



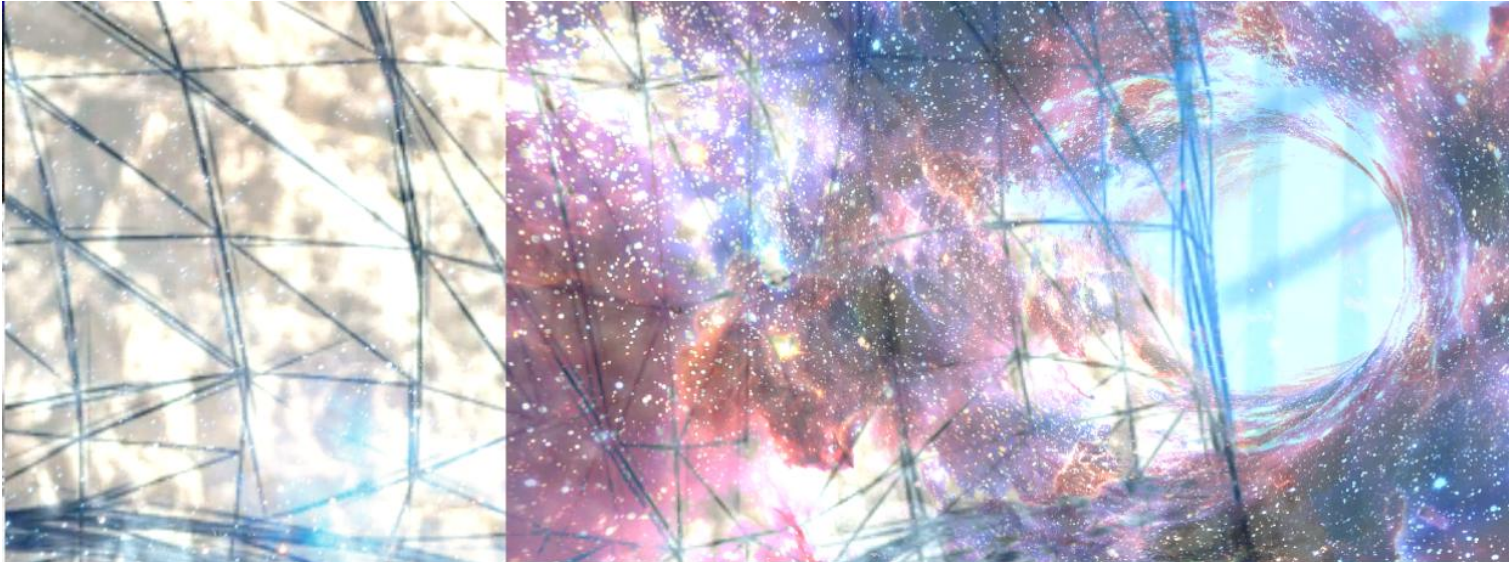
keep out!
no, seriously.....

#4

02 24

recent art.







Y

Here is the eternal dream, darling, the one desire I have for us: one day I want to be gray and weaker and I want it to be your fault. The curves and sags pulling my flesh magnetized downward—because of you, carved in your name, trying to reach you in the grave. No, I hope it doesn't end like that. The eternal dream is really just another way of saying *here is what I dream about at night, the steam swirling and pulsing through me as I sleep. Here is the eternal desire, arguably universal and factually omnipresent in humanity: in my fantasies I am seen whole. Pitted, hollowed, and reinvented.* I think that I deserve to be witnessed, but woe! To be witnessed is to shroud yourself in the funeral garb of Vulnerability, to invite in evil tongues, to practically *beg* on your knees for criticism, for someone to be loyal to, and I don't know if I can handle that yet. I don't know if I can handle that at all.

Oh, to be handled, to be something held - or, in another definition of the word - held back, restrained, kept tame. Oh, to be kept tame—to be kept in someone's grasp, leashed, strictly cherished until my elderly years. Oh to be pet. Keep me in my purest form. Keep me stripped to the barebones—this disgustingdisgusting vehicle of abhorrent need I am now—but don't look at me, don't you ever look at me. I cannot be seen, or invited in, because I might strike—I wasn't lying about being dangerous, about the eternal dream being rooted in fear. I won't tell you what that means.

ii.

