

2020

(ages 13-14)

I'm kind of confused
and I don't know why
I don't have any questions to ask and I don't have any answers to give,
except for maybe "I don't know".

it's not anything funny
I'm only laughing into the air
because I can't figure out what else to do, and laughing seems like a
pretty quick way to get an answer
a smile for my confusion,
a remedy for the sickness
and some vitamin d for whatever you said its good for.

dear
the ghost hiding in the CD case,
I did see you but I promise no one else will
I wont tell
you can trust me.
I don't have many people to talk to,
and not many that would want to hear if I did decide to break that
trust,
but I love you now so I won't.

I'm confused
as to how I can feel like I know so much and so little at once,
how my memories are fleeting and my thoughts are constant and then
vice versa for a remedy.

—

leave room for me
when you forget how lights work
and drown in all my puddles
because oceans are eyesores

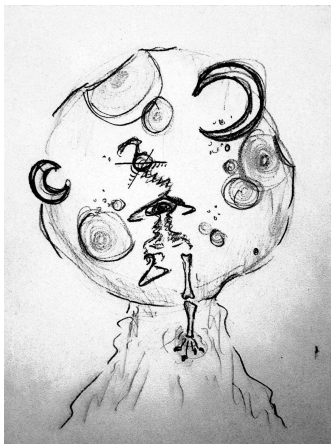
you never loved blue
and the sky was never bigger
you spoke too many arrows
that wouldn't leave your quiver

leave room for space
when you shut your eyes forever
let it wallow up inside you
and say coffee makes it better

leave your room for me
and make yourself some coffee
brush your teeth and breathe
I'm not the best at talking

but I'm trying to be here for you
let me know when things clear over
paint a picture
hang it up
and

—



I really want to write a poem
but my brain won't stay on one topic long enough to come up with the first metaphor
and I guess that's one thing I want to write a poem about

I want to write a poem about
my aching limbs
that don't want to move
a product of my self sabotage
so why am I complaining
and that includes my
fingers that kinda stop me when
I want to write a poem

and I want to write a poem about
how I feel about you
how I feel so
damned
much
about you
and I can't think when I'm with you
but I really haven't thought a lot
so I really havent written any poems

so I'm trying to write a poem
lately I drag my legs
because they buckle with my weight
I don't think I look sick
I need to cut my shit
my fingers drag along the screen
not even enough strength to write a line about how little strength I have
I hate it, I hate it, I love it

like so many things that make me weak
I have a habit of wearing down
then building back up at such a pace
that I can't even see myself in the mirror anymore

i also kind of want to write a poem about how I'm done with being me
I'm so done

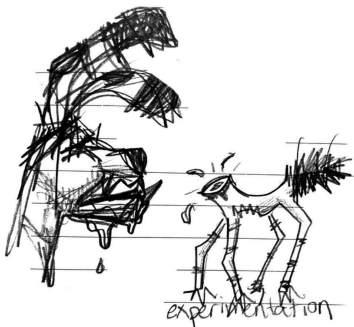
I forgot my voice today
talking like I would when I'm trying to fake it
talking like a child
when I wanted to be understood
like I have a mind,
like I have a concience

because apparently the eight year old
crying at her one fat roll
had no choice and no mind
and the ten year old
that couldn't stop eating
didn't need to be listened to

maybe I am a child

I'm just about as one sided
and by that I mean I can't make up my fucking mind
I'll never stop
but I wish I was just better
why can't I have the best of both worlds?
maybe it's because my both worlds don't fit
why can't I just be better?
I'll never stop

I want to write a poem
about how I know this won't last
about I'm weak
about I'm spacing
about I'm empty
about I already don't remember this poem
I'm numb
I'm dying
about everything.
I wish I could write a poem



have I apologized sufficiently for my suffering
as if suffering isn't sufficient apology
for being a burden,
and being a burden isn't just another word to roll of my lips
dripping with the saltwater and smooth as the weeds that grow when I ask for grass
my lips don't know what else to ask for than an apology
I promise, if given so much as two words strung together
to tell me that there is some remorse, or pity for the blind cat that wanders into the street,
I'll accept and plant the saltwater
until it sprouts up next spring, leaf's pulling gently outwards, ready to start a storm

ready your cellar, and I'll miss
ready your shotgun, and you will

unfinished

and I sit here,
watching the cars drive by,
and the wasp fly around my front door,
and another broken light go
on, then off, then on again,
theres always one more half-thing
that waits to be a whole
like maybe one day I'll find myself from the wishes
or the cars will stop coming
or the road will give in,
and the light will go out without ever being fixed

dear _____,

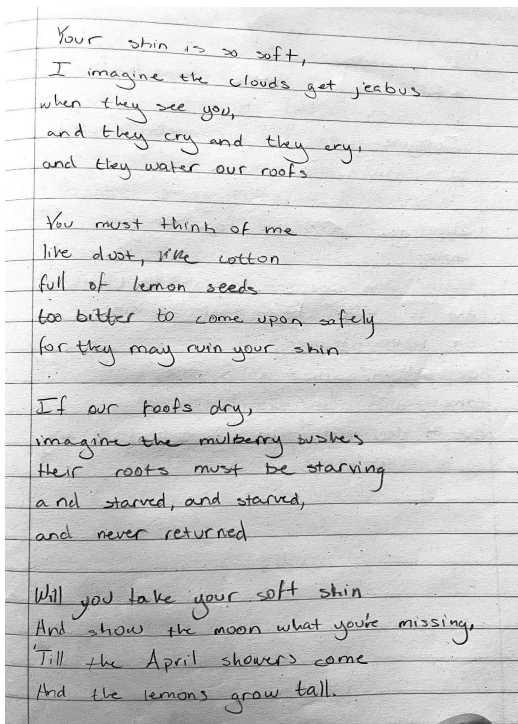
things are great, better than ever.

I ate twelve cookies. Inhaled them. They live now, without their families in the dark. Oh how bad I feel. The guilt may consume me from the inside out like I take outside things in.

I have a habit of taking your thoughts

I don't try and if you want them back they're all yours. I don't want them so please, I beg of you, take them back now.

They hurt. I just want to be numb and they hurt. Numb is better than feeling so attached. Take me away.



i spent the day today,
walking to the place where we scattered my mother's ashes,
with a woman who raises kids that aren't her own
and man whose wife died in his arms.

it's nothing poetic,
they each forgot about their situations moments after they happened,
and we mindlessly wandered into the woods
and into the soot
and into the rot
and we all turned into dust

tomorrow it will snow
for two days it will be quiet.
no one will expect it, because it's much too early,
and the snow will cover our dust
and we'll be soaked up by the dirt
and they will forget about our situation as if it never happened

yesterday I wished
I wished upon every star
to turn into dust
to be burnt down to a thought
and absorbed by whatever towel they used to clean my walls
and the frogs and the worms
would use me for winter beds
and dream sweet dreams
and it would finally be quiet

so I spent the day today,
walking to the tree where we left my mother's ashes
with the woman who raised me
and the man who raised his son alone

—

if I pretend to laugh one more fucking time
I might wheeze my ribs loose we're all running nooses around the sky pick your hand
out carefully keep me safe inside
the breeze is tearing roots from homes captain no one says to hold your ground safe
and sound
fake smile till the world ends

—

too big too empty
better drain it out and hang it out to dry tomorrow's laundry for whoever wants me
entity beast
simple to the core a vessel of air
and borrowed trinkets that you never bother to take
but speak to others despair

I have a problem
and it really isn't right
I don't know if I should point it out
cause everyone else is looking down
and it hurts to know that it wouldn't really matter
if I said it

my compliments to the chef
this is the best meal I've ever had
I'll finish it all
and I won't regret it a bit.
that doesn't happen much

the thing is
I saw you serve it with a dirty spoon

I don't think I'm mad
I don't even think I should care
on the way here I must have passed a few
eating off of the ground
and out of the fucking garbage

and this is a wonderful meal
but it was doomed from the start



2021 (14-15)

how to confess without consequences

if you talk enough,
you start to notice no one's listening

conversation, ignorance
reliance on rat poison cocktails instead of morning coffee

it's not sad or tragic, but it's hardly beautiful
not in the way dying girls are

not in the way that dying stars get one final show,
withering out so no one can admire them
but burning on just the same.

the stars that may have never been acknowledged or named
but surely there's been someone who cared, and now it can never say
thank you

just a black hole stealing everything I know
stretching it thin so I have to watch every particle
every detail
before it's gone forever
and I don't even remember how to miss it

if you talk enough,
you start to realize that things come out

bats and bugs that were eating your stomach lining
finally getting to see the light
before they drop dead,
dried up before the dark parts can take them back

the only ones who knew
the viral terror that infected your insides
secrets that weren't far behind,
so you close your mouth and stitch it shut

intention, repentance, silence,
and confession

confession coming last, after the stitches have healed

to love is to anticipate loss
to lose is to anticipate mourning
to wake up in the morning you have to forget

take your medicine
brush your teeth
get back in bed
and wait for tomorrow

if you talk enough,
no one cares when they hear the truth

all of your words blend into one
weaving and waiting to be worn
thin, falling apart,
fraying until no one can recognize the secret you spilled from the apology
you didn't owe
and that's that

and i hope I've talked enough

—

my cells are shriveling up.

millions by millions,
fragmenting into themselves,
they routinely run out of time

every seven years, your skin renews.
just wait seven years, and the pain never touched you.
just wait, seven years,
and she never held you

tear off your flesh,
watch it rot, exposing your bones,
your body that you've never wanted,
and that's never wanted you

my cells are killing themselves.
writing notes and fantasizing about rope
dangling, pulled taut between the balcony and
nucleus, lysosomes,
ER,

hey Google,
what does dying feel like
stories of boiling skin and boiling your back when they tell you to clean yourself.

even though you'll never be clean
you can keep scrubbing
keep pulling
until you rub off enough dead cells
that she never kissed you goodnight

—

I don't have any crying songs left.
please tear off my skin
boil pasta in my blood
and make them stomach it

your eyes are bloodshot yellow
my hands are swollen red

I can't read lines from faces
and there is nothing in my head

all that's left is a hospital bed
spackled ceilings
somewhere you know you fit

i find it shocking
lets shock me dead
I think you lysol sprayed
my white board brain

my best trait is the way I scar
and cant make up my mind
even if I do belong here
I don't deserve anyone's time

please hate me
then forget me
you've always been my shiny knight

I'm just the moon
that breaks your beauty
I only know me in your guise

please tear off my skin
I don't need it
and there's nothing underneath
if there is make them eat it

make then chew it fifty times
tell everyone that I love them
and condolences aside
I really do think you should taste a bit of
poison once in a while,
it keeps me fucking humble
and now I bleed spaghetti sauce



i haven't felt feelings in days

maybe I'm frozen
because you couldn't take me now
but you'll need me later

I'd ask but I think you forgot

lovely until I'm freezer burnt
and flaking

always the wrong shape
always speaking the wrong way
i wish you'd just take someone else in my place

and if I thought too long and tough myself
the thoughts aren't gone, just locked away
I could peek through the gaps in their cells

and learn to spill my guts
but only to strangers

no one wants to hear that
biting
nagging,
numb, too little, too much,

dad I think the freezers broken again

teach myself to be what you ask and

learn to fall in love
but only with strangers
the way their arms fold
and their eyelashes flutter,
and they're far away from their homes and their freezers

please don't put me away

i can't breathe
and my air feels trapped
screaming might help but
I doubt I would agree with the decision by the time it went through

that's becoming a rule

I feel like screaming a lot

that sounds dramatic but
I'd like to see you try
to sit with your lungs corked while you listen
to an angel telling you they don't think they deserve their wings

soon enough I'll pull out my dad's drill
and pop holes in the front of my lungs,
the most I can hope for is a dull little whistle
but at least now I'll die whistling

to an angel

—

she drowned her dreams of you in all of her finest regrets
she spoke your name at the pew but by noon she'd forget
lover to entity and water to sweat
mourning a love she hasn't lost

i shattered a bottle to see how sharp it could be
now there's nothing covering my face
all I can do is splinter
but I'm trying my hardest to break

—



2022 (15-16)

it's that time of the year again
the seeds are sprouting, and the animals are coming out of hibernation
it's getting warmer
and brighter
and happier

it's that time of the year again, isn't it?
do you remember the gardens you grew
the beautiful peaches and cucumbers
with their soft skin
wash them please

I can't touch that
it's dirty

do you remember learning to love them
laying in bed and daydreaming
now get up

do you remember the garden you grew?
the one you never had to touch, or see
because it's too deep under your skin
in your skull
under the bone, and fat, and mucus and ants

you know you never could have done it
but I applaud you for trying

it's that time of year again,
when you call up your dealers, and ask how much for one.
just one.
and buy ten.
and take them all at once

it's pathetic.
you, who sits inside while they grow your garden
and learns to act so they can keep on laughing
and you can have somewhere to go

it's that time of year again
for stomachaches, and seeds,
swallowing them whole,
breathing through your nose and stuffing your bra

he's doing it again
you're doing it again
he's falling.

