

I embrace the pain, immersing myself fully within it. If I focus ever so precisely, I can feel my heart skip a beat in my chest at the very moment that it all becomes too much to bear. I relish this, not because I am a masochist, but because this is what it means to be alive. My mind is bitterly clear now, and thoughts resonate more lucidly than they have ever previously. For this is my wakeup call. After months of living in a dreary haze of regularity, of routine, of squelched hopes and uncomfortable compromises, I am only now shaking the crown of dreams from my head. I look around, I see, I want to touch, but this is not possible, and so I dance, swaying gently in the hints of the summer breeze. I merge with the wind currents, letting my thoughts and emotions flow outwards. Like the most delicate of blessings, they glide away on wings of longing and despair.

I no longer view my depression as something negative that must be purged. I no longer struggle. I now recognize that this has to be. It is the anticlimax of my life; it is the moment that the tides of consciousness cease their struggling and their shifting, entering into a state of equilibrium for an instant so brief that you can scarcely detect it.

At first, I blamed you. With a critical eye, I stared at you, obsessively reiterating your flaws in my mind. I purposefully forgot that you were only human, and perhaps I was placing unrealistic expectations upon you; expectations that I didn't even desire to live up to, but rebelled against them so gently that I was never even aware that they were my own shortcomings. And if I sensed these limitations in myself, I transposed them onto you, loathing you for not being the person that I myself could not be.

Most of all, I hated you for loving me, for taking care of me, and for being strong in my moments of weakness. I despised how dependent I allowed myself to become, and the extent to which I had allowed you to impact my life. I laid awake at night, my mouth sour with distaste for your kindness. These were not things that I could do for you – you always knew that I was not that type of person.

Most of the time, I simply forget.

But sometimes, when the wind is just right and I'm reminded of autumn evenings where time passed in an endless haze of cigarette smoke, I recall the way that your face looked, basked in the dying embers of sunset. In many ways, I am sorry for what I allowed to happen, of how I left you irreparably shattered. At the same time, I have no regrets. This was an evolution; an emotional ascension through which we both needed to struggle, bruising our egos on each other's deluded idealistic perceptions.

I smugly sit, sipping tea that has long grown cold, and think to myself how satisfyingly serene it would be to honestly say that I will never fall in love again. Perhaps this is something I would have said only a few short years ago, when I was still ignorantly an infant to myself. Now I know that this is foolhardy. There will be others. It is unavoidable. And as I lick lingering traces of bitterness from my lips, thinking of your subtle kisses, I don't think I'd have it any other way.