

December

LOST CAT

Two years old. Orange. Loud purr. Please CALL if you see her and HELP us bring Sunshine home!

\$750.00 Reward For Safe Return Of Lost Chihuahua

BELONGS TO MY GRANDPARENTS. SHE GOT LOOSE AND THEY ARE DEVASTATED. GOES BY MRS. WORMWOOD. PLEASE CALL OR TXT IF YOU SEE HER AND WE WILL COME RIGHT AWAY. SHE IS AFRAID WITHOUT HER FAMILY. CAREFUL IF YOU APPROACH SHE MIGHT RUN AWAY. PLEASE JUST CALL.

In the thin-misted morning, you stare into the maudlin yellow eyes of Sunshine the Cat, her face pasted to the row of mailboxes at the top of the hill. *Missing since January 15th*, you read, and think of the coyotes you heard yipping in the woods that border the neighborhood not two nights ago. Maybe later, when he comes back from work, you'll tell him about the missing cat, ask him what he thinks. Maybe it'll fill the silence when you visit his family for the holidays.

You pull out your phone to see if she's been found, if this flyer is blissfully outdated, and instead find yourself immersed in a river of lost things, a tide of all that you can and cannot hold. You wonder at lost cat after lost cat after lost cat, at vanished rings with precious stones – how precious are they really, if they slip off so easily? – and rewards for missing dogs, dropped

phones, disappeared wallets. How had you never found this desperate online world of lost and found before? How could you have been so confined by something as physical as a flyer?

You turn away from Sunshine the Cat, pull up your hood, keep walking.

January

MISSING: Cat, no tail

Martha has been missing for three days since she slipped out the back door. She has one of those collars with a little bell, pink, and she loves children. If you see her, please please call, we are desperately missing her.

Lost Glove (Midbridge)

Left-hand Columbia Glove, black, possibly in the Albertson's parking lot. Fell out of my bag. Call if you see it – I need it back!

lost keys (downtown/broadway)

I lost my keys on my walk to the car, somewhere between 3rd and Broadway. They must have fallen out of my pocket. Call if you find them. There's a mushroom charm attached to the key ring, four keys total, one's pink with blue stripes. Wish I had a picture. You never think of taking a picture of your keys.

There's a seemingly-endless parade of lost cats: Clare, Kate, Marbles, Mark, Martha, Milo, Sprinkles, Sunshine. The list goes on and on, day after day of posts proclaiming the dearly

disappeared. You find a tear in the flyer, the mournful yellow eyes of Sunshine gazing out from the half-faded and mostly-shredded paper. It wouldn't have faded online, you think. She would be eternal there, one of a hundred other missing things whose stories you've come to think of as your own.

You press a corner of the flyer up with a finger to try to mend the rift, consider mentioning the missing cat when you see him again, decide against it. You find there's less and less you want to say to him, that there's little more than a rapidly fraying sense of obligation between the two of you. He doesn't want to hear about another fixation of yours, a mindless hobby, a stupid cat on a mailbox.

You shove the pile of spam mail under your arm, pull your glove back on, slide on your heels down the icy hill to your front door. It's locked, of course it's locked, nobody else is home. You have to jiggle the key to get it to open.

You drop your keys in the bowl under the light switch, reconsider, lay them on the counter to take a picture. You never thought of taking a picture of your keys. You favorite the picture, put a little heart beneath it to avoid forgetting, and promptly forget.

February

LOST: Wedding Ring!!

Our anniversary is coming up and I lost my ring, it must've happened while I was running errands. I can't believe it. We've been married for twenty years and I feel awful.

14k yellow gold, size 6, approximately 1.15ct. If you find or see this ring, please call the Midbridge police department, we've already filed a report.

Lost Wedding Rings

Lost around 2:00 P.M. at the bowling alley. Very dear to me and my husband. Not worth any money, small reward if you find them. One has a fake diamond in sterling silver, the other has rose quartz in a black band. I love the day we married and I love my husband call if you find them I miss them dearly:(

Lost Platinum Wedding Band With Engraved Initials

Grandma lost her wedding band out on a walk we think it slipped off in the cold either February 2 or 3 she was around the NW Oak Hill area Wednesday but Thursday went to the lady's club downtown for her quilting and may have lost it there. The band is plain with the initials "SUE" and "PLAT" stamped on the inside. If you have it or know anything about it please call to let us know and we'll offer a generous cash reward no questions asked.

Before bed, you stare at the space where he used to sleep beside you, imagine that he's there still. You dream of an endless chain of wedding bands: sterling and silver and gold and platinum. A key, a carat, a cat carrying that rattling terror, twinned eyes blank and unblinking, a pair of dying stars absorbing the light around them until they're on the brink of implosion. You wake, heart racing, trying to get the image out of your mind.

In the dim near-darkness of your wretched bedroom, barely illuminated by the square of light from a phone held too close to your face, you check the website of every shelter in a twenty-mile radius, hoping to see the familiar eyes of Sunshine gazing back at you.

