

# Know Yourself Better, So You Can Freak Out More

*A Starter Pack for When You Suddenly Want to Date Again*



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by Keeley Young

## therapy suggestion: write lists

these are the reasons I should stay single:

- I am a mess
- I cannot seem to escape my own body
- I cannot give you sex (hot, raunchy sex, me unwilling, unable, at this point are you tired of hearing all about it)
- I am deranged, if I think about it
- I want too much, or else I feel like I am given too much (things come in paradoxes)
- I don't know if I want to be a husband
- I am a mess
- I think I am too much for other people to handle

those are my reasons,

or at least a sample size.

a sort of handful you could shove in your mouth,

if you would like to.

those are the unsettled thoughts rattling around in my brain

because if I do not think them, maybe someone else will.

he will weaponise them against me,

strong-arm them dispassionately

he will move snake-like around them, as if they are his precious eggs (foxes like to eat snake eggs, and

men are snakes and foxes, and birds, they can suck on this finger)

somehow I will adapt to being in love

without these fresh hesitations

although they are fresh because I am only now naming them

giving them proper names, proper nouns,

like Fernando. Tristan. Harry (Harold).

(I don't know why giving your problems real identities just makes them easier to hate)

somehow I will adapt, because maybe I will fall in love again  
and I will want to tell him, I love you  
and I will be able to think, 'it is love WITH the pain.'  
love with the 'oh no, he had six boyfriends' torment, torture, whatever, it's all the same  
it would be nice.  
it would be kind, no?  
for love without a paradox.

my stomach hurts, and it has been writhing around for a while, giving me paranoia  
there's this sort of tenderness in my brain...  
I am terrible at describing my pain  
which might just be why I have to make my own diagnoses  
there is an underpinning.  
I want to pin myself to the ceiling.  
twirl myself in the air, fan blades circulating  
let the blades julienne my skin (I make all these little references, little dark and wicked jokes about my  
untimely suicide)  
(I think about a quote—something about how life's not worth it if you cannot fall in love, if you cannot  
be loved)  
I have lists because all I seem to do is organise myself into different boxes:

a blue box: depression.

a darker blue: the sea. this one is a metaphor. there is a vastness, in the most self-centred way possible. I  
am made of little messes everywhere.

a lighter blue: in the clouds are my memories, and I am losing them slowly.

this box does not have a colour: it is my anxiety, hard to define, inflating and deflating and complex and  
complicated.

a green box: body pain. why does my throat hurt why does my head hurt why do I scream out in pain  
and yet I can contain it in a box.

a yellow box: competitive reality tv.

a red box: art. homemade, maybe, but crafted professionally, mostly. art keeps me breathing.

a grey box: sweaters?

and I guess, without real hesitancy,  
a rainbow one: I am gay, and it all seemingly can get better (sometimes it is okay to not listen to  
yourself speak)

a list is never fully written,  
well mine surely are not  
I have more reasons/more boxes/more lines  
this is not my first rodeo.  
but a list is a list is a list is a list  
this is the reason for my insanity.  
no, this is insanity in application.

**When You Lay in Bed, You Touch  
Yourself and Think of Him**

by Keeley Young

...

You are a university student. It's impressive, to think that after the effort of high school, where you only dreamt of boys from afar, you have made it here. Which feels like a sort of gross overstatement, because maybe you will drop out after giving it a go. Immediately, you suppose, you hear the voice of someone—it doesn't really matter who it is—and they wish you well, wish you hell, just kidding, the only person wishing you to swallow a chalice of the underworld itself is the voice in your head. It has real spitfire, the voice. You will fail, you will get laid or else you are the sort of gay kid that can't even get fucking right. People like you, men that align to liking the same sex, they're supposed to be built for the sort of sneaking-around sex, pushed against the wall, half-lit by a dingy sort of lightbulb of how many years old.