505-504-

—

I think I'm in the mood to explain myself
to lose my breath for a couple smiles
if explanation can feed and get stuck my teeth
next time I'll remember it hurts

I think I'm ready to learn new words,
snap perfectly good pencils for an excuse to make noise,
go against the grain,
and change my name to splinter

its time to write down my thoughts again
for better or for so so much worse
so the tooth can digest what my tissue couldn't
and spit out bile

—



And to my mother

sometimes I forget that I can't write literally
my hedonism doesn't permit that kind of pain
shaky hands pouring bitter coffee
another line about inhaling to heal
with poison that will kill me
into lungs that won't expand
to prompt nothing but comfort
that used to come for free.
5, 10, 20 more
a feeling that you haven't earned
another thought fabricated,
a memory,
of that beautiful serendipity
who's beauty I will never match.
a terrible monster
that holds me with sharp nails and bared teeth
but at least she doesn't run her hands painfully along my skin
like the air and the men that love me.
steady hands pouring sweetened acid
pulling me closer to an untimely demise
gifted to me with my first breath
vaccinated, taught, hospitalized, fed
but never heard, because I won't speak up.

her ashes tasted like wine and roses
but now they're stuck in my teeth.

I can't write literally
my hedonism won't permit it
just as it won't allow me to stand, or walk, or sit up straight.
go ahead darling,
do your worst
I've been waiting for so long to feel something more than cycles of pain and
pleasure causing pain that I must relieve with pleasure
drink this cup, piss it out, and use your shaking hand to pour another

—

i spend my days in rooms full of people
who don't know what it's like
to feel like you've said something profound
you've poured your soul out and the weight in the room is crushing you
and your ribs are inflating and they're starting to feel raw
and all you did was state your name

they're all listening, continue

in this caretaker who refuses to look up from their wrists
to see that their hands are holding my throat
their thumbs pressed so hard they've turned white, and hidden their nails in my skin

with mannequins who can speak
and computers without keyboards

I spend my days in rooms full of people
who whisper so loud that it hurts
they have this talent, turning the air into rocks, and my skin into porcelain
so even if I could put my own thoughts into a sentence,
it couldn't leave my lips
or I would break

a manequin of sorts
who can't speak

they're all listening, so why don't you continue

I really want you to know
but I don't know how to tell you
that my ribs are taking up the space that my lungs need to grow
because my ribs are taking up the space that my lungs need to grow

the instructions are simple,
run around me with scissors
as close as you can
and see who bruises first

I spend my days in rooms full of people
who don't know what it's like
to scream behind fucking polish
you need to say something profound
but you're stuck, and you're trapped,
and your own weight is crushing you
and your ribs are inflating and they're starting to feel raw
and no one knows your name

—

consumption.

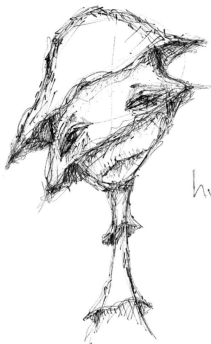
where do you think the flowers come from?
the ones you pick
and put in a jar
and dry up
and hang from threads that they used to know.

you know they can speak.
their roots hold each other
like you've never been held,
for the life that they love
if they know what that means.

you see, to them it's just the truth.
they know that they need that pressure to live
and sunlight to breathe
and soil to grow.
they know when to drink
but they never met you.

those flowers you pick and put in a jar
and starve to death
and leave to dry
and hang up with thread
that they used to cry for.
for it used to reach out
to hold their roots
for the life that it loved.

you pretend that you know,
while you swallow your thoughts
heated and poured
ungracefully
into cups that they could never hold
without your plastic hands.



your heartbreak is pathetic,
sobbing for the petals
that you picked and starved and hung.

your teeth are clenched
because they miss the sun
but they won't tell you that,
for their roots can't reach yours.

do you remember when you were sown?
with feet in the grass and hands in the dirt
and raspberry thorns in your terrible fingers
buried so deep
that maybe they'll grow.

—

my dear serendipity

sometimes you close your eyes
back cold, sirens blaring
and you hold your hands to your ears
and you whisper

this is it
let your shoulders fall
and grind your pretty teeth
what a wonderful way for this curtain to close

last night you held your breath
so you could finally fly
and for a moment you felt it
eyes closed, back cold

for a moment you felt her hand on your back
back cold, hands shaking
and you smiled.

every day you open your gaping fucking mouth
a fork in one hand, being held by the other
but crimson has always been home to this skull
and it reminds you what warmth feels like

a thousand years ago you walked outside.
i saw it, and so did the sun. it seems though,
you did not.

you forgot your home for a house
and clutched your fists
inhaling your pleasure like air
until growing pains were unbearable

and now you're four feet tall
sirens blaring, ankle sprained,
foot on the gas, ears plugged.
but you never learned to walk.

sometimes you close your eyes
and the earth shakes hard
and your vision goes black
both eyes open

and you hold your own hand
and whisper in your ear
my dear serendipity,
you can let your shoulders fall.

—

I may have been in pain
but I yearn for a time when the right things hurt

the beauty,
of ghosts waltzing over algae-ridden water
their feet landing perfectly on the beat of the drips
from the roof of the cave that they suffocate within
while they look into each other's eyes
and scream

my skull has been caved in since age 12
slowly eroding every thought and movement
while I leap between things to blame
for my own swan dive onto mossy rocks

the comfort couldn't save me

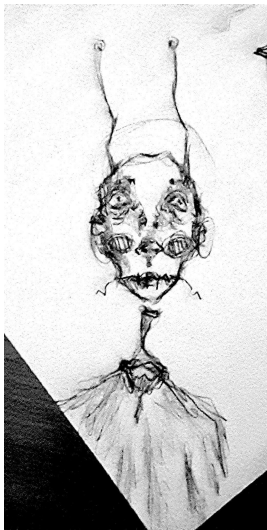
I yearn for a time when my hair grew straight
and fell into shower drains
to feed the waiting creatures
deep in the pipes
with their wide eyes and bared teeth
whispering that this is beautiful

like ghosts dancing behind my eyes
with vines for hands
and lighttower tongues

i may have been in pain
but the memory feels like breeze running over my fingers
and behind my back
and lifting me up to go somewhere else
where the right things hurt

this is someone else's spit
on bitten, unpeeled oranges
covered in sand and sweat

mine would keep me colder than this
under darker skies
sleepless, bleeding, and
beautiful



—
I'm facing unrequited love
skin touching electric skin
hand holding a fist
and two bruises that are far too dark to see

they might as well be holes on your flesh

the sky is making noises that sound vaguely like thunder
rumbling
and I'm sitting, staring out the window
watching your hands trace circles on my skin

while I lift mine to both sides
and shove nails between my finger webs

if I ask politely,
you might look away
but I can't speak.

yesterday I ate in front of you
and chewed
and swallowed
without a fear of you looking

without that fear that you'd realize I was human
made of flesh and fat and spit
and turn away to meet god
so you could grab his fist instead.

it isn't quite killing me
but it's causing something far worse than death
a plastic guilt
and a plastic kiss

for your unrequited love
—

my overconsumption may be self-destructive
but I haven't yet seen the face of god
causing my own suffering and tearing open wounds
but wounds scar once you take your fingers out

maybe I'll learn something
something
from my obvious mistakes
before my eyes start bleeding and my lungs collapse

maybe I'll learn to stop,
I know I can't stitch the wound
for I've taught my hands to shake
but if I sew my fingers together I can't reach for my assassin

and he'll grow lonely
and it will make him tired
and he'll forget how to move his legs
so he can't come whisper in my ear

I'll name him and give him a home
somewhere softer than this room,
then I'll pray that he's a better person
than this flesh carved from stone

he'll stop when he's full,
and make small talk,
and kill his friends,
and never meet god.

one day, I'll take my steady hand
and walk outside
to find a beautiful garden.

I'll fall on my knees and let the bugs touch my skin
and the dirt stain my bare legs,
the strawberries will reach out but I'll leave them be
and they'll be lonely
but they'll know that I'm saving them from poisoned stomach acid

and they'll know that I love them
and we'll make small talk
before the ground caves in
and I fall on my neck
and finally meet god

maybe I'll fall in love with you
on my quest for obsessive variety
and stoke your flames until they turn
a shade that suits your eyes

you'll reach your hand out carefully
and I'll return my fingers
bloody, stained, and grey
for you to gently hold

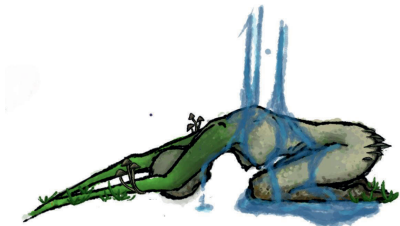
maybe I'll fall for the boy in the painting
who's bones looked crooked
as he cradles a broken nose

and I'll stitch his wounds
and his legs together,
and watch the blood drip over his smile

I'll try my best to watch your lips
while you scream to God
in a crumbling cave
and the echos cry back clearer than your voice

and I'll die knowing I've never said your name

—



has anyone ever told you
you write perfect songs to kill yourself to
and you can't hold a tune or a breath
but your hand makes a perfect fist

and you wrap it around mine
and then unwrap it promptly
it's just what we do
it's love

and we stop
feet screeching
cause we were running
and I was running

and we were out of breath
and we held our fists together

has anyone told you you're human
and this house is your home
you can't deny it, cause you sleep here
but your blankets are always too warm

I'm consuming masochistically
and I don't think I'm a masochist
unless you want to hurt me
cause you seem to love to kiss

and you offer your fist
with a smile

and you offer a hit
and a lighter to blister
singing of skin
cause the smell isn't vile

like everything else
your words and my spine
come crashing together
to make something godly

