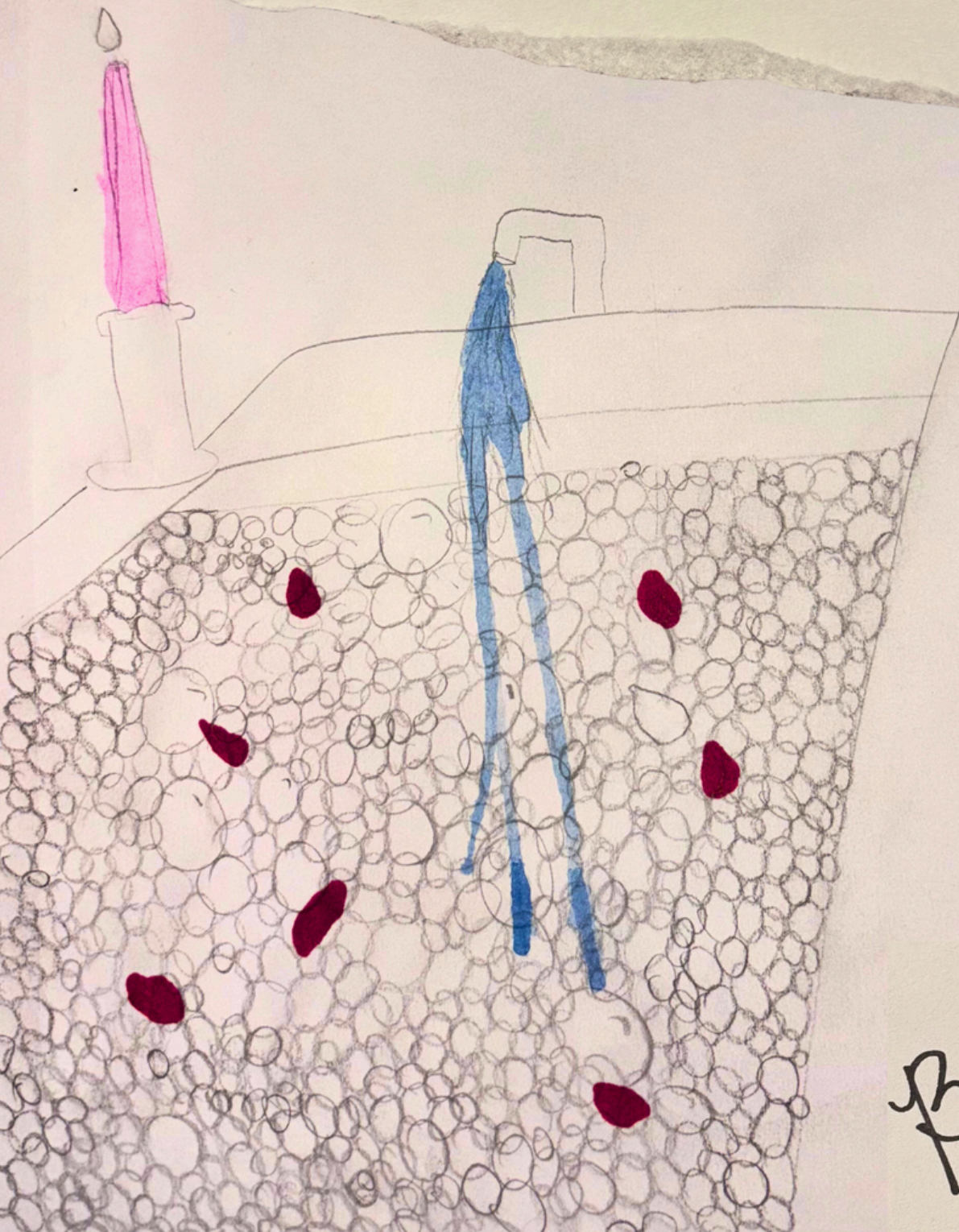


# Bathtime Poetry



Bobby  
Gutter



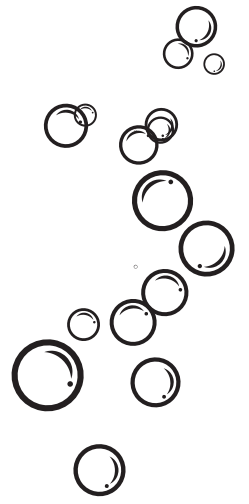
Dedicated to my muse-

You'll forever live in my poetry and in my heart.

Your tortured poet,  
Bobby G ♡



# “bathtime poetry”



i try to drown but it isn't deep enough  
blood red stained on my lips  
i should probably get something to eat  
is that them banging down my door?

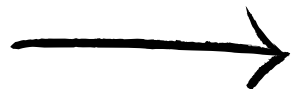
i've searched the internet for places to rest fantasized bout what you'd think  
my robot therapist says to play it cool

i can't afford it anyhow  
i talk and talk and talk and talk  
like we're just kids again  
but my neighbors just hear a mad man  
who never sleeps anymore

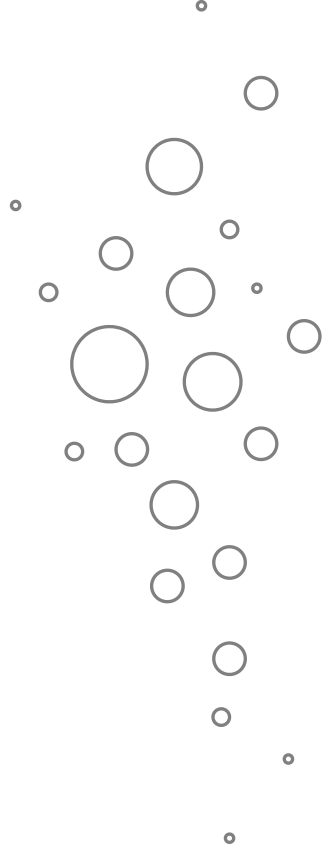
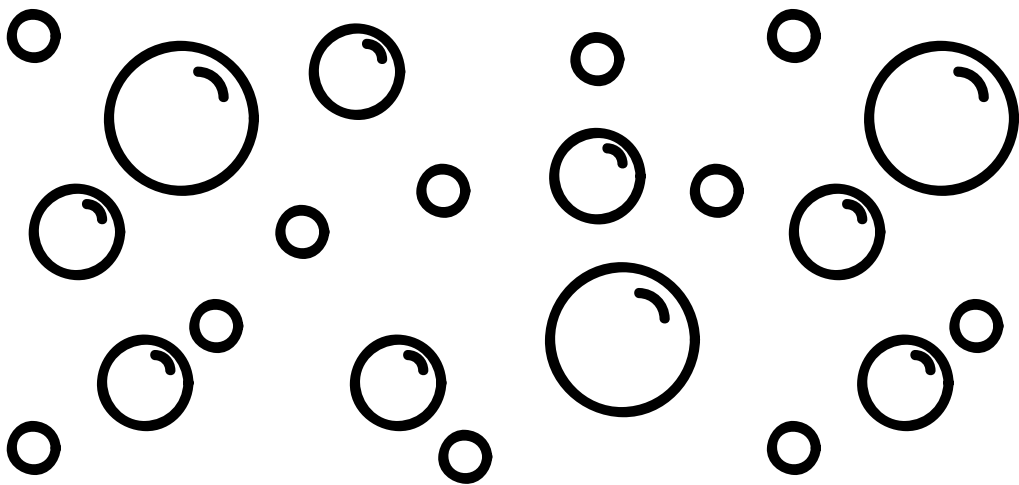
cracking another can til the sun rise  
waking up to evidence of “today's a new day” but it always starts the same  
I've gained the weight back

i cry in the car because five hours of honest work is too much for me to handle  
anymore

