

—| **LEAH RAE** | Hot Ticket Tuesdays

1

Every night we spent together
was a Tuesday.

I was never your Saturday night,
I was a half-price double feature,
a mid-week gamble.

I was your Hot Ticket Tuesday.

2

The night we met, you got me drunk.

You coaxed whiskey down my throat
and smirked at me sideways,
your eyes making promises
your body would never deliver.

3

On our first date there was a blackout.

This is what I remember:
ordering from a menu
I didn't understand (it was in Mandarin),
leaning into you at the movie theatre
so that I could read the subtitles.
You told me that Cantonese
is the hardest language to sing in.

You pointed out the park by my house where you
got arrested for playing Hamlet.
You opened the door for me.
I think you winked at me.

The traffic lights were blinking red Cyclops
as you drove me home.
We stopped at a store.
You bought cigarettes,
I bought grape bubble gum.
I hugged you and
memorized your smell: wool and smoke.

After we said goodbye
(no kiss, that would come later)
I navigated my way down the hall
to my apartment with my fingers,
the walls were the veins of an ancient tomb.
The Guardian Angel candle glowed at the entrance.
I wrapped myself in flannel pajamas,
goose down and maroon curtains.
Your face was projected on the backs of my eyelids.
I made a list of all the things you said to me.

I waited for the lights to come on.

4

On our second date
you took me to the ocean
and slowly cracked my chest open like an oyster,
slurped out my heart
still wet and raw.

You wrapped me in a blanket that smelled of dogs
and told me you could never love me,
then asked if anyone had ever broken my heart.

I couldn't help wondering
if all Catholics
have such soft hands.

5

On September 11th
I went to see you in a play about Grimm's fairy tales.
You became a giant on stage,
a goblin, a ghost.

Afterwards, you wrapped
your sweaty arms around me,
let me wash the white make-up from behind
your ears.

We drank beer by the ocean,
spoke of airplanes threading
through the eyes of buildings.

There was devastation.
I was a fire, my bones snapping kindling.

Drunk and warm under the afternoon sun
I wished you would peel the clothes off me
and lick my salty body.

God help us, I thought.
The best thing we can do now is fall in love.

6

The last time I saw you was on Thanksgiving.
You stood on the balcony blowing smoke rings,
ignoring me.

You didn't drink.

7

I'd like to say that I'd forgotten about you,
but I haven't.

I brought you with me to Notre Dame
and the Tower of London,
carried you under the English Channel,
over the Atlantic.

I never spoke your name.

And so I submit
to being
your reluctant Ophelia,
teetering,
ready to throw myself into
the open arms of Le Seine,
the closed eyes of the Thames,
for one more cold night.

8

I'm still waiting
for those whiskey promises,
those Hot Ticket Tuesdays,
when I let my love spill over you like a flood,
a blushing geyser
we both stood witness to.