

# thank you and goodbye

kat, april 14 2024

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All the girls I've ever met are in love with misery  
I think I am too  
between how much I talk about wanting to cry  
between how much I pointedly do not cry

All the girls I read about are miserable  
or want to be  
between their romanticized ideals of abuse and  
dreamed imagery of the battered girl  
with her mascara running and her eyelashes fluttering

coquette, they call it, being coquettish, cute,  
and I want to believe there is something cute and shy about my misery,  
as my hair gets greasier,  
as my friend checks on me every day,  
making sure I've taken my pills,  
and I lie sometimes, because I do not want to worry them  
but I already have

and knowing you've worried someone is like stabbing yourself in the back  
the lies and the pained reality etched into your back  
like a careful incision with the precision of a surgeon  
all cold and sterile and latex gloved and masked

and I mask myself outside every day  
fear a second skin to me  
my imagined misery a blanket  
like the guitar strums of tortured artists ringing through my earbuds and into my ears  
because to hear oomori seiko sing the words of idols,  
"I & YOU & I & YOU & I",  
in such a pained voice, like a dying cat,  
despite all the people she's harmed  
despite how her abuse hurts me too  
even though I was just a fan  
and I'll never know her  
I felt like I did, through her music  
and I still felt the stab of her betrayal etching itself into my back  
when it had no right to  
when she was busy beating her words into her poor idols  
sharpening her teeth  
with the words sung by idols  
two years before I opened my eyes to this world

screaming and stuck in my mom's uterus  
my sister waiting impatiently for me to be broken free  
because I lacked the fury to break myself open at age nothing

and at nineteen, almost twenty,  
I realize,  
with delicate guitar strums in my ears,  
the threat of the hospital over me again,  
as my hands shake while I type,  
and quiver,  
and tremble,  
as I hold out my hand in front of my therapist and inadvertently show him I hadn't actually eaten  
the snacks I said I ate before the session,  
that I still lack the fury  
to rage against my own misery  
to drown in my own prescriptions  
to avoid and run from my responsibilities  
while creating more for myself  
because I want so desperately to be seen

and this is a depressing poem  
this is my first poem  
and I want to quote oomori seiko  
to end things neatly  
but she has never ended things neatly  
so I won't either

I think about all the musicians that have shaped my identity  
because I lack the fury to shape my own identity just yet  
and I think about the artist I am listening to right now  
as she sings All my days I wait for something more  
and I think  
I do too much of that too, don't I  
and flower face is right, I learned all my sadness from watching TV  
but I grew up in front of a laptop screen  
so that's not quite right

and nothing is ever quite right  
as I walk outside and past wars of stickers and posters ripped apart and stuck atop each other,  
graffiti and illegal weed shops and all of it,  
hidden away from my ears plugged by earbuds too loud,  
too hipster, with my music player like it's 2006,  
like I was more than a toddler that year,  
like I know more than I actually do,  
like I've experienced more than I actually have

but I still walk every other day  
to class  
to therapy  
with my mask on  
with my earbuds in  
and I listen to tortured artists sing about horrifying things

and the images in my head go wild with tortured images  
because imagination is what we cling to most in our misery  
and for me  
misery only loves the company of its ideals

I think I get it now  
why girls escape into coquettish aesthetics,  
all pink bows and frilly dresses,  
all evocative of the things I dread so much,  
the things I rage against as I call myself a fan of young girls,  
and get side eyes and weird glances from everyone I know for it,  
as I believe so faithfully  
religiously  
in the merit of these equally skilled and talentless girls on stages  
in front of older men

because to cloak yourself in these aesthetics,  
you surrender your misery to a higher power  
abuse  
possessiveness  
control  
subjugation  
all those lolita images coquettes covet  
because they are married to their misery

but I think now as I write  
that I could never willingly subjugate myself like that  
because I couldn't rage when I was about to be born  
and I can't rage now because I don't have it in me  
but maybe I do  
maybe I have some of that rage in me  
as the frustrations boil over in me  
as the tears come to my eyes thinking of the girl I was just five years ago  
but five years is a lot  
and I rage now as I write  
the friction coming naturally  
as I rage against my own boredom and inaction

I think of those violent images that come to my head outside and walking  
with those tortured lyrics running through my ears to my head  
and I think now while listening to oomori seiko sing  
about the color pink  
and rage in a desperate fit of anger and frustration and passion  
that despite everything  
I still love her art  
and maybe that's callous of me  
maybe that's disgusting of me, actually  
given what she has done  
but sometimes the art we love is wretched this way  
and maybe some day  
I will reconcile that

but for now  
I write in my word processor  
and listen to an album released in 2014,  
that I own on cd,  
that I have written too much about,  
and all those passions come back to me easily,  
crashing into me like waves slipping out from a crack in between rocks and stone,  
in a dam that's about to break,  
and I don't know how to end this poem,  
I just hear oomori seiko screaming in my ears,  
and I wish I was as eloquent as she is in her rage,  
even though I shouldn't wish to be anything like her,  
the idea curdling in my stomach,  
oomori's guitar strums too delicate for such a disgusting person,  
but her art still means something to me,

and that has to count for something,  
just as the idea of tears more than their presence,  
has to mean something, anything,  
for me to be able to accept the idea  
that I don't cry as much as I want to