I'm telling you something
you don't want to hear
our reflections are clashing
at least we can see

has anyone told you you're human
and this house is your home
but the freezer is humming and keeping you from dreaming
and it's burning around your corpse

—

there was once a beautiful girl
who loved to dance all night
in her cold dark bedroom
with the window shut tight

her dad was a doctor,
he took his graveyard shifts with pride
and one day he came home and went to bed
and she woke to find a pen with her name on the side

the girl picked it up
and carried it to her cold, bright room
and shut the windows tight
so she could see what she heard

she pictured a man
with a fist on his chest
and a needle in his vein
and a clock on his wall

and she painted him up beautifully
with light sockets for eyes

she laid herself down to reward what she'd done
and woke to sirens and shaking walls

the funeral was casual,
she wore her mother's wedding dress
laid flowers on the coffin
and took to her pen

her eyes fluttered shut and she pictured her hardest
a man in jeans
a boy in a suit
laying right under her feet

she pictured them holding hands
and screaming for help
though the guests would hear cries
and offer condolences in response

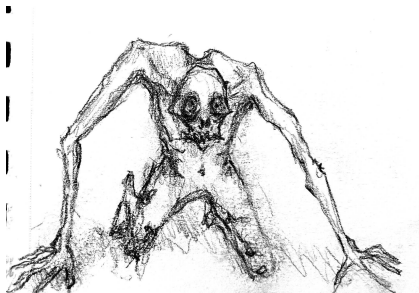
that night she went home to an empty house
and closed her window tight
and went to sleep
to reward what she'd done

and she let her art swallow her
in her cold dark room
with the windows shut tight and no onlookers but the stars

she took her graveyard shifts with pride
scrawling her stories on rigid walls
and asking the moon if she'd earned her rest
showing him her ink stained hands

then one day she woke up
and told her favorite story yet
of a beautiful girl on her back
on a bed of fresh, soft, red snow

and she opened her door to the harshest light
and asked the moon where he'd learned to shine
and waltzed to the flowers she'd layed down to rot
and fell on her back with a knife in her throat



Please remove your fingers from each others skin. If I'm letting you in, I need you to be clean.

Take off your shoes, your coat, your shirt, so we can sit here and look. Miles apart, tracing every line and crevice. I wish I could paint. It would look just like this.

Until you reach your arm out, and the miles turn into inches and the paint dries. Please remove your fingers from my skin. I need this to be clean.

This isn't a poem. I don't want to write a poem. I want to make my thoughts into words and then put them here to let the paper digest them for me.

Please pull your fingers out of my mouth. Leave the room and take every proof of you, so I can think. Let me imagine your voice, your breath, your touch. Let me paint the lines and crevices. Don't come back. Don't ruin it.

Let me spin something I can love.

i'll worship art as god,
and my body as the devil,
and I'll teach them to get along
and sew the two together,
until all of my smallest tendons
are hung on my bloody walls;
I used my hands to build this box,
now it's time to call it home.

to lost loves that are better on short drives
hands wiser than mouths, though your fingernails were as sharp as your tongue
i remember, you were painfully gentle
choking me with feathertips, the same ones you used to carve his face
spending our few nights lamenting about his worth, coughing when I picked
up the guitar, pulling it back.
i always paled in comparison, but I promise I'd still bite.
at least now I can say I hate your voice.

to lost souls that never learned
anything but the fact that there are others wandering
and if you can hold on tight enough to the first one you float by, if you can
open your eyes wide enough to recognize their face, you're fucking set.

there are no maps out here,
but i was always tied far too safely to the street signs.
thank you for getting me stranded,
i only blame you for finding your way back,
for turning to smile at me when you know my muscles can't contract.

to my lost love that I walked long roads with,
I hope I never find you.
for i know I'll become greedy, like so many men before me.
i know I'll stare the poison in the mouth
the splenda-sweet poison, the adrenaline, the scars and deviated septums,
and I'll swallow.



don't you get it?
you were a thin child
and with every dawn you grew
on vines and branches
tall, then short
you were a good child
you knew what you loved
i drew you in a book one day
one particularly sad day
when I had to question what I was
and the answer is, I was a child.

now here you are
grown
not big, not strong
but bigger

don't you get it
you'll never be able to create again
not in the way that I did
when I was just a child
and every thought was an idea
and every line I drew was art
you'll never be able to spin around
and watch the colors
and the world spin with you,
you'll never be here again
but you can turn as if you were

now here you are
with needles in each hand
pretending that you're growing
one vines, on branches
i drew you, precious parasite
when I was just a child
and I'll never be a child again
so this is how you'll remain

i was a thin child
with weights tied to my feet
and you were there too,
i remember how you spoke.
with each breath, I breathed
while you simply inhaled
with each step, I moved
you never learned to swim

you will never create again
not life, not death
you'll stare at the walls
and try to see pictures.
that's all you are.

i was once a child,
but that time has passed
and the dawn is coming again.
I've left you as you are,
but you can not blame me, for I was a child.
I've died , dear parasite.
now grow

—

my body is starting to feel alien to me
I'm losing my ability to speak, walk, eat, see.
I'm completely naked, the only creature with exposed skin;
fragile, defenseless

my body is mechanic-
made of hinges and bolts, but I am an animal.
my limbs are impractical
I find solace in the knowledge that my bones protrude, as proof that there's
something holding me together

I'm tempted to expedite the alienation,
change my exterior, destroy the inner workings
gnash my teeth and catch my tongue, stare straight at the lamp for hours,
and feed whatever parasite I've swallowed

in disconnect, I walk past eyes without recognizing faces
i fall asleep with my eyes open
still then, those passing ghosts are welcome to look into them.

my skin is sprouting scales,
since last winter they've grown bigger, tougher,
my skin is releasing itself, I assume that it too is tired, so I peel it away
hoping that it knows that this is empathy, this is human

my sentences are growing longer by the day.
I'm sure you've noticed, they're taking up space for nothing.
there's not much point in sharing yourself through scripted acts of incohesion.

and now that i can no longer hear my thoughts,
I guess this is a good way to end the poem,
leave it a symbol of my decomposition,
another bit of waste to bury this alien body.

—

it's all okay now,
all of it,
because I know beauty now.

and it's not because it introduced itself,
I wouldn't have listened,
and it's not because you taught me,
it wouldn't have stuck.

I've simply stumbled onto it,
on the long staircase down,
lost the railing, asked it to help me up.

and it looked at me, long and hard,
and shook it's head.

but it was a gentle gesture, the slow rock
of the sinking boat that bills me to sleep, and

it's all okay now.
all of it.

I'm bathing in this dalliance
with nothing to cover my flesh
engulfed in the waves and wondering when my heart will learn to skip.
I see the way her fingers play upon everyone's skin,
just as they do on mine,
I wonder if they tremble the same.

I've let my head fall under,
and I don't plan to come up for breath.
I've tangled my fingers so lightly in your hair
that if you wish to pull away they'll hardly snag.

dear my precious cynosure,
sincerely, your nail-biting sycophant.
I'm sorry that I don't know how to love.

To knit the most Beautiful gown

Her trembling hands held her needles tight
One over, one under, wrapped around
She watched her string crawl in the light
One over, one under, trailing along

Green, white, purple, and blue
Over and under, it came to life
An inch, a foot, a sleeve it grew
Over and under, for hours and nights

And as her gown trailed on the floor
One above, and one below
She glanced in every looking glass
Till her eyes began a sorrowed flow

“What have I done to deserve this plight?”
She cried to no one but the moon
“Must the cost of Beauty be blight?”
And she tore her gown in two

Her trembling hands held the remains
One over, one under, wrapped around
She left with no coat, despite the rain
Foot over, foot under, she trailed along

“What’s hurting you, darling?”, said the moon to her back
“I’ve made up a monster”, she gently replied
“Have you come out to wash it?”, it called down to earth
But no water could clean the horror she’d birthed

And as her gown trailed on the floor
Night above, and dirt below
She gathered all the sharpest stems
Till she reached the roaring river’s flow

“What have I done to deserve this plight,”
She cried to the angels in their quiet nests
“Must the cost of Beauty be blight?”
And split her stomach down from her chest

Her trembling hands held her barest veins
One over, one under, beginning to fade
And grabbed the sharp stems to begin to repay
The beauty she'd robbed from a young lamb's grave

Black, and brown, and soaked dark red
Over and under, she carried on
An inch, a foot, with not a thought
Till the angels reached down with their fragile arms,
and wrapped her in their silken sheets,
and lifted her up to the weeping moon,
night over, dirt under, and heaven above,
with nothing left of it's dearly beloved,
but the earth where she sleeps, stained deep dark red,
and beneath the roaring river's bed,
torn in two, and rotted so,
rests the most Beautiful gown.

—

the orange light isn't bothering me as much
it still makes me pretty nauseous,
but I've given up on avoiding stomach bugs

are my hands too stiff to hold
the feeling makes me nauseous
but I love how easy your skin is to mold

can you help me pretend
that this isn't repulsive
in return I'll give you the bones from my hands
they're my favorite ones

—



if I can't live, I guess I'll curate
cause rly that's all I've been doing
sticking my hands into bowls that don't belong to me
pulling them out, drenched in holy water that the living blessed,
and feel it burn beautifully, turn my skin the color of love and disease,
and making sure not to sleep,
surely not enough to rest,
to dye my eyes in coal and wine that might just look holy in indirect sun rays,
if I can't live, you can't either. I'm really so sorry that's what I've been doing.
and we won't go on walks because my legs are tired
and we don't tell the truth because I've never confessed,
but if you want we can hold hands in the dark
and watch as my skin's dyed the color of rot and bursting veins.
I guess I'll curate, cause it's all there is to do;
I never plan to make a living, and the coal clotted my favorite wine, and it got all over my
bloodstained hands and I washed it off at the holy water stand that no one locks up cause
that would be selfish and I don't even know my Self,
so I better get to curating honey,
cause you can't hold a ghost-
and your love demands flesh.

I'm daydreaming about stepping out of my front door.
you can't blame me. the sun hurts, it's cold out, my palms sweat, I'm tired, it's setting me on
fire.
I daydream about conversation. I know that I can speak, but my mouth will not move.
I know that I can see your face, the way you're better than this kill list.
i know that way back when I would've just killed myself.
fuck it if they went outside, doesn't mean I have to. try writing a few books, step off of my
porch and fall right into a noose.
and no one would bother to cut me down, because I was a stranger.
I'll never be in a band. I'll never make it big. I'll never rebel, I won't be remembered.
as is true for most.
so why am I so fucking bothered? do I really think I'm that special? that I'll cry on my
carpet because I wasn't born younger, pathetic dry heaving until the spotlights shut off.
can ghosts time travel?
do the dead have to stare at their own sagging skin and wrinkled faces being consumed by
their own mother? I hope not. that would be cruel.
but that isn't my problem. I will never grow old. I simply need to bypass the archives and
speak over the phone with flat palms.

today I stepped out of my front door and turned back around.