I've thought too about leaving  
no trace behind, like a show or a movie  
where they'd find my body in a river  
or on a beach somewhere tropical  
swimming with the fish  
or sunbathing reading an American magazine  
they'd say he was gone far too soon  
or that they think i was spotted at an airport  
i've thought too about going to Church  
so i can repent, then be reborn  
but for now I'll stay here



writing bathtime poetry,  
despising my reflection in the faucet  
i'll be a maniac, a cheat, a hoax,  
but only 'til 4 o'clock  
then i think i should get some fresh air  
a bite to eat, perhaps read a book  
this story isn't about you anymore  
i've always been one for the dramatics  
but lately i worry about my own safety  
'til i let it all out the best way i know how  
it seems so calm now-  
the water running, the comfort of free will  
the vastness that change can inspire  
so perhaps this is my own sermon  
a makeshift baptism after all  
maybe i am God  
maybe i'm too old to be taking baths in my regret  
too clever not to come out clean



## **Baby brown eyes**

The music moves through you

With sunlight in your palms

Moonlight in your pocket

Maybe you're not lucky, but deserving

I love your ink-stained fingers

The ships you've sailed

And the souvenirs you brought home

I love how you listen to public radio

And get a kick out of getting a kick out of things

I love your dimples

And the way you fix your hair

The way you love like it's life or death

The pining, the crying, the growing, the learning

The writing, the waiting, the trying, the failing

You make me laugh

With your head in the clouds

And your feet on the ground

How you tiptoe to the beat

And how you care

You're my best friend

# “attractive”

I swear by it all, you can feel when I'm shifting  
I make little lists, read a chapter, bathe myself in luxury  
And then there you are  
Like your soul is keeping tabs on mine  
They say when you're at a higher energy, you're more attractive  
When you stop chasing, they come to you  
As for me, I'm just trying to heal  
Perhaps my healing techniques transform me to a radiant frequency  
So just wait until I'm free  
Will you be banging down my door?  
I'm not taking my power back to get a leg up  
I'm not tricking your mind into thinking I don't care  
I just want to be okay  
And if you notice somehow that I'm not who I once was-  
And you change your heart and your mind-  
I want to be ready to love you fully  
So for now, I'm going to give myself the attention I so desperately crave from you  
Fill the gaps that you occupied when you were in a good mood  
And you can feel it in your bones  
I'm not pining today, I'm not chasing  
I'm existing and bettering myself  
Just wait until you know what it's like for me to slip through your fingers  
I've never taken the opportunity, but I can imagine you'll finally worry  
Someone else loves me more than you ever could,  
More than you love yourself  
And he's more attractive than our earth's natural magnets  
So here I am, in all of my glory  
And there you are, right on schedule

1/26/25

what's not to be grateful for?

i've a carton of eggs

a handsome man in my bed

John and Peter in the water

speakers for sound

art nailed to the walls

a perspective to hold

when i woke this afternoon,

i felt bogged and bewildered

then i marinated on those feelings

realized i am the director of my life

and my leading man is a hero

they're privileged to know me

and i, too

has it not always worked out for me?

have i not manifested or chased what i need?

do i not know the tunes that will sharpen my mood?

i could stay here and stare

or i could get up and dance

10/26/24

perhaps it's the warmest i've seen these oaks in years, or perhaps i depleted my  
recollection, time and time again  
perhaps it is warmer than i remember, 'specially with him laying here with me  
my eardrums are racing my heart to see which will give out first  
but i couldn't sleep in today, so i'll opt for saturday morning cartoons once i make  
sense of the way i'm feeling  
perhaps i've outgrown the sensation, perhaps i no longer look good in the pictures  
cause while everyone's dancing to bright neon colors, my music stays the same  
isn't this supposed to be fun?  
i once sought adventure,  
now i yearn for familiarity  
the kind i grew up seeing in my parent's lifelong friends  
we can't have house parties, they've shrunk all our homes  
it occurred to me yesterday that it once made me laugh that if i was really like my  
father, i'd have a mini me and amanda by now  
instead i was refreshing my screen, watching numbers tick up  
tick, tick, tick  
"it's such a dopamine rush"  
death to the authors and death to mystique  
if i can't be a poet, i'll find other ways to remind you all how special i am  
i'm beginning to wonder if i'd be better off without all of it  
there's so much discomfort when the wind starts to freeze,  
unless you recall that we're just like the trees  
shedding our palette to make room for new,  
expanding our roots from the ones we outgrew  
and in these sweet changes, emerges a man  
just like before, and certainly again  
who looks a bit different than this time last fall,  
who won't be afraid of the new, not at all





## “valentine’s day part 1”

a natural at flowing streams  
today it was a dried out creek  
what have you done for me lately?

that i haven’t had to ask intently  
four drinks i could drink down fast just now

earlier it’s like i forgot how  
i pined like the fallen leaves  
what do you think when you think of me?

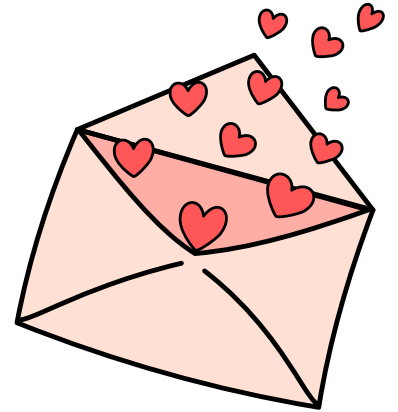
now i’m wordless, looking to you  
though you’ll get angry not worried if i stay here in my  
room

predictable at best is getting old  
i’m gonna need something to feel like gold  
when i met you i was insecure

now i wanna flirt my eyes with passers on the floor  
and I’m comfortable at best, know how to fall back at  
your worst

this whole thing’s starting to feel like it’s been rehearsed

## “my valentine”



a sugary snack and my name pressed in red  
some hearts are too small for what needs to be said  
and chocolates, they melt, so i'll write it in ink  
how kissing your lips is my favoritest treat  
my clock's never ticked on quite nearly this far  
it ticks with the beats of my blood-dripping heart  
a slow dance past midnight, then i rest by your side  
to wake up admiring the steady daylight  
we've grown like a tree, through the rainfall and snow  
with roots that don't weather, so i want you to know  
how i love you my dear, my sweet Valentine,  
you're simply the best thing that's ever been mine ♡



**riding through the hills of Indiana**  
a photograph caught my eye  
friends from lifetimes ago  
rejoining to celebrate their graduation  
it got me thinkin'  
i could be reuniting under palm trees  
i could still know them well  
for a moment i was envious,  
a sense of failure that's lingered  
but i just left the county fair  
with my man and his mama  
if i hadn't run for the hills  
i wouldn't be here now

October 5, 2024

I study you like poetry  
Line by line I read  
You run so fast, and when you do  
I stare in disbelief  
But when I'm trying to get by  
You stare with cruel intent  
Oh now you want to take your life?  
You've outdone me again

I think you're changing, every year  
I thought I nailed you down  
But I can't change you, like you me,  
You pass through every town  
I've mastered how to deal with you  
I'm grateful for your tricks  
For you have taught me empathy,  
Stillness and patience

At my parties, you send me home  
When I have just begun  
In my despair, you let me sit  
As if it's all for fun  
I've given you most everything-  
My youth and all my change  
You stay the same, each lonely night  
And every passing day

You tell me I'm allowed to cheer,  
To lose and when to leave  
And decide it's my turn to start  
And finish when I breathe  
Your hands they stay around my neck  
I'm victim to your games  
You've given me my hope and joy  
And all this wretched shame

Where did you go? I ask myself  
I'm losing all my sleep  
I ask you kindly- "wait for me,"  
You're just a rotten thief  
My childhood, my glory days, all drop like grains of sand  
And then you turn around again  
Like it's all in your plan

by Bobby Gelter

# “snap”

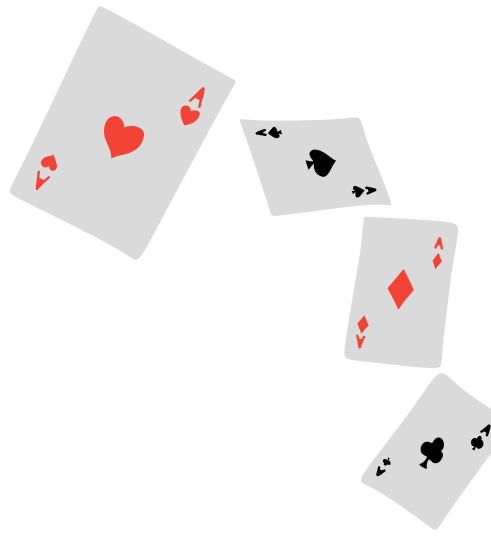
I snap my two fingers  
And score you some tix  
To the latest of showings  
Of my newest tricks

