Maybe baby is another way to say bye

Christian Jil R. Benitez
Maybe *baby* is another way to say *bye*

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I mean, it’s not like I’m gonna leave you the next day. It’s more like, we gonna leave anyway, as we should, as soon as we’ve been given names. Like how I’m *Chris* so I can’t be *Adam*, or *Matt*, or *Evan* anymore. So unlike my shadow, in the smallness of it – inside another – I just crouch and suddenly, I’m a rock or some animal, and I don’t even have to tell you why – in fact, *I can’t* even tell you why, I’m just that, all pitch black, inert and flat. Sorry we have to speak, it’s always too much, or too little, or too loud for love. I mean, I apologize I can’t love you the way I would’ve wanted to love: tenderness and hunger, simple as simple must, it’s just all hands, open and I turn to your touch. It wouldn’t have even mattered if you call out another name, because it’s just us, baby, and it’s all ours. I mean, we’re nameless but all the names could’ve been ours – call me *Smart* – *ass*, call me *Whatnot*, I could’ve been a flower vase or the water in it, unreplaced for days, and I wouldn’t have it another way. I mean, my God, imagine lying beside me, and it turns out I’m also the bed we’re in, softness and sweat and all, and I’m still the lucky one. Call me *Afternoon*, call me *Midnight*, and I still would’ve come; in fact, we could even not die, like really *die*, we could’ve been air instead, monsoons and their rains, all kinds of it, and I would’ve still found a way to beckon to love. It’s such a shame, really, if you ask me, that you can whisper to my ear that *I love you* - no matter how much, I think it shouldn’t have to be heard. It’s not like because it’s a secret to be kept, it’s more like it shouldn’t be needed to be said – you know what I mean?

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I know you call me baby before you even open your mouth,
this earth seems to tell me this, it just knows,
maybe we can’t lie with the way we stand, you know?
Maybe there are other ways to speak, maybe we’re just too human – and language is the biggest scam.
I mean, don’t rob us of love, spare us some, don’t make me ask for it, please, it’s already a lot.
We could’ve been born as algal blooms, and perhaps
then, life would’ve meant so much more: it’s light, it’s water, it’s just that. Maybe somewhere, there’s still war,
but at least I can feed myself, and cooking is one less thing you would’ve worried about. Maybe you wouldn’t be calling me baby, that’s for sure, maybe it’s spore, or something fancy only algae would know.
Sorry I’m apparently human – I mean, I’m sorry I’m apparently human, for otherwise, I could’ve loved you less selfishly, and maybe, you know, more wordlessly. Like, no need to call me names we invent ourselves through: in some other time, maybe you could’ve just pushed me up the wall, and I would understand. Or you could’ve just, you know, be, and I still would understand.
History, with all of its boredom, led us here, sadly, inefficient lovers, having to ask if we understand clear enough. You get what I mean?
It’s like whenever you tell me you love me, or I tell you how much I love you, we just cleave each other a little too much: I is a bit too lonely, and you is always already a little too far. I mean, it’s sad, like really, really sad, I couldn’t even begin to tell you why, or how, with the force enough to substitute a pat on your back, to mean at least, no matter how much I don’t understand it myself: baby, baby, maybe it’s all just love.