

I love like the ocean.

Buoyant, salty, sun warmed like a bath.

Swim until your heart is content!

But be wary,

The tides pull you from shore,

will pull you under to the dark, cold parts at the bottom,  
mysterious creatures will pick the meat off of your bones.

If you tire, take a break on my beach.

I will change you, don't forget,

The sun reflects off of my surface,  
will burn you if you are not careful.

Only strong swimmers need apply.

\*

like the desert

And when I have finished with you,  
You will be a nomad stumbling forward  
from mirage to mirage  
seeking oasis.

You will find no comfort.

When you find water, food, a home  
you will always be thirsty, hungry, unsettled.

You will crave my warm salty water in your mouth  
though you know it will make you mad.

Only devoted applicants need apply.

## Curses for My Lovers

### Curse 1

#### *Fat Lonely Slob*

May you eat and always be hungry,  
thirst and never be sated.  
May you be lonely  
no matter how many people surround you.

### Curse 2

#### *Confident Idiot*

My ye seek and never find,  
never truly or wholly understand.  
May ye always come close to grasping that thing to fill thy void  
only to watch it slip through thy fingers,  
every time.

### Curse 3

#### *The Forgetting Disease*

You will be unable to know whom all you have lied to,  
or all the lies you have told.  
May you live each day stuck moment to moment  
never seeing past the hand in front of your face.

Us: A Snuff Film

I could not feel the ground under my feet,  
when I loved you.

My roots, new  
nearly see-through and  
the old thick ones  
even my umbilical,  
in the chilled spring air,  
dangled, helpless.

And you stared on.

I couldn't eat,  
only pull in the air quick,  
shallow and ineffective, like  
a hummingbird with clipped wings.  
The lack caused my wood to shrink from my bark, and  
as I spent every day coming closer to  
being felled,

you stared on.

As my leaves dried, snapped off  
plummeted uncontrolled,  
too light to make a sound, as  
my branches dried to death white and stuck brittle and useless,

you stared on.

## Hands Big Enough

I love men that hate me.  
They do not realize it,  
no. At first,  
they want to be enveloped.  
Encased in my arms safe,  
lying against my breast.  
But, they cannot help  
but to raise their hands to my throat,  
slowly and purposefully, to squeeze the life from me.

\*

I love them,  
every one,  
every second of suffocating agony  
as my lungs fight for the oxygen they need.

\*

I cannot love unless they have hands large enough  
to wrap around my throat.  
I raise my head, offering.  
If they do not raise their hands, I take them and place them on either side of my neck.

\*

The thumbs are always the hardest to place.  
They always want to squeeze using their fingers, but  
I move their thumbs onto the middle of my throat and  
press lightly so they know to put the pressure on my windpipe.  
I let them know, with my eyes that *this* is the quickest way.

\*

They act as if they hate it at first,  
they loosen their hands,  
shake their heads,  
swear they don't want this,  
but I know and so, I persist.  
I press on those thumbs, and  
soon they are pressing hard enough for my hands to dangle at my sides.

\*

Right before those thumbs break through the hollow at the base of my throat,  
crush my windpipe,  
right before I blackout,  
I always see that tell-tale smirk.

\*

I do not feel anything as they kill me. I know only that I must die over and over.

\*

Once,  
I was not sure his hands were big enough, and

he already had a half-crazed smile  
so I was unsure how his face would look as he killed me.

\*

I heard him say he'd do *it*  
because he feared he'd do worse if not *this*.  
I smirked to myself and thought, what could be worse?

\*

He readied himself by jumping up and around, his  
arms dangled at his sides but  
they were clenched into fists. He seemed to be waiting for a bell.

\*

It clanged,  
or anyway, he looked up at me as if it had.  
It was time.  
He strode toward me.  
Within a foot of me, his hands opened, rigid.  
He raised them and wrapped them around my throat and  
it felt as right as filling my lungs with oxygen, as natural as death.

\*

I did not have to place his thumbs, they found the natural disconnect.

\*

Right before his thumbs applied enough pressure to kill me, I  
noticed the shine of water on his right cheek. I  
couldn't help but smile. I  
felt the laugh squeeze it's way up and  
come running out of my mouth,  
my tears came galloping after of their own volition, and I had no idea why.

\*

His face twisted into a sneer,  
and then,  
orbs of light danced in front of my eyes,  
and then, nothing.

Like Smoke He Will Be Gone.

And he will disappear,  
I swear like smoke he will be gone.

\*

I feel how he loves me, in  
the tiny hairs just starting to curl on his shoulders, on  
the stone smooth spot right below  
his seventh vertebrae, when  
he leans back into my chest, grabs  
my hands clasped around his shoulders, and  
brings them to his lips.

\*

And he will disappear,  
I swear like smoke he will be gone.

\*

His lips are like cumulonimbus clouds. Soft  
urgent,  
foreboding,  
like it will be too much to  
let it all out, just yet.

The longing would overwhelm,  
so intense I'd  
shatter into pieces.

We don't have time like that, to  
bend over table and  
put my pieces back into place,  
to let me sit and dry before  
sending me out to the world, so  
he gives me a delicate kiss, well  
okay, two, three  
and one for the road.

I nibble his bottom lip on the last one, so  
he won't forget  
Me.

\*

And he will disappear,  
I swear like smoke he will be gone.

\*

And his mouth is releasing love in bits  
of sound, phonetic variations that

all equal love, but  
there is the fear in his eyes.

I stay calm, though. Watch his lips,  
that give love and say love.  
Then he holds me, like  
I am precious.

Okay, one more, delicate cloud kiss.  
“And here,” he hands me his heart,  
chopped up, sauteed and slow-cooked in a hot pot with red beans,  
served over white rice,  
the good stuff.  
Sushi rice  
thrice times  
washed. And  
he puts it in one of his new Tupperware bowls.  
I can tell it’s new because it doesn’t have built up  
white gunk on the sides and  
the fluorescent lights in his kitchen are so bright  
reflected on the red top, I  
almost can’t look at it.

And he says, “For you,” with those lips.  
And that fear in his eyes is still there.  
And he handles my body, precious.

I bite his lip.

He stands,  
a foot away, watches  
me pull open my car door and hands me my backpack and canvas book  
filled purse, because—  
he never gives me a reason why I shouldn’t carry my own heavy  
things, but  
his relaxed straight-backed walk  
beside me, says  
he does it for the same reason I am standing with  
his heart in my hands.

I turn to put his heart, red beans, and rice in my car and  
turn back around and  
he has disappeared,  
I swear like smoke he is gone.