

Summertime

Maddy McFadden

“And, the way Joplin’s voice moves is like the way my body feels inside, and
‘Summertime’ literally sounds like the way my thoughts run through my—”
“Stop talking,”
he says before pressing into me, kissing me—hard,
before I tell myself to remember this moment
I’ve been waiting for, before
the harsh yellow light annoys the periphery of my eyes
as my back pushes into his bed—so, I squint
up to see the vexing cross suspended
from his chain, swinging
back and forth above me
like a pendulum, unceasing and marking time, and
warning me that we are opposing forces.
But, that is exactly what sex with men is—
forces transposing,
exchanging my seduction for their desire,
my power for theirs,
and their satisfaction for tedious hours I repent, so
I squint my eyes *hard*, and think again about
the Chelsea Hotel and how
*Joplin and Cohen could exist together for a moment in a suspended space
and it didn’t end because one didn’t understand how brilliant the other was, it’s just—*
He stops kissing me, still moving in repetition—fast
as the screaming coil springs permeate my ears.
And, I wonder what he’s thinking.

The pendulum continues—slower now,
showing me that he has the power to displace and restore me,
and displace me again.
And, when he gets up without helping me come,
I believe it’s because I failed to make him want me to.
And, the force I exerted dependent on his has dissipated,
leaving me with nothing,
feeling like nothing,
feeling nothing, and I remember that
even “Summertime” was originally composed by George Gershwin.