



BLOC PARTY.
INTIMACY

Bloc Party

“Signs”

Intimacy

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Wichita

Signs Now All the Time

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I used to be in love. He was the boy at the gas station when my friends and I walked there from getting stoned at the park, the boy sitting on the curb. My friends wanted cigarettes, went in with their fake IDs, left me outside. The boy on the curb had cool sneakers.

I like your shoes, I said.

I can't remember his answer. I want to remember, so badly, what he said, *thanks*, maybe, or *nice hair*, or something, this time, the first time I heard his voice.

There's this song by Bloc Party, this song, *Signs*. It's a love song about a dead girl. Or I think it is.

Two ravens in the old oak tree, one for you and one for me.

Bluebells in the late December, I see signs now all the time.

He liked to meet me downtown, hung out on the courthouse lawn with his friends. There was a water fountain no one ever drank from. We'd sit on the curb beside it. Went to the movies, sometimes, the 24-hour diner up the street.

The first time he kissed me, we were sitting on the curb by the water fountain. He grabbed my hair, pulled me toward him. He did it in this gentle way, kept his hands in my hair the whole time we kissed. All these cars going past when the lights changed; drunks stumbling round from bar to bar, and they seemed so old to me then, catcalling us sitting on the curb; girls in torn jeans and black eyeliner, looking at us, at him mostly, wondering what he was doing with someone like me.

I closed my eyes. When I opened them again, he was looking at me.

One night, I went to his place, lay down in his bed with him. Rested my head on his chest, listened to the sound of his heartbeat.

There'd been another girl there before me. He told her to leave when I came, said: *Leave, you're bugging me.*

The girl laughed, stayed on his couch with the television playing.

I didn't know who she was. Took his hand, followed him to his bedroom. I could hear the sound of the television through the wall.

He said: *You have these eyes. You always look like you're about to cry.*

He got married. It was this girl I met at college. We'd dated all the same guys in high school, dark-haired girls who cried easy, had wrists thin as toothpicks, wore shirts too big. She smelled like apples. It was her shampoo, she said, played with her hair in class.

He got married to her and they moved to Portland.

Then he died.

You never wanted to alarm me

But I'm the one that's drowning now.

I didn't know he was dead at first. No one knew. People kept telling his parents they saw him, *just the other day, on the street*. Saying that he was in hiding, saying he didn't want to be found.

He's fine, they said. *He's fine*.

Then I had this dream about him. He was sitting on the curb outside the door of the comic book store I'd just gotten a job at, boy always sitting on the curb. I was so happy to see him, so relieved, so angry.

Where have you been? Everyone's been so worried about you.

He said: *You don't have to worry about me anymore.*

It took them four months.

They found his body in the river.

I could sleep forever these days because in my dreams I see you again....

It was so like you to visit me, to let me know you were okay.

The last time I saw him, he was about to get married. He was engaged, *can you believe that?*, and I couldn't, not someone like him.

He needed a ride; I gave him a ride. Dropped him off by the courthouse water fountain. Kissed him there again. I didn't care that he was getting married to that girl who looked like me, kissed him on the sidewalk where anyone could see us, let him tug my hair.

Don't tell, okay? he said when he left.

I said: *Who would I tell?*

I can't even remember his face anymore. Pretend I do when I look at his obituary photo. He is flat, in my memory; he is a newspaper page. Yellowing and ancient. I am always trying to put him together from these pieces I've kept, the things he'd given me that I've lost. Always hoping he will come to visit me again in my dreams, to tell me, just one more time, I don't need to worry about him. Not anymore.

I see signs now all the time, that you're not dead, you're sleeping.

I believe in anything that brings you back home to me.