

between the lines (2023) F Johnson Ross

bzzzzz

bzzzzz

I think we have a problem [you're a problem]

I'm not sure what this will mean for what I want to say [to you] this afternoon

oh I am sorry to hear that
[finally things can fall apart!]

on the 21st of december, I noted the solstice and thought – I would like to get off, this year. it was probably too late to buy one of the sad lamps you had sent me a link to and that I had dismissed as too expensive. expensive, and I also doubted my ability to sit still for long enough with a bright sheet close to my face for it to make a difference.

your ability to sit still?

well you can't tie the light sheet to your face, I don't think [chuhh]
I didn't see any with that feature on your list. or on any I had already *checks script* researched

in breath

I actually wanted to talk about the noise

oh, really?
[why??]

yes, I can't stop thinking about it, that buzzing. I've had some thoughts

okay
shall we put some time in the diary?

okay
[now?]

you don't sound happy about that? [ffs]

mmm
no
that's fine [it's not fine, it matters to me now]
when do you have time?

Now. Just enjoy. Now. now now now now. It seems like a simple enough instruction & question & answer and yet we struggle, and laugh, simultaneously when presented with it.

Bejewelled, anointed granite hard time held up. And yet, this cursed meaning slopping out. A still indefinable thing: is it formless or is it just empty?

NOTE TO SELF: pick up milk, medication, states of consciousness. the gift ofnowness and also Black Friday. things and thoughts and concepts we pick up without even knowing what they are and then they flow through us. [they spill out]

sigh
I feel like I've been sitting here for a thousand years and it isn't even time for lunch yet
[am I hungry?]

a rose, a rose, is a rai-ai-sin

so everything can fall apart

[no. I'm still holding my pen]

I've been sitting still for so long a fly lands on my face. It doesn't move even when I flinch and I have to brush it off with my hand. I wonder if it was attracted by my new lip balm. I lick my lips unconsciously.

[can I kill it?]

[that's a bit dark]

the phone rings but when it does the noise you hear is a buzz because it is 'on silent'

I can sense the vibrations, like halos interacting. while we sit here with the buzzing between us.

bzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

it's a problem [you're a problem]

[paying attention to this]

[reading closely]

[eyes scanning the screen]

[eyes scanning the screen]

[watching your face]

[blinking]

[watching]

I'm not smiling, you're smiling!

No but really I'm not smiling, I need to sort that out.

Just grin and bear it. Punching bears, punching crocodiles. Female violence lauded when it's landing one on an angry creature en plein air, otherwise not so much. Hiding in plain sight, no time to check it's just there, all the time, around you. Then suddenly the gleaming snap, schrrRRK

In the labour room, active waiting. Uncomfy chairs + I can hear the woman next door. Screaming, waning. Screaming, waning. Now screaming screaming. There's no space for cover, or pause to think, for that matter. It's just matter over matter over matter. And then they leave you alone and you're to find out what to do yourself. No sleep, of course, did you not read the signs?

Lions wander across the cycle path as naturally as if they had invented and then rejected bikes.

My brain squeaks, turns: something falls out. I think something has fallen out.

citation trails, the more you are cited the more you are cited the more you must be cited. properly cited.

where did you get that from?

silence hangs

where did you get that from? [that shouldn't be there]

smile

who decides what a word can do?

stick to the script!

a gentle flex and bend, a surprise, a deliberate strategic insertion: oops...

Honestly, don't spend too much time on the reading list, spend time on the reading.

I don't follow... [It doesn't follow]

pause

look

well I mean

[I don't agree. I don't want to follow.]

bzzz bzzz

thwack

what's the use, they'll only come back again

'the willingness to register the impact of violence, so that the registering is also the creation of a possibility for being otherwise'
[serious question]

laugh

is that a serious question?

I'm going to be late [I don't want to discuss it]

are we postponing our meeting then?

whatever I'm doing I seem to be missing something [I'm willing to miss it]

the sensation of reading and listening simultaneously. the sensation of reading and scrolling and reading and scrolling and listening and scrolling and reading and scrolling and scrolling and scrolling and scrolling, simultaneously

deep breath in

[I can't think straight]

reading and reading and reading and not listening

long breath out

scrolling and reading and scrolling and reading and scrolling and readin' sum more

not listeni

not to put, to find a point, too fine. fine, a point, on it, to put too fine a point on it, whatever it is I don't want it.

where did you go to my lovely, with the wind tunnel in your hair. a tower, i tried to show you: it looked like a tower, but then it didn't seem to be there, fa la la, la la la la.

I feel poisoned so play heavy metal in an attempt to drown out the buzzing and rove about the house closing the windows.

living on a prayer, for me, afjsndflkndf

not even half way there and I can't concentrate

axolotl rose, tiny hands, wild hair, woahh-oohh

[I'm doing to be late] [I don't want to leave]

but what's the use, what's the point of saying that?

it's good to talk about these things. and it's interesting too. [to US]
I think

[I don't think you're really talking about them though]

we're enjoying ourselves, why can't you just enjoy yourself too

silence

oh c'mon, really

exchange of looks

I don't want to [this feels childish, is this childish?]

[is it really so impossible that I should feel differently about this from everyone else? or at least how the others appear. I can't believe we're having the same conversation, again, but we are] *exhale *

bzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

[uffft]

anyway, what was that you were saying the other day darling? something about the most ambiguous words in english – something like that
[let's talk about this instead shall we!?!]

[you're missing the point. missing the point!]

[stay, oh stay, won't you]

bzzz *bzzz*

I need to go

We're going down, let's call it timber. I think about yelling it out loud sitting across the table from you in this room full of people. I want to laugh at my own joke. But I do neither of these things.

Every time I look up the clouds have changed, but they seem completely static so I don't know how this is possible. Unless they go 'poof' like in a cartoon departure. I need to get out.

The flies are buzzing around my head again – so noisily – why do I never learn. Checking, ofc leading to a puncturing with wanting and jealousy. Familiar sensations and argh. It isn't a good feeling. Having said that – it feels easier to drop it now.

All day, all night, all day all night. I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

Semiotics for beginners. I am going mad.

All day, all night, all day all night. I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

Summer flies, a throwback to months past. Or could they be bees of some sort? It's wild how loud they are.

Viva la fiesta, viva la noche, viva los DJs. I'm not sure, this is one of those times I'm just not sure. All day, all night.