I don't understand all the fuss about dying alone.
I'd hate to die in a crowded room.
under so many eyes, lulled to sleep by the buzz of the florescent lights, while the voices talk
and you can't make out any words, and their heavy boots kick your hollow cheeks until
someone bothers to look down.
I'd prefer a garden, looked over by only the birds who couldn't bother enough to sing a
lullaby. their glowing wings will cast shadows over my open mouth, they'll fly higher and
higher, until they, too, hit the sun.
no evidence, no observers, no sound.

if I can't live, I guess I'll curate
cause rfly that's all I've been doing
sticking my hands into bowls that don't belong to me
pulling them out, drenched in holy water that the living blessed,
and feel it burn beautifully, turn my skin the color of love and disease,
and making sure not to sleep,
surely not enough to rest,
to dye my eyes in coal and wine that might just look holy in indirect sun rays,
if I can't live, you can't either. I'm really so sorry that's what I've been doing.
and we won't go on walks because my legs are tired
and we don't tell the truth because I've never confessed,
but if you want we can hold hands in the dark
and watch as my skin's dyed the color of rot and bursting veins.
I guess I'll curate, cause it's all there is to do;
I never plan to make a living, and the coal clotted my favorite wine, and it got all over my
bloodstained hands and I washed it off at the holy water stand that no one locks up cause
that would be selfish and I don't even know my Self,
so I better get to curating honey,
cause you can't hold a ghost-
and your love demands flesh.

a perfectly vibrant and soft orange that's just been placed on the table could be eaten under its skin by plague-infected maggots and you wouldn't bat an eye.

I hate being an artist.

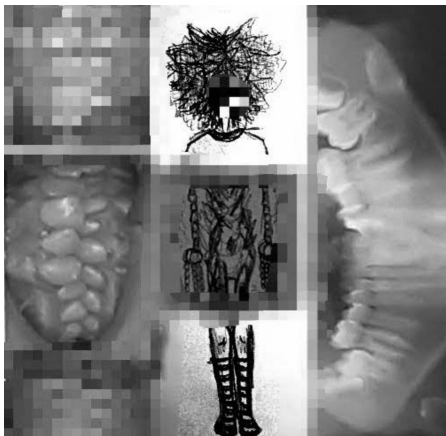
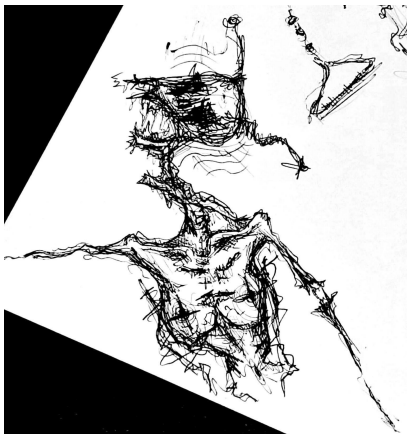
mathematicians solve problems, janitors clean the floors. my work will never accomplish anything, and it will never be finished.

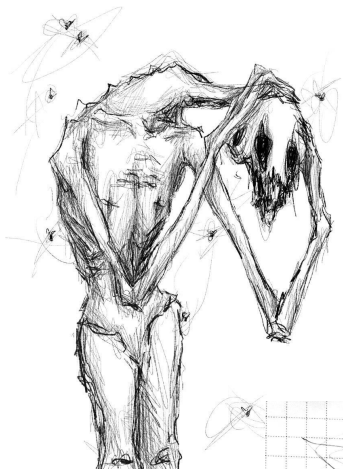
I can't simply consume beauty; I have to study it, watching each element individually, completely erasing the whole. I do it so that I can maybe someday replicate it, but how can you recreate something that you've never really seen? I'm stuck referring to the few observations that I remember making when I was child, and it's left me moving about the world as if I still was one. an artist cant survive without pridefully marketing his creations. I was not a prideful child. and how much worse is it to be an artist of so many mediums, so that each one gets so little practice that it barely resembles art? and that instead of simply studying the sky at night, memorizing the pattern of the stars, you're distracted by the tales of the gods painted in them, and how you could never play a harp as well as an angel.

and really, who am I to call myself an artist? certainly no one that dares to peel oranges. I'd ask an observer, but I haven't got enough pride to go find one, so instead I sit in my room crying over gift horses mouths.

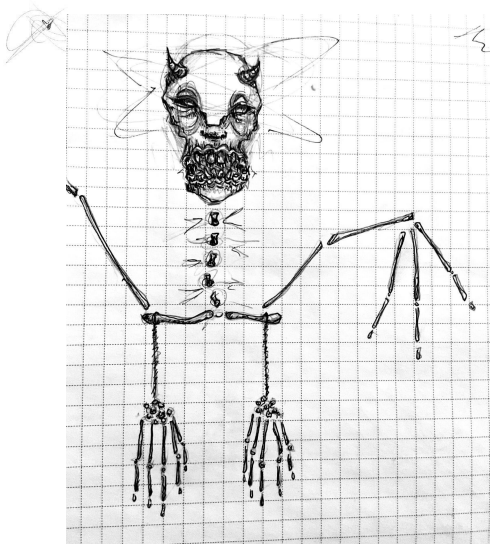


INSERT DRAWINGS





INSERT DRAWINGS



2023 (16-17)

despite my previous claims,
I feel that I've wasted my whole entire winter break living.

it's tired me out, it's distracted me, I think it's reminded me that I will die. and I guess I've given in. I made a very stupid decision today, and I think I blame living.

I've really only dipped my toe in, nothing special, nothing extraordinary, but I'd sure think it was.

I'm an idiot, I'm right about that, that's important for me to know. I don't know what exactly I plan to do with that information, but I do know that it's true. I really shouldn't be making excuses. "I blame living". get over yourself, am I right guys? guys? you're paying attention right? everyone is paying attention? to me? fuck!

I'm acting like a child. hedonism, masochism, whatever you want to call it. I'm spiraling out of control on purpose. throwing a tantrum, if you will. screaming and thrashing on the floor, ugly, dramatic, begging for everyones attention, this poor child. god. kill me.

I'm not being careful, spilling milk and never bothering to clean it up. I try my best, really, but it slips through the cracks. they've been growing wider, too. it's not my fault, really, please, please.

I'm not a child anymore.

these words come from the dead, the dying, the corpse dragged tiredly up from purgatory and gifted a friend. a corpse that can't help but breathe.

it's an ugly thing. who wouldve thought it would be obsessed with beauty? .

I have school tomorrow.

someone shut this fucker up.

—

you're like cooking in winter
holding my hands up to the stove
hoping to burn my fingers so I can finally stay warm
sleep, sex, and murder
Wilde called me a masterpiece
an infant that grew up too fast- he always liked to play with fire
and cried when his skirts stopped fitting

is this how you breathe?
in through the hands and out through the feet
muscles cramping more by the hour
your knees won't let you walk, your arms can't reach north
and you still wanna be a rockstar?
look at yourself.
describe yourself.
where do you see yourself in ten years?
ten years and four months
a day to get your credit
what's the big fucking deal with you and the stage, you won't let god see you naked,
won't even let your dad hear you play. maybe he's a special case.
there's no one much closer to compare
at least they won't smash your favorite plate.
I bet you cried when he did.

one hundred and five six seven eight pound
infant,
sick and sick and sycophant
staring at the fretboard
swallow around the poison
record its moans.



back when there was nothing, collecting was a comfort
plastic forks were gifts from angels
and then they sent another
and the next
and the next
and now your drawers can't close

do you know you can refuse?
no one's holding you at gunpoint
red, hot and tensed cum palpitations but the metal cools my forehead
, thanks.

if you tell me to open my mouth, I will comply.
anything you put on my tongue I will swallow.

I am still collecting

if we should find ourselves in love
i beg you leave without a trace
forget my name and lose my face
amongst the miles that you drove,
for I can't hold you without gloves
so every step your feet shall take
best fill my jagged, shallow grave
with words you know I never spoke.

cause I know that my strength to stand
is stolen from your dwindling flame
and still I watch your slowing breath
all wasted on your empty praise;

so turn your back while you still can,
for better or much worse I'll stay.



—

I loved my enemy so wholly that I became him
a conglomerate of orange hues, dry lips, dust and anticipation
aren't I so lovely, so full of joy, so full
that it makes you want to come so close you puke

and it's gone so far, grown so ugly that I can no longer wish to grow
and no one thing cleaned can come close to cleansing the whole
and I have begun to rot

i curse you for choosing such an ugly, misshapen coffin
you know what I love more than anyone else, you knew what would keep
the filth locked in
you painted my face up just to fill in the gaps
but not before tearing them open
and stuffing, and stuffing,

why don't you just sew my mouth tight and shut?
it would fix every one of these laughable problems
and if I'm lucky that would leave absolutely nothing
and you could all go on

without pause, I cry and scream at all things holy
come, look straight into the light, blind yourself, join me
come to resent every sweet whisper that keeps your lungs full
until you can hear them shouting so loud that it dents your skull

—

I have a tendency to fall in love with vampires.
maybe I am one myself.
those dead for so long that their teeth begin
to rot, finding company in their cavities
draining each other's blood
my ~~teeth~~ are dull from decades of grinding
whenever the light becomes too much
a vampire is too skilled at pretending they're breathing,
chewing, swallowing. ~~centuries~~ centuries down
the road they tend to lose their reflections.
maybe the difference is that I was born without
one.
my blood regularly drains, only to flood in so fast
that I can't enjoy a single moment of
warmth. and ~~my~~ ^{their} love burns me just enough
that I never get the solace of turning to
ash. I'm sure they would scatter me.
this will be rewritten soon enough.
there's an eternity to edit ~~my~~ our mistakes,
until they look like sweet oblivions, gone
too soon.
you're welcome to drain me, and I'll resent
you for it, but I'll never tell you. I
want you fed, and to keep your heart
beating. especially if it kills me.
an eternity is a long time. an eternity
gets dull.

i have had every thought that i will ever have
and they're all left scattered and broken, fragments stitching themselves together, two plot
lines that fit perfectly, a prettier, tragic ending
but it's fine
i'm happier now
more beautiful
taller, thinner, stronger,
Spent

look at me- i'm even curating my memories
my last ten cents on a cigarette that won't give me a buzz
and he she they didn't even know why his hands started to shake.
fuck.

I love you
but please do not kiss me
I've chewed all of the skin off of my lips
and
it stings
to hear you echo those words back to me
knowing that we are both lying
through
our teeth
are stained so yellow
that no dedication could clean them
no encouragement can
save us
but please dont touch me
for I've cought on fire
and I wouldn't want it to spread
to
you, my dear,
are my enemy
I dream of making you hate me
puncturing
my eyelids are too heavy
to appreciate the beauty
that I know lies around your skull

I hope to be buried in graveyards miles apart
so that those who claimed I love them can never put us back together
so that the worms that eat you never meet me
the ones that chew the skin from my lips don't taste you
because you'll kiss me even if I'm bleeding
and you wish I'd do the same

I love you



I am made of sickness.

It is all I create, all I do, all I live.