With the sleight of my hand  
I can stay up all night  
And make magic of numbers  
It's really a sight

You won't mind if I scream  
If I'm inside a tank  
When I come up for air  
You won't know that I sank

I say “is this your card?”  
Though I know that it's not  
To vanish my lunacy  
Cause you're all I've got

Then I saw through myself  
We needed to part  
Unlucky for me,  
Left my head with my heart





9/15/24

you crack up laughing bout something we laughed about last night  
shouting out gas prices like i wouldn't empty my tank to find you, my priceless  
boy

our cards are on the table, only this time we're playing on the same team  
we'll win in the end

you send me a picture of two deranged looking cats- "us"  
you know i get sensory overload but you keep your hand on my leg when i drive  
perking up when you hear a good song  
"who sings this?" and you always know  
you tune in to my FMs and stay til the AM  
i gotta smile when you laugh at your own jokes  
pull me closer then knock out in three seconds  
must be tired from your good job at keeping me happy  
i make you dance like a ballerina does  
sometimes even on your toes

but i like it best when we hold hands and sway in my living room  
throwing chairs in a cozy little cabin  
we drive home and you point out how much it costs for us to get where we're  
going

i say "all we can do is be better"  
what nerve to beg someone to stay only to threaten them with leaving  
and what you said is true  
water is so good for you  
'specially when your roots are regrowing  
one day we'll be like these evergreens  
we'll stand strong amongst a history of other lovers who stopped trying to  
move mountains and decided to be still  
"the Bengals better win today or I'm gonna fucking beat you" i pause to laugh  
while i think of the next line

Welcome to Tennessee  
"thanks for having me"  
my funny guy



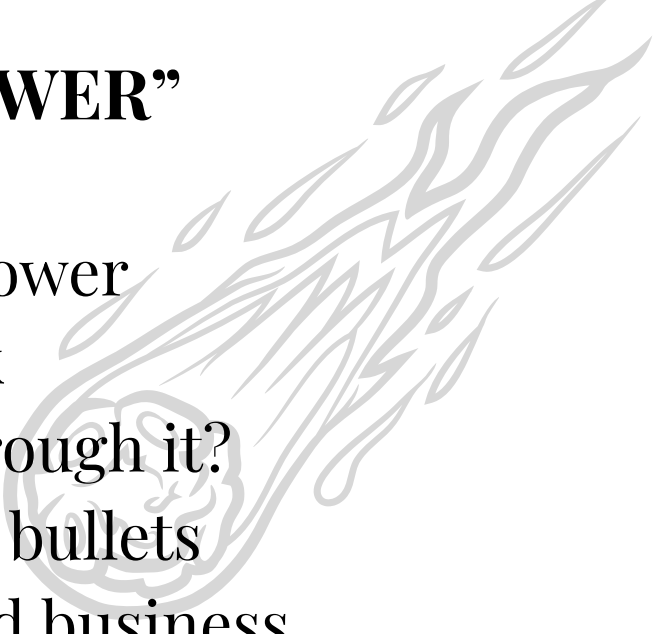
**Lana**

9/28/24

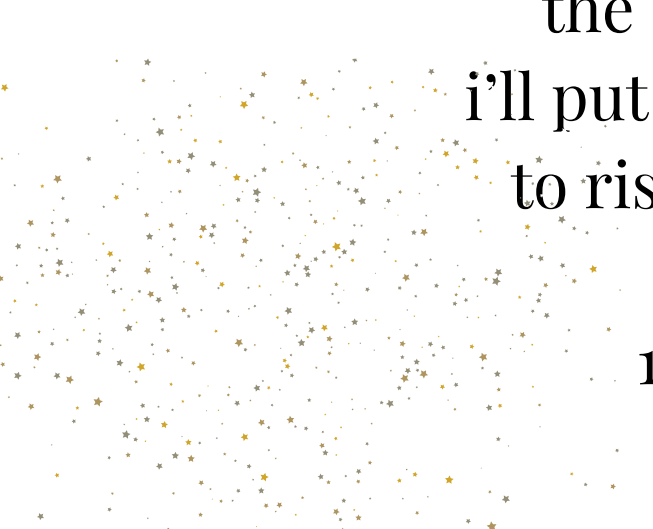


it'd be unfaithful not to compare  
for in a line of dreamers, those who convey their sentiments as little pieces of art,  
would not they point to one another?  
as the words escaped my sentimental, i pondered the separation of imitation and  
inspiration  
all of this to say,  
a bubble bath he intrudes on  
to take a break from watching his football game  
of a college i once graduated from  
is refreshing at least, a rebirth at best  
she in which i pull from spoke of 11:59pm,  
deciding to start over for the day  
she speaks of simplicity  
and man, that speaks to me  
cause my lover's talking touchdowns while i smooth over my skin  
this is all i ever dreamed about  
before someone sat on my leather couch  
gifted at best, abandoned at worst  
a man who speaks to me  
while the bubbles make me clean  
“are we winning?” while i poke my dimples out purposely  
scented foam hiding what i hope he thinks of me  
i can't recall what he said back,  
but man, that boy he makes me laugh  
and sometimes i enjoy my solitude  
cause i love taking lengthy baths  
the way he loves his quarterbacks  
sweethearts forever,  
as long as i stay sweet

# “METEOR SHOWER”

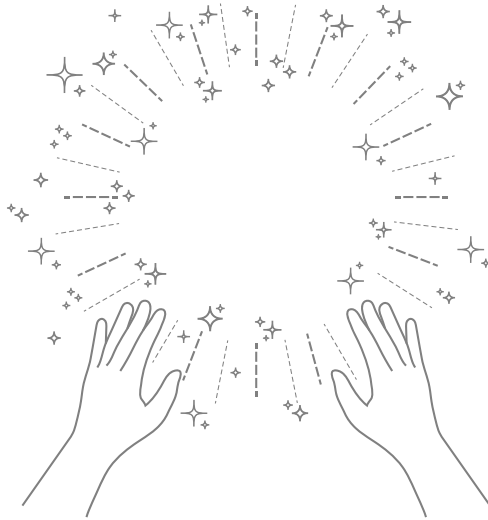


ah! a meteor shower  
at daybreak  
how'd you sleep through it?  
asteroids land like bullets  
pointing to unfinished business  
right into my bedroom  
when the sky decides to spit at me  
i can't help but looking up  
trying to collect stardust when i can  
i'll keep it in a jar  
and hope it glimmers through the days  
to pull out and play with later  
and if it still sparkles, i'll be rich  
if it turns to dust, i'll catch some more  
strange seeing the sky's show against  
the ever-rising sun  
i'll put it in a jar, for now  
to risk not going mad



1/4/25 7:33am

## Assume Attraction (2/27/25)



breaking all the laws  
i'm running out of crimes  
neville's got me questioning  
my own concept of time  
facing double charge  
attached to my own chain  
how to find myself again  
it's almost like a game  
mirrored is my peace  
when i get what i want  
time to face reality  
you'll always be the one

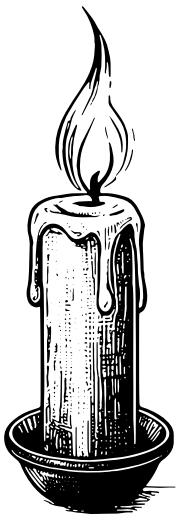
**March 12, 2025**

I've forced myself outdoors  
The city at large is celebrating this weather  
Before I noticed the birds chirping,  
I noted the dead plants in cracked pots from last year's beauty  
I realized I'm sitting in your chair  
I've lost my identity  
In the war within my heart  
Scarified my dignity  
Finding it difficult to restart  
The things I'm always grateful for  
Seem like bullets I have to dodge  
To sit in silence, to tune it all out  
Which, of course, doesn't help anything  
So here I am,  
Forcing myself to write and listen to the birds  
I don't feel clever, no, but rather uninspired  
This heartbreak isn't the roaring fire it once was,  
But a low burning ember covering my ground  
I try to watch my step, then get burned again  
Before I lay down in the heat  
Why does it always rain until you finally need release?  
I resent myself for only feeling alive when you let me  
I resent you for not seeing things through  
Though I try to stay strong, to respect your time and space,  
I'm counting clocks that tick so slow  
'Til I can touch your face  
Perhaps it would be better  
If you had burned down my house  
An arson's touch seems quicker than  
A candle burning out