You go through a series of firsts—first kiss, first boyfriend, first time sucking another man off. His penis feels strange in your mouth. You feel like you're doing something wrong, despite knowing the very last thing you should be doing is biting down on flesh. You position yourself the way you should be positioned, but after a time, people start to keep their cocks in their pants around you. First break-up, first relationship without the sort of strict labels you were familiar with, first time uncomfortable around someone when they come into your work and you can't help picturing them naked, and it makes your mouth dry and gaping. It isn't much of a mouth anymore, it is an anti-mouth. You go so far as trying to wash him out of your memories, even though he was only a two-time thing, you could never date him, and you never would. Somehow, when the mind is quite distracted, you flicker back over the image of his cock and picture yourself getting fucked by him. You had felt so uneasy both times you stripped down to nothing with him. In your dreams, you let him pretend he's taking your virginity.

Although technically he would have been.

The first time you have penetrative sex, you feel nothing. You're only half attracted to this man, and you will soon enough start disliking him (hate is a strong word). Nothing of much importance, which is how it feels when he orgasms into the condom. You were having sex on the same bed you have slept in for many years, and thankfully an average *first time* does not completely rattle the comfort of things. The

sheets will be washed; the memories will be covered over. You like to jokingly say you essentially lost your virginity a few different times—there was never penetrative with your first boyfriend, because you were petrified, and the man you bought your first dildo with never fucked you himself, because you were petrified.

You never have penetrative sex again, because you are petrified.

But you love your body now. You spent years tormenting yourself and being ashamed of it, thinking that there was no possible way a man could glance at the shape of your body and be attracted to it. There is passion in soaking up the compliments like a sponge, and men your age, men ten years older, men twenty years older, seem to drool a little at the sight of the hair on your chest. Or your peach butt. Or your penis, because gay men love penis, and they will love yours.

Men will start grumbling at you. You are too much of a tease, they want to eat you out, they want to suck you off, they want to fuck you until you're suffocating with a pillow in your mouth. Your anti-mouth. *When are you available?* You make excuses, you tell them you are too tired from work, you stand someone up because he whispers (digitally) those sweet nothings of how he wants to have sex with you in a hotel room. He has been waiting too long, through kisses that lead nowhere, your mishandled, or misplaced, interest in him. You justify why you need to stop seeing him: he asks you to hang out every single day, and you are the sort of introvert that can comfortably go a week only leaving the house to go to work.

A handful of relationships will begin, then end, and you rationalise that it wasn't a lack of sex that killed them. You rationalise that a lack of sex isn't killing anything. This man has problems of his own, this man can find someone else that will love him the same as he might have loved you.

While trying meditation, some tiny, feeble creature held hostage in your brain clammers up a wooden staircase and flicks a switch. You don't date for some time, but you stay on the dating apps.

The sex fantasies are incredible.

There is truly no harm in making yourself cum.

The sex fantasies are incredible.

There is truly no harm in—

You meet someone in your final year of university, although at this point the degree has taken longer than expected. You rationalise that, too. There have been many men across the entirety of your degree you have secretly pined after—this one is too straight, this one will find you too deranged, this one is probably just straight and uninterested in you like that. Reassuring, almost, to know that people won't need to tempt you away from the repellent bubble you find yourself awkwardly navigating.

Sitting beside him, making jokes you hope he finds funny, you start to picture him naked. Intrusive thoughts like these have pierced your brain ever since you started finding men attractive, in a sexual lusty sort of way. You picture him first without his shirt, beautiful nipples, a hairy chest, you want to run your hands over his body but at first you are warned, look but don't touch.

Then you picture him without his pants. You have to do some more sketch work, drawing out his legs underneath the trousers he usually is wearing. Here he is wearing underwear that flatters him, makes you quiver, makes your cock stand to attention. Like an artist, the underwear is erased. All the details seem to matter less when you are straddling him, in a passionate sort of embrace that does not seem like the sort of one-off it inherently would be. It is a sex fantasy, there can be intense passion. You are almost sucking on his tongue as it squirms around in your mouth, but it is beautiful, exciting, dirty, there probably isn't a condom, no one catches an STD in a sex dream.

(You imagine he is clean, though, but outside of rich fantasy, you would always be wearing a condom during penetrative sex because safe sex is important and you would rather not risk needing to go to the doctor immediately afterward, and pissing in the cup, and handing it to the sweet old woman that probably truthfully doesn't know you're a horny, horny boy that wanted to be taken right there in the university classroom, on top of the desk you thirty minutes ago talked about your creative endeavours at. Non-sexual.)

