

My pupils always drift to five o'clock. Here in the arid palm of New York, my hands are slick with sweat. No, not sweat—this must be dehydration. How else to explain the desert inside my body? The dryness prickles, an unbearable itch. Every polyester fiber of my jacket tangles with the newly sprouted stubble of my sweat-damp skin. God, I really should have spent more on wool. Even beneath my skin and bone, my heart feels the itch too—a small bird caged behind my ribs, its wings beating furiously.

I am a silent person. Honestly, I don't care about the lives of others, nor do I wish to pass any judgments. Yet, here I am, forcing myself to speak. "Oh, really? That's incredible." Faceless figures standing in front of me, talking about things that don't interest me in the slightest. Still, their words hear my echo, all the while waging a quiet battle with my neck, trying to turn toward you at five o'clock. Your eyes—they're truly big. So big that I see myself reflected in them, flushed red, my embarrassment laid bare.



I am adrift in the primordial chaos of the universe, trying to discern what is real. My thoughts dissolve into the chaos; my body melts into the void. This feeling is not always unpleasant, but I'm striving to reforge my form, just so I can reach out and touch you, an entity. I long to hold a mirror to your beautiful eyes and see a more beautiful version of myself reflected within—but your fluttering lashes, like the wings of a hummingbird, block my view.

If I cannot see, then I will imagine. I dream of parasitizing your body. What happiness it must bring, for you to be so nourished, such a feast!

Look at me. I've changed into a finer wool coat. I've curled the ends of my hair. I've spritzed myself with Portrait of a Lady. I've never known waiting could be so sweet. I am a prisoner of infatuation, on the brink of release. I'm like an opera singer warming up for her grand performance, trying out different tones and rhythms to talk to you. Is this too much? It was meant to be my metaphor. I didn't think reality would actually let me get this close to see myself in your eyes—it's too much. You've declared war on the boundaries of my realm, piercing my heart with an elegant sword. The wound is shallow, like a paper cut, but it won't heal, no matter what I do. I'm like a cat. You only need to stand still, and I'll come rub myself against your leg—but don't get too close, or I'll bristle and flee. Usually, I live in the moment, but I find myself thrilling to the thought of a closer future: next week, the next minute, the next second. My nervous excitement comes from not knowing what your next move will be. But the greater uneasy lies in not knowing how I will react.

Another sleepless night. The creases in my bed sheets bear witness to my anxiety, and the smudged fingerprints on my screen know the rhythm of my heart—suddenly racing, then stopping abruptly.

I wipe the steam on the mirror after shower, and my face stares back at me—so young, so beguiling. My body, raw and beautiful. I wish you were younger and shallower, perhaps. So that you will be obsessed by at least my body, because I know for sure I'm fucking beautiful. I don't even know if my mind loves you, but amidst the chaos of my emotions, I know my body is slowly collapsing, undone by loving you.

I foster bitterness, as if I've swallowed an entire lemon whole. If my emotions could ferment into wine, it would be sharp on the tongue, and dangerously intoxicating.

I like it rough. Sex with you must be a sport, a battle. I want to wrestle with you, tear you apart, gut you open. I want to bury myself in your still-warm blood and organs, seeking shelter from the cold.

I've started noticing basements and damp, shadowed paths. I hide in the cracks, luring you to step inside.

Without any rhetoric, my most basic emotions tell me that:

I want to kidnap you, lock you, make you love me and me only.
And so I hate you I hate you,
I hate you, I hate you.
You force me to feel this way.

Is this toxic? Maybe. But more than possessing you, I want to possess myself. I want to control my own mind—decide what to remember, what to forget. I want to control my temper, to remain rational when I see you being just as fucking sweet with others. I want to control my appearance, every tissue, every cell in my body. I want to seize back my autonomy.

Loving you evolved into a constant drizzle summer rain that keeps me barely alive, while the dampness seeps into my lungs. I want to wring out my soul.

I dismembered myself, decorated the still-pulsing pieces of flesh with ribbons, and threw them to you. They hit the ground with a sickening thud, and the pain seared through me. I'm hurting. But this pain, raw and unyielding, declares my existence, my power.

Between us lies a rainforest shrouded in poisonous mist. I let its venom seep into my blood. When I finally get out, you're not there on the other side—or perhaps I never needed you to be.

The truth is, I might not even know you at all. If someone were to read these words after my death, I doubt they'd find any you in it. It was never about you. It was always about me.



The bird with beating wings is me.
The flushed red is me.
The chaos is me.
The unease is me.
The sword is me. The bitterness
is me.
The madness is me.
The poison is me.
The strength is me.

I am the sole witness to my love.
I am the one and only truth in this
universe of my making.