

“The Vigil”

Each year, you blow out your candles with increasing fervor

Each year, you count down on your fingers until the day you reach the elusive 18

You wait and you wait and you *wait*

Adulthood conjures up images of elegance and eloquence and everything you're not

And so, you wait

You dream of ballgowns and coy conversations and not so subtle looks

You dream of the things you dare not dream today but may dream one day

You wait to dream and so your dreams wait

The hours accumulate around your feet like sand

And *yet* you wait

But then it comes

The clock finally strikes midnight and you expect to be whisked away

You expect for the stars to align just so

You waited and waited and waited...

Instead, you enter a world of saccharine sour smiles

Instead, you enter a world of festering egos

Your champagne is bittersweet and burns your throat on the way down and the air reeks of

stale disappointment

You waited and waited and waited to dream

You waited and waited and waited to be

And now... you simply wait and wait and wait for tomorrow

And hope that today has not yet come

“The Unknown One”

It was his eyes.

They speak of adventure. They speak of wonder and passion and sin and you know you couldn't escape even if you wanted to, but you don't...

Oh, you don't.

You wonder about him sometimes. You wonder about his dreams and his thoughts and his heart and just *him*.

He's a whirlwind of color and sound and emotion and you're lost in the sea of his subconscious... you don't understand, but you don't try to.

He's intoxicating.

He's a storm. The warm, rolling thunder of his laugh and the shock of electricity when he touches you...

He leaves you breathless.

He's everything you're not and there's something terribly beautiful about it. You find a rhythm in the chaos, but you hardly notice. You're too drawn in.

You're flying close to the sun and you wonder if this is what love is...

You're not used to the unexpected, and he's caught you off guard. You can feel the breath rush out of your lungs and you know this is a bad idea. You know you're on a tightrope. You

know you should turn back before it's too late. You know, you know, you **know**...

But you don't.... or maybe you just don't care.

Because in that one moment, you know he's worth it.

“The Masquerade”

Attractive

To be a lady, you must be attractive. But sometimes, she throws wistful glances at the lone pair of sweatpants in the back of her closet

Beloved

To be a lady, you must be beloved. But sometimes, she feels the constant niceties she recites to her mother and father and everyone that she is just “*Fine, thank you*” weigh her down and privately wishes she could just be herself.

Calm

To be a lady, you must be calm. But sometimes, she wants to kick and throw and hit *something* simply to hear it shatter.

Dainty

To be a lady, you must be dainty. But sometimes, she wobbles slightly in her stilt-like, superfluous Gucci heels and daydreams of not tiptoeing constantly through life.

Elegant

To be a lady, you must be elegant. But sometimes, she wants nothing more than to tear her Versace ballgown to shreds.

Fair

To be a lady, you must be fair. But sometimes, she hears the grandfather clock in the formal living measure out careful, even little beats and she begins to long for impulsivity and irrationality as she begins to crave the sparks of irregularity in her life.

Good

To be a lady, you must be good. But sometimes, she realizes that good is the enemy of best and wonders if she’ll ever be good *enough*.

Honest

To be a lady, you must be honest. But sometimes, she spins silky smooth lies into elaborate fabrications and wishes she could be honest with herself.

Immaculate

To be a lady, you must be immaculate. But sometimes, she revels in the little specs of dirt under her fingernails because they make her feel human.

Jovial

To be a lady, you must be jovial. But sometimes, she feels sick as she cracks the ends of her mouth upwards in what might have been mistaken for a smile.

Kind

To be a lady, you must be kind. But sometimes, she makes scornful comments under her breath during her Etiquette class and she feels just a bit lighter than she did before.

Lively

To be a lady, you must be lively. But sometimes, she has to pinch herself during dinner to prevent herself from falling asleep right into her precisely portioned caesar salad as the sheer sameness day after day after day becomes suffocating.

Modest

To be a lady, you must be modest. But sometimes, she looks back on her lukewarm life of forced, polite laughter and Finishing School and she wishes she had something to be proud of.

Noble

To be a lady, you must be noble. But sometimes, she tires of having to repeatedly swallow her pride and be the bigger person in her arguments with her friends and wonders how it would feel to be selfish *just* this once.

Obedient

To be a lady, you must be obedient. But sometimes, she wonders what it would feel like to be free from the responsibility and the burdens and suddenly her corset feels like a straightjacket.

Perfect

To be a lady, you must be perfect. But sometimes, she looks into the mirror and sees her perfectly *perfect* reflection and reminds herself that she is anything but.

Quiet

To be a lady, you must be quiet. But sometimes, she wants nothing more than to scream at the top of her lungs and be listened to.

Respectful

To be a lady, you must be respectful. But sometimes, she likes to pretend that she isn't a lovely little wind up doll and asks herself why others should be given respect if she can't even respect herself.

Steady

To be a lady, you must be steady. But sometimes, she can't help but relish the infinitesimally small tears in her shining Chanel stockings as any reprieve from her precise, painstaking existence is godsend.

Trustworthy

To be a lady, you must be trustworthy. But sometimes, she hears herself repeat that she's fine for the thousandth time and distantly wonders why she is deserving of anyone's trust when she is so full of lies.

Upstanding

To be a lady, you must be upstanding. And today, she thinks she may be.

Visible

To be a lady, you must *not* be visible. And so she is.

Wayward

To be a lady, you must *not* be wayward. And so she is.

To be a lady, you must not be x

To be a lady, you must not be y

To be a lady, you must not be z

And so she is.