

Girl, I like your face

It's time to create a club, ob-la-di ob-la-da
darling we're pulling up to the drive-thru for lobster
claws and Pinot Grigio from Oregon and the stuff
you don't see on daytime television, because
if you stick your pinkies far enough up your nose, fast
food could be fancy and Tallahassee could be
a kingdom of the richest deep fry batters sizzling with
teenage grease and pimple popped oils. McDonald's would be
the penthouse, baby. Gimme the Top Floor McNugget special,
extra sweet and sour sauce to-go, because I want more
more more and I want it now, in the highest row
of the opera, between silk spinning acrobats,
underneath the army cot with a Ouija board and
a bottlecap planchette where we placed our half-chewed
hairspray fingernails and slowly slid to summon
women who could sing well enough—can't they all?
I'll make Sunday Chik-Fil-A reservations and you
can be my two a.m. Taco Bell Taster—because
it always tastes better then, anyway, because we're

thick as thieves, my Double Decker Supreme, when our lips
are too numb to tell if it's true love or just fake beef
with the pink goo in the center, and you tell me all
of this, too but my mouth is too numb to taste it,
too numb to say it back, and you know to be grass-fed
and call it culture is to water the weeds with booze
reeking of take-out lomien noodles about as blubbered
as a walrus because you never really could pronounce
hors d'oeuvres, could you? But you've always been good at drawing
blood to make a pact, squeezing salamander bellies
till their mouths open and clamping them on your earlobes
like expensive jewelry. You've always been the one
to give that bottlecap an extra jolt, so don't think
I haven't noticed your subtle push over to hello.
I could sit on the porch with you forever, which is
to say our very own hike through the Garden of Eden
eating apple pie mix straight from the can— the highest
form of summertime resistance. Who needs fancy when
you have two spoons?

Tinted pink, thinking about you

I watch you lie on your stomach with your legs stuck up
in the air crossed at the ankles, bare feet tar black
from the asphalt. You've got your shirt on backwards

and a bumblebee behind your ear and you're staring
at me with fistfuls of your cheeks in your hands reciting
spells you learned under your breath to grow your hair out long,

long enough to chop off and still have some to tousle.
And I'm watching you do it; growing and growing
and bathing in blood the way the Cotswold ducks did

in puddles leaking down from the marketplace—red
and runny like streaks of ketchup. Tomato-pasted
sherbert-bellied bills that said *It's you and me up against*

the wall, baby—or in the pond or beneath the wooden bridge
that smelled like iron and caramel kettle corn. I hear you
talking on the phone to Philadelphia honeybee, and damnit

I feel lucky you're mine. That you're the (one I get to spend my time
with, you) pack of powdered donuts that went down with a *thunk*
when I shook the vending machine— I, the all too eager grabber

who nearly crushed them all in the yanking out process.
You put your terracotta corduroys in my laundry
and now I'm tinted pink, thinking of you, listening to you

tell the other eight nine ten hour away people over a half-buttered
English muffin that you are eight nine ten hours away, how sorry
you are you can't make it and with this, you nudge me

and put your life in the backseat, the trunk, my coffee-ringed cupholder.
I bet those ducks became bloodthirsty, waddling across the cobblestone
with Kool-Aid stained tail feathers, a birdbath of bloodlust.

If there were geese, (which I bet there were) they would have looked
like pomegranates, like me and you, in and out of adoration under Mars.
I think Mars would like the look of that, too.

Erika and the fish and you

Poppy, there you are, standing with a lime green trout in one hand and a baseball bat in the other—actually, it was a paddle, but details like that have never stopped you before, so why start now—when you're whacking the ever-loving-shit outta that poor bastard.

Lake Tahoe looks better with you in it, Poppy. And there you are, dancing by the touch the ceiling Christmas tree, barreling through the living room like a goddamn pair of dice, snake eyes or sevens, like a gambler who'd bet it all and gone

outside for a smoke before the hand was even up. Because fuck it, Vegas looks better with you in it—but you'd probably say otherwise for the sake of your pockets and the way the soap at Harrah's makes your lefty pull less lucky.

And there you are walking Millie down the aisle in Austin, a black suit and a black tie and a black shirt and you are larger than the preacher and you are larger than the Strange Boys with Ryan's brave boy voice and you are larger than the diamond ring in my dad's hand and you are larger than life in Texas, too.

Now you're here in my voicemails because it'll always be Valentine's Day six years ago when I missed your call. *Will you be my Valentine?* Yes, I'm calling you back. Your girl is calling you back. I called you back, but my mailbox sounds better with you singing me doo-op

because I still don't know why fools fall in love but I sure as hell know now that I've never loved a red living room recliner more than I've loved yours. Because there you are, Poppy. Here you are, and here I am in your seat and my life is better because you were in it.

Because every window I've ever cracked open has a girl curling her lip around a Marlboro the way you did. Because Vienna is still waiting and you didn't know anyone who wrote songs like Billy. Because Lake Tahoe was to die for in the middle of June with Erika and the fish and you.

Under the Bottle Brush Tree

I've still got your paperclips in my pockets
right where you left them, on the days when
we slept in our pushed together beds, me
with my broken fingers and you, all gaga
knuckles and Sadie Hawkins rings, one

on every crease, one for every piece of myself
I would trade for the days of one-handed
handstands—the one's Rog never saw
and mattress moving through doorways
too full of all our memories to fit.

We were nutcases. Me, you, and B,
sharing shampoo and cigarettes with
open mouths under the shower and
shoelaces tied together till our ankles
kissed, the only way to walk down

Wallerville—because Wal-Mart can't
be that far. Because I miss the way you
take forever to go nowhere at all.
Because now you're too far.
Because I'll always skip the end

of every song because the end
will always hurt too bad to hear,
and we knew how the summer
would end from the second it started:
you, all smashed records and someday,

and me, all sorry and sorry and I'm so
sorry, with my pockets full of paperclips.
But I'd move every mountain in the Poconos
to find just one more, just to meet you there
one last time.

My Girls and Aly

My girls can't stand to sleep in their own beds—
there isn't a part of each other that they don't know.
My girls give each other hickeys, because you can't
find love like that in a camp bathroom. My girls
are all long legs and Long Island accents, Hard

Tails hiked so high you can see their half-assed
attempts at being anything other than thirteen.
My girls steal Aly's cucumber melon Dove
deodorant, and her vanilla sugar body spray
and her clothes and all my bullshit bad habits.

My girls sunbathe naked on the dock as
people jet ski in the lake. They don't care
if they're copy and paste, cliquey as all hell,
getting sent to the cooler for shit they swear
they didn't do. My girls cry over red and blue.

Over boys and big brothers and bad weather and
color war breakout. When we cry, they do too.
Our girls never made it to breakfast on time.
They'd stay up all night, sitting on each other's
shoulders to see who could hang a tampon

the highest. Our girls knew when we meant it.
When we said they can't have it out for the world
the way they have it out for one another. But they
knew they had us, when it rained so hard their Hunters
filled higher than the lake, when we'd turn the lights off

after lunch and lie so still our stomachs crackled like
campfire on Sunday, like two marshmallows on one stick,
stuck like your towel laid out next to mine on the honey-
suckle grass. Because if anyone could make a front porch
feel like prom night, it was my girls and Aly.