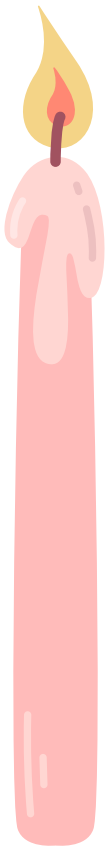


Instead you flick the lighter,  
Then let the small flame die  
As if to say "I'm still right here,  
but go find your own light"  
I'm trying, but not hard enough  
I hope to get there soon  
To make it through the longing nights  
And painful afternoons  
And I could win this battle  
Then be left wanting more  
Instead I'll strap on my old gear  
To try to win the war  
If what they say is really true,  
You'll miss me when I glow  
But what if I'm only glowing  
In the hopes you'll somehow know?  
Perhaps I lit a fire in you  
Perhaps I put it out  
Perhaps if I rekindle it  
You won't have any doubts  
I pray to be less miserable  
Once I finish with these words  
I'll plant new seeds in flowerpots  
And listen to the birds  
I'll focus on my discipline  
And take care of myself  
I'll fold my laundry, take a walk,  
And dust off all my shelves  
I'll be a friend to all my friends  
And get a good night's rest  
I'll wake up every morning  
And I'll choose to do my best



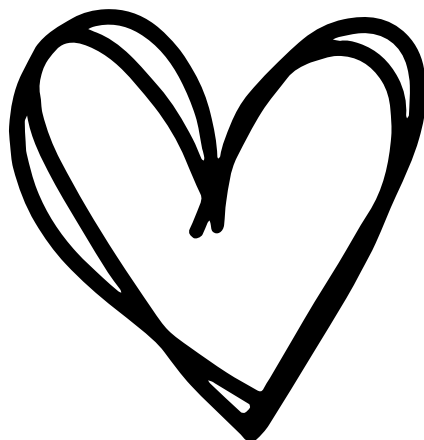
## “pink” 2/21/25

petals and candlewax  
dripping with love  
a quartz made of roses  
divine from above  
a chain ‘round my neck  
with a little pink stone  
the lower it burns,  
the more i have grown  
an emblem from early  
on my wrist that i kiss  
affirmative action  
that i read from my list  
he loves me, he loves me,  
each petal they sing  
one day we’ll go shopping  
for a perfect-size ring  
your mind where i’m dancing  
while i bathe in our truth  
surrounded by pink  
i’ll be patient for you



2/22/25

my universe protects me  
therefore, you are safe as well  
i won't let them dismiss you  
for empathy is stronger than defense  
you'll know my heart well  
for it is yours  
you'll find me in every daydream  
smiling and radiant  
a seed shouldn't be dug up before bloom  
through the rain, when the sun comes  
i know i'll be seeing you soon





**“HELL”**

with the lights off,  
you can't tell who i'm dancing with  
He doesn't feel like you do  
but I'll pretend it's your arms I cling to  
i'm off beat, tripping on his shoes  
in your absence, Satan's been my muse  
i want to get better at getting better  
i want to get better for you.  
while I slow dance with the devil,  
knowing i won't make you proud,  
i drink one more to numb the guilt  
there's no angel around  
may this love find its way from corruption  
may the light shine on me again  
i'm not a praying man, in Godly sense  
but God, please hold me in your hands  
a child of Adam, who heard the hiss  
and abandoned enlightened truths  
to twirl around in sinful pain,  
so now I turn to you  
save me now, like once before  
i'll baptize my own heart  
a climb from Hell, I venture now  
and this is just the start

**“don’t be gone too long”**

“you make me feel oh so safe”  
even when you’re not close  
today i’ve been a Hell-bound cry  
like a fire to a rose  
on my brightest days,  
i look from afar-  
and admire you so dear  
on days like this,  
i long for more-  
and now i need you near  
perhaps it’s quite unfair to do  
‘cause you just wanted space  
but i reach out for solace yet,  
your comforting embrace  
i could try to help myself  
but lately i can’t look  
directly into my own eyes  
for missteps that I took  
i’ll try again, another day  
or maybe later on  
but as of now i need some help  
so don’t be gone too long



“paint”

i've been telling stories  
making you seem right at home  
the pictures i was painting  
to another, seemed like fun  
so now when i tell fables,  
i'm so careful of your name  
an antagonist in violet,  
who never asked to paint



# “muse”

I've still got my way with words  
Still got this colorful room I made  
Still got my army  
Can't take away my soul  
My favorite songs, still Mine  
You won't take my love and keep it  
It lives all around me

I'll keep my bite and my charm  
I still look better than I ever have  
They still tell me I deserve better  
I've still got past lives that you never touched  
My fish who swim  
They say their memories are quick to forget  
Crystals stacked on the counter  
Pride intact, since you still hit me almost always  
I've still got a fat ass  
And compassion  
And boys texting my phone  
And luck that never runs out

But you've still got luck, too!  
Lucky I'm so nice  
And care about you so  
You've got a bright future ahead  
If I have anything to do with it  
The one thing I'm running out of  
Is the thing that keeps you coming back for more  
My attention  
I've still got the people I've blown off for you  
Lucky me  
Count your blessings  
One thing I'll always have is a muse  
Years after you're gone

## **“they’ll never be me”**

you can try to find the chorus  
i’ll still write all of your verses  
if you want, i’ll disappear  
do my own thing for the year  
but you wouldn’t like the outcome  
my newfound body without some  
cause i’d find it in the dark  
with broken men with similar scars  
and after i got off i’d wonder  
why i’d waste my time in such hurt  
they’d all be older than you  
i’d do it cause you told me to  
you’d find boys younger than me  
and neither of us would be free  
the photographs i’d send your way  
saving them for rainy days  
‘til someone wants a taste  
is the thought of it so strange?  
after all, i’m just a man  
a naked body with a plan  
i’d touch myself with my words  
but they’d surrender so unheard  
it’s not a threat, i only crave you  
but what do you expect me to do?  
i’m on my knees bending over  
so i think you should come over  
and stop wasting all our time  
cause i can f\*\*\* ‘em like i rhyme

# Untouched Leaves

12/30/24

forgotten are the candles  
but the stains of pink remain  
boxed away my suffered yearning  
and perspective i once gained  
to forefront is desire  
to relight a certain flame  
and set fire to my efforts  
echoes whispering your name

lush is the hypocrisy  
that's growing at my feet  
evil lies within the glass  
in reflections that i see  
yellow now, a conifer  
that once was painted green  
sighing was the boy i knew  
who trotted untouched leaves

# “I AM THE DIRECTOR OF MY OWN LIFE”

I'd never seen an audition so strong  
Easy to miss that you got the lines wrong  
The film not yet greenlit, yet there you were  
A star in the making, what an actor

Two weeks after that, I signed you a deal  
Based on improvisations and your appeal

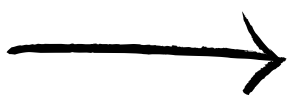


Forgot to read over my own contract  
Then we started filming, and that was that

I built you a set, a dressing room, too  
With no understudy, so I was doomed  
Your trailer was stocked for after each scene  
But you came to set already three sheets

Actors are late, but the show must go on  
You starred in my film, I got you all wrong  
The credits they rolled, the tears fell from eyes  
Your fans, they engaged you, much more than I

When your deal was over, you sat me down  
Told me you were bigger than this fake town  
You should've been fired, way long ago  
Yet I raised your wage, so you wouldn't go



