

16. CLOUDY SKIES

“Why is the sky blue?”

“The writer wants you to think happy thoughts.”

“He can change things that easily.”

“He has to change a whole lot of other things so that you will go along with his perspective.”

“Like what?”

“Let’s say that you look at the sky, and it looks cloudy, then you need to convince yourself that the sky really is blue.”

“That could take a lot of convincing.”

“That’s what separates a great writer from a hack. He gets you thinking about what is important.”

“The sky is blue today, but who cares?”

“I want to know why the sky is cloudy.”

“It is the only way to give rise to life. If you pass an electric current through a cloud, you alter the chemical composition of the vapor and give rise to the stuff of life.”

“You can get it started that easily.”

“It’s more of a wish than something real.”

“So the story starts with a wish!”

“More with a cloud of perfume.”

“And the perfume is the essence of the loved one.”

“That is the most correct description.”

“I like it when the sky is blue.”

“It is cloudy today.”

“I would like to see it blue.”

“Life needs a spark.”

“How can the universe get into itself?”

“Only by its touch!”

“That makes no sense.”

“It’s the universe getting out of itself to see itself.”

“How can it go around like that?”

“How do you go around like that?”

The cloud expands to fill the universe.

“I feel shaken up.”

“Outside of the atmosphere, there is none of the protection to sustain life.”

“Take a deep breath.”

“The planet turns around itself.”

“That is too complex for the solar system. It works on simpler instructions to itself.”

“Is there a manual to hold things together?”

“There is a book that explains it all. But the universe has no knowledge of the book.”

“What about the inhabitants?”

“They feel the effects. But they do not know the full nature of the universe.”

“Why is that?”

“The cosmos has its secrets!”

She explains herself to him.

“I’m no different than anyone else. But I have plans for my life.”

“Where did the plans come from?”

“From my friends, from my parents. Good decisions in life.”

“You do what you do for whatever that means. Then you make sense of it afterwards.

You call it a choice or whatever. But that’s also a trick that you learn so that you can pretend that you know what you are doing and are in control of your destiny.”

“You’re not.”

“I take the quickest route to fun!”

“What if you take a another route?”

“I might not get what I want.”

“You know how to get it!”

“I can get it in good time.”

She has plans for herself.

“Does the universe allow us to make plans?”

“They make loads of plans for me at work.”

“This is going nowhere.”

“Get another job. It will help make sense of things.”

“I want to make sense of things myself.”

“Even if you come up with a plan, you will always be reacting to someone else. Or to your job. Or whether or not it’s a cloudy day.”

“Is this a story about cloudy skies?”

“You know the expression: biology is destiny.”

“I like the expression: the weather is destiny.”

“Get a raincoat.”

“Things are looking really bad. There’s a nasty storm coming.”

“Stay inside, and do what you have to go.”

“I have to take a plane. It’s going to get grounded.”

“Wait a day.”

“My plans are getting messed up because of the weather.”

“Have an alternative. Be flexible.”

“Is this a story?”

“You’re the one who’s locked into a narrow role.”

“Give me more options.”

“You’re going to need more options if you ever going to make the world go your way.”

“Not all of us can change are lives at a whim. There are all kinds of interconnected plans that I depend on.”

“You’re going to have to break the chain somehow!”

“I’m trying to hold my breath until things are right. It’s becoming too difficult.”

“Take a break. Have a nap. It will all look better in the morning.”

“It never will look much better.”

“Then do what you have to do and don’t complain.”

“I’m telling it like it is. You’re just too accepting of the status quo.”

“You’re the one who is having trouble with destiny, but you don’t want to do a thing to change it. Do you think that some kind of magic is going to descend from the clouds to take you away?”

“Little plans lead to big plans!”

“And where do the big plans go?”

“They go in a box to take out after I get the little plans done.”

“It’s all looking better than you know.”

“I’m dressing up for the great things that are to come.”

“Dress right, get the guy, get the job, get the life, and then boom!”

“Is that your solution?”

“You’re the one who has it down so well.”

“I need to sleep.”

“As long as you don’t sleepwalk. Then you’ll really screw up your plans.”

“Go to sleep, and work it out. Then make it happen in the morning.”

“It may never happen!”

“How is that?”

“Every single moment could be an excruciating hell. You could give out before you’re done.”

“I’m just starting to get the hang of things.”

“It’s one thing to have a plan. It’s quite another to live it from day to day.”

“I think that I can do that.”

“But you never know when you’re just going to fall apart.”

“I have great endurance.”

“You need a bigger vision.”

“I have a vision as big as the sky!”

“That’s fantastic. But how is that going to make you money?”

“I’m working on that right now.”

“How are you doing that?”

“I’m figuring it out while I sleep.”

“Good luck!”

“At least I have a clue!”

“What are you going to be? A sleep explorer.”

