through Dublin, I feel light.

In New York I take the subway, and I become anonymous as a worm.

If this plane is my dressing room, I don't know whether I'm getting into character, or out of character, or just switching from role to role.

About to begin the descent.

Yours, Lily.'

² Lily Akerman is a writer, lyricist, illustrator, and puppeteer. She graduated from Princeton University with a degree in Comparative Literature, with certificates in Theatre and Creative Writing. She is currently living in Dublin on a Fulbright Scholarship to write lyrics. She tells us that she has not actually been home since arriving in Dublin a year ago, so the setting of her piece is fictional. In her mind, she says, she often lives between two places. Her poetry has been published in *The Stinging Fly* and *The Pickled Body*. This is her first published illustration, and indeed ours. Lily Akerman divides her time between Dublin and New York.