

Mar Sin Leat

Written by

August (in the wake of) Dawn

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BLACK:

FERGUS
(voicemail, speech
slurred)
Skye. It's me... Guess you're at
work. I was out the night, just got
back from The Hart... Found Archie
in his basket, he--

Random pulses of coloured light soften the black--

1 EXT. SCOTTISH CITY, JOURNEY - NIGHT 1

The coloured pulses materialise into city street lights,
reflected on a windshield.

FERGUS
(voicemail - in Gaelic)
--He's gone.

Raindrops fall on the glass, refracting the light.
Distraught, the driver, SKYE (22), a trans woman, shoots a
worried glance up at the clouds.

TITLE: MAR SIN LEAT

2 INT. CAR/CITY JOURNEY - NIGHT 2

SKYE stubs a rollie in the ashtray. Music plays in the car.

A plain carrier bag sits on the passenger seat. Skye's
heavily ringed fingers fumble through it. She finds an energy
drink. Lifts the ring-pull one-handed and takes a swig.

A "PRISCILLA'S BAR" work lanyard hangs around her neck, "SKYE
MACLEAN" printed on the keycard. Along the ribbon's length,
pins and badges of pride flags, pronouns, slogans for
Scottish Independence and queer liberation.

The music continues to play over as Skye's car travels
through the outskirts of the rainswept city.

She passes out of the city and onto the motorway.

The car disappears into the night.

3 INT. CAR - DAWN 3

Crumpled drink cans in the footwell. Discarded wrappers. The
ashtray overflows with stubs.

4 EXT. PULL-IN - DAWN

4

The beat-up, well ridden car is parked in a layby. The sky is dark grey, prepared for the imminent sunrise.

Skye exits the car, stretching and yawning. She scans the scenery, bleary eyed.

She leans against the car and rolls a fresh cigarette with fumbling fingers. Lights up.

She pulls her phone out of her back pocket. She swipes through her contacts. Stops on 'DAD'. She calls. Nestles the phone against her shoulder. It rings.

SKYE
(muttering)
Pick up, pick up, pick up...

5 INT. FERGUS'S BEDROOM, FARMHOUSE - DAWN

5

Curtains drawn. A double bed unmade. A single pillow.

Faded outlines of picture frames in the wallpaper. A worn tweed jacket hangs on the back of the door.

Empty beer cans sit on the bedside table. A mobile phone next to them. It vibrates. The caller ID reads 'SKYE.'

It rings out.

6 INT/EXT. JOURNEY - DAWN

6

Skye drives by the last dregs of housing estates and petrol stations. The landscape gives way to Highland mountains.

She drums her nails on the steering wheel. Her eyes dart back and forth across the horizon as day breaks.

She HUMS a melancholy lullaby to herself.

7 INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - DAWN

7

Skye's HUMMING plays over-

FERGUS MACLEAN, (65), half-awake, bleary-eyed, sits on a wooden chair pulled away from the kitchen table, gripping his coffee mug.

His hands weathered by years working outdoors. He's shabby. Unshaven.

Skye's humming cuts out. Silence.

With a heavy sigh, Fergus looks over at the table.

Laid out on a plastic tarp is the body of an aged Jack Russell, ARCHIE. He seems small and frail. All life gone.

Fergus puts the mug down. He crinkles the edge of the tarp, rubs his thumb against the plastic. His brow furrows. He clicks his tongue and turns away.

8 INT. ATTIC SCENE - DAWN

8

The attic is dusty and bleak. Fergus, head bent, searches through the trappings from an older life. Tents and sleeping bags. Suitcases. Games consoles and boxes of models.

Fergus finds a heavy trunk, pulls it into the light coming from the small velux window. He crouches. Stiff. His fingers graze the clasps of the trunk. He hesitates. Steadies the tremor in his hands.

He inhales. Undoes the clasps. Slowly lifts the lid.

With a sad smile, his eyes pass over the memories held inside. Framed happy photographs -- a younger Fergus with his wife, MOIRA, as she knits -- Moira holding a baby (SKYE) wrapped in a blue woollen blanket -- Moira, posing next to a nine yo Skye on a rope swing that hangs from a sycamore tree -- Skye holding Archie as a puppy.