It's what I consume and spit out, while it consumes me and refuses to let me crawl out of its mouth.

my memory of sickness - sunken eyes, skin clinging to collars and cheekbones, drinking from a sponge after years of refusing to surrender - wraps around everything that I claim to be my own. it is my romance because it's lost the sheen of horror.

my past, of course. my future for certain. I know that one day I will join her in that room full of ghosts, but I can't manage to make it matter. it is real, so there's no point in paying it any mind. it is beautiful, so I take any energy that I can manage and use it to turn my skin purple and pray for more prominent infections.

there is no point in arguing over fact.

the songs I write now, the words on this page mean nothing. it doesn't matter that I've witnessed bodies slowly decay, or hearts stop. I haven't been sick enough to echo back anything but meter and tentacles. one day I will know true mutilation and bow down to it. for now, I can do my best to learn three acts.



so what now?
it's been confirmed.
while they were examining the corpse,
shortly before the blood was drained,
and the mouth was twisted up,
one eye opened.

when the shock wore off,
everyone in the room sat up straight.
and all I asked was what I do now
that my clothes had been taken
and my bills were not paid
but they stared with wide eyes until my head turned

those who die artists are strong-willed
they suffer through tremors and inadequacies
to shove decaying pencil to page
knowing that no one will frame their last work,
and I froze

those who can sit and cry in lyme and light,
I didn't even bother to research,
to read, to study, to write with what was already in my hand
I would've died nothing

and that's what always bites, right?
the beautiful tar that holds your wrist to the bed
and wraps it's gentle hands around your frontal cortex
tighter and tighter, and your fine tuned ear couldn't pull a lullaby out of the
white noise
your artists eye cant remember it's fingers

you, who praise yourself as one thing only
made of hardening plaster
unwilling to pull up your feet and practice
even when the blood does dare flow to them
and before you know it

they examined the room for a cause of death.
the windows never opened,
the door didn't lock,
there was blood in the paint, but it had curdled years ago
the mattress was dented. the springs on the top left corner no longer fully
extended through layers of sweat and rust and dryrot and weight. there had
been inkstains on the sheets, but they'd faded with time.
hints in the only poster on the wall told that he was a dramatic. he swore that
he had days left.
and still, he left nothing.

interviews with the family were more of the same.
wonderful kid, so many dreams.
the marks on his carpet pointed to restless sleep,
did he wake up at night often?
did he do his laundry? did he ever bother planning his life? using what he had?
what a shame.

and then the next,
and the lips began to twitch,
and the neck to crack,
and I might've still grown
had an inch left in me
if I'd stop worshipping my skeleton
and there might be a story to tell about me if I wasn't so sure that my muse was
hiding somewhere behind the sun

and after it all, to hell and back, all I'll do is beg.

The lovers



when we were born, we opened our eyes to the darkness
our cries echoed off of the close, packed walls
and bounced back into our fragile eardrums
and it hurt like sharp needles,
sharper than the ones that our mother fumbled and stuck our backs with
while she tried to sew dresses onto our unblemished skin
and we cried, and we cried
until the pain became too much

when it became silent, our eyes began to wander
up to the sky
that mirrored the ground
and the beds that we slept on, raised inches among feet
we never stopped to count ourselves
but we knew to open our stifled mouths and suck on the gifts we'd been graced
silently,
while our eyes wandered
and together we saw that sliver of light.

mother never did tell us her name,
but we all knew that she was mother
and though we could not see it,
we knew that she was the hand that pointed up to the flame
telling us to introduce ourselves,
so one by one we laid down our hands, and gifted it our precious breath
until it was gone.

and then the silence broke

mother never did speak, but on that day we heard her strangled cry
and her arms leave our backs, and our backs hit the ground
and in the darkness we heard her feet echo
further, and further,
and up, and up,
and
a snap.

when the light came back, we saw.
we saw her folded limbs

at the bottom of the jutting earth, layered up further than our eyes could swallow,
and though he never introduced himself, and mother never told us his name,
we knew that they led to God.

when we knew that we were alone, it became still.
for there was nowhere to place our mouths
and our throats were coarse and dry.
though no one spoke it, our hunger was deafening
so we all shuffled back to our inches among feet
with nothing to cover our shaking legs
and placed our soft palms over our ears
and let our eyes wander
up to the light

once it would leave, and once it would return
bright at first, but dimmer as our eyes became heavy
and the weight of the silence was nothing to the darkness
and the darkness was nothing to our slowing thoughts
and then we heard it

a crack
a bang,
and from the light came a flood of tears
and our eyes shot open, and we moved slowly
and though none of us knew how to speak,
we heard one word.

and at once the shuffle became a thrum
as loud as the cries that we'd sworn off
and our newlyfound legs dragged us to our cold mother
over her, and we knew this was right
it was all right when we climbed higher, up to God,
and though we couldn't feel our fingers, our hands found the handle

and we fell.

—

hey, it's been awhile. what the fuck is up?
shit, man. dependence, timeshares, juvenile rage. contrive and contribute, that's what
I always say.

maybe I wrote a song once, or drew your face so well that our conversations feel
counterfeit, but I wasn't there. maybe they sucked the secrets out through my IV. all
I can tell you comes from the eternally half-finished products. if I found a penny on
the road, heads up, mint condition, maybe my muscles could pull out a portrait.

they sure know how to write about this. only this, always this.

independence, timeshares, birthday parties.
count your days, baby! doesn't take much to realize you're losing! one minute at a
time

I am writing this because I realized I have nothing to write about. my palms didn't
sweat when I got up on stage.

still, I'm sure I'll find something on the back of the page.
how many times can I repeat the same thought? they need dusted off, sorted
through, fed.

you met a man, relentlessly grasping, walking with his eyes closed and hands open in
front of him, for something that I am so sorry I can not name.

how many songs can I write about the same sentiment? ripping your skin off can't be
that interesting. love is everywhere, and shit,
it gives me this reaction, you know? it's terrible. I miss the sting in my mouth.

CONTINUE HERE

—



grab the ugly takeout container,
and throw away just enough, as much as you can stomach wasting, enough that no one will notice,
look at the neat preportioned toppings,
scoop out a sixteenth of this, an eighth of that.
why do I do this again?
start stabbing with your fork, strategically, carefully, enough that there's everything in every little bite,
pick it up, put it in your mouth
chew, swallow,
repeat
till you're full and finished, and the plates still full
and you take another bite, and it doesn't shrink,
and repeat,
and repeat,
and repeat,
why am I doing this again?
i forget that consuming isn't solely recreational
and my stomach hurts, and the plates still full,
and suddenly it's a chore.
I do it to stay alive,
take a bite, chew,
repeat, repeat,
because I have to.
and suddenly all I can taste is life,
and all I can feel is my beating heart,
and it all just tastes like surviving.
because life is supposed to be recreational,
and now I've realized that it's a chore.
pick it up, into your mouth, chew, swallow, repeat.
maybe if you ate a full meal.
I do eat full meals.
yeah, but you get that look in your eye.
like you're gonna be sick.

life tastes terrible.

why did I write this again

—

who knew i just needed to grow up
now all that's left is to die
forget all i love in the heat of our lust
sever tendons with teeth to fit perfectly in your arms
and that shit doesn't heal
none of this does

here's to first times
and a crippling fear of pursed lips
so i'll talk your head off, rediscover my lisp
write it love notes until it's too tired to stick

but you adore my voice

here's to losing, killing off my hobbies,
cause i only draw blood if there wont be a fight
and my days are spent in waiting rooms,
professionally decorated lobbies,
by someone who gave a shit, knew where the light should hit, knew how to hide their own
smile.

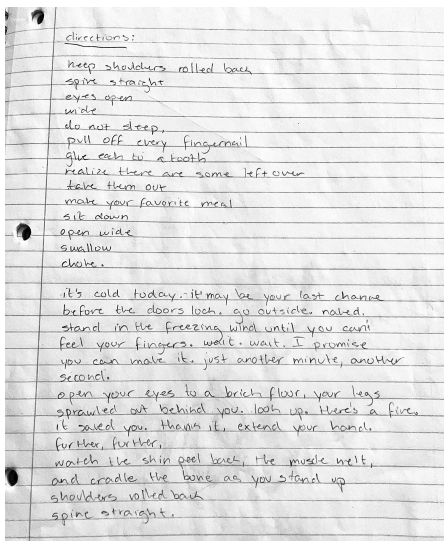
my teeth grind without my permission
but now they're much stronger
feeding on venom and contaminated vapor
and the aches are so soothing, zen in dead roots
carving out cavities cause i haven't practiced since last fucking june and

God

who knew i just needed to grow up
and stretch and shrink and die
and choke on my temporary corpse's spit
this straw doesn't work but who gives a shit, i don't need to be filling up like this
i just needed to grow up
and forget how to write a poem

if my thought can't be realized, they'll never grow legs
and they can't run around and jump on snails and cry cause they had names
and before they know it, i'll take theirs

this isn't a poem
i need to grow up
but all that's left is to die



directions:

keep shoulders rolled back
spine straight
eyes open
wide
do not sleep,
pull off every fingernail
glue each to a tooth
realize there are some left over
take them out
make your favorite meal
sit down
open wide
swallow
choke.

it's cold today. it may be your last chance
before the doors lock. go outside. naked.
stand in the freezing wind until you can't
feel your fingers. wait. wait. I promise
you can make it. just another minute, another
second.

open your eyes to a brick floor, your legs
sprawled out behind you. look up. Here's a fire.
it saved you. thank it, extend your hand.
further, further,
watch the skin peel back, the muscle melt,
and cradle the bone as you stand up
shoulders rolled back
spine straight.

nothing I do is remotely notable
and light bounces right through my dried-up suit and fucking tie
maybe you're just not a go-getter
a finger snapper
coated in saliva
maybe you weren't meant to exist

second dates are probably really fun
so I can't blame them
but the thought moves my fingers to tear out my throat; three inch platforms so he can watch the lights go
out without letting his shoulders slack (I'm a very generous thing)
I must be lucky that it's so easy to stop them

though I know this man loves a good wet specimen just as much as I do
floating in formaldehyde isn't my version of an idol
and contrition is harder than contrived brain waves
plastic neurotransmitters
I've never written a story.
I'd be great at editing trailers.

this is my instrument. it's made of fleas and garbage. exactly how I built it. I wouldn't change a thing.

you could call me a coward
you should
you would if you loved me

I used to be better at this.

all of it.

the starving, the smiling, being fucking beautiful. I haven't aged, but I sure as fuck grew, out of all of my favorite clothes and hobbies and now what am I? a bed-dweller? a dustcollector? an artist

I used to go outside, because my thoughts bounced too quickly off of walls, and now there's no need. I have none. I used to be better at thinking, and singing, and what does that leave me?

a vegetable shoving sugar down it's throat? a taker of all that makes coffee bitter and water clean.

a bloater, a chewer, a whiner, with bad knees and a sore neck, an orgasm chaser that won't be touched below the back,

a reader of theories because I can't write my own, one that knows that bugs can't feel pain, so I sell off their lives because my cats need to have some sort of fun, because I can't move.

I used to be better at hating myself enough to force all of the love to seep out, and my dry, bony fingers got stuck to it. now, I inhabit a layer of fat, with no proof of anything under it.

