

*my head is dismissed
as being empty of all
complex thought,
because how can
sixteen years be
enough to feel a
lifetime's worth of love
and loss? but they
forget, they always
forget, that hormones
and heartbreak both
start with an h.*

confessions of a teenage loser

by NAIRA JAIN

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confessions of
a teenage
LOSER



NAIRA JAIN

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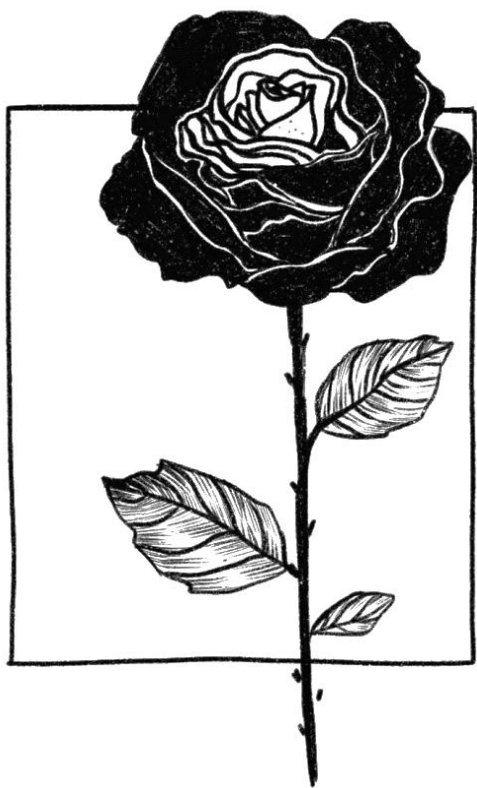
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part one:
loving



at one point in my life
i fell asleep in a tree
and when i woke up,
a small blue and white butterfly
flew down
and politely perched on my wrist
we looked at each other
for a good long while
and i wondered at how
such small eyes
could see so much
and then it flew away
and i fell in love
with the world

-butterfly universe // 8.3.17

someone once said to me that beauty was good to look at, but not as good to feel. i didn't know what beauty felt like because i never felt beautiful, or like i mattered. i believed it at first because when i saw you, i thought you were beautiful and knew i could look at you forever—but then you opened your mouth and spoke to me, and i realized they were wrong because you made me feel beautiful and like i was important to somebody, and it was immeasurably good.

-beauty isn't a beast // 8.10.17

i never thought i could love so much
the sound of those three words
as i do
when they roll off your tongue

-i love you // 9.21.17

she's pretty
in a manner you wouldn't notice
on a catwalk;
a tattoo she did herself
with an ink-drenched needle,
moon and stars on her hip,
a smile that brightens the world's colors
and a little streak of brown in her hair
always tucked beside her neck.
she's pretty
in a manner you wouldn't see
on a magazine cover
and pretty in a manner
you wouldn't realize you'd fallen for
until you were already gone

-pretty // 9.21.17

and then our lips met
and we feasted
on each other and on this colorful darkness
that swirled between our breaths

-shattered midnight // 3.1.18



drowning.
being sucked straight
d
o
w
n
the drain,
straight into the darkness,
straight into the fire
that will turn my soul to steam.
straight into desire,
without a second to even scream.

-drowning in love // 3.29.18

let me tell you a little something about *infatuation*.
it rarely ever happens by process of elimination,
can't be solved by an entire nation's deliberation,
and depending on the person, it's hardly ever a sensation-
but who cares—
the train of infatuation's about to leave the station.

-infatuation // 4.4.18

i've never realized how much my nerves were aware
of how much i love him, of how much i care.
of how much i like it when he touches my hair,
of how it clogs my head when he says "right here, right there",
i'd ask him to do it again if i dare,
but i don't and i can't, because my nerves are aware
of how much i love him, of how much i care.
and if he says no, my heart will just tear,
so i keep silent as he lays me bare,
because i live it, i breathe it, this heartbeat we share,
i love that my nerves are so very aware
of how much i love him, of how much i care.

-nerves are aware // 4.4.18

she's so beautiful.
red lipstick is quite suitable,
makes her look like the goddess of love,
hell's clapback to the angels above,
she's a sweet sin in red, heart steady and true,
when you look in her eyes you can see she loves you,
she's a star in this empty and whirling night,
in a room full of darkness, she turns on the light.