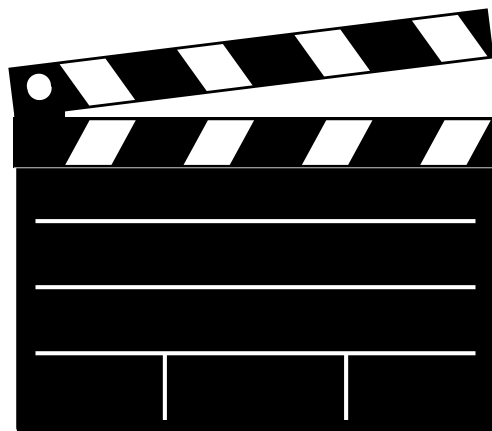


I said, “if you love me, give me a chance”  
You said “it’s sequel, and I just don’t dance”  
You turned to your contract, and just my luck  
Apparently I gave you final cut

A fade to black sequence, but in real time  
A plot twist that somehow haunts me at night  
Your montage impressive, my favorite part  
The time when a prop, you thought was my heart

We began production, no leading man  
But I wrote the script I hold in my hand  
And since I’m directing, no screentest done  
I thought, “being star, it might just be fun”

Part two outsold budget, stellar reviews  
And family I found, in the cast and crew  
So if you’re in theatres, remember me  
And perhaps I’ll cast you, in my movie three





## “sunshine for Spotty”

sunshine for spotty  
i'm five deep wondering  
when i'll be better  
lucky enough to have this afternoon  
unlucky enough to be missing you  
rachel says i'm not asking too much  
your silence tells a different story  
patience was never my thing  
so i change with your stormy weather  
i shed a tear and there you are again  
telling me you love me  
i love you no matter what  
one day i'll be proud of myself  
for seeing this through  
you'll be holding my hand,  
saying you love me too

# **“Margot”**

3/25/25

I throw my coat on the ground like it's nothing  
27 unread messages on my phone  
Tell you about my day- fabulous it was, yet I complain  
Like my favorite fictional actress  
You're intimidated, I can tell  
So you find a sense of power in walking away  
But you're not walking at all, are you?  
You tiptoe  
And I'm sprinting  
So I'm a few steps ahead of you  
Looking back to make sure you didn't trip on your  
shoelaces

## **“so proud of myself for respecting your boundaries”**

perhaps i would cheer if you'd bloodied my nose  
fist full of hatred, i'd say “way to go!”  
i'd throw a lil' party if you tore up my shirts  
knocked over vases of water and dirt  
i'd hang up some streamers and i'd wear a hat  
but i can't celebrate, not just like that

Fourteen days that I've let you run free  
I wonder if you even think about me  
I'm proud of my strength, and for being so quiet  
But I still dream about you every night  
They tell me “good job” like it's so romantic  
To leave me here hanging, for me not to slip

I'd call you right now if I thought it was sweet  
But time has its lessons, so I'll keep it brief  
We all have our ways of drifting through loss  
But you are my soulmate, at least I once thought  
So please take this trophy, for leaving me cold  
For blocking me from reaching your telephone

for breaking the chain, and for moving right on  
But I'm not too happy, accepting you're gone  
All my friends tell me to leave you alone  
My therapist said to give you what you want  
So poems are how I can now speak to you  
I would've jumped ship, if only I knew



## **“fathers” 11/1/24**

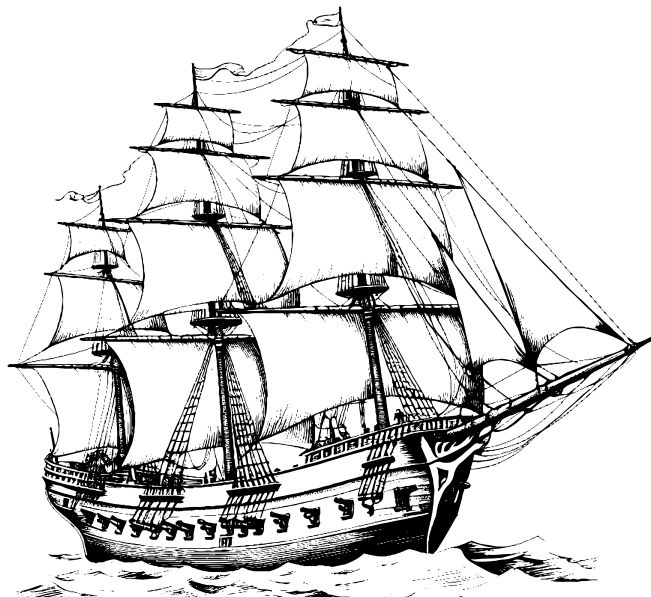
all i can do is cry  
to keep myself from punching you in the face  
i could hit you with my words  
but you wouldn't read it anyway  
i asked “why haven't you read my poetry?”  
your eyes darted to the side like they do when you've had just  
enough to drink  
defending me as if i were you  
read between the lines,  
you make me blue  
if you ever say i'm coming at you again  
i'll come at you with a key change  
you're lucky i even give a fuck at this point  
they say folks go after guys like their own father  
so maybe i'm absent and never enough  
and maybe i'm not textbook after all  
fix your tone and text me back,  
or i'm finding someone who can do just that  
this is my final warning  
maybe we just aren't meant to be  
maybe all of this is worth something  
but i've tried to spell it out  
and all you do is let me down

# “captain levi part 3”

the waters are rough again  
my captain tells me jump  
i'm scared

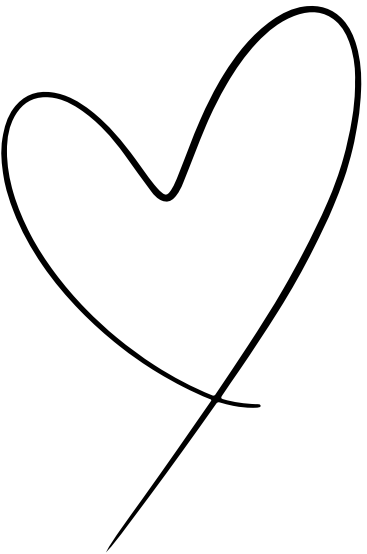
let's find a safer path  
the stars will get us back  
i'm scared

take my hand, i'm begging you  
we'll sail away together



## “BOBBY”

maybe it's the one who calls to you  
even when you're on your tenth goodbye  
or the one who held onto you tightly  
when you were trying so hard not to cry  
but we handle our shit in all different ways  
try to pretend that i'm not all around you  
when you reach out for them and find you're alone  
cause they'll never adore you like i do  
so i won't bother you with the facts  
but i know what i know what i saw  
you can run the whole earth to escape me  
but you'll circle right back all in all  
in a side by side i still hold up,  
though i'm sure some of them have me beat  
but a taste test would tell different stories  
on your tongue, i'm the sweetest of sweet  
you know that they drive me so crazy  
make me doubt myself time after time  
'til you pull me in closer and whisper  
“i love you and you'll always be mine”  
i don't need your wavering validation  
to remind me i'm always the best  
i just need you to stop chasing dead ends  
and lay your defeats on my chest  
click your buttons to window shop new toys  
that break after only one use  
then come wind me back up and watch as  
i play a familiar tune  
it puts you to sleep, and you're dreaming  
if you think there's another like me  
and one day when I forfeit the rat race,  
like Bobby you'll want them to be



# “Bridge over Troubled Water”

i gasp for air  
flail my arms  
look up and see my friends  
looking down on me  
unable to save me  
standing there, dry  
the current feels inescapable  
why did i decide to swim across?  
i ask myself  
there was a clear path above  
we'd all have walked together  
making jokes about the party last night  
“JUST KEEP GOING! I'M FINE!”  
i shout  
no one hears me  
i could submerge, i suppose  
surrender to the tide  
but what if i make it across?  
will my suffering make me stronger?  
am i strong enough?  
it's funny,  
i could've drowned myself in the ocean  
years before i decided to swim now  
the thought never crossed my mind  
one, two, three...  
i start again, though it feels like i'm not moving  
why didn't i listen?  
i'm no better off threatened by living with the fishes  
than they are, taking steps towards their goals  
maybe it was pride, maybe it was hope,  
but i kept going  
just then, it started raining  
not raindrops, no,  
flotation devices. one by one by one  
finally, i realized i'm not so troubled after all  
sometimes i just have to swim before i float  
i grab on, kicking my feet like a child  
and once again, i reached the shore  
i think i would've made it on my own,  
but it would've taken me a lot longer