He is gentle one minute, passionate and agile the next.

The sex fantasies where the man you are with is aggressive end quickly. You don't want sex that hurts, that scars you, that scares you. This fantasy dances, it twirls round, because it is sensual and comfortable, and he is never glancing at you with an uncomfortable grimace on his face as if he wants to tear your skin around your asshole and bury the remains of your corpse when he is done with you. You don't want him to be done with you. You know internally, down deep, that eventually you will never see him again, not properly. University friendships seem to be ending, dissipating. Your negativity is eating away at the fantasy, you should be picturing him kissing your neck, trying to leave the sort of hickey you can tell people is a love bite, not a bruise. Not that he will ever love you.

He is pulling his pants back on and you take a moment to look at him.

When you graduate, will you ever see him again? Will it be at some industry event, and in the fantasy realm, you avoid eye-contact because you think he is ashamed of the lust he displayed for you in



that classroom all those years ago? In the real world, will you smile at him, try to catch up with him by asking him how life has been treating him. Wonder if he will mention a partner, mention that he is happily married to them. You will be seriously excited for him, but not *for* him, because you can restrain yourself. You won't go home that evening and poise yourself in bed, masturbating to the thoughts of him all over again. You know you won't, because you have matured, you're a sensible adult now. Instead, you will sit there in front of the television and wonder what impression you left on him, from start to then, at that event, when you stumbled on trying to explain what you had been working on ever since graduation. In his eyes, are you the same awkward acquaintance from before? Would he shun the idea of fucking you because you act too much like a sheep, or too much like a little brother?

For now, with your university graduation fresh, recent, you just remind yourself something slight: he is not liking your Instagram stories because he wants to be with you.

You feel stupid for the repression you feel when someone tells you they have a partner, as if there was ever a chance of some serene relationship between the two of you. You can't give them the sort of sex you only imagine in your head. But you can keep imagining it. It extends gracelessly away from just the people you know in person—you admire a celebrity from afar, and then you see their partner. Certain flecks of your heart go strangely numb. You never quite stood a chance, regardless.

You comprehend it, in an elementary sense. Everything is a dream until it is shattered. You share your happiness, your joy, for people so happily in love they seem like they don't need to have the sort of thoughts you possess. It is limiting, thinking other people—any of them—could be without a little mind-crunching, a little skull-bending.

Relationship announcements are exciting, compelling, thinking another person can find a partner, so there should not be barriers and boundaries in front of you. Find love, you will. You can, seemingly. You start to cross out the fantasy of him, thinking you ever stood a chance. In a posed photograph, his shorter partner leans against him. It is sweet, a little cheesy. You shape the sort of fantasy that sticks in your mind so you don't feel like a homewrecker, which is an outdated, sexist term, really. You shrug it off, setting a sort of scene that begins in the kitchen, the perfect place for any bad porno. After a thrilling five months, they have broken up. You wrap him in your arms, a warm embrace, pure comfort and pure sex in the cracks of it. You offer him something to drink, can I make you a tea, coffee? Can I put your cock in my mouth and make you feel better?

You start to feel like a rebound because the men in your past have compiled the greatest hits of their previous relationships and hurled them at your head, in vinyl, because records smash against your skull better. Your knees scrape against the tiles. He is channelling all the anger and the torment and the

loneliness into the grip on the back of your head, but he does not think for a moment of hurting you, mistreating the gorgeous boy giving him the attention. You tell fantasy-you there is no need to be thinking about how this will all end. Either you never talk to him again, or he pesters you until you become the dream boyfriend that will never leave him. He starts talking about marriage while you stand underneath the draining showerhead, getting screwed from behind.

But this is all an imagining, why does he speak, why does his voice sound alarms?

He should be quiet, tender, appreciative. There was never even dirty, angry break-up sex.

He is in awe of how you came to him, extended a hand, told him everything would be better when he tongued your asshole and made you scream out louder than you thought even possible for your voice, considering you're an introverted, quiet sort of sexual deviant.