At the bottom of the trunk is the blue blanket.

He tenderly lifts it out, fingers stroking it gently. Fergus holds it close for a moment. Breathes deep.

9 EXT/INT. JOURNEY, RURAL ROADWAYS - DAWN

9

Skye's car passes through narrow roads and rough tracks. The sun breaches the horizon.

Inside, Skye finishes the last dregs of an energy drink, crushes the can and dumps it into the passenger footwell.

She takes a turnoff.

10 INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - MORNING

10

Fergus stands before Archie's body, holding the blanket. He closes his eyes for a moment, inhales. Steels himself.

He wraps the body. His expression is neutral, actions mechanical. He creases the corners flat.

His head lifts, surprised, at the SOUND of an approaching vehicle. He glances at the clock on the wall. 6:45am.

- 11 EXT. FARMHOUSE - MORNING 11
 Skye's car bumps down the drive and pulls up near a solitary farmhouse. Weeds grow through the cracks in the yard. The wheels scatter gravel.
- 12 INT/EXT CAR - MORNING 12
 Skye parks the car. Cuts the engine.
 She takes chewing gum from her mouth. Stuffs it into an empty crisp packet. She sprays herself with deodorant, checks herself in the mirror and picks at her mascara.
 Reaching into the back seat, she grabs a black denim jacket. The lapels are covered in pins and badges.
 She gets out. Pushes her arms into the jacket and catches that she still has her work lanyard on. Yanks it off. Throws it back into the car. Kicks the door closed.
 She approaches the house, shoulders forward, hands in pockets, head down. All black - t-shirt under jacket and jeans. Keys jangle from a carabiner hooked to a belt loop.
 The front door swings open. She freezes.
- 13 EXT. FARMHOUSE - MORNING 13
 Fergus stands in the doorway. Against the light, Skye is almost a silhouette. She stands awkwardly. Fergus stares through her, brows furrowed.
- SKYE
 You alright?
- FERGUS
 (in Gaelic)
 Wasn't expecting you to come.
- SKYE
 Aye, lovely to see you too.
- Fergus nods back into the house.
- FERGUS
 (in Gaelic)
 He's in there.
- Skye enters. Fergus heads off, closes the door behind him.
- 14 INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - MORNING 14
 Skye pauses in the doorway. Steadying herself. She steps in, but stops when she sees Archie, wrapped in the blanket.

She wells up and swallows hard. She approaches tentatively. Her hand reaches out. She looks away for a moment. Blinks away tears. Trying to compose herself. Skye lifts away a corner to reveal Archie's face.

15 EXT. FARMHOUSE - MORNING 15

Fergus approaches the house, carrying digging tools.

He passes the kitchen window. He spots Skye, at the table, stroking Archie's fur. He pauses. Concern written on his face as Skye lets out a pained half-sob at the feel of Archie's body. She covers her mouth, holding in sobs.

Fergus raps a shovel on the window--

FERGUS

C'Mon!

Skye snatches her hand away, looks up. Flustered.

16 INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - MORNING 16

Skye straightens, steadies her breathing. Swallows against the lump in her throat.

She covers Archie's face with the blanket.

17 EXT. REAR FARMHOUSE - MORNING 17

Fergus strides down the path through a field of scrub and reeds, behind a barn.

Skye follows behind. She cradles Archie's body in her arms. Her expression is pained, forced into neutral. She fights back tears as she walks, but loses.

18 EXT. SYCAMORE TREE - MORNING 18

The sycamore's leaves are half-shed -- patchworks of green, gold and red. They lie scattered on the grass. A weather-beaten rope swing hangs limply from a lower branch.

Fergus passes by the tree, heading further away from the farm, but stops when he no longer hears Skye's footsteps from behind him. He turns back to see her approach the tree.

Skye lays Archie down. She remains crouched as she fixes Archie's covering. Wipes her eyes. She swallows and stands. Fergus marks out the grave.