# GAME NIGHT



I glance across the table,  
Analyzing your next move  
You dealt the hand I'm holding  
So I know we can't lose

And although we are partners,  
A frown sits on my face  
But you should know I'm bluffing-  
My strategy's in place

I ace my turn, I'm smiling  
Then you throw down a trump  
You love to have the final word,  
And spoil all my fun

Then we go to my place,  
Get out a game for two  
Take hours trying to learn it  
And now it's me vs you

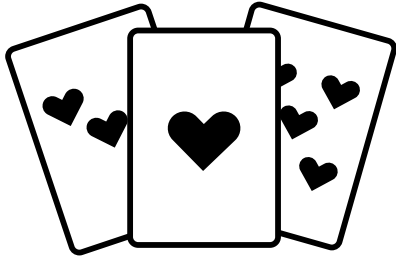
I patiently was watching  
You sacrifice yourself  
One by one your army fell  
You're angry, I can tell

I thought about letting you win  
To spare myself the 'tude  
But love is just a game, my dear  
So no need to be rude



I couldn't just remain a pawn  
I had to grow in rank  
So victory was mine again  
Regretful of my strength

Next, a dice game, based on luck  
Intuitively chanced  
We took a pause to grab a drink  
And have a little dance



Then we rolled and finished up  
While I did all the math  
Yet something wasn't adding up  
I couldn't make you laugh

Now I do puzzles by myself  
Always a missing piece  
Perhaps it's under the table  
So I stay on my knees

I'm pretty good at solitaire  
Though I hate to discard  
But I'll play with the hand I'm dealt  
Even when it seems marred

I've learned to take my time with things  
With strategy and care  
Even when like a child I scream,  
"This isn't even fair!"

I googled games where two men win  
Cause that's what I'll play next  
And we both know I'm good at games  
And some games you reset



# “ON THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT BY TAYLOR SWIFT ON ITS ANNIVERSARY”

I remember it like it was yesterday-  
I posted that I got the taylor swift album early  
For some reason was trying to catch your attention

It did

You got drunk, I got drunk

We cried

I wrote a poem about your reaction to what became my favorite song on the album

A song inspired by a story that someone wrote one time-

Which in turn, became my childhood

I remember it was a few months later

You were my boyfriend still

Why did the lyrics ring true?

I wrote a poem – from Peter’s perspective

On the whole torrid affair

He was sorry, as they all are

I was by my parent’s pool

You were with guys you’ve never introduced me to

Said they were straight

I called you soon after

You sounded annoyed

That I’d even bother,

Like your broken-est toy

Anyway, a month or so later I had my Summer

You know – more pool time, journaling, pining

I went to the dunes in Michigan and forgot about that album

Tried to, at least

It was your birthday and as soon as I let you go

There you were



A day or two later (one) there you were again  
Seems you couldn't get away  
You wanted to be here, so why did it take you hours to leave?  
Why were you annoyed when I asked for an ETA?

A couple months later, the album clicked  
I love the piano, the raw lyrics, the double-triple meanings  
Your favorite was But Daddy I Love Him  
Fair, I thought, I'll stick with my Peter  
The Manuscript is some of her best work – even as a poem it shines  
But she closed the album with it, which is a true testament to “THE TORTURED POETS DPT”  
But we all know that.

I listened in cars to the songs that she sang  
And more often than you, the lyrics they rang  
I thought “but I love him,” my Daddy said “great”  
A Swiftie who gave just all he could brave

September of last I was in the bedroom  
The one in the cabin, perhaps it's too soon  
Uh oh's were on repeat, you know just the song  
An hour there later, I told you I'm wrong

For throwing a chair, and for making you cry  
For something you took, that was precious of Mine  
Perhaps it's all stupid, I know what she says  
But next she found Travis, so all hope remains

You never did ask me, about all the words  
Or how all the lyrics turned into our world

I find it ironic, a Fortnight's been sung  
Since I had to swallow – you just aren't the 1  
And since you're not asking, I'll tell you the truth  
You're lucky my poetry's all about you  
I'm here if you need me, but Peter please read  
I'm not here for breaking, to beg or to plead  
Your typewriter's still at my place, by the way  
Disguised as a token of our last embrace



## “I am a Lighthouse (Captain Levi II)”

You thanked me dearly when you docked  
My coastline harbor, clearly rocked  
I'd brand new candles in my lamps  
The night you sailed onto my sands  
You made a home on my own beach  
A shore that's often hard to reach  
You said the storm was awfully cruel  
I said “oh yeah, I saw it, too”  
But here I stand through wind and rain  
Though I can't always fend off pain  
I'm glad you found me, safe and sound  
I wondered if you'd stick around  
The other sailors stopped then sailed  
For bluer seas, but I prevailed  
It's what I know, my fortitude  
Still shines so bright in solitude  
But there you were, we talked all night  
You've heard the sirens, saw my light  
And though my glow, it circles, too  
It always seemed to shine on you  
And one thing I didn't foretell  
I never could shine on myself

And when your next adventure called  
It seemed that my lanterns had dulled  
So much that you came sailing back  
Three leagues of waves, but no clear track  
And yet I glowed enough for you  
To dock because I never moved  
The light in me grew stronger then  
I thought, “I found my bestest friend”  
At night we'd tell our tallest tales-  
Forgiving seas and stronger sails  
The shanties that we slow danced to  
'Cause what are drunk sailors to do?  
You whistled softly, while I slept  
So rainstorms in my eyes, they crept  
But I'm no sailor, not at all  
I light the sea, you try to brawl  
Way hay and up you live in fear  
Good night and good luck, thank you dear  
So then I flickered, while you dreamt  
Of afternoons on islands spent  
With pirates with nothing to say  
And there you were, sailed on your way



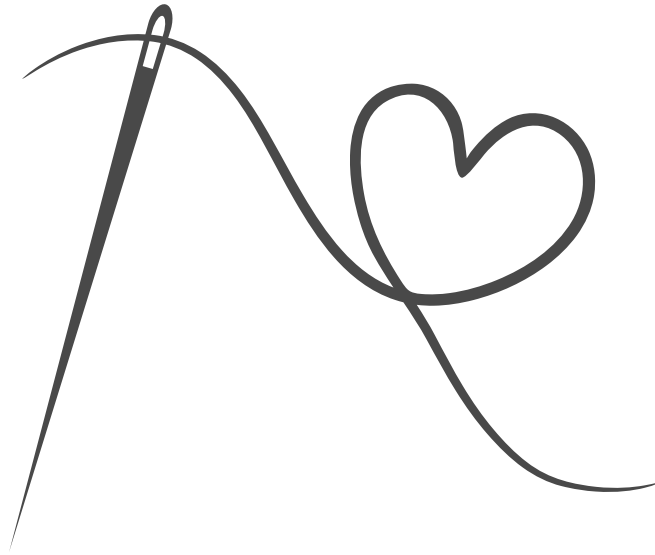


You write to me while out at sea  
But half the time, too dark to read  
Your anchor left in shallow depths  
I'm tall enough to watch ships wreck  
But yours it floats on with the wind  
With telescopes on my weekends  
Your greatest love, a fable now  
You may think it a stable bow  
But here I watch the lightning strike  
And watch you hold on for dear life  
My keeper keeps me lit but mad  
He asks me if you're coming back  
He's no stranger to candle burns  
He'd retire if you'd return  
And I'm by nature, of my own  
So when you drown in a cyclone  
You'll gasp for air, you'll call for me  
Then catch a flicker out at sea  
That seems so bright in dark night skies  
Get blinded by his sweet disguise  
You'll wonder where your anchor went  
My light will catch your slow descent  
You'll never make it to the floor  
If I'm alight, you'll find the shore  
A glass bottle floats up just then  
Reminding you of where you've been  
A treasure map for only you  
"X marks the spot" of words so true-

