

Anna Mantzaris

3 Calculations

1:

It's a fried fish. With the head on. This is the first meal with the man who will become my husband. I have to be careful not to look at the eyes.

Of the fish

Not the husband

The meat is chunked and served with sides of chili pepper sauce and a garlic butter sauce.
The fish is a foot-long.

The menu reads:

Varies in size

He says:

The husband

Not the fish

That he imagines someone he doesn't like getting a fish the size of a sardine

= .5 ounces

The object of his affection, a trout

= 12 ounces

His soulmate, a whale

= 4,800,000 ounces

Final Equation:

2 people

who

marry for 1 year and 6 ounces =almost bliss, not quite

2:

There's a pawprint in the back of the casino. I'm certain it's a bear.

2 prints

-

1 missing print

= Just 1 print caked in mud

I've gone out the service entrance. No one stops me. A hawk soars overhead. This is Reno. Not Las Vegas. They sell Mustang Ranch T-shirts in the gift shop and play

80s music

I remember roller-skating around The Derby to "Blue Monday," kisses laced from stolen liquor. My life still involves a lot of stolen liquor.

The service door locks behind me. I've forgotten to buy a postcard.

I find a strip mall.

"You should call this a trip small," I say to the woman behind the counter at the restaurant.

1 gallon soup, \$2.99

+

free bread smells that smells of plastic

= I'm still hungry

Next door the Cougar's Den sells only nuked bright pink hotdogs.

Until 3pm

I order and eat 3 per minute

= I am the Joey Chestnut of the moment

I sit by the window. A German Sheppard perched in the driver's seat of a Scout truck. The windows fogging up.

38 degrees Celsius

No one has a coat on as the tiring herd roams from casino to casino.

3 seconds between door fronts

I wish we were staying at the Lido with its tri-colored fluorescent sign bragging

Free ZERO-cost cable

Circa 1950s

I will return to our empty airless high-rise room.

Final Calculation:

Me at present location: 39.5299° N, 119.8143° W

You = Location unknown

3:

I break everything down into IV steps:

Watching television:

- I) I have to reach for the remote
- II) I have to hit the on button
- III) I have to choose a channel
- IV) I have to look at the screen

Heating soup:

- I) I have to open the can
- II) I have to pour the soup in the pot
- III) I have to turn the burner on
- IV) I have to stir the soup

Being with you:

- I) I shouldn't ask questions
- II) I shouldn't expect too much
- III) I shouldn't expect anything
- IV) ?

Final Calculation:

My name is V letters

Yours is the same

You tell me it's VI

= I believe your bad Roman numeral math