Fergus hands Skye a shovel. He swings a mattock, cutting chunks of turf. She shovels it out of the way.

A MONTAGE of grave-digging as the sun gets higher:

The two dig.

Skye discards her jacket, wiping her forehead with the back of her arm.

The grave is getting deeper. A rhythm starts to form between their swings. A co-ordination of effort.

Fergus takes off his jacket, red in the face.

Skye stops to catch her breath.

Up to his knees in the grave, Fergus takes a coughing fit.

SKYE

You alright?

Fergus waves her off. He doubles over, letting it subside.

FERGUS

You dig like a lassie.

Skye flicks Fergus the Vs. Fergus ignores her and continues to dig.

END MONTAGE:

19

EXT. TREE - DAY

19

The hole is fully dug, Skye offers Fergus her hand. He hesitates, but takes it. Skye pulls him out.

Skye lifts Archie's body. Between them, they lower it into the grave.

Skye gazes down at the body wrapped in the blue blanket, small and enveloped by the dark earth. She takes a shovel and begins to fill the grave with dirt. Fergus joins her.

Skye sings the same lullaby as from the car.

SKYE

(sings in Gaelic, CAIDIL
M'ULAI DH)

Caidil m'ulaidh, caidil m'uan

Sùilean m' eudail dùin suain

Luasgadh mulaid a' mhuir-làin

An sìor-dhùrdanaich air
tràigh.

SKYE

(translated to English)

Sleep my darling, sleep my
lamb

Eyes, my treasure, close in
slumber

Mournful rolling of the high
tide

The constant murmur on shore.

Fergus gazes at Skye as she sings. He slows his shovelling.

The wind catches the fallen leaves, scattering them.

Expression pained, Fergus turns his back to Skye and brushes a tear from his eye. Fakes a cough.

Skye tamps the loose earth down with the back of her shovel.

Fergus grabs his coat. Begins to put it on.

FERGUS
(in Gaelic)
Right. I've shit to do.

He stalks off, fidgeting his jacket into place. Skye watches him go, incredulous.

FERGUS (CONT'D)
(over shoulder in Gaelic)
You staying long?

She runs. Grabs his arm. Pulls him back to face her. He won't meet her gaze.

SKYE
Hold on, are we not talking about this?

FERGUS
(shrugging off her grip)
What's there to talk about? He's dead.

SKYE
No the dog. Us.

Fergus barks a laugh. He crosses her to pick up the tools. She spins to follow him, disoriented.

SKYE (CONT'D)
All this shite.

Fergus straightens, holding a shovel. He breathes deep.

FERGUS
(in Gaelic)
Och, what're you going on about?

Skye trembles. Her fists clench. Her brow furrows. She snatches the shovel from him. Stares him down.

SKYE
(in Gaelic)
Mum.

Fergus clicks his tongue.

FERGUS
Skye, I'm not doing this right now.

SKYE
(seething)
When then?

FERGUS
Not when you're like--

SKYE
--Like WHAT? *Emotional*? Distraught?
Is *that* why you didn't take me?

Tears run down her cheeks. Fergus shakes his head.

FERGUS
(in Gaelic)
You've no clue what you're talking
about.

Fergus passes her. Climbs up the path. Skye watches him go, frustration building. White knuckles gripping the shovel.

She blows up, throwing the shovel to the ground.

SKYE
(screaming)
Will you just fucking *listen* to me?

Fergus stops in his tracks. Behind him, Skye sobs. She clutches herself tight, shoulders drawn in.

Fergus takes a tentative step towards her but she turns away. He looks at his daughter as she weeps. Pity and shame cross his features.

He closes the distance. His arms envelope her from behind, holding her close. Skye tries to pull away but he holds on. She twists into him, clutching at his chest and sobbing. He lets her cry herself out.

He leads her to a nearby low stone wall. They lean against it, side by side. She fishes into her jacket pocket for her tobacco and skins. Rolls a cigarette.

FERGUS
(in Gaelic)
Oh, for Chris--

SKYE
(in Gaelic)
What? It's for stress.

Skye lights up. Takes a draw. Fergus snatches the cigarette out of her hand. He takes a drag. She raises an eyebrow.