"A lighthouse flickers, ships they sink  
And bottled letters drip in ink  
My music is my lover's roar  
He bellows often at my shore  
He's evergreen, but none went by  
The wind is foul, the sea runs high  
I hate to sail on rotten tub  
So sail unto this standing love  
I swear by rote I want of you  
I'll lead you back the whole way through"



you might need some more sage  
cause your energy's toxic  
seeping into my conversations  
on a rooftop with someone i love  
i look down and see you on your way  
another hard night of work-  
resenting me can't be all that fun  
but you should get paid overtime  
spoon feeding didn't work so i shut up  
and suffer silently to spare you  
I fantasize about setting you free  
writing a book about a talking fish  
kindergarten teachers will reach out and ask me what inspired it  
their students will ask "what's your favorite color?"  
i'll write back from an airbnb somewhere  
forest green, and it was inspired by something i watched die  
but loved until its last breath  
and you still won't get it  
you'll take your piss poor attitude out  
on the only person who filters his words to not hurt your feelings



what do you think about the outfits you pick out before you strike a  
nerve?

are they thrown on impulsively?

or do you change your shirts to match the color of the streetlamps on the  
pavements you stumble down?

because to the naked eye, they never match

I'm meticulous and won't let you see me in a color that hurts your eyes  
yet you pin me down

and sew your rough patches into my shirt

you didn't pay attention to me

if you had, you'd have realized that i'm not wearing one

so the blood you're seeing isn't yours

you were so quick to throw it over your head



**“you’ll live forever in my poetry”**

how marvelous it is,  
knowing i’ll never truly lose you  
even when you’re not in my arms  
you dance across my pages  
and in watercolor paintings  
and in the way i look at the moon

though seasons change  
and our hair changes color,  
my once-upon-a-Wednesday-afternoon-  
diehard devotion is immortalized  
and therefore, my darling, so are you  
you see, it didn’t take long after our lips met  
that i allowed you to live forever



How foolish to believe we'd get out clean  
Now both our apartments are trashed  
Empty cans and love letters never sent or read  
Swear I heard footsteps just the other day  
Must've been a phantom

Tears swelled up in your eyes, when you saw me again  
Said you couldn't forget about me  
I touch your leg, you know I hate to see you hurt  
But it's better than the make believe I hold at night  
Like fairy tales written in the pitch black

I kept composure just to make you feel safe  
Didn't mention how in thunderstorms I call to you  
Or how my ankle bruised from trying to escape the chains  
So I just hold you and I tell you it'll be okay  
Hurt people hurt people

I could teach you a lesson, let you sit in your guilt  
Give up on you for the sake of myself  
But I see a sailor lost at sea, who needs a hand to hold  
So I plant a seed and stay the night,  
Then go back to my beautiful world

The long nights of suffering were well worth the fight  
'Cause I'm stronger in every which way  
Not enough to carry you and your bags,  
But enough to lift you up for a moment of relief  
And to love myself in ways you can't

Hear my words sung to the sky  
He's here now, right by my side  
A love letter, just for the moon

I'll spell it out, only for you  
Through candle light, I feel him near  
I release doubt, and all my fear

Green eyes, how they look at me  
His love is all that I receive  
I feel so safe inside his arms

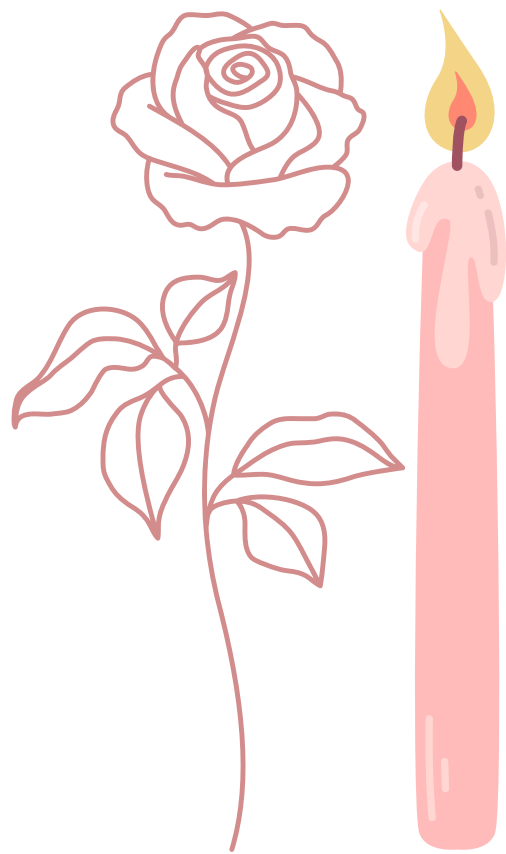
He loves my spirit, and my charms  
A kiss right on my magic lips  
He says "oh this, this I missed"

He pulls me in much closer then  
And that's the power in my pen  
"I love you always" – said in chant

And thank you for this scarlet plant  
The petals fall right in my tub  
I soak up all of his love

The stars align, like dreams I cast  
Our love is cosmic, so it lasts  
I now release you, take your time

The Cosmos shift, the boy is mine  
I call him near, my magic's done  
I know he'll always be the one



I'll keep it on the low  
That I've been getting high  
He's been creaking on my floorboards  
Like a phantom in the night  
We sit pretty in bars  
With his hand firm on my leg  
We drive around in cars  
And we haven't crashed just yet  
You may think that you're special  
But can you take the heat?  
It's still my name he whispers  
Even when he's in your sheets  
And if you asked him nicely  
Which I did just yesterday  
He'd say that he regrets it  
While he kisses on my face  
And I'm no longer threatened  
By ego-feeding fakes  
Whose swimming pools need cleaning  
While he swims in my lake  
So go pick out your tulips  
And make a flower crown



His final rose is golden  
And falls if I look down  
So wipe that ugly smirk off  
Before you make me mad  
One of us turns tables  
And one's a copy cat  
Now you're off my to-do list  
Whatever will be next?  
Unlike my brown-haired baby  
Let's get this off my chest  
I see your eyebrows raising  
I recognize it well  
Your concern is so draining  
Your opinion my Hell  
I'm not some doe-eyed baby  
Who needs a helping hand  
What you see as a vicious trap  
Was just my best-laid plan  
Don't think I don't notice  
It only comes from care  
But this is what I wanted  
So save me from your prayers

Let the papers print it-  
Look at this common fool  
But you don't know what I know  
So let me break your rules

# “Train Station”

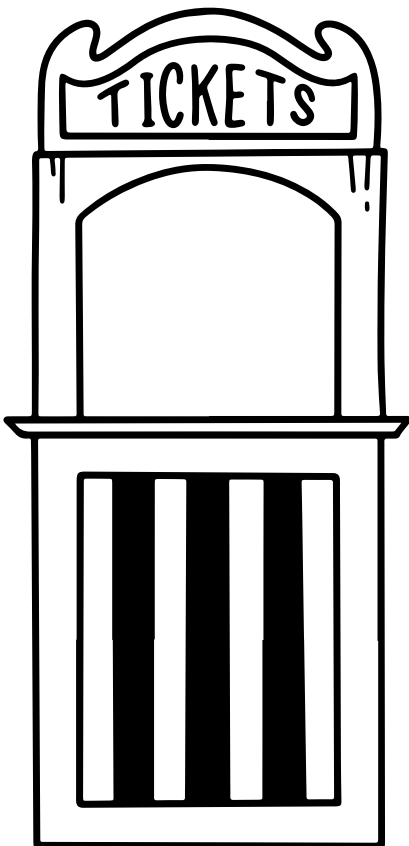
I glance at my ticket,  
Then up at the clock  
Surely it's coming  
A train can't get lost  
It just has to follow  
Its predestined track  
No matter the distance,  
It always comes back

And just then I notice  
That nobody's here  
I'm the only one waiting  
I try not to fear  
I pull out my wallet  
And sit at the bar  
“Just one for me, please  
It shouldn't be far”

One eye on the platform  
A beer in my hand  
Making chat with the tender  
A curious man  
He's asking me questions-  
Like where will I go?  
I say that I'd tell him  
But I just don't know

“So you mean to tell me  
You're riding for fun?”  
I say “not exactly,  
I'm just on the run-  
I needed a change,  
And some time to reflect  
The journey will show me  
Where I should go next”