In reality, you skirt around talking to him, avoiding stepping on toes, or else, avoid becoming the sort of rebound he is looking for, if the break-up drums up the sort of momentum you predicted, based on those social media posts where he talked about the best night of his life, ever. He mentions once how you never seemed interested in having sex with him. You realise these feelings have been lingering for so long, you have been pretending certain relationships never extended to a point to disappoint someone when you tell them, *I just don't really have sex much.*

You don't have many kinks, considering you don't have very much sex. You see all the aggressive disgust from other gay men your age around being attracted to older men, men in their forties, that you teeter between whether this attraction is your only real *kink*. In a sense, it is a fairly ordinary one—so you like men that were your age when you were born, very thrilling, those extra years of experience that hopefully means they are skilled in the bedroom. But your attraction isn't their presumed *skill*, you realise they could be absolutely unexperienced in the bedroom if they were married to a woman for fifteen years and avoided sexual intercourse—and called it sexual intercourse—because their wife was not a man in his twenties. You are attracted to their faces, their bodies, the image of an older gentleman. You can't explain it completely. You are attracted to men your age, and men their age. You watch porn featuring older men topping thin, pretty young men, and you insert yourself in the scene. Porn has shaped your desire for men in their forties and fifties.

At some point, you start meeting older men and think about the sex you could be having with them. Sometimes it is automatic, like the other man cannot help but take you right there, pull down your pants and insert himself inside you. You care less about the size of a man's penis when he's older. There would be some sort of a misconception, sure, but you picture yourself regardless in the home he has raised all three of his children in, in the bed he could have conceived them in with his wife, who he

realised had been his beard for those fifteen years, and now he can comfortably be the out and proud gay man he should have been in the 90s. Maybe it is thrilling to think he had passionate sex with a woman for years and years, but now he prefers you, he wants you. He could flaunt you around if he wanted. His children are your age, and you could have even gone to high school with them or knew them when they were in diapers. You wink at his son, who bullied you in primary school, as you step out of the older gentleman's bedroom wearing only your underwear. This is a fantasy. You feel a layer of trauma shed off you, like your clothes had shed when the bedroom door was locked.

You have had fantasies about the older men you meet on dating apps. You swipe right because he is in his forties, he is attractive, he seems like a decent sort of guy. He disappoints you when he doesn't act like a person your age, which immediately feels judgemental. You rationalise it—he is abrasive, he questions why you do not immediately want to meet him, he wonders aloud why you are taking your time to respond to him, or otherwise he begins to make the age gap between the two of you creepy. *So you're into older men?* He would begin with, and then it would spiral. Overdramatic roleplaying. Fantasies spoken too brashly. It makes you question whether you should speak.

Should you keep this all to yourself?

You had plans once to spend a night with an older man, but you cancelled the week of, and you rationalised it all. You had your reasons, your excuses. He liked the idea of you wearing nothing but the sweater in the picture he liked of you. He liked the idea of you walking into the room in the sweater, teasing him, soft shoeing your way to him on the sofa. He probably liked the idea of fucking you, too.

He can stay in the drafts, then. Images of him sketched out. Him undressing you, leaving you in the sweater as he rests his hands on either side of your body. His hands wander southward, but he is tame, he is horny in a gentlemanly way. You know you like older men because they are less immature, even though you have met immature men in their forties. Those men are usually divorced, actually.

You seem to drift to the porn categories that replicate your fantasies.

Fantasy can outrun disappointment.

You find a porn star with the same physique as a guy you have known since high school, and you put a thumb over the porn star's head to replicate it all inside your imagination. You siphon yourself back into high school, days when you saw him with more frequency, add in a little more urgency. The flirting becomes more genuine, less petite and silly. You comprehend entirely that a gay teenager coming onto a straight teenager is a recipe for future mob-mentality—they would say you slammed him into a corner, but in your mind, the sex is phenomenal. You ignore that he likes women. You're a little

feminine yourself, you don't play sport, you spend high school around a flock of teenage girls who gasp when you talk about your boycrushes.