FERGUS
 (in Gaelic)
 For stress.

He passes it back.

FERGUS (CONT'D)
 She used to sing that to you, when
 you were wee. Didn't think you
 remembered.

Skye contemplates, taking a puff before exhaling.

SKYE
 We never talked about her. You
 never talked about her.

She glances up at him pointedly. He doesn't meet her gaze.

FERGUS
 I didn't know how.

SKYE
 God, I— It was like... like one
 morning, I just woke up and... and
 she was gone. Like she'd never been
 there at all.

FERGUS
 I was trying to protect you.

SKYE
 Aye, how'd that work out?

FERGUS
 Not great. Seeing as you left too.

Fergus peers over to Skye. Her eyes on her shoes.

SKYE
 I kept hoping she would come back.
 I used to see her everywhere. Now,
 I barely remember her face.

Silence sits between them.

Skye takes a last draw of the cigarette. Holds the smoke
 inside. She looks up at the leaves, rustling in the wind.

She exhales. Flicks the cigarette away.

SKYE (CONT'D)
 Why didn't you want me at her
 funeral?

FERGUS
 Skye...

SKYE

(welling up)

Just-- I need to know. I've gone over it in my head for years. Every day. Over and over. Like I did something wrong. Like I wasn't good enough. I wasn't--

Her voice catches.

SKYE (CONT'D)

Man enough.

She looks up at him.

SKYE (CONT'D)

Are you ashamed of me?

Beat.

FERGUS

No.

Skye tries to blink away her tears.

FERGUS (CONT'D)

You were-- You wouldn't stop greetin'--

SKYE

Och, aye, you just didn't want your wee boy being a big jessie about his mum dying.

FERGUS

It's not like that.

He fumbles for the words, frustrated.

FERGUS (CONT'D)

I didn't know... Your mum, she always knew what to say.

SKYE

So, you just left me?

FERGUS

It wasn't like--

(under his breath)

Fuck me, this is hard...

(beat, hesitating)

I couldn't keep it together. I was a grown man.

Skye rolls her eyes and pushes herself away from the wall. She fumbles through her pockets for the tobacco. Starts rolling.

Fergus takes a breath. Readying himself to speak the words. Skye finishes rolling, lights up.

FERGUS (CONT'D)
I didn't want you to see me like that.

Fergus stares at his feet.

Skye closes the distance, returns to his side.

FERGUS (CONT'D)
I wasn't strong enough.

SKYE
I didn't need you to be strong.

She passes him the cigarette, a hand on his shoulder. He takes it and draws.

He laughs, hollow, to himself.

FERGUS
If my old man could see me now,
he'd skelp me.

He takes another draw.

FERGUS (CONT'D)
I should have been there for you.

SKYE
We should have grieved together. It was like I lost both of you.

Fergus wraps his arms around her.

SKYE (CONT'D)
All this time I thought there was something wrong with me. That it was because I'm... *this*.

He pulls back, looks her in the eye.

FERGUS
Don't you ever think that.

He pulls her in tighter and clasps the back of her head.

FERGUS (CONT'D)
You're my daughter.
(in Gaelic)
I love you.

SKYE
I never got to say goodbye.

FERGUS
I know. I'm sorry.

Emotion overwhelms Fergus. She holds him close.

SKYE
I miss her.

FERGUS
Me too. Every day.

They pull apart. Skye, eyes bloodshot, wipes at her face, the tears, the snot.

SKYE
What now?

FERGUS
Now...

Fergus puts a hand around her shoulder, brings her in close.

FERGUS (CONT'D)
Tea.

The pair head up the path back to the farmhouse.

FERGUS (CONT'D)
(in Gaelic)
You remind me so much of her, you know. She'd drive me round the bend anaw.

Skye laughs.

20 INT. KITCHEN, FARMHOUSE - DAY

20

CREDITS ROLL

MOS:

Fergus puts the kettle on. Skye takes mugs out of the cupboard and searches for biscuits.

As they sit around the kitchen table, with their drinks, Skye and Fergus catch up.

END.