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## Lost Boy

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Class of 2016

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# Lost Boy

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**Author Bio**

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# Lost Boy

Pamela J. Thompson

Movement One: October 1983

Peter imagined himself a child still  
but his body did not agree.

*We are young and we are in love,*

He told his body over coffee.

He watched his black face crinkle in the shiny dark wood table,  
his left eye framed by a wet mug ring,  
only for an instant.

Two months ago the man had told him,  
only as a courtesy,

that he was positive, and therefore expiring, Peter imagined  
the man's life as a gradient of black and white against a tideless  
ocean,

and it was, he said, *Probably too late for you, kid.*

He got on the wrong train on the subway,  
but took the line all the way to the end, mentally carving his name into the  
seats,

hands too weak for anything but prayers.

He thought he heard someone whisper, *Fairy*, as he walked past;

there was a blue-green flash across his mind,

it felt like an electric orchestra, a symphony of beautiful nonsense—  
perhaps he was mythical. Perhaps he should be more afraid.

Peter went to the bathhouse,

this time simply to bathe.

He let the warm grey water envelope him  
until there was nothing left on the surface.

Drowning was a possibility somewhere in the left corner  
of his right hemisphere.

*Wouldn't it be less painful?*

But two hands,

they felt like angels, caressed his torso,  
silk on silk,

bringing him back to life.

If touch could be healing, if it could be pure—  
Maybe this could have been love.

Movement Two: Late February 1984

Visiting friends  
who did not yet know,  
who would never know,  
was like becoming the anchor of a tempest-bound ship.  
Each kiss reminded him of the infection,  
a harbinger of Spring,  
of Death in the valley.

Peter imagined himself a horseshoe crab  
with magic blue blood,  
with a life worth protecting.  
But his body reminded him through the aches  
and suffering,

*We are dying. We are poor,  
we are what lonely white writers call beautiful, black, and tragic.*  
No one was ever going to write a memoir about Peter,  
about loving and losing him.  
It was raining: from inside of the apartment  
the world was a water color painting steeped in tea.

Movement Three: March 1984

Peter imagined himself meeting Death,  
but it was only the illusion of his mistress—  
needle in his arm, lying starfish  
on a stranger's basement floor.  
She whispered,  
sweetly in his ears:

*I am a soft black film  
covering the earth.*

*I am in the air,  
I am in blood*

*I am the crack,  
the pop of an artery  
bursting as the bullet  
passes through red flesh  
into cold distance.*

*I am one plane  
colliding, collapsing  
on to another.*

Peter did not remember those thoughts.  
All that mattered was amber colored light,  
each golden hue a beam  
traveling through his body,  
warm honey in every vein  
until, painfully, it wasn't anymore.

Movement Four: June 1984

Peter didn't want to die alone on a park bench,  
or in a shelter  
or in the hallway of a hospital.  
Thoughts spilled like water from his trembling mouth—  
*Was there ever a crueller creature than mortal man?*  
*He who sees and feels the suffering,*  
*but raises the knife, all the same,*  
*in his hand?*