Tea is in the cabinet over the stove, mugs stacked on the shelf above the plates. Everything is where it's supposed to be. Your cold fingers wrap around the displaced mug, hold it close to your chest. You think of the lost wedding bands, remember that it is February, and that it is Valentine's Day, and all of those great and terrible romances of your youth return.

You check your phone.

He must be right. You are obsessed.

March

LOST: coffin, HUGE reward

Handmade custom coffin, my grandfather was a woodworker and wanted to be buried in it. Had it out front for the hearse. You bastards took it. And my grandfather! Nasty surprise, if you haven't opened it already. Leave it where you found it or call, no questions asked, no police need to be involved. We just want to bury him.

A fire hydrant... (DOWELL HIKING TRAIL)

50 feet off trail, found a fire hydrant. No idea where it came from, no identifying marks, but its definitely a fire hydrant! If you or your municipality is missing a fire hydrant, call me with the color (its pretty unique) and I'll make sure it finds it's way home.

You decide to get a cat. Who's going to stop you, anyways?

April

FOUND BLACK CAT!!

Long haired female, very friendly, definitely domestic. Call to pick her up.

Found Female Cat

do not respond to this post, call the shelter directly

Do you know me? I was found just south of Harkens Bridge, two miles from City Center.

I am missing my family! Please share so I can get back home!

Awake at night, you wonder if you really were obsessed, obsessive, obsessions spilling out of your pockets and pores like an overfilled cup. You pace your house, back and forth, restless and caged, ferally indecisive. Sunshine would understand you, would take in your words and all of the terrible, unspeakable things that you are inside, would hold them within herself, behind those melancholy eyes that belie feline wisdom.

You leave a message on his phone, hate that you sound whiny and desperate, leave another one, angrier this time.

Steven watches you, owlsh eyes peering out from the darkness. He's a bastard, but so's everyone else, and at least Steven shits in a box in the corner of the laundry room and not on your passions.

May

STOLEN BIKE

*"SAFEGUARD YOUR VALUABLES", really? nobody could help me get this back????
Stolen right from my porch, by my doorway, not a single call after a month. Man, just give it back.*

Found: house key, unique ring

*I found a single key on a keyring out on my morning walk on the Wisthal Preserve.
Please call if you think it's yours and provide a description. It's very distinct.*

When you see your mother, she asks *whatever happened to that nice young man?* And you have no answer for her, only a stale sort of silence. You tell her about Steven, talk about him in that casual way you talk about friends or coworkers or family, and she's somewhere between confused and entertained when you tell her he's a cat. Bemused, you think, she's bemused.

You leave him another message, you need to hear his voice, then you can apologize, tell him he was right, but you weren't obsessed, not really, you just couldn't let go of that damn cat, it was one thing, one thing only.

The flyer for Sunshine was taken down, or maybe it was peeled away by the April showers that were supposed to bring May flowers, and secretly you're glad that you don't have to see her anymore.

June

re. Teeny-Weeny

edit: thank you kind strangers for helping us find Teeny-Weeny! after that last call, she is happy to be back home with her family.

FOUND: orange cat, skinny (Wisthal Trail)

Found this poor baby out on the trail, she came right up to me and my husband. Very thin, looks like she's been out here for a while. Sweet. Yellow eyes. Vet didn't find a microchip, but we're optimistic that her family is somewhere out there. Please call!

Lunch with friends.

How are you? I haven't seen you since graduation! God, we should catch up more often, it feels like we never talk anymore. How is – what's his name? Mike? Marvin? Mason? I swear it started with a "M".

It didn't start with an "M", but you smile and tell them things didn't work out. They nod in the all-knowing sort of way that friends nod when they don't know anything at all, and let you show

them pictures of Steven, who's going to be six months old in a week and a half. You consider throwing him an almost-but-not-quite birthday-party. You picture him in a silly triangle-shaped hat, smile, put your phone face-down on the table to look at the faces of your friends, to see their eyes, to make the connection that you've been missing for so long.

Did you see that they found Sunshine? you ask, as if they know who Sunshine is, as if they'd been kept awake at night thinking of the poor cat, imagining her wandering the woods alone, flung to the side of the road by a car, eaten by coyotes or an owl, shivering to death in the rain and the cold. They have no idea who Sunshine was, had never seen her eyes keeping watch over the mailboxes, could never understand the unknowable thing that was Sunshine, who was a cat, but also a blackhole, a sinking place for lost things that could never be found.

July

MUD

SERIOUSLY YOU HAVE THE EMOTIONAL DEPTH OF A MUD PUDDLE. YOU ARE AN EMPTY PICTURE FRAME. A SOGGY BANDAID WAITING TO FALL OFF IN THE SHOWER.

You turn thirty years old. Steven wears a cone-shaped hat, because he's six months old, and you find that celebrating the absurd helps you to forget the world in which you lost yourself.

You listen to the message he called to leave you while you were still asleep, hold it to your ear, think about Sunshine's yellow eyes. Mud puddle, mud puddle, mud puddle...