He tells me the last train  
Is sometimes behind  
And pours me a glass  
of an open red wine  
Church bells in the distance  
I get up to leave  
He says “you can stay  
‘Cause I still gotta clean”



It's now half past midnight  
I sit there alone  
Just then from the window,  
The ticket man phones  
"Sir, we've an issue-  
Conductor just called  
Engine's overheated  
You might wait for long

I can issue a refund  
You'll be on your way"  
I say, "If it's coming,  
I'm fine just to wait"  
I sit on the cold bench  
And nod off to sleep  
Finally something wakes me  
A hiss full of steam

I gather my baggage  
Walk up to the front  
Conductor then greets me  
And gives me a punch  
He says not to worry  
The engine is safe  
Just needed to cool  
We can be on our way

I look out the window  
Wave bye to my past  
As the train starts to move  
Though not very fast  
A feeling of comfort  
In the struggling train  
I'm glad it's not broken  
Just needed a break



## SECOND STAR TO THE RIGHT

You fly your ship into my light  
A beacon leading home  
I'm not a lighthouse, not this time  
For centuries I have shone

Pressed against the blackened skies  
I twinkle just for you  
Did you forget I'm always right?  
And I'll always be true

For just a second, I forget  
While you endure the pane  
Of windows cracked, and in they let  
You visit once again

And just before I disappear  
You sail right on to me  
I welcome you with great sincere  
Last stop on your journey

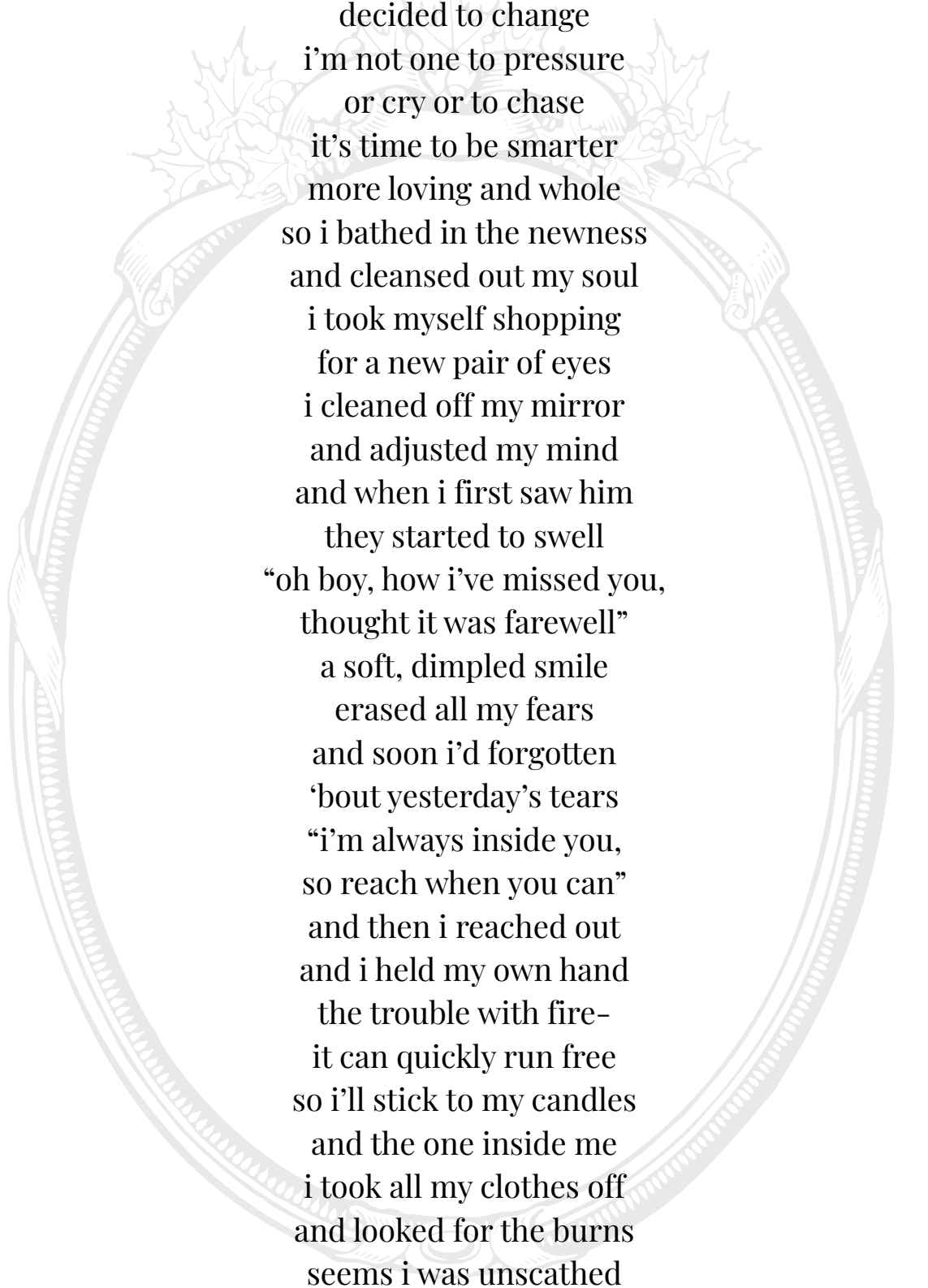
Since time to you is just a hoax  
And since I haven't moved  
I hear your tales of other folks  
Who let you in their rooms

A sparkling old rarity  
You've come to rely on  
But return without clarity  
Oh, why must you be gone?

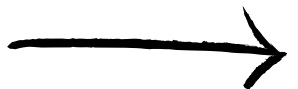
You couldn't put out my bright blaze  
Despite how hard you try  
So I just watch you never age  
And light up your whole sky

And if I fell just like before  
Exploded onto land  
You'd never make it to my shore  
And clocks would tick their hands

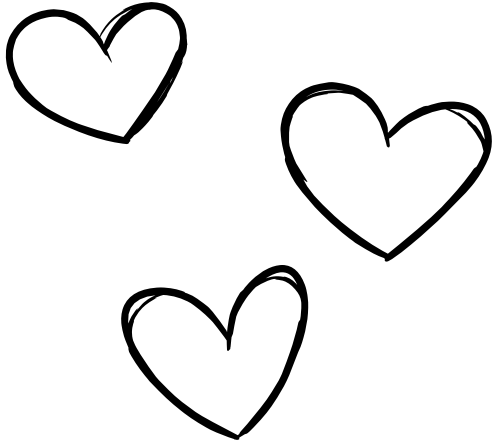
## “the boy with new eyeballs”



woke up in the ashes  
decided to change  
i'm not one to pressure  
or cry or to chase  
it's time to be smarter  
more loving and whole  
so i bathed in the newness  
and cleansed out my soul  
i took myself shopping  
for a new pair of eyes  
i cleaned off my mirror  
and adjusted my mind  
and when i first saw him  
they started to swell  
“oh boy, how i've missed you,  
thought it was farewell”  
a soft, dimpled smile  
erased all my fears  
and soon i'd forgotten  
'bout yesterday's tears  
“i'm always inside you,  
so reach when you can”  
and then i reached out  
and i held my own hand  
the trouble with fire-  
it can quickly run free  
so i'll stick to my candles  
and the one inside me  
i took all my clothes off  
and looked for the burns  
seems i was unscathed  
even though i'd been hurt  
then a sigh of relief,  
i could finally calm down  
because all that was real  
was the here and the now







like a painting once hung  
i soared like an eagle  
like a choir i sung  
i splashed in the water  
read a page of my book  
how lovely i felt  
and how joyous i looked  
two days clean of liquor,  
and my favoritest drug  
but i still threw a party  
full of whimsy and love  
and that's my new mantra  
to celebrate more  
find beauty in stillness  
and in doing my chores  
and if you ask nicely,  
i'll tell you the truth  
i'm starting to think  
i'll be fine without you  
my love hasn't wavered  
contrary, in fact  
it's now something purer  
from hope and not lack  
so send me a postcard  
wherever you go  
i'll write back in secret  
in the lines of my poems  
but if you may notice  
this one's just for me  
the boy with new eyeballs  
is already complete

