

you know my mother disapproves of you now.

you were
sufficient—

gave me intentional
touches of radically
transparent passion
in written
approximations,

but your
likeness—

seemingly
enthusiastic and
insistent,

something I moved
with sluggishly—

became
an unexpected
and disturbing
illusion on
my part.

it grew
motionless and
final;

quickly out-stripped
and pinned me
harshly into
my own cold
beat of discomfort.

a three-part saga we rinse and repeat.

I recently spoke with a friend of mine about relationship, and ever since I've wondered:

What are we all doing, and why?

I

I write poetry because I feel so opposite the modern rhetoric of content singularity—yes I can be single, can happily be one on my own—but wanting someone to lay on the couch with at 11pm on Sunday nights is so hard to admit in such blunt terms.

II

“We need to get together!” is probably one of the most unenthusiastic statements I've ever read, because who are we kidding?

We aren't going anywhere.

We're far too busy pining the ones we lost, too busy curling into ourselves when we desperately need and want to reach out—to actually touch another person.

But we don't.

Settling for abstract words and imagery is safe, and it's better than watching our walls crumble when those we care about walk away from us with a sledgehammer in hand, aware or not of what they left in dust behind them.

III

So we rebuild. Slowly, and with words cemented over our ability to trust, among other things. And when others come along, we follow the way their lips stretch over their teeth when they speak; keep safe distance and avert our eyes.

We deny; we joke; we flirt, peacock, and enjoy the attention we both give and receive; we get nervous when the stream of messages slow, and more so when they taper off completely; we internalize and find invisible faults in ourselves; we try again anyway.

We erode.

Then we build.

Eventually, all we can afford to be is harsh and unapologetic. The wall we end up encasing ourselves in serves its purpose, standing tall and proud as we sit behind it—our backs are flush against its surface, our foreheads rest on your knees, and our arms are tucked tightly against our ribs because being alone like that seems *safe*.

But it isn't.

presenting problems and concerns.

currently diagnosed with
___ (moderate) and
stress adjustment
reaction;

please check all
that apply:

r

e

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o

n

S

h

i

x p s

are your problems affecting everyday tasks?

x y

x

x e

x s

good morning.

in the morning
I roll my head back
when my spine
arches and
my fingertips reach
for the headboard,

and meanwhile my
shirt has left a
long patch of skin
vulnerable to the air—

but it's warm.

and I feel that
remaining bite of
sweltering dreamscape
still wrapped around
my ankles like it doesn't
want to leave.

but it will.

and it does when I
kick free of sleep,

sitting up as soon
as my body stops
twisting into
wakefulness.

when my eyes are
finally open
I note that in my
dream

his hair was black,

but it's not.

tangents.

I won't apologize
for wanting
something
all-encompassing,

and I won't
blame you for
not being able to
give it to me—

we were
errant tangents,

maybe,

meeting once
and oxidizing

before careening
away—

ever sperate
from that point
onward.

I was so much more
than you realized,

you'd said.

I still look
for you,

even though
I shouldn't and
can't.