I made you a grilled cheese and we laughed because the light of the fireflies glowing against the sunset looked too much like the fire that claimed his body—we have to laugh about it because there's nothing left to do, no other way to mourn. On my father's side, we have a hereditary allergic reaction to commitment. I am fighting this like he fought the flames but the contrast is clear: this time I am the victor. Stop bringing him up in your writing. You have some issues to address.

I made you a grilled cheese and we cried because this didn't really happen. In my dreamscape I made you a grilled cheese and you came back to life to thank me for my hospitality and you're sorry but you *do* have to die again, you're already breaking like fifty heavenly laws by being here, but you just wanted to meet me. I get that but I don't think I can let you go. At least smoke with me before you leave—you can give me that much.

iii.

You are the one I love, the one I have coiled my soul around. I'm warned not to love the world too much or I might get distracted but it's so hard when the world has given me you. You are the one who redefined it for me—the concepts of wholeness and individuality—the harbinger of light. I am whole in myself, I am my own being, and my mind extends to the parts of me that I have grafted onto you. Symbiosis. We talk about that a lot, but I think togetherness can create an entirely new sense of individuality. An epiphany. The flickerburning stars within me reflect only you into the sky when you look upwards at night. At daytime, the sunlight peeks through the clouds that form bubbled up only in the shape of our memories. Our first conversation. Our first confession. Our first hope, ignited in the air like the fireworks that blew my cousin's hand straight off. It won't be like that for us, that's not a good comparison. Here is what I meant to say: I will kneel for you. I will

kneel for you.

iv.

Okay, let's face it: I failed you. I'm sorry. Most days I know that it wasn't my fault, *I* wasn't the one who chained you up in the basement, but I could've done something. I didn't exist back then, but I should've reached out to protect you. Siren-loud inside of me, Logos screeches out: *No, someone else should've reached out to protect you, but you were alone. This is, clearly, bad. There should've been someone else there. Someone should've kept you safe but they didn't.*

Shut up, I tell Logic, I'm not done talking. I'm trying to beg the girl to forgive me but I don't think she understands. I don't think she blames me, which means I will not burn up in the impact of her healing. Maybe I shouldn't be so afraid. If I stop being afraid, the very fabric of the universe around us will shatter, and then: no more clouds or moonlight or pictures of my lover on my bedside table. I still want her to say it—I *forgive you, it wasn't your fault*—but I don't think she can hear me inside of the cage.

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from " "It's Such A Drag": The Viral Misunderstanding Of Drag Subculture", a personal essay

Anti-transgender conservatives claim that drag "grooms" children into being queer, that drag is equivalent to abuse, and that drag is inherently sexual, but I have only seen beauty and bravery in drag. I went to my first drag show at a youth summer camp in 2019, where several young drag performers put on a show unlike anything I had ever seen before. As I watched them dance, laugh, recite poetry, and tell jokes, I began to look inward at my own self-perception. I saw, in their movement, the kind of confidence that had never felt tangible to me before. If these kids were able to be authentic in the face of judgment, to dance around in multicolored defiance, then I was capable of blossoming into a version of me that didn't put any emphasis on the harsh opinions of others.

It seems as if the view of drag that non-queer people hold and the view of drag that queer people hold are frequently divergent. When I asked their opinions on drag, my closest queer friends described drag as "aspirational, empowering heightened expressions of gender that disregard conventional binaries", as "a becoming", and as "the holiest form of self expression". In contrast, when I asked my non-queer family members, their only thoughts were of drag celebrities, such as RuPaul. This is not an incorrect perception of drag, but it is a perhaps limited one. Drag culture is vast and expansive, and its reach goes far beyond what is shown in mainstream media.



MONTHLY PLAYLIST / FEB '24

theme: love!!

- i. talk about you ... miika
- ii. love comes quickly .. pet shop boys
- ii. so much love ... depeche mode
- iv. pure love ... mother mother
- v. heart pet shop boys
- vi. beautiful james ... placebo
- vii. vintage ... high dive heart
- viii. maps ... yeah yeah yeahs
- ix. peacefall ... purity ring
- x. transatlanticism .. death cab for cutie