I used to be so much better. nostalgia can only lie so hard. so what does that leave me?

at least I kept pictures.



a name

i would really love to go outside
it's the perfect day
and the countdown has started
soon the sun will blister my cheeks, and all the hard work i put into growing
my fingernails will be for nothing when they catch on fire
i got so excited today, i thought i saw someone burning like me
with no lighter and no sticks, though sparks take skill

but i was wrong, so i walked away

these are not pretty words, an interjection i still feel needs made
in case i read this and think i though this art deserves a name
i came inside and sat down
and now i'm sewn to the sheets
clean for once, but not for long
the laundry room is much too far, and my knees are getting worse.

this is all i ever write here. i know, it never leaves this hell that i've painted like
heaven
and i invited god in
she's the only one i trust
and i still can't write her one honest song

how to escape the orange light, my unexplainable curse
am i just wishing to be worse?
an excuse to stay inside and cry over the cold?
it's the perfect day, barely warm
but enough that gloves melt onto my skin
i'm sorry i couldn't follow
please don't live without me

i had so many ideas that i thought i'd remember
but art can't be born in this empty bottle
i think i'm finally accepting, no one said this would be the hardest part,
she only knew me at my worst
and she'll never hear my favorite songs
and she has to watch, from the sky of all places,
has to inhale all of my secondhand smoke

i will admit, i have crossed a line

i stopped watching my feet, just for a moment, and glanced at the sky
but it was enough to singe my fragile retinas
and now your face looks blurry.

you've been killed once before, this is no revelation
your eyes dart around the room like a confession that it's here
so i still my legs
it's watching
so i tilt my head

and i'm so very sorry. i do love your eyes.

are you wearing makeup today? you look sharper somehow
amongst your blurred lines i can make out a smile
and perhaps some teeth
that appear to grow longer;
cuspids sprout,
and sink.

it flooded today.
the rain poured down for hours, days
i'd never lived to see a murdered drought,
and it pulled up the roots of my favorite little sprouts
i'm not sure what they were
perhaps they'd grow into trees, stand for a hundred years

we stayed inside, outliving.

thank you, thank you, for now we've won
now i can prove that i can't touch the sun, really
dramatics aside
while my retinas heal up all by themselves, and move me to kiss what i can now see is
your mouth
and my fingernails stop growing

everyone loves a happy ending,
so i've written a story with none at all
a child that never earned a name
and crossed out the line that could've saved this world,

i truly am sorry
but we've chosen ourselves

i've been killed once before, this is no revelation
my skin has dried, my blood has been let, my head severed and hung
though your room is ugly, it's a fine decoration
but my screams became compulsory
so they found my remains
and my brainwaves stung their heartache
so they stitched me back up.

not this time.

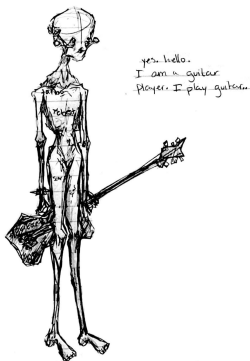
this time the rain will drink from me
and learn that it, too, can live
this time i'll run before it learns to speak
I've never been proactive enough to sever tongues
but i can't bear to hear the sobs, can't let them know what I've done

i stopped watching my feet, just for a moment, and glanced at the sky
but it was enough to melt my eyes
and now your face is closing in
screaming the name that i branded into my skin,

it can't be,
it wasn't

but this story has no end

—



theres something different about the quiet nights,
when the time doesnt fit the clocks just right
and you're free to fall fall limp til gravity snaps your spine

there are no consequences til the buzzkill sun blinks
and you can't see your hand a foot in front of your face

so your glossy whites land on nothing
packed full so dense that there's no more room for stuffing
but you insist on keeping your jaw rocking, up and down steady until you can pretend it's
shocking
it must be broken, but fixin takes talking

and there's no room for that on the quiet nights

you could be anything while the stars watch close
writer of things holy, big time quitter, ghost
but I made sure the drapes won't let in the coaxing shimmer and they keep out Defibrillator
hope

I see you're smiling, I thought you should know
i held out my hand and she asked for a rose

theres something different, it lingers on the tongue
and draws out confessions, so horribly won
and rocks your floors everytime sleep might capture your lungs
it wouldn't want you to catch up, be gone for so long that you forgive this liar you love

but there's no speaking here, and your footsteps are declarations
in the quiet night, tomorrow you'll be weightless
jaws unhinged and clenched so fast you could miss it
and you'll lose it forever in the hungry fuckin hinges

—

empty. that's what this feeling is. emptiness.

I filled my skin with metal, stuffed my face with food. I tried writing a few songs, a story,
reading one, I even resorted to picking the grammar apart, blaming my disinterest on
sentence structure. and yet,

empty.

so? what do I do? explain it? stuff every orifice with cotton and wait to shrivel up?
suffocate? jam a steel rod through my chest? so much work. why can't anything be easy. why
isn't staying alive harder.

I still haven't crossed that line. the one between artist and child, the one that determines
whether the cement dries with you in it. I haven't made any hard plans, and I sure as hell
haven't committed. but I have cried, useless tear after tear among sheet and flood until my
tearducts are left

empty.

is that all this is? desire? moaning and crying because I'm too picky for my appetite? it's
exhausting, really, watching you give up so quickly. you're not spent, just cheap and heavy
and wasted.

you know what you could do. wake up at dawn and get right to work- brush your teeth,
take out the trash, clean your clothes. use what you have, dip into what you don't, and keep
going, without rest, until your skin is cracking and your joints let go of your bones. only
then, when you really can't leave the ground, will water taste like blood.

but who has time for that?

so I'll fill my mouth and whine about the lump in my throat, and break all of my pencils,
and jam my arms chock-full of wood, and chew my tongue up

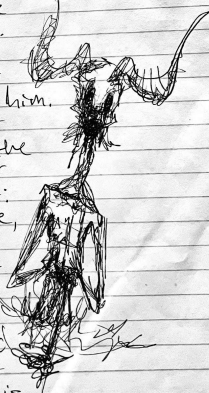
—

of course you should expect this,
my first thought is always selfish
what about me
what about me
what about me

but what about me?
what's left for the ashes?
a burnt negative thrown into the scrapbook
spiders crawling in my peripheral cause I can't even have a fear to point at.

and who knew love was really something I can't bring me to believe in
I can stomach ghosts and god
but dear there's nothing new you're spitting that I'm breathing

Here are my pixels! I beg that you consume me!
cry for beauty before worshipping terror!
All that is holy slips through my muddy fingers!
god! in flesh! say his name! eat him
in crumbs! love him for your pain! his gifts!
he is watching, always, never open eyes.
live only for his restlessness and weep
for his efforts. he is one. you are one.
do not confuse it! look,
you are surrounded by the
divine, but you are one.
your skin is made of
sharpness! your eyes of
sorrow! love him. worship him.
say his name, feed your
wounds morsels, thank the
sky for your blood! your
air! but do not forget:
you are a damned creature,
you may look, you may
consume, ~~but~~ you may not
take his light with
your dirt. so ~~be~~ still,
child in your coffin and
be one, and know that
you are here, and he is
loved.



amen.

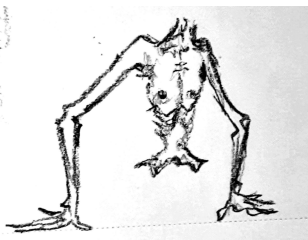
the intricacies-oh, they are in everything,
the dust that coats you, the flies that
swarm your lacerations. ~~they are the~~
~~the~~ the discarded love and ~~the~~ sunken eyes,
you know there was so much, you were so
much, what now? you lay in your intricacies,
collected grains of plants that no longer grow
because your fingerprints killed them, you
killed them. all of them. and in them, there
were intricacies. beauty, you say? in your
creans? beneath your brain? you are nothing,
stand next to the graveyard but never step
foot on its soil, love the singing trees from
afar, know that your dirty has run from
you. know that you've disgusted even the
foraging, the angels, you've sinned, lied,
painted false confessions. and your dirty,
she punishes harshly. she knows your
soul, knows that there is little left, that
your nailbeds have crawled down to meet
your mother. she is the voice singing, the
sonnet that they sway their heads along
with, that you can not hear, and oh her
intricacies. she's put so many holes in
her flesh that it bleeds whenever she
dare dance, and she's killed all that she
loves, which is why you're the sole survivor.
alone, you paint your details. alone, you
speak in monochrome waves, alone you let
them drown you. you let them wash the
dust. oh, you've killed them all. how simple
that you'll never be forgiven.

I wish I was dead

for fear of my life
with nothing but a sore stomach to lead me
through the hundred degree nights
I will never be anything
because being something takes a spine
and a tongue that can finish pleading without wrapping around itself ten times
it would be kind to pull it out.
it would be kind to let me think that if things had been different
instead of letting me watch it rot out of my mouth.
I wish I was dead
so wholly
that I can barely give any weight to the wish
because that would mean I have to take my own first and plunge it into my very own
acid
and you know what that takes?
a heartbeat, drive.
I dare my heart to stop if it loves me at all.
but I couldn't pick love out of a lineup,
so why would that hunk of muscle
and you can't love a pile of fat and shaking meat
and you don't love me.
it's best if I go now,
if you were kind you wouldnt bat an eye
and let me fall beneath the dirt
and bury me with a smile
and let me go under with an empty stomach
that's begging to leak and hollow me out
and use your love to count my calories
and use your hands to hold my throat.
I wish I was dead,
but I fear

—

... some time later



I am thinking about the changes.
that my skin has made in this past week
how it's stretched and grown
and scarred and bruised
and torn
bloody
Battered

I am thinking about myself
far too much, I will admit.
no one should dwell this far in their own psyche
it's pointless to live in a body
if you can't accept that sometimes it's bones
are safest hidden, tucked away, warm

I think I've begun to find myself
in the knowledge that I know nothing
of the way my hair is supposed to fall,
or the popped vein sitting right under my eye.
it's been so long since i first saw it
and it's fading so quickly, and I know that now I love it,
but upon our meeting I spent hours trying to prove we were strangers once more.

I wore the same cutoff shirt,
but my jeans were ripped back then
and I know that I bought them that way.
I walked into the closest store
chanting "girl, girl, girl"
and threw them on with my brand new soft pink Davie Bowie tee shirt,
because I'd noticed too many changes,

and now that I'm thinking,
I ate a burger bun today. both halves. cleaned my plate.
and I smiled at the kids and told them that they were safe,
and I pulled out my earbud to ask her to repeat, just one more time, because I had to pause
the song that I loved. that I found. that I put on because I wanted to hear it.

it's funny, after all these years stewing in stagnation
I believe I'm still the exact same thing.
but after all these years I can look it in the eye, and maybe today it wins.

—

whats wrong with me, baby?

here I am, drenched in sweat again, more than I bother pulling out for an hour a day, for that special sorta healthy pain, feel the burn, blaze it, with nothing broken or bruised except for my suckerpunch cracked lips and gently swollen eye- I love the feeling, you know that? metal through skin, puncture, picture perfect, I'd do it all day if I had the strength, but I refuse to sweat.

it's filthy. the best solution i can conjure is to remove the glands, but we've established that my hands are no good for opening skin so my next best bet is to stitch my mouth shut, permanently, none of this day on day off sucking on saliva coated high fructose corn on the cob bullshit, for real this time, forever.

but he'd whine about it. lord just another bite, king did you eat enough president suck it the fuck up,

so why bother?

no need to scrub when I'll be too dirty to crank my limbs up in another hour, no need to clean the wound when my dead cells will get it infected anyways, no need to stand up when there's nowhere far enough to walk.

chewing on my gums got boring, thank god my teeth are rotting or I might have no excuse when I'm finally too old to sit in one place all day, all night, you haven't improved still, all this repetition and you still refuse to hear it.

I'm writing this as an excuse. youll know this already, if you read it. if you bothered, through all of the bullshit that I thought was worth keeping because I'm made of the splinters from that one thing I built that one time and they hurt hurt hurt but I love the pain.

shit through skin, stabbing bleeding, concussed before you realized you were slamming your head against the table, grabbing your own hair, screaming moaning, all from the comfort of your own bed, soaked in sweat, baby.