With the body of a porn star, you climb him like a fir, grinding a fruity peach against his thick cock. He has no real trouble carrying your weight, a real sort of unconventional knight. In your head, you craft the perfect situation from truth—the one time he picked you up, dropped you home, it was an overflowing theme park visit where you were only friends, real friends, with a few of them. You felt like an eyesore otherwise. Instead of taking you home immediately, he detours to his place. It's empty, quiet, he doesn't quiver when you suck on his nipples. In this fantasy, you are content he wants you desperately. When you are saddling on his cock, an invisible lasso coiling in the hot air, you moan his name for the first time out loud. You think before this moment people would not have understood why you craved his attention, his body, his sweet smile. You think, now, as his hands tighten on your ass cheeks, that it all began because he gave you proper attention, even if it was all playful and silly-for-a-teenager. It makes you horny, but it makes you feel secure, too. Maybe it would alter a dynamic. Maybe security, a proper sort of security if you could define it, would change a fantasy into a reality.

In the bedroom, you collapse down beside him, resting your head on his chest. Panting, with a sticky white liquid leaking out of your asshole, you look at him. He starts to blink out. You are alone, in your room not his, staring at a short video of a naked, stocky man who strokes his fat cock in a half-decorated bedroom. Your stomach is splattered; you feel lonely, and tired, and you know the next time you see this friend from high school will be merely at a glance, maybe for a short conversation about how work has been for the two of you. There is never a question of whether something will happen between the two of you, or even if you will spend quality time together, because you feel embarrassed. Sometimes, in your head, you picture yourself passed out in his arms, completely dressed. Life is deflating, I know, he whispers in your ear. He keeps you warm at night. Makes sure you are feeling alright in the morning, before you take the train into work. You're reading a book while you wait patiently for your stop and it's comfortable, imagining a someone half-plucked from your past, half-scraped-together from absolutely nothing.

So, here you are. There are voices in your head that tell you the problem is your inability to shut out the voices in your head. If you were able to blank-stare everything, you could have fulfilling sex with the guy that is visibly getting annoyed because you will not come over to his place before he goes to work in the afternoon. Or the guy that gets so turned on thinking about someone having sex with you, even if it is not him. You do not feel like a true asexual. Imposter syndrome? You allow yourself to try the word on your tongue, but because you only have one-note descriptions and definitions of it, you cannot

comfortably position yourself there. You start to think you cannot be asexual because your body compels you to *want* sex. It is a want that has a long list of terms and conditions. You send men seductive pictures of yourself, record videos of yourself stroking your cock, pretend you are riveted when a man initiates dirty talk over text, or foreplays what he would do with you if he were there, right there, invading your personal space like that.

You remember how sex once seemed so liberating. How you thought you would find the man of your dreams, bottom for him regularly, and forget about being single, alone, and lonely.

Now you are single, alone, and keeping at bay those feelings of loneliness.

You picture yourself in relationships with the men you are making genuine connections with:

1. He takes incredible care of you. He is funny, genuine, likes the same sort of things that you do. You avoid the talk of sex for a couple of dates, pretending it is a shadow on the conversations that actually keep you fascinated by him. He mentions it. You try to help him understand your thoughts, the way you thought you helped your last partner understand. The partner that tried something even after you had told him it was not something you necessarily wanted. How that relationship ended soon after, how this one won't progress much further.
2. He makes you laugh, he makes you laugh a lot. He is certainly more intelligent than you are, more travelled, more invested in his future than you ever could be. Talking to him sometimes makes you feel like you are nothing more than three children dressed in a trench coat. You laugh off discussions of sex, because he's such a natural comedian, he is so funny. In private, you work yourself up. You try to remember what it was like to be intimate with someone, you grab the dildo out of its hiding spot and practice, practice, practice, which gives you stomach aches. You don't feel sexy around him. You feel like an overgrown baby.
3. He definitely will want sex. You're lying about the genuine connection.