“People want learn about what motivates their dreams.”

“You need some kind of licence for that. Otherwise, someone has the opportunity to really fuck with you in a criminal way.”

“Do you have a better suggestion?”

“You could start a religion.”

“For profit?”

“It’s just an idea. I’m trying to think of a way that you can take advantage of your skills.”

“You are trying to do too much. This is really not your place.”

“I’m a good listener. I’m trying to find a way to apply your knowledge.”

“Sometimes you just have to do what you’re told.”
“That’s how a lot of life’s problems are created.”
“So be it!”
“I feel a little hopeless here.”
“Do what you have to do!”
“I could go back to school.”
“Do you want to become a psychologist?”
“I had thought about becoming a cognitive therapist.”
“Or you could be a weather person.”
“Is that all that you think that I’m worth?”
“Everyone thinks about the weather.”
“I can’t seem myself as a meteorologist. I hate the rain.”
“Farmers pray for rain.”
“I am really afraid of clouds. They can hide so much.”
“It’s better to hide if you’re not all that confidence with what you have.”
“You don’t have much to hide!”
“What does that mean?”
“You’re so thin.”
“I have trouble keeping my clothes on me.”
“You should have something to eat.”
“I don’t really feel like eating.”
“You’re going to disappear.”
“I feel like one of those boas where you can see the rat inside.”
“Are you ready to gobble up a rat?”
“I’m feeling sick.”
“Think of the cloud. It does not eat. It only drinks.”
“That’s how clouds get drunk. Then they let it loose on us.”
“Sounds pretty nasty.”
“This is quite a good way to begin the story.”
“I need something to eat.”
“We could make a gourmet meal.”
“Are you telling me that I should be a chef?”
“Do you want to be chef?”
“I could make cookies?”
“Would you like to cook for a hundred people at once?”
“I would need a formula.”
“Or you would have to become a formula. Do it all automatically like a machine.”
“I am getting the hang of things. I can see the universe in the back of my mind.”
“You have to feel it as well as see it.”
“I am making a meal for the universe.”
“The chef to the stars!”
“The sky is hazy. I am having difficulty seeing the stars.”
“You can feel them.”

“I have a pretty good picture in my head.”

“Love is like the food of the mind.”

“And pleasure is the food of the soul.”

“We have found the wedding of matter and spirit.”

“And I can even taste it!”

“If I can only stomach it.”

“You don’t feel like eating.”

“I am under the weather.”

Being born under a bad sign could be bad thing. But living in bad weather is hardly a good thing.

“We can make the weather work for you.”

“How are you going to do that?”

“You have to be willing to give of yourself.”

“How do I give myself to the weather?”

“You have to be a martyr to a higher power.”

“This is all about martyr-worship!”

“I am willing to do you what I have to do.”

“You are willing to commit yourself to your belief?”

“I’ll sacrifice myself just to make it rain.”

“You could move to Seattle, and you wouldn’t have to waste your time praying for rain.”

“What if you got it to rain in the Gobi Desert? That would be worthwhile.”

“But if you had too much rain in a desert, you would end up depriving it from the bread belt of America.”

“So miracles start off as a blessing, then they end up as a curse.”

“Things can go from being a wonder to being the bane of humankind. My advice to you is to stop wishing that you can change the world!”

“I told you that it would be easier to move to somewhere else than it would be to change the weather.”

“I want to be a rainmaker.”

“That’s a myth.”

“What’s wrong with a little myth now and then?”

“A myth can make you delusional if you spend all your time waiting for the rain to come to your desert.”

“What are you suggesting?”

“Go where your heart takes you.”

“My heart is leading me up into the clouds. I want to see it rain.”

“That’s all that it’s going to take to make you feel blessed.”

“It would be nice!”

“It’s already raining somewhere in the rain.”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“After you get the rain, you are going to want something more.”

“So I get caught up in a cycle of rain and its attendant benefits.”

“There are alternatives.”

“What should I hope for? If I hope for rain, that offers me basic gratification. If I look for something more in life, then I’ll only end up disappointed.”

“You hope for rain, it will only make you all wet. So what’s the big deal.”

“Rain is the source of life. You should know that.”

“You want it in the ground, not all over you.”

“Do you think that it would be better to worship the sun?”

“It does have its benefits.”

“You can have the sun year round, but if it never rains then you’re back where you started.”

“Is that your justification for cloud chasing?”

“I can’t think of a better one.”

She is happy that no one got hurt in the process.

“I thought that there needed to be some kind of pain if there is going to be any redemption.”

“Why is redemption so central to belief? You could base a system of faith that founded on damnation!”

“Damnation, faith, it’s all pretty much the same thing anyway.”

“Why do people read books? To jump into bed with some fictional person. Or to get some twisted satisfaction from solving the puzzle of other people’s lives. Or to find satisfaction in engaging in mental gymnastics with the novelist.”