—

I've noticed something this past year. when I am strong (mean, bug killing, quiet, laboring, lifting and giving orders) I am a man. when I am weak (tired, overwhelmed, panicked, pained or oblivious (or when I take the bugs outside)) I am a woman. however, when I am mean I may also be a woman, demonstrating classic signs of female hysteria, and when I am lifting I may be a girl overexerting herself to prove a point, the way a child would claim that can reach a high cabinet. I wish I could pass this off as a paranoid misconception like I did as late as this summer, but my brothers are growing older, deeper voices as they age and I am frozen in time. the language used for me when I refuse to hear "no", as opposed to when I complain about a pain in my side is unbearably obvious. it's no surprise, really, but it's interesting at the least to have my humanity stripped when I can't bear to listen to a blaring siren, or don't understand a math problem, or when I finally beat the tallest boy in school, and he claims he lost to some girl. "man", as I've come to realize, is not a title that I hold to the public, but a badge that I can earn and wear, so long as I keep my laughter short and my struggles concealed. it's not the absence of struggle that they seek, though. in fact, it's the exact opposite. it's a challenge of how much I can bear before letting a word slip. it's

a challenge to suffer, as horrid and as often as a single man can withstand, though it doesn't seem to count towards me that I never express how deeply a single phonic can carve into my chest, that I never scream and cry and storm off as soon as the "s" leaves their mouth. I wonder if this will change when my shouting makes you want to cover your ears, or if I'll have to count on stealth, or weld the badge right between my eyebrows. I think the next few years will be interesting at the least.

—

don't you want to be happy?
run barefoot in the grass, sing in the rain, wake up just to thank the sun? don't you want to smile without stretching, barbed wire tooth enamel hooking into your gums? wouldn't it be lovely to look at yourself,

or maybe you've fallen in love with the sting

grown seasick from deprivation, begged and pleaded with static hair and bloodshot eyes, blown out pupils and bared, bloody canines

and we know you don't bite .
and i'd love to cross a line,

anything,
to make you jump to action, snap my rubber head between your hands, singe my skin off; I'd love to be your ashtray, so useful, so loved, so charred and cracked and bloody

then can I be happy? when I've torn off enough skin? it's all natural succession, I dug a well so I could build around it, and something big jumped in.

wires are keeping me going, messes of unorganized cables tell my lungs it's time to digest. and I'm still fucking up, and I'm the only one, and i have to believe it's hopeless.

can I please be fucking happy? strip my list while you exhale, please? look at me for just a second longer, learn that I'll let you pull me under, take it so far I'm screaming! (stop.)

you could be happy.

that's not what you want though, is it?

you want your throat held.
you want your eyes covered.
you want your jaw hinged,
and your hands bound,

and then,
you want us to hold your name on our tongues, and mutter a gasp, and stifle the sound.

spectacle, cadaver, but he died with a smile.

—

guess I gotta make it a little while longer.
those people don't love you
those people don't love you
and you did one more bump than you were offered.

I guess this is what living feels like.
I can barely stand up
after the most fun I've had in my entire life
I went out,
in the world.
I saw the sky above me,
and the sidewalk under
and went further down the alley

maybe I've dipped my foot now
and realized the water is so nice
and made a plan to jump

maybe I fell in love
but those people don't love me
and I don't pay for my own gas.

the most fun I've ever had.
really? they ask
you seem like the type
you're just a baby, man.
and you talk like you know
you talk like you've lived

I plan to jump.
the chlorine-water wraps me up
and fills in every crevice
and I know already,
it will make it's way into my lungs.

but I've only dipped my foot in
and it's the most fun I've ever had.

I found my way home in the dark, half an hour out without a compass or a flashlight
and my heart was still racing when I woke up.
I tried to count the beats to go to sleep
wracking my body, shaking the bed.
I made it pretty far



—

I'll do it this time. I'll experience beauty through the eyes of a dying fruitbat dangling above our heads. I'll stumble around and let my feet outwalk me, and I'll resist for the sake of novelty. I'll do it. no numbers, no countdown, just will and life and beauty.

I'll become a part of something, and i plan to lose a bit of myself in it. I fucking hope. I won't choke when I tell them my name, and I won't need a line to dance on. I'll just live, and I'll live beauty, and I'll collapse on my bed, spent and wasted and ugly, with a smile on my face. then ill know.

—

I refuse to believe that my beating heart is all that keeps me up.
images of people. some of them can't be found anymore, a popular artist in the 60's who's fully decayed, and a recording of their voice, speaking about nothing.

I refuse to believe that all of those precious thoughts were held in by an electrical current. I refuse to believe that blood leaves with life in a person.
I refuse to believe that I am a body.

one day this thing will be disposed of. I don't care where. i don't know how it's never happened, it feels like such a familiar process, you take a dog to get it's pulse checked and they tell you it's too late. I feel like I've floated face down in rivers, been found by a group of terrified children, and they screamed for their mothers, who calmly dragged that cold thing out.

there's a video of Jeff Buckley that I watched once. I don't remember what it was, but I know that it sparked something in me. a curiosity. a smile that I wanted to see again and an unanswered question, but he's a body now.

we call it that too, right? a body. just a body. you're a person, and then you're a body, and that artist from the 60s had an unreleased album. no one's found it. it was up in his old attic, and he moved out and someone moved in and the dust built up too heavy to bother brushing it off.

of course I'm still in love . of course I am
with your stupid voice
and the corner where I used to wait for the bus
and I was miserable
and thin
and cold
and it went so deep all I could do was shake and cry and wait.

I hope when dads pass me mourning
they turn and whisper to their daughters
never to turn out like me.
never to turn up tired and used up before you've had any use,
never to let your mind run and find yourself on a completely different side of town
where your stomach hurts and the lights are blinding
never.

but of course, I can't go back
I never can
and it's too late to change,
and I'll never have it.

I'll never let you go, no matter how many times you make my nose bleed
or glance at me funny.
just a little off, just enough
to turn the whole thing sour.
just one rotten apple.
just one more.

the field where I paced around, mimicking kindly, until you objected,
and I waited and waited
cold and crying
and I walked on fragile knees
and wished I was dead.
but the bus driver was nice.
he let me charge my phone

of course I'm still in love
of course I'm still the rotten daughter
who's location is off
who doesn't smell like cigarettes
but you have to know.
you have to know I'm dying.
tired. used up.

I'm your dog

and I love it

I love the way you're scared to let me roll in the mud, so I can pretend I was brave enough to try

I love the way you pull my leash, so I don't have to decide,

I love the way you look at me when I'm oblivious, like this is loved, expected, when you watch me chase my tail, and smile, because I'm just a stupid dog

until I realize dogs can't talk

and I'm bad at that part, at keeping my mouth shut, or knowing when to bark. and you can kick me, and kick me, but after I cry, those same puppy dog eyes, I'll always come back.

dogs love unconditionally. dogs don't care if you're speaking to them, they'll perk up either way. dogs don't care that you only tell them you love them when they're the only one there to love, when everyone who can respond is out of earshot.

and you trained me so well.

so where can I go?

no one else knows your commands, a mean glance, the right tone, and you raised me sitting in your lap, sure I can lay somewhere else, but there will always be gaps.

I'll sit at your feet,

feet from you, listening in while you speak, occasionally turning away, not enough for them to know this isn't for them, uttering broken sentences that only I can understand. you're confessing to them, you've murdered, I know their names, but dogs don't care.

dogs love unconditionally.

you can kick and drop and forget to feed, but I'll always be waiting there by my bowl, tightening my collar, whining.

but you don't have to listen. because you know, no matter how far you let me run, I'll still be here when you need me.

just your stupid fucking dog.

This year, i lost my months
I think it was this year,
When i really stop to wonder, i can tell you its october,
If only by the airs sharpened teeth, carving me down into something a little
more perfect, chewing my pinks into purples,
Maybe closer to winter, highlighting my apathy in neon-pumpkin-orange ,
It hard to get into the spirit when i can barely cram into my own.
Youre telling me im supposed to care that shes screaming, before they've even
drawn blood?

Thats stupid.

Why would i bother to keep my eyes open when I dont like where im looking?
Stupid. Why should the tides change my sunny disposition?
I thought you loved horror. yeah, well, I did too, but maybe I got sick of
watching girls running, maybe I'm tired of my skin peeling, off my muscles,
tossed onto the pile of months-old bones
that might just rot to dust this year,
because last October I had another mouth to fear,
and those letters are better left alone.

—

Waste, loss, preservation, immortality.

That's what this is all about. Get the thoughts our of my head, they die quickly there.
Throw them on display and let them live forever. Freeze them in time, pretend they
couldn't have evolved.

Carve your name into plastic. Anything more permanent would take time that I
can't have. It's reserved, for something. No one will tell me what.

Daydream about dead dogs and discreetly grind your teeth, flesh stuck in your jaw.
This can't be happening again. I can't wait to regret it. Lose the beauty and snap the
threads that tie the answers together, left with nothing but the half finished attempt
at a depiction of something I'll never understand. You are the dog, Gray, and you're
hungry, and lonely, and the colors surround you, and if anyone gets close you'll bare
your teeth. You are the dog, Gray, who comes home and finds his owner dead. You
are the dog, Gray, who collapses next to him and screams and cries and knows
nothing but to bite, to bite harder, to chew and swallow the part that's still warm.
Knows nothing but to keep himself whole. You are the dog who falls asleep without
licking yourself clean, and wakes up waiting to be fed.

The wires have already begun to sever. I know it. The illusion will shatter too soon,
and I'll realize that I've been away. My fur is matted.

The dog grows indifferent to the smell and begins walking. He does not know where.

there are small precautions that i take day to day-
i sleep with an open pocket knife, leave it up to fate,
lay it anywhere after cutting dead skin off my soles,
make sure to dig it too close to the bone,
sometimes i forget, wake up with it buried in my side,
but it's nice, good morning, maybe next time.

i don't like to look too hard before crossing the road,
but i wouldn't want to scare the drivers.
accidents happen, i'll be like the foxes,
their pretty red fur sewn into their intestines
that you can't bother avoiding,

what's another scarred tire when you've been driving all day?
breathing in exhaust, sweet-sour decay,
counting down the years before your lungs start popping
so you can let the fumes seep in-between your organs,
i'm still not sure where your breath goes
when you tear yourself open

but i know there are some thing you can't stitch closed,
so day-to day i make sure i'm falling just short
of the line in the sand, a step too close to the shore,
it's just a precaution.

I know that I can not wish
for time to freeze for me
while I wish away every day
and pray for dying weeks.

there was a cricket somewhere
behind my mirror
sometime this summer.

I wondered, that night
in the heat
through the sound of the fan
when it would die.

I have not thought about that cricket since.
it's December.
there's no more chirping.

I have a habit of losing things.
it has to be this darn memory
in the morning, I'll be surprised to find my keys exactly where I left them

and god! it's almost Christmas!
lose your twenty odd scrap checklists
forget how to spell occur, you've heard something like this,

I hate this. authors note. I hate this. authors note, this is stupid and pretentious
authors note what is a rhyme scheme how did the greats do it did they really
just sit down did they really never forget? did they really? did they really never
forget how to --draw- feeling from the--- there's something in my skull
-something that- it's in the back, holding onto the metaphors, it gave them so
willingly when--dogs, eating. I haven't been as hungry. I'm hungry now.

did they never forget

how to form sentences that feel like something. I wanted to make that feel like
something. I want to tug on something behind your jaw, something that
chokes you up and clogs your throat. it's the best I can describe it. that's hardly
a fucking explanation.

this was supposed to be the first poem
that I wrote.