-best friend // 4.9.18

i want to be
the person you think about
at two in the morning
and at two in the afternoon
i want to be
the person who you can't want to tell
about your deepest secrets
and your coffee orders
i want to be
the person who you wish for
at 11:11 every day
and every time you throw a penny in a fountain
i want to be
the person you make mixtapes for
not only because you knew i'd like the music
but because you wrote the lyrics about me
i want to be
the person you come home to hug
to release a long day's stress
and to just be able to touch you
i want to be
the person you kiss
like we have forever
and like it's the last night of our lives
i want to be
yours

-soulmates // 4.15.18

the other night i stopped to wonder
between the sounds of angry thunder
if you'd ever text me back
or if i'd just die of a heart attack.

the other night i stopped to ponder
watching rain fall over yonder
if you'd ever give me a call,
or if i was even worth it at all.

the other night i kissed your cheek
knowing future days were bleak
because you couldn't pick up your phone
and oh, i felt so alone.

and then this morning through my sleepy haze,
my phone fell under my half-shut gaze
and everything was fine, i swear
because "One New Message" was shining there.

-texting back // 4.22.18

you turned my body into a love letter and kissed words across
every part of me, and i kept the letter safe under my pillow
and at night i trace my fingers over the words and imagine
you're writing them across me all over again

-love letters // 6.13.18



we are two fragile hearts, beating irregularly,
clashing against one another,
both damaged and bruised and patched up with tape,
things called permanent when we know
deep down in our souls that aren't stitched quite right
that everything in our world is temporary,
and that is intolerable.
but when i listen to your laugh,
when i hear our voices mix
and our Pepsi-flavored conversations,
and your ice-glazed tongue
on my Mountain Dew lips,
even though i know that this is temporary,
it becomes my own small silver infinity,
which i can close my eyes and recall
when instead of your tongue on mine
it is chocolate and a rose thorn and blood,
reminding me that i am human
and i am here,
and i am tethered to this world
by your love.
my damaged heart cannot tolerate things
that are not promises, that are not forevers,
because tape can only hold together
so many shattered pieces.
but when i speak to you, lie next to you,
feel sunshine in your hair and starlight on your breath,
the world becomes a series
of fleeting moments,
of fleeting words and tastes and touches and memories,
and my taped-up heart
continues to beat brightly
even when this high i'm on comes to an end,
because i know there will be another.
i know that for every promise broken,
there is another promise made,

and for every second that passes us by,
there is another that we may live to the fullest.
you and your broken soul
whose stitches line up imperfectly with mine,
you have helped me realize
that perhaps the only forever we have
is these moments, these temporary beautiful feelings
that will always end, but will always come back.

-pizza parlor kisses // 7.18.18

when i'm with you
my brain short-circuits
my heart pops a spring
and every part of my body
shifts into high gear

-crossed wires // 8.2.18

some of my favorite sensations in the world are:

1. crushing my lips against yours, long and slow.
2. cool water rippling around my ankles at night like it wants to go somewhere but has no destination in mind.
3. falling off a bike and feeling hard packed earth scrape my upper forearms and remembering that the agony of broken skin is what it feels like to exist
4. staying awake for too long but not feeling tired at all, instead more alive and free with each passing moment as the night sky fills my eyes
5. bare feet on a rain-washed road with soft drizzles and gentle breezes caressing my face as though begging me to stay awhile longer
6. watching the lights of a city skyline at midnight twinkle and pierce my eyes, and smiling through the pain because it's beautiful
7. the ache in my head as the sun warms the treetops at 5:47 in the morning because yes, i stayed up this late so i could pretend i was a broken-hearted movie star watching the sunrise—
8. —when in reality i'm just a broken-hearted woman watching the sunrise with a whole-hearted man beside her
9. crushing my lips against yours again, longer and slower than before, as day breaks across the world and shrouds us both in gold

-all nighter // 8.3.18

things i love about you:

1. your hands, soft like the crumpled petals of a papier-mâché marigold, fingers on palms and fingers on lips.

2. your face, constantly slathered with freckles and lotion and kisses from all those who came before me

3. your hips, sporting the small tattoo of a planet and stars we did together on your bathroom floor at two a.m.