## I Am Putting This in Writing, To A Man After Spending Seven Hours With Him:

don't pick me, don't you dare.

find yourself a man without disappointments

find yourself someone without these imperfections

that I cannot list on one, or two, hands

when we spend an hour together, or way, way more,

I go crazy just sitting with the joy of you

I picture every little breath of escapism I could take to stay there, with you

how could a life be still in one moment?

there are all these itty-bitty things

until you hold them up to a microscope

so I rehearse in my head how to warn you the best:

'I am a complete mess'

- has not worked so far

'You will stop smiling when all I do is drive you insane'

- hinted at, briefly, without gruelling tenacity

I have been good, I have been sweet

(to myself)

(harshly)

I tell them I do not want to date, and true to form, I couldn't stand it with them,

but then you come along and complicate everything, because I am starting to picture myself beside you,

I am starting to think there is some wild possibility you will just understand me, as if that is at all possible of another human being.

but, fuck fuck fuck,

I guess I'm catching feelings.

because you're dumb, little boy,

you outright confess you love his attention!

fucking stupid.

(I am berating myself, not him, because how could I be grumpy with someone for wanting everything you expect from a normal, healthy relationship. I am a weirdo. I don't fit in. I don't want to fit in.)

he wants happiness, like the rest of us

then... then... then why, I guess?

why is he still here

(I can't be that damn exciting)

(why are you still here, please fucking tell me I'm not insane for thinking you can hear these miniscule attempts at shoving you away, to protect me)

I apologise.

you came here for some poetry.

not a man crumbling at the idea of being cared for.

of bringing some hope to himself, and making another person smile

you're out here uncovering toadstool caps and rocks, searching for the rhymes that are missing

I should be keeping the process going

(my heart is slowly unthawing, leave it on the kitchen bench, darling, it's fresh out from the freezer)

I should be feeling so lucky that someone wants to see me again next week

but I feel so damn unlovable.

he tells me my poetry is exposing of my heart,

he compliments my gorgeous prose

(yeah, okay maybe it is depressing, he says, when he talks of *Killer*)

and he keeps on lingering

I guess he still likes me.

I sound so incredibly self-destructive

but I keep this swilling, as if I know anything about fine wine,

I have lived long enough in this body to understand it.

the aches of it, the eternal backflips of my brain (which is, coincidentally, also in a hamster wheel)

I have to wipe the tears away waiting for the train

woke up too early in the morning, haven't eaten since lunch (my fault, for liking his company)

I'm out of water.

I'm running out time.

because maybe one day in the future I'm lying there in bed staring at the ceiling, wondering why I let it get so far with him. why I got complicatedly excited for the prospects of a man seeing me through all the reasons I continue to see my therapist, who is a lovely man for listening to me speak, and speak, and fucking speak.

so I will be in bed.

having just told this beautiful man that I do indeed love him.

but I'm wasting his time!! couldn't he find someone sexier, someone more energetic, someone who can speak without fumbling on their words, someone that thinks less about themselves dying!

I'm so overdramatic.

I want to tell myself to live for the present,

because I cannot control what will happen when I just keep swimming

(until I am sitting there beside him, and I cannot simply surrender)

there's some future iteration of me dangling from a vine,

hanging from a tree,

content, bereft of woe, carving a whistle from a whale bone,

being simply happy with him.

(I like to think I could be happy in the wilderness, provided there are hot showers, and a sizable library)

so maybe I think it would be gentler on my heart

for him to look elsewhere,

this country line dance with depression

is only going to continue for another century

I don't plan on living so long.

so maybe he shouldn't pick me,

and I will mend the cuts, the bruises, the break.

duct tape is surprisingly cheap

at least compared to seeing my therapist.

there are friends I have been meaning to see.

I can always just be comfortably miserable.

...I stand up from the train seat that is awkwardly shaping my spine. I suppose I chose to sit like that, where poor posture is an effect of trying to straighten out my head, when I've got these feelings on



repeat, or speed dial, I don't know, I've never actually had a use for a concept like speed dial in my life, but the impression it leaves in prose is at least semi-receptive. You know the sex is incredible when your boy is back to writing poetry. I'm joking!! The sex isn't happening, which is an eternal part of the problem. Find someone else, because my heart can handle the drama. I can cry myself to sleep, I love the taste of ice cream, I really hate the idea of hurting you. It is terrifying to think a person could just completely understand me and not be petrified of me.

Thank you for caring about me.

