

Entry # 2

jouska

and this is how it ends. I scrub my hands clean of you, wash every inch of skin you touched over and over again, watch as what's left of you pools at the drain and sinks. I watch it just to make sure it's leaving. this is good. this is better. to forget is to move on. to rid my body of every spot that was yours is to move on. making room for empty spaces is how I move on.

this isn't to say I never loved you. I did, here and there, though not in the ways you wanted me to. in those fleeting moments where trust and teenager and ache all aligned—planets in a solar system that revolved around the two of us—I loved you more than anything. my love for you was the only thing I understood. when it left me, my love for you was the only thing I wanted.

even good things must come to an end. this isn't to say we were good, it's simply to remind myself that I once thought we were, that I once thought we could be, if we found a way to keep our planets aligned. perhaps we were good, sometimes. like the moment before bad news, the flicker of the lights before a power outage, the last second of the high before everything comes crashing down. this is to say that I loved you like we were always hanging by a thread. this is to say that I loved you like I knew you would leave. this is to say that I loved the pain that came with leaving on my own. this is to say that whatever love was there is gone now.

this is all my way of saying that I don't know if I love that way at all. that maybe I never loved you, after all. maybe I loved you differently than you loved me. maybe I only wanted to love you, wanted to watch the planets align and convince myself that you were fate, that I had a destiny, that if I tried hard enough I could make love out of loneliness. this isn't to say that I was lonely. this is to say that I thought I should've been.

**jouska* is a Finnish word that's defined as a hypothetical conversation that one would compulsively play out in their head, as well as the Finnish translation for spring. Pronounced yow-ska

i leave everything unfinished (but i guess that's better than nothing)

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- ~~if i leave my window open at night these days,
i get goosebumps. where has the time gone?
when did i learn how to leave a voicemail?
when did i start being able to walk to the library alone, again?~~
- ~~there are so many beautiful things in my life.
like how i can smile and someone almost always
smiles back. like how i can sleep through almost every night
and wake up to a room i recognize.
like how i can do something that reminds me something
awful happened, take a deep breath, and do it anyway.~~
- i will wake up feeling better in the morning.
i will clean my room every thursday.
i'll learn how to quit the job my body could
never handle in the first place. i'll learn
the things i can't do aren't always my fault.
- ~~i think i've reached a crossroads because
the only thing in my life that still needs saving is me.~~
- i will save myself. i'll learn how. i'll start going to bed
at 9:30 and waking up at 5 until it feels like
i have a brand new sense of control. i'll stop trying to read
away my stutter. i'll start eating three meals a day.
i'll be okay. i'll be happy.

in which i write the same poem again

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i lie here waiting for the snow to melt and think
how dare you. how dare you rip the grass
out from under me like a rug. how dare you
steal the name of every season and shove new ones
down my throat. how dare you turn this earth
barren again and again without warning.

i would have done anything for winter
to end gently, back then—to ease into the warmth
like wading into a lake in june. my world wasn't dead
for lack of water, but still, i would have cried rivers
if it made the earth green again.
i think i still would.

by the time i don't feel like i'm still stuck there,
forcing songs down my throat instead of breakfast,
two summers will have passed. i tell myself
it will only be two summers, that by the time
this one turns back to deadness,
the frozen desert won't remind me of anything.

i wake up every twenty minutes and try to
drink from an empty glass. someday, this is what
it will feel like to put these songs back in my mouth,
to write this poem again. when the glass finally empties
(because glasses always do), i'll rejoice in the feeling.
i won't ask any more of it.

i'll stop drinking down and throwing up
the month of january and i'll refill a new cup of water,
instead. i'll write a new song, one that tastes better,
one that won't stick to my lips and
tell me i don't know how to kiss like a normal person.
i'll find something new to remember the summer by.

come winter (because winter always comes), i'll
buy thicker blankets and warmer jackets and write about
everything else. i'll romanticize all of it, every
fallen leaf and crumbling street and frozen puddle,
every unfinished poem and untitled document
and unreadable manuscript. they will keep me warm.

when spring arrives (because spring always does),
i will water this garden, me, the one i planted

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all on my own. i'll resurrect every plant
and part of myself that turned black in the winter.
the plants will grow back stronger, if cared for,
and i have to believe that i will, too.