



AUSTERE REX GAMAO

Happy Together by Wong Kar Wai as Wishbone by Richard Siken as Austere's Mirror

I. Love

Love barges through the door and punches Austere squarely in the forehead.

But first it cries outside the door, rubbing its blood on the frame, scratching a fresh wound.

Austere takes the punch and kisses the red on love's thighs like he would his own hurting.

Sometimes there's no taste but sometimes the ladder breaks in half. Say, I want a movie that could hurt me. I've been bleeding so much, what's another bullet wound?

You're here so early. Will you stay long? There's a sofa you can sleep on. There's a mouth you can spit in. There're cigarettes for you. Here's my hand.

II. Furniture

We can watch this, Austere says, moving his mouse over the file. He has done this twice. Once in real life, the other in a fantasy. We could learn something. We could shotgun our

Bodies into the furniture. You'd like that, wouldn't you?



On the screen, Ho has bandages in his hands so he couldn't do anything but break Austere's heart. Lai sleeps on the sofa and Austere's on the bed smoking a bone he picked up in a bathroom. Austere jumps on the sofa with Lai. Lai complains but Austere's so

reticent, so wounded, he crashes the sofa and the bed together. On the sofa outside the screen, the couple kisses when the movie couple kisses. On the window outside, people gather to

watch what'll happen when the movie couple raise their fists made of broken plates. Austere practices his dancing in the apartment alone and Lai cooks eggs at the back of a car,

his side perforated with love.

III. Kitchen

We're in the restaurant kitchen dancing. Austere is both Ho and Lai in this scene.

He looks happy to be there. Happy to use his feet for something other than running from the

bones of his old country. Happy to be in the arms of a man he didn't meet in the dark. We dance too much it turns into kissing, kissing into hunger, hunger into a cut away.

IV. Black and White

The car broke down so we're breaking up.



V. Wash

Because Ho's hands are bandaged, Austere has to clean his body with a knife. Ho

sits on a chair at the center of the room. Everywhere else, fleas. Say, I'll call you a slut in

the future. Say, Let me feed you now. Say, and I'll hit you six times because you

won't tell me how many men you've buried in the trunk of your car.

We're on the rooftop. Lai's fixing the roof of the apartment building in the color-corrected afternoon. Austere climbs up the stairs with a water bottle and pours love

on Lai's back. He kneels in prayer and drinks the bullets on Lai's skin.

VI. Henry

Henry's always in a moving car in a freeway somewhere he can be chased. His boyfriend's the director making the movie of their lives. His boyfriend's riding shotgun with

a shotgun shooting a scene. Austere's in the back, his side perforated with love.

They feel
lucky to be alive and hearing the roar of the tires as they zigzag their way to happiness.

They feel
lucky to be making this movie, to be on this road, to be holding hands, to be in love like this, to hurt for the fun of it.



VII. Cinema

Austere leans the movie against the uglier parts of his life. The bone-white mistakes laid bare in a script. The saturated fists carefully framed. The fast-paced lust. The simplicity of a kiss washing anger away but leaving a pebble of disgust. Austere reads the poem after he watches the movie, a small ritual.

They fit together like a knife through a ribcage.

On the screen, Lai fills his loneliness with other men's bullets. Austere cries

Because his bullets have grown in his stomach like vines and strangle him when he forgets to sleep.

VIII. Low Voices

Chang likes low voices and when he asks Lai what kind of women voices he likes, Austere tells them he likes men who can sing him to sleep.

Lai ignores them, continues

cooking.

Lai likes voices that press against his stomach.

Lai likes voices that make him lean in for a kiss.

Lai likes voices that rev the engine and start the car without him.

IX. Voice Recorder

Austere cries into the voice recorder Chang gives him to speak to at a bar.



X. Waterfalls

The Iguaza Falls is on my lamp. Ho bought it for me. I don't need
to go there

anymore but I need to dump our dead bodies into the raging waters below.

XI. Lighthouse

Chang goes to the end of the world and drops Austere's sadness
there.

Austere wakes up with a swollen forehead and a bruised lip.

XII. Slaughterhouse

Yes, Austere's naked and yes, he took painkillers when he cooked
dinner because

he has his father's teeth. Why are you looking at him like that for?

Did you do it? Haven't you slept with other guys with a morgue
between your knees?

Ask him if he wants you right now and he'll pull up the list and let
you pick the answer that would rectify the ugly bone sticking out of your
necks.

He could read you a bedtime story of when you were happier.
Sunshine yellow bleeding out of his eyes.

You'd like that, wouldn't you? He knows

you won't listen but you can still watch his lips quiver

as if he just met you.

How many times have you both fallen from your bed and you,
cotton-soft, folding him back in your arms?

Claw him here, kiss him here, dance him around the table.

Are you hungry? Sit down. Take a plate. He has burned



the meat on purpose this time.

XIII. Happy Together

By breaking, Austere swallows a bone

he picked up in the dark and spells something new in the dirt with a loaded gun.

XIV. Wishbone

Grab an end. Please.