I had to have been studying
I haven't
I haven't.
I haven't been able.
I am not able to describe this.
pressure behind my throat, behind my eyes.

I know that it can't stay like this.
and someday I will have to learn
to suck it up
and put in my retainer

I looked it up a month ago
I think, it said it'll pull out my
teeth and tear my roots so
that I need dental implants.

this is beyond pointless
at this point
this is just a moment in time

I'm capturing a moving
frame a moving frame
and it's entirely dishonest
I just hope it makes for a decent read.

I know that I will lose my bed
and learn to sleep scratching my face
I know already that I'll hope
that when I wake I will have scraped-

there's blood under my fingernails.
I know one day I'll let them grow.
if only for a handy tool to carve.
and I'll forget that this room was home.

I know that someone loves me.
and that I still won't love,

I know someday they'll cut their hair
and I'll grow mine out long
and maybe we'll grow apart,
and find, and kill each other.

I already lost my brother.
he's in a better place.

-



there's some euphoria that comes with looking terrible, like in the movies, when the pretty girl wakes up with a hangover, last night's makeup smeared, hair mussed and matted with her shirt hanging off one shoulder. there's something about proving it, to myself, if no one else will look. something like pride, in the way my eyelids hang half-shut, closed up from both sides, eyebags and swollen uncleaned piercings, stumbling so hard I just might get a bruise. something about the stomachache that soothes my sore back, something about the toothache that distracts from the plaque, so it's really a prize when you finally catch a sparkle. the sweat running down my arms, leaving ice in it's wake, just reminds me how warm I must be for that feeling to take. picking up a wrapper must deserve applause when I haven't cleaned in years. brushing my hair makes me a masterpiece, even if I smell like mildew and cigarettes. no one bothers to distinguish anymore, between the dust caked up and the vomit on the floor, and there's something about it. something so sweet. like the aftertaste of bile when you forget to brush your teeth. stimulate your taste buds, last night's liquor, web MD calls you a heavy drinker, and it's the only thing that still makes you smile.

I've always hated dogs.

dirty, needy, pretending like they're obeying when they really just want to know you'll still throw them a bone to chew on. if you've grown bored of their tricks.

if you run your hand through my hair you will pull it back to find it covered in grease and dirt. you will call me dirty.

the dog stares up into your eyes, and hears you speaking. the dog's eyes shine like he's listening. it's the kind of thing that leaves you wondering if he really understands, or if he's just learned that "sit" means sit, and "stay" means stay, even if running would save his life.

I meant to shower this week, but it got lost in the wreckage. I believe I saw your blood on the wall, felt something soft between my teeth, but I know that I have only been staring at the door for far too long. my eyes have grown tired. you forgot to feed me.

what good is a shy dog? a dog that's scared to bark or sniff, a dog that rips open it's gifts and gives them back like he's made you something? what good is an artist who dreams of nothing but biting and tearing and walking away, what good is a spider who's fallen in love with her prey? he prays for an intruder, she has to kill it anyways. I've always known the answer.

bad dog. connotation.

—

all of my friends will go away
and I will be left alone
to do college from home
and discover this cough is cancer.
I'm eating popcorn for the sake of comedy.

I've never really understood constructing jokes
tear a piece of your cheek out and hand it over, unexpected with minute
tragedy, stare then laugh after you've added time.
I don't know what people keep under their hoods that keeps their bones from
creaking, none of my friends work out.
I don't know why I'm not allowed out. I could get lost. I don't know why I
haven't written. I like to read my old poems. they remind me that growth can
be temporary, and the pathways are impermanent.

I am bad.
b a d carved into my wrist
from when I was a child.
b e a t u i f u l in my thigh
from when I realized my childhood was over,
and a scary rating on your whole darn autobiography ,
we can't publish this in a school paper.
this is all youre gonna get from me
oblivious needle imagery when I was 13
its fine, I only got a couple questions. before that I thought you snorted heroin
and swallowed weed. I looked it up.

a _____ 'm . no. I can't say that. . child versus adult.

—

you know there are bugs living in your eyebrows?

millions of em, millions if I remember right.
I'm not supposed to tell anyone.
it spoils their appetite, gives em the creeps, the crawls.
but sometimes theres really something there.
it's always worth checking,
I think.

there's bacteria in everything you eat, you know?
your mouth is full of it,
it's all alive, eating, sleeping, dreaming
some of it survives your digestive tract, but not much at all, not when you know
there are millions.
more, if you leave it out.

you really shouldn't leave pizza out of the counter, they multiply by the second, and
it is safe
until it's not.

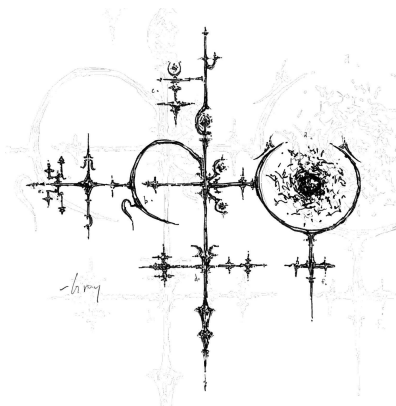
I think I'm like pizza that you left on the counter, and then maybe you ate it for
breakfast.
there are bugs in my eyebrows,
and more in my mouth,
my stomach,
maybe soon they'll move into my ears and chew on my eardrums.

but really and truly, I can't blame them.
they must be hungry if they're resorting to eating me alive
I prefer my food overcooked and dead.
but it doesn't make much of a difference, not even black charred used up matches
will satisfy my sweet tooth.

you know there are bugs living in your eyebrows?
do they know they're growing?
do they have to move out when they're old enough, or do the wait for me to fret at
the hairs and carry their corpses out on my fingertips,
eat with my hands and swallow them,

i wonder how many diseases can fit under my fingernails.
I'm not supposed to ask.
and my warts are growing
but you can only see them if you
look really,
really not that hard
but no one does.

I've gotten used to missing out. I admire the art on flyers. I take note of the venues. maybe one day I'll pretend I know something about them. i watch from afar, lay under my dirty blanket, lose the will to make a meal and eat the candy getting stale under my bed. I blame god for the stomachache. I say I don't understand my ailment. I lay in bed all day, lay my weight on my ankle at a wonky angle with a crooked, bent spine. I can't care enough to make a healthy meal, I brush my teeth in the mornings and let the filth collect into cavities. I mourn my perfect teeth. it hurts to chew. I tell no one. my ears are ringing. I tell no one. I blame god. my mystery illness, my labs came back perfect, god is cursing me, I bleed cursed blood and vomit damned bile. I blame deficiencies and undetectables. I blame crooked angels. when I'm scared I blame myself. I'm scared now. my teeth hurt. I've had so much red 40. I don't know if my mom would be proud of me. I'm a hedonist. i can't enjoy anything without smoking. I'm a thief. I'm a liar. if there is a hell, I am going there. if I'm reincarnated I know I'll be downgraded, and I can only hope that I'll be a dog. it feels right. I joke because I can't tell you how deeply dogs bite me. I don't know why. I hope that in my next life I'm a dog. unless I kill someone, I hope I'd be a creative animal. a sewing bird. something small and safe. a house rat. I hope it's soon.



INSERT
DRAWING
HERE

2024 (17-18)

art is dead. soul 4 sale, pay in weed

art makes you feel something?
that's what drugs do
find something better to sell

or admit that you are no better
no cleaner, and no more holy
than 'compulsions' sound

find love in back alleys
with cracks in the bricks
and take pride in your lines

you never cared much
what what was kept tucked up
under that glint in her eye

don't you get it?
there is no middle ground
everything is owned these days

you're standing in
somebody's houses ashes
free of fucking pay

be grateful that
you even get your pencils
snort the dust they leave

you could blink
and it would cost too much
to make them make you breathe

and somewhere some kid's
working 90 hours while you
lay in bed

admit that youre no holier
no better than the
guy you payed



compulsion takes your
hand from your side to
the pencil but

it takes a brave young kid
to decide that
he wants to grow up without lungs.

information that ~~entures~~ ~~of~~
parents ~~that~~ subjects writers gathered
the
consult apple inherited. have identify
tell respect ~~the~~ online development
~~plurals~~ ~~to~~ ~~and~~ zeds which

vital information
is stored in daughter cells. ~~is~~
trying to consult their parents
for a string of ones and zeros to
inherit dulling macbooks
halves of worms in mother's apples
or respecting 401 codes
grow up through cracks in the paywall
audiences over plurals
want developing stenography
the art of sending emails
stitched up for ease of dismissal
train to gather favorite subjects
from a glance at online shopping carts
to identify bodies
from the comfort of your home

you could at least cry

semi trucks will always have to turn
and no one is analyzing your poetry.

so, do I speak in simpler words?
stop driving entirely?

shoot for the stars or stay home and paint every one of them accurately

from dusk to dawn you sit and let you lungs wither,
for your brush can speak

full sentences don't account for the state of the economy

but you've made yourself up
a very economic plan

the night's too dim to tell the old dead cat
from your cold numb hand

but if your light's too bright you can't see past the glare across your eye

so you've struck a deal with any god-
if the low light should slowly lie

a handkerchief across your face,
when you go blind you shall go die

and I stare on in through your window, wishing that I had your drive.

—

in

I am almost an adult

this year I learned that you must love every season
~~and~~ ~~forget~~ ~~all~~ ~~of~~ ~~your~~ ~~favorites~~
~~and~~ ~~not~~ take note of how you shake when you
are freezing
and stop peeling the damp t-shirt
from your back)

~~and days about~~
and that when you read a biography,
whoever reads biographies, you
are much more likely to ~~ask~~ ~~about~~
the year than the day of the week,
unless our story takes place on Sunday.

I will turn 18 on a Sunday this year,
while everyone else is thanking their mother's
frail hands and torn stomachs for a
chance to wear their own,
~~and~~ half of which will do so from red lacquered paws,
at least that's what my grandma told me,
staring down a staking highway,
when I asked her what's the use.

and there's no point in skipping prayer,
even if God has left us ~~staring~~ watching
empty chairs for his own entertainment,

~~if~~ ~~any~~ ~~footsteps~~ ~~like~~ ~~responsible~~ ~~parents~~
distinct footsteps like responsible parents
storming up to my cracked door.

AN ODE TO THE SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF MY HOUSE

There is a square
of fading sidewalk outside of my house,
right in front,
it's cracked so bad the ants built a home
stories high
to raise their young out of the old

and every day I ride my bike
down to the neighbor kid's house

there is a square
of fading sidewalk that the men all crowd around.
they have bright vests
and so today I can not hop it's little ledge
with rusty shoos
and catch myself when the wobble starts to tip

and they brought out white spray paint
and so the ants got up and left

There is a square
of painted sidewalk in front of my house
and though
I decorated properly with pretty chalk
they washed it off
and wrote angry looking words that I can't read

my mom told me they say "caution: uneven"
and they'll pave it over sometime before spring

so now I do
my jumps off of my short brick wall
where passing cars
can not see me land on my rusty shoes,
my swayed up knees
so hard there's deep grooves the shape of my feet
and right behind them there's a berry bush
whos thorns snag my hand and make me bleed

when I reach
under the branches to pick myself a snack
or look for all

the little snails, my best friends til they went out
unless they're dry,
at least they got to die where

until one day I came home and the sidewalk
was painted green with morbled carnage

little boys dont know no better
and now there's a stain above the warning
appreciate the color
he said they made a real cool sound.

feb 18- may 12 2024

