

I'm on top of her. There's some music playing, a guy I've never heard of before tonight. I've heard a song or two he's done, but he didn't have a name before tonight. Two weeks ago, the girl I'm kissing now didn't have a name either. She's the best thing to come out of the Vietnam war, I'll tell you that much.

A month later, five hearts will be drawn in my notebook when I'll have left my room for a moment. She'll leave the message, "For my love to remember me..." I'll find it after she leaves.

I stop and pull my head up. She doesn't know what's wrong. That lamp above my bed causes me to wince. I turn my head, looking towards the stereo.

"What is it?" She asks, trying to pull my head back towards her.

"The song," I said, "It's the lyrics." I find myself laughing as the chorus of song repeats, "I'm gonna lose you, yea I'm gonna lose you, I'm gonna lose you now for good." I focus my eyes on her. "This is the worst way to start things off." She nods her head, finally understanding.

"You're not going to lose me," she says, this time succeeding in bringing her lips back to mine. I enjoy kissing her.

I think about how in a month from now, I'm going to be on top of her again. We won't have seen each other in a week. She would have gone away, but I hadn't. We start to catch up rather quickly. We won't be kissing, just lingering on each other. She'll start to repeat, "Oh God, oh God." I'll ask her what's wrong and she'll tell me she thinks she really likes me. I won't want to say the same, thinking that saying the same would be saying too much. And saying it after she does would simply diminish its impact.

I didn't know when the right time to kiss her would have been. I was working my way towards it. The CD she wanted me to hear was playing. She was sitting up on my bed, I was inching towards her on that ratty old desk chair that squeaks when I move. She broke the tension by asking first.

Soon, I'll buy her a small flower to give to her in class. Of course, I'll unintentionally get to class before anyone else does. I'll look like an absolute fool, sitting in an empty classroom, with a flower resting on the desk next to mine. She won't show up to class. Her absence will make me look even more ridiculous. Not wanting to attract attention, I'll try to be as sly as possible retrieving the flower and placing it in my bag without people noticing.

While walking out of the building, I'll call her, asking why she wasn't in class. I'll have the flower in my hand. She'll ask where I am before I'll be able to ask where she was. Somehow, we'll have completely missed each other. She'll have been waiting for me as I'll be leaving the building, calling her.

"I brought you this," I'll say, handing her the flower as I see her.

"You're too cute," She'll say back, admiring the flower.

"You made me look like a complete fool, you do know that. There I was, sitting next to your seat with the flower on it. It looked like a memorial to you, as if you were no longer with us."

Two weeks ago I actually said I was a cat person, a fucking cat person. People in the Vietnam Lit class were talking about animals. Everyone else in

the discussion was talking about their dogs. And I say I was a cat person. I thought I blew it immediately. But then she spoke to me.

“I think cats are interesting,” she said, half-smiling. I didn’t know where to place my eyes. I was drawn to her mouth immediately. But her eyes drew me up. They were brown, but with almost a hint of orange. I wouldn’t find out till much later that she wore contacts.

We’ll be sitting on my floor that afternoon when I brought her the small flower, going through my collection of movies. *Say Anything* will catch her eye. She’ll make a connection between the character of Lloyd Dobbler and me. It’ll be because of what I’ll tell her about myself and my life back in high school. She’ll smile and say “you’re Lloyd.” I’ll lose her for a second as she drifts off somewhere else. When she comes back to me, she’ll say “I used to joke around with people that I was going to marry Lloyd Dobbler.”

My right hand runs through her short curly hair. I pull her closer towards me with my left arm. My fist tightens around her brown locks. She pauses, leaves her mouth open as she attempts to smile. She leans in to kiss me and then pulls back. She enjoys watching me go in for the kiss, and that bit of frustration when she denies me. I press myself up against her harder. We both breath louder.

I wanted to say something to her after that first class in which we talked. I didn’t know what to say. I was never very good past hello. I didn’t have the nerve to say anything while she packed her bag. I left the class without so much as a goodbye. As I waited around with some classmates while they smoked, she came walking out. I hadn’t noticed how short she was until she was standing right next to me. I was at least a foot taller.

I didn’t manage to say much more than “have a good weekend,” as she proceeded to walk by me. She told me to have the same. She was going to be out of my life before I knew it, just like the girl in the class semester, and the girl before that, and so on. She was at least ten feet away when I opened my mouth.