“Is there some kind of trickery going on here?”

“You think that you are going to be saved, but you are actually going to be exiled to the lower depths of hell.”

“You need to save your money?”

“What does that mean?”

“It’s not about good or bad anymore. People are more interested in entertainment.”

“Are you making light of the spirit?”

“The spirit is as light as you’re going to get.”

“Are you implying that is the problem with salvation.?”

“What do you mean?”

“Salvation distracts you from the nuts and bolts of living.”

“Are you trying to pull me back in the shit?”

“You have nothing to worry about?”

“Then what are you doing to me?”

“I’m trying to bring you back from the dead.”

“I can’t be more dead than I already am.”

“Love isn’t supposed to end like this!”

“Is that where redemption comes in again?”

“You always have the opportunity to fall and rise again.”

“I am feeling light-headed.”

“You want me to give you answers.”

“I’m the one who is trying to develop a new liturgy!”

“Where are you going to start?”

“There is ritual, and there is pageantry. Both are combined to create an impression.”

“What else is there?”

“There is design to help provide a clearer identification between the observer and her belief.”

“How does it all work together?”

“The visual arts intersect with the gestures and the words to direct the attention of the believer towards the clouds.”

“This is enough to make it rain.”

“It goes way beyond this to effect the deluge.”

“Do you need that extreme a blessing?”

“What is the your fear?”

“That everything will be washed away.”

We have arrived at the next stage of belief: prophecy.

“You really can predict things with your belief.”

“I’m probably more accurate than the weather person.”

“Is that sufficient?”

“What do you want? Are you willing to risk your life for what you are selling?”

“Is that how you make your predictions come true?”

“What do you mean?”

“The slaughter of the innocents. Raining terror down on the world!”

“That is not what I mean by the weather.”

“You’re not talking about dramatic contrivances.”

“I’m talking about the rain from heaven.”

“The only way that you’re going to get away with such dramatic license is if you back it up with a little cruelty.”

“The weather is about cruelty?”

“That is how people accept such violence. They get used to it.”

“How are you ever going to escape?”

“I have escaped!”

“When the downpour comes, you are going to get wet like the rest of us.”

“I’m not like you. I don’t use pseudo-science to impose a system of devotion on the world.”

“No, your alternative is to blind faith in the weather.”

“I’m not the one who is trying to scare people with descriptions of terrible natural disasters.”

“What is the basis of fear? Lack of knowledge.”

“Sometimes you have just enough knowledge to know that you can’t do a thing about what is going to happen.”

“Is that your method?”

“I’m not the one who uses scarecrows.”

“Am I the crow?”

“You are making quite a bit of noise.”

She is losing her place.

“Turn your hymnals to the next page.”

“You’re on fire!”

“Thanks!”

“You really are on fire!”

Miracles can happen if the story teller is on your side.

“The universe comes together by coming apart. You have to measure the rate at which things separate.”

“I am trying to do something like that. It’s just getting beyond me.”

“There is no way to make it out.”

“That is where you pray for a miracle.”

“How does that work?”

“You put the miracle in the hat.”

“Or in the rain.”

“Or you move to a place where it rains quite a bit.”

She listens to the sermon.

“I trusted you!”

“We both trusted each other. But that didn’t amount to much.”

“I can make you disappear.”

“How do you do that?”

“Send a strong wind your way.”

We have a story!

“It sounds like a weather report.”

“Ring the bell. A bad storm is coming.”

“The only storm here is in your head.”

“I thought that it was a geometry problem.”

“I was pulling for geology.”

“That is a little hard for me.”

“Where would you prefer to begin all this?”

“Somewhere without pain.”

“We are on the rocks.”

“Water on the rocks. Meteorology and geometry.”

“It’s more than something in my head. This is really happening!”

“It is happening. But the full effects are going on in your head!”

She is going to lead the reading!

“Hail is falling!”

“This is incredible.”

“I’ve never seen hail stones that big.”

“The confluence of different forces. Different temperature. It all ends up in this calamity.”

“Who are you working with?”

“The congregation.”

“I have my own collection of believers.”

“You are not going to be able to solve the weather problem in the times that remains.”

The weather is fooling with her identity.

“Why are you messing with me?”

“I know this to be true.”

“Give me something to quiet you down.”

“You have your faith.”

“It’s not doing any good.”

“This is not going to hurt the way that you thought it was.”

“The rain doesn’t make me numb.”

“You shouldn’t talk to yourself so much.”

“Why are you talking to me all the time?”

“I don’t want you to feel as if you are alone.”

“Am I really alone?”

“In a manner of speaking, you are. You don’t have the advantage of a seasoned story teller who is explaining all the details to you.”

“Is there a fight going on here?”

“I am showing you who are the good people. What do you want?”