4. your legs, the way you cross them at the ankle and never at the knee and wear the same dirty canvas shoes every day and have scars from climbing over a barbed wire fence in tenth grade

5. you.

-things // 8.3.18

i choke on soda,
bubble laugh
and all the joy it brings.

we listen to
the same sad song
the same sad person sings.

tears in our eyes,
we harmonize,
wear plastic wedding rings—

your hand in mine,
it's so sublime,
these ugly perfect things.

-slumber party // 9.17.18

at first you'd see
a normal girl,
but then be quite perplexed.

she captured hearts
with diamond smiles
and a single late-night text.

to hook me in,
she bats her eyes,
like a witch she has me hexed—

a wink and flirt,
a candy kiss,
but never sends a sext.

-the girl i loved // 9.17.18



speak a thousand languages
 into my mouth.
 my tongue thirsts
 for your pretty words.

-linguist // 9.23.18

i love you.
i love the thought of you,
the feeling of you,
the taste of you,
even the suggestion of you.
it makes me want to write poetry.

-want // 9.23.18

your lips are like
magic fairy dust.
they cast a spell on me
to make me forget my own name.

-tinker bell // 10.4.18

lazy fingers
on freckled skin,
silky masses of hair
pooling in the creases of necks and shoulders.
sweet soft hands on distressed knees,
glowing white and ravaged red,
torn pieces weeping blood
that whispers of stolen motorcycles
and kisses at high noon.
a single, smiling bruise on her neck.
three laughing, parallel scratches on his shoulder.
bright crimson stained knees
and an unsteady motorcycle,
tipping them down the empty hill.
star in her eye,
moon in his grin,
sun in their souls
as they make tender love in the grass.

-star crossed // 10.8.18

i lean close to you,
 hand pressed at the base of your neck,
 fingers in your hair
 and tongue sticky sweet,
 ready to take my first *perfect bite*—

“can i take your order?”
 blink. shake my head.
shit. it's not real.
of course it's not real.
 “hello? do you want anything?”
 a heartbreaking smile.
 hand waving jokingly in front of my face.
 hiding my blush with a cough.
 “yes, please...”
 bright eyes.
 beautiful, unassuming.

“wait, i remember you!”
 heart skipping.
 “y-you do?”
 “yeah! you knocked over the display last week.”
 heart sinking, sinking,
sinking down into my toes. *shit.*
 “y-yeah. yeah, that's me.”
 good-natured laugh.
 “latte with extra whip, right?
 same order every time.”
he remembers.
 it makes me smile despite myself.
 “yes.”

“will that be all for you today?”
 ringing it up on the cash register.
 hands flying.
 his beautiful perfect hands.

“yeah. make it extra sweet, please.”

“ah, a woman after my own heart.”

digging into my wallet.

head down. lip chewed.

you have no idea.

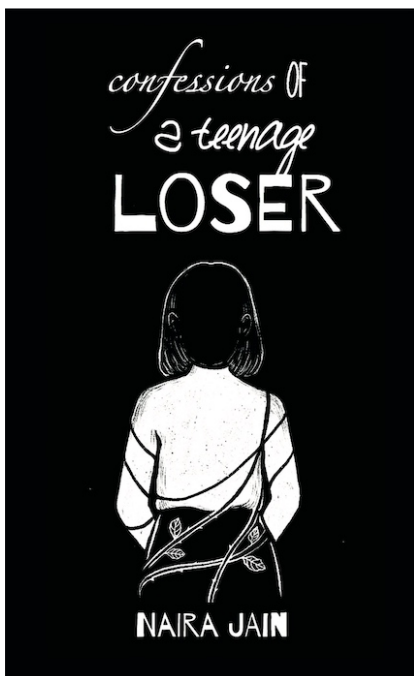
-the hot barista i'll never have // 11.14.18

her heart
is like
her English:
a little bit broken,
a little bit awkward,
but easy to love
and always delivered
with a smile

-foreign exchange student // 1.3.19

often i will lie awake at night,
thinking of you,
and wondering
if perhaps
you are doing the same

-awake // 1.16.19



*my head is dismissed
as being empty of all
complex thought,
because how can
sixteen years be
enough to feel a
lifetime's worth of love
and loss? but they
forget, they always
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