“Hey, I don’t even know your name,” I shouted. She turned around, completely surprised. I continue, “We were talking inside, but yea, I don’t even know your name.” She walks right back to me and formally introduces herself. I do the same. A week later, while we’re on a walk through the park, she admits she had already known my name. She watched me as I wrote it on a paper. It was one of the many perks of having rows of desks so close together.

After she puts *Say Anything* back on the shelf, she’ll make me promise that I won’t fall in love with her. She falls back onto my floor in frustration when I’ll say I can’t. I’ll tell her I know how that works, that I’ll promise, but fall in love anyway, then she’ll get leukemia and it won’t work out for any of us. She’ll ask me to make a revised promise, that I won’t tell her if I do. I’ll say I’m fairly certain I could honor that. She’ll add a clause that I can tell her if she tells me first. And I’ll start counting the days.

She told me she thought I looked like Orlando Bloom as we walked through the park one afternoon instead of going to class. I laughed because I knew I looked nothing like him. I didn’t question the fact she told me she was referring to me as Orlando to her roommate. I was happy to hear she was talking about me. She told her roommate I wore nice jeans too. I laughed again, not knowing what to say to that. I made a mental note to write a letter to the GAP later, thanking them for such fine jeans. She thought I had such good

style because of those jeans. I knew I was going to have to start folding them instead of simply throwing them on the floor.

She'll love how my heart beats fast as we kiss. She'll say how much she loves it over and over and over again. With each "I love it," I'll wonder if she'll slip and say "I love you."

We roll over, she's now on top of me. I try to sit up without taking my lips away from hers. She playfully pushes me back down. I lift the two of us back up with more force. She has her arms completely around me. Our bodies are sliding against each other's.

"We need to slow down, don't we?" She asks. I nod and stretch my arms out a little.

"We probably should," I say. She kisses me again and pushes me back down.

"It's fun looking at you from here," she says while staying down at me. The lamp casts an orange shadow over half of her. I'm taken back by the image of her above me. She's directly to the side of the quote I had written on my ceiling, "I was once what you are. And what I am, you will become." The quote and her appearance had no correlation, but the sight of the two combined leaves me without anything to say. I need to stop painting shit on my ceiling.

She'll be draped in blueness created by the absence of light on my walls as the sun sets later that spring. The little light left will soften the room. I'll feel so happy, but see such sadness in the blue. I'll point it out, even though I couldn't even explain it to myself. I'll tell her about the orange shadows from that first night she was on top of me. Then I'll apologize for saying such dumb things. She'll tell me everything I say is perfect.

We were sitting in a pile of snow once we realized we had already walked the length of the park already. She was making a tiny snowman near her feet as we walked. I told her how I wanted to be a writer. One day I would like to say I am one. She told me about her adventures in trying to make connections in the entertainment industry. The conversation turns back to our class. She told me she planned to bring in a book I had said I hadn't read. She was going to put her number on the first page.

"Pretend I didn't tell you that, so I can still do it," She told me afterwards. When we parted that day, I didn't know if I should bother trying to ask for her number. I wound up asking if she still planned to bring the book in for me. She said she would.

We'll go for a drink before I have to meet up with an old friend. The banter will be relatively light. I'll talk about myself and let her listen. She'll talk more about her life, and I'll nod while resisting the urge to run my hands all over her body. We'll make plans for the weekend. The night end will outside my house. She'll lean up against the red bricks, pulling me towards her. She'll want to kiss me early incase my friend is waiting just around. We'll have stayed too late at the bar and my friend will be waiting at the door.

We're lying in bed, just talking about the little things we tried to do in class to get each other's attention. I brought up this shirt she had worn that drew my eyes from her face. She brings up my cologne. I tell her about the class when she brought the book in for me. As everyone was leaving, I waited around to talk to her. Someone else was waiting around to talk to me. The

person asked why I wasn't leaving. I said I was waiting for her. She lights up when I tell her this.

"You said you were waiting for me?" I didn't know if she said as a question or a declaration. It causes her to reach in to kiss me again. We talk about our faults. I admit that I get scared off easily. I usually become afraid, feeling I'm going to get hurt. I back away before I can get hurt. She tells me how she's been fickle in the past, caring for a person one moment, losing it the next. I don't want this. I tell myself she could be different with me.