## and there you are...

and now you're leaving little hints that you might want me,  
(I don't know, it's tentative)  
will I cry the whole night through (sometime, because of you?)  
you say the dangerous thing about me is that I don't seem dangerous  
and I thought I told you to pick someone else.  
spare yourself the bulldozer in four months (if we're lucky)  
but my heart by now has completely melted,  
I can make you laugh  
I can make you smile  
I can make myself forget certain things, like how messy I can be, or how I wanted to call this rambling  
of poetry 'The Sweetly Cynical Suite'  
or 'Big Boys Do Cry (Personal)' as a sick homage to the song by Fergie you have to remember,  
or I'll knife myself in the stomach.  
it's the me taking myself seriously that startles me,  
like a hare nibbling in your paddock of corn,  
like you believe there is passion in wanting to start something with me.

you know I sit there beside you and accidentally bump my leg against yours,  
except it isn't so much an accident as a toe in the water,  
testing the temperature  
because maybe I've grown deathly afraid of the ocean  
but nauseously I imagine resting a head on your shoulder after an exhausting day  
(yours was probably longer, but I am weaker)  
I don't like examining you for flaws,  
some gorilla looking for bright scarlet nits,  
because I find the little things and imagine myself loving you for them.  
I know.  
you're cute to me  
I completely hesitate complimenting you  
(even though you're handsome and you should know it)

you just seem to understand me.

you know I sit there beside you, imagining leaving over and planting a kiss on your lips and not being rejected,

I imagine the rejection.

repeatedly.

bang bang bang bang

there aren't blanks in the gun and you're not happy to see me and it is insane to think that maybe you're happy to see me but not in the sense that an unfortunate erection ruins everything

(he could've won the bee)

if I were structuring a musical around my life, to change a subject or two,

there would seemingly be a million *I want* songs

(what, I want a lot of things)

but those songs would have left the stage in Act 1, the character long since knowing it isn't so much about what you want

but about what you can get.

wanting to see me for the third time is a man and I'm just a little boy

(not physically!)

I made silly overreaching promises I would write a poetry collection about my love life,

but all my inspiration is from him

(until he bores of me, and gets rid of me)

I am an illogical nightmare!

give yourself a break, sweetie!

go to the zoo with him, though.

and if you kiss him you kiss him,

and if you don't you don't and you haven't.

those minute pangs in the heart heal

do they?

do you get the villain song in your own musical like I do?

## *Note from the Writer*

thank you for reading and please do not assume my brain is continuously fucked up because I can promise there are moments of relief, moments of joy and comfort and pure, unbridled catharsis, like this moment right here! isn't it a wonderful thing that we can fall in love and fall out of love and nearly crush our hearts into the cracks in the ground all because we want to feel understood, and seen, and not rejected over and over and over. isn't it a wonderful thing that we take each worry and spasm of fear with us, applying them over and over, squaring them off into neat little boxes that make them so travel-sized the body, the brain, and the heart feel compelled to offer them bigger and bigger compartments, just based on whether that feeling grows...although the goal is always to hope the feeling shrinks, so you see a shrink (an outdated term, really, but after you just read some of my poetry did you think I was really going to miss the opportunity to use that play on words? it is so healthy to see a therapist though.)

isn't it neat that for centuries and centuries we have been falling in love, or at the very least fitting into the sort of characteristics that the world prescribes to love. we, as a species, have been flirting with one another, embracing one another, having sex with each other, all of the sort of typical expected acts of a romantic relationship, and we have been doing it with such a fervour that there are people in this very year feeling the unbearable weight of expectation and pressure that comes with years and years of unhealthy discourse, or perhaps even just...a lack of discourse? and I am not spelling an end to how the vast majority of the population interacts with romance, with desire, with lust and sex, but all I can do is talk, or I suppose type, because I'm good with my fingers. that's not a sex reference!

it would be lovely to think a person will want to be with me primarily for my personality (I'm pretty cute too, thanks genetics!!).

I mean I can tell myself a boy like that exists.

maybe he does (idk fingers crossed right now; I hope you can tell I'm trying to lift up my head)

- *Keeley Young*