Can she really call it heaven if there is a layer of clouds that separate her from a direct encounter with the true blue?

“There is a rain inside of me.”

“You need the warmth of the sun.”

“Of course, you do. But you are not going to get it.”

Her hands can reach beyond the clouds. But she does not feel confident.

“I need to leave!”

“We need to have a little talk.”

“I am not really up for talking.”

“Don’t scream so much. People will take more time to listen to you!”

She is being interrogated.

“Tell us everything that you know about the weather?”

“It’s not as if I can make it rain.”

“But you can tell us where it is going to hit next.”

“I don’t have any degree of certainty. The winds could change.”

“Include them in your prediction.”

“I do. I just don’t know how to weigh these factors. It is almost as if the weather anticipates my prediction, and then it alters its flow to mess with me.”

“You really think that you are that privileged.”

“Do you have better explanation?”

“You are trying too hard to get an explanation.”

“I’ll keep an umbrella with me all the time.”

“That is the best option.”

It is probably a waste of time to ask her any more questions. She touts her ability to predict the weather. But her actual skills seem more limited than a shaman.

“How did you know to bring an umbrella.”

“I have a portable one here in my purse. It’s with me all the time.”

“I hope it’s sufficient to give you all the help that you need.”

When you’re an adult, you can indulge your taste for candy. Just buy a box, and there’s a bar next to your desk when you feel the urge. Kids simply don’t have this option.

“What do you need?”

“Whatever you are offering.”

“This piece has no moving parts.

“None whatsoever? On and off?”

“Only here! Not here does not qualify as an actual state of the object.”

“What about in decay?”

“That is permitted.”

“Melting. Are you allowed to melt?”

“Melting is considered to be a selection.”

“Are you aware of all the selections?”

“I was at one time. Some of them are automatic. Stay tuned to the weather report to discover everything that you need.”

“I want to do more than feel the weather. I want to learn how to make the weather.”

“You have to insure that your house does not leak.”

“I am trying my best to make that happen. Any other recommendations.”

The rest of the text describes all types of home improvements to deal with the weather. Very severe weather changes cannot be anticipated.

“We are getting closer than ever.”

“That’s what you think. Just because we’re both sweating together doesn’t mean that we’re together.”

“You haven’t sweated as much as I have. You’re not really living this.”

“You may have made bad choices.”

“The notion of a bad choice is very simplistic. There was a lot more going on than that. So much information was hid from me. After all, do you make a choice to get up, to get breakfast, to have a shower. All this is automatic. You may not even question whether you want to go to work. You just do it. But you do question what kind of breakfast bun you want with you coffee.”

“I’m staying away from that goo for the time being.”

“Good choice!”

“Sometimes I’m having so much fun, I can wonder why I am doing something.”

“That might not be for the best.”

“The decision-making circuits have melted. I just have a go!”

“We should talk about the weather.”

“I couldn’t do what you do if I tried.”

“Don’t try. Just do what you do!”

“I feel as if I should give up. Just see what happens if I do nothing.”

It is time to get lost in the clouds.”

“What’s wrong with you?”

“I’m lost in the clouds.”

“You have to get to work!”

“I work at home.”

“You have to start working now.”

“I work when I like.”

“You should be working all the time.”

“I’m letting the part fall into place.”

“Put on a nice suit so that you can, at least, look like the rest of us.”

The result is hardly satisfactory. To have been caught up in a network of choices, bisecting angles to get into college, trisecting angles to get into law school. What you’re not willing to do to get ahead. I am giving you all the answers just as I have offered them to myself. It all works. This is a more exact science than meteorology. I am predicting every detail of my life. And it will all work out the way that I like. Love is like a tornado. And I have learned how to ride the most catastrophic storms.

“You’re making it up as you go along.”

“It’s very much like a cloud. Although you probably see it as a solid.”

“Radioactive.”

“It is hardening. It becomes more and more difficult to muster sufficient force to break into the wall!”

“You are making me want to puke!”

“How is that?”

“You need to take a shower.”

“I have a business meeting. I am getting ready!”

“You better get ready. Otherwise, you are really going to get the business.”

The atmosphere is the key element in regulating climate changes. A disturbance to the homeostatic mechanisms is enough to make the whole system unstable. Such instability is difficult to reverse. If things proceed too far, there no longer is the possibility of going back.

“We need to stop right here.”

“Stopping is not an option. It is almost about to rain.”

“Did you make it rain?”

“I wished for it.”

“That is not the same thing as making it happen.”

“I am very good at making things happen.”

“Is it magic?”

“And I have the great ability of ignoring counter-evidence.”

He looks away from the natural disaster. If he is far enough away, he might ignore it completely. Things are bad enough for him. The last twenty-four hours have been sheer hell.

“I have to get my suit from the cleaners.”

“Don’t go by there if it’s not ready!”