

time machine

i dont think anyone likes me
you say, tight fists in pockets.

why do you say that?
i say,
when everyone praises you so?

they only say those things to make me feel better,
you say, shrinking in your jacket.

well why would they want to make you feel better
if they dont care about you?
i argued.

they just dont want to bother with a
stupid,
crying,
mess.

.... do you really think that?

...

or is it just hard to believe otherwise?

...

why is that?
i finally say.

i just think that if they saw me,
the real me,
you say,
they would hate me.

what do you mean,
the real you?

the stuff i hide.
the stuff they dont see
because i want them to like me.

but im selfish,
im bitter,
im petty,
i want to be mean
and angry
and rude
but i cant be
because thats not how -

and then your throat closes up,
because the word doesnt
fit inside your mouth anymore.

i know,
i say.

mister,
you say finally,
how can you be me from the future?
im not a boy.

neither am i,
i say,
not a girl either, though,
most of the time, anyway.

confusion still lingers in your eyes
but you nod thoughtfully
because something about that
settles something inside you
like sand smoothed over
or a plank finally laid level

hey kid,
i say,

because time's running out
and you need to hear this

and i say,
you're going to make...
so many friends.

and the way you look at me,
with loneliness gaping
in the soul of your eyes
makes me want to cry.

you'll make good friends, close friends,
i say,
that you'll hang out with,
have lunch with,
that you can talk about the universe with.
and not just one, or two, or five
but so, so many.

a bajillion?
you say, skeptical.

it sure feels like that sometimes,
you say with a small smile.
you'll meet so many different people
unique people
cool people
people like you
and people not like you
that you'll learn from
and discover with
and,
and they're going to love you
and you'll never have to question that.

i see it in your eyes
and the way you study your fingertips
that you dont believe me.

that's cool,
you say.

and i know,
i say, forcing tears down my throat
that you dont think so,
but i

but i choke on my words,
because theyre still so, so hard

to say out loud.

i love you,
i say.
really, i think youre amazing.
i do.

and i see it in your eyes,
and the way you shuffle your feet,
that you dont believe me.

and maybe,
thats in part,
because i never fully mean it.

we stand there,
not knowing what to say.
im crying
and you cant understand why.

ill come back,
i promise.

... why?
you say.

i could say a lot of things.
i think youre dumb.
i think youre a little broken.
i think you could really use
the warmest hug
in all of time and space.

i want to love you
so furiously
because you hurt so, so much.

but all i say is,
ive got a time machine
and the only place i can think to go
is right here.