

**ctrl + alt + delete**

i know,  
its hard to control,  
alter, and  
delete lovers  
from your system.  
i promise, i'm not trying  
to press your buttons.  
i just want to login into your heart.  
replace all past users with my name.  
key in 143 as my passcode to  
unlock the love you've been  
storing since your past lovers failed  
at managing the tasks that come  
with loving a man like you.

i know,  
waiting for love,  
looking for love,  
relearning love,  
recovering from love,  
googling *what is love?*  
repeatedly, is getting old.  
and Alexa and Siri may not always  
hear you out or understand your request.  
that's why I'm trying to make this  
easy for you and me to access.  
i don't ever want to sign out first  
without being the first to  
welcome your heart to  
the home of mine.

i know,  
we've both  
opened-up before  
and seen enough blues  
to want to completely  
shut down but we must  
not cancel this application  
without the start of  
processing words with  
a micro soft rhythm  
for us to stay up to date  
in the operations of *love*.

**Imago (I'm a Go... Fly)**

Temporarily,  
the green surrounding  
me is my home.  
My ovule was laid  
here for a reason.  
Another beautiful Monarch  
believed in me before  
I could caterpillar crawl my way out,  
go through flowers  
to fuel my life on my own,  
show off my own phenotypical  
blend of multi-colored stripes  
then hide in my chrysalis.

Please, don't worry  
about me being here.  
This will not take long.  
This stage is not isolation out of fear.  
I promise, I am not ghosting  
just to be ghosting.  
I am accepting my growth.  
I am protecting my growth.  
I am falling in love with the  
brown skin that will shape  
me differently for a lifetime.

Even if you don't understand  
my resting period  
And refuse to accept this change,  
I'm a go, open-up from this chrysalis anyway-  
unfold these damped, soft wings,  
pump blood into them gracefully;  
Get them flapping happily  
because I don't want to watch  
everybody else take flight when  
I can be brave and fly,  
leave a legacy on  
the same greenery for  
another monarch to  
metamorphosis and call home.

### When Battling Abnormal Cells

There is pricking  
then probing.  
It's even more mysterious  
when there is no pain  
or other symptoms.  
It's even more petrifying  
if you've never been diagnosed.  
Any malignant test is a  
nightmare on Cancer St.  
You'll definitely know  
your blood, sweat,  
and tears for sure.  
It is the worst pill between  
the blue and the red one,  
for you and your family  
to swallow.  
No matter the stage.  
No matter the phase.  
You wouldn't even  
wish it on the lover  
or friends you  
lost while battling it.  
Funny how magnetic  
resonance imaging  
becomes a new angelic friend,  
happy to see you through  
and show others the miracle  
God has already seen  
to help keep  
your life from being  
uncontrollably  
destroyed inside-out.

**My Quarantine Life (04/20/20)**

With 2,470,410  
cases confirmed,  
169,595 dead,  
more pending  
in 180 countries  
and regions,  
I will not complain.

I will not complain  
about the Birthday I spent  
alone when I peacefully,  
without any pain,  
woke up to a new age  
that many did not get  
a chance to greet.

I will continue to enjoy  
giving myself a Mary Kay  
facial every Sunday  
after smiling at the debut  
of my unibrow and  
chipped polished toes.

I will not complain  
about the cancelled trip to  
visit my father's grave for  
the first time since  
I've planted him,  
the vacations to the islands,  
the backpacking trip to Europe,  
a PhD gift to myself,  
or the conferences that were  
easily postponed.

I will be grateful for my shelter,  
even though I live alone  
and wish that I had a family  
of my own to cook for,  
to have movie nights with.  
Kids to read to,  
teach them new things  
and about life.

I will contently walk into

each room and be thankful.  
Praise and thank God that  
my bills were paid in full.  
I still have incomes, food,  
transportation, and life.  
My family and friends are still here.  
I cannot touch or hug them  
or break bread with them,  
but I can hear, see and  
laugh with them virtually.

No. I will not complain about  
my quarantine life and  
what I cannot do,  
where I cannot be,  
when there are millions  
of families and friends  
worried about their survival,  
their love ones fighting for their life  
or heavily in pain over the  
169,595 people that they cannot see,  
hear from, hug tightly, and  
celebrate life with again.

**Ashanti's Drum**

A Nubian queen loans her steps.  
I borrow her drummer boy's  
boom here,  
his boom there,  
and another tick, tick boom, boom.  
They know I own bona fide  
rhythm in my motherland hips.  
So, I pay my roots.

Pa rum pum pum pum  
rum pum pum....  
*Hips stir like Earth.....*

Pa rum pum pum pum  
rum pum pum....  
*They free water.....*

Pa rum pum pum pum  
rum pum pum....  
*Arms reach for God.....*

Pa rum pum pum pum  
Rum pum pum....  
*They gather to worship.....*

Pa rum pum pum pum  
rum pum pum....  
*Feet, lead me not alone.....*

Pa rum pum pum pum  
rum pum pum....  
*They yield and return.....*

Pa rum pum pum pum  
Rum pum pum....  
*Ancestors on call.....*

Pa rum pum pum pum  
Rum pum pum....  
*I honor, I honor.....*

Pa rum pum pum pum  
rum pum pum....  
*I praise, I praise*

*with life in my hips.*