I won't know what to expect while I pull into the parking lot by her apartment. It'll be the last time I see her for a week, but I won't know that yet. A night at a club will seem promising, but I'll still be completely nervous. My jaw will drop as she approaches my car. She'll be wearing a tiny black skirt, covered by a tan jacket to keep her warm. Her lips will be redder than I have ever seen them and I'll stutter as I try to talk to them.

Before leaving for the club, we'll stop inside her apartment so she can grab her bag. The flowers I gave her will still be in the vase, even though they will be nearly dead. I'll still be in shock that no one had gotten her flowers before. At least I'll know it made that first date memorable. The tiny flower, which will be dubbed "the memorial flower" will be in her room as well. She'll tell me how she told her friends and co-workers about it and how they all thought it was wonderful.

While we were still buzzed from the bottle of Merlot, lying on my bed, she noticed the barron side of my desk.

"Haven't you ever wanted to carve into this?" She asked.

"The thought had crossed my mind." I smirked. "Wanna carve your name into it?" She became giddy. I took a pair of scissors out of my desk and handed them to her. A moment later, her name was carved in. I asked her to move over for a moment as I carved my name below hers. I didn't put a heart around it or anything. It was much too soon for that. But at least her name was there "forever" or until we have a horrible break up and I need to bring in a belt-sander.

We were supposed to be slowing things down, but her top's off and she's on me again. Her small breasts fit well into my hands. She moans and squirms as my hands run across her bare chest. She's all I hear. The CD stopped playing and we hadn't put anything else on.

On the phone, once she gets back from her trip, I'll admit my biggest fear to her. I won't plan on it, but it'll come out anyway. And she'll share with me a part of her she usually keeps to herself. I'll feel honored to be a privy to the story of her and a friend. The conversations will continue though out the night, going from eternal life to comic books. She'll say she hopes we can talk like that forever. I won't pick up on it right away, but be happy when I eventually do.

We lay in bed later. She's curled up against me, her head resting on my shoulder. She comments how we fit together. Our bodies can be wound around one another and there won't be the slightest sensation of discomfort. It feels just right. It shouldn't feel this right, not so soon. She says that it'll be weird in class after tonight, that she'll want to just pounce on me when she sees me. I say that I wouldn't mind, but the class might think something of it.

I'll never have such an appreciation for Biggie's *Hypnotize* as I will when I hear it in the club. The fog will engulf her and me as we dance. She'll be mouthing the words. Her body will be moving, but her eyes never stray from mine. I'll try once to kiss her, but she'll pull away to tease me.

We'll be tired from dancing and resting over by the bar. She'll need to go to the bathroom and will ask me to stay where I am. I'll have a drink and wait for her to come back. I'll glance around the club, noticing all the other people talking and dancing. And I'll be able to appreciate that there couldn't be anyone in the club quite like her. She'll catch my eyes in a distance, as she saunters back towards me. Her body will be pressed up against mine as she'll jokingly ask, "What's your sign?" Without even thinking, I'll say, "yield." That sexy look in her brown eyes will dwindle as she will begin to laugh hysterically, stopping only to take my head in her hands and kiss me.

I cooked her dinner. I didn't know what else to do for a first date. A movie was out, we wouldn't make it through two hours. There wasn't much else to do around these parts aside from going to a bar. She wanted something memorable. Lacking any creativity, I told her I'd cook dinner. I bought flowers and a vase as well. I would have gotten nicer flowers than ones at the supermarket florist if I had known she hadn't gotten flowers before.

My heart will break when I see her cry for the first time. It'll be because of an exam. She'll have thought she had done well, only to find out the opposite. I'll act quickly, trying to catch that first tear as it falls from her left eye. When she composes herself a bit later, she'll say how she missed me while she was away. I'll promise myself that I'll never make her cry.

I won't go directly home after we part with a small kiss. I'll make a short trip to the flower shop. I won't know what to say to make her feel any better. A large purple daisy will be the best I can do. I'll hold it behind me as we meet up again after her class is done. She won't notice it right away, only seeing the goofy grin on my face as I eagerly await giving it to her.

I read the book the night after she gave it to me in class. I wanted to call her, but I didn't know what to say after hello. If I read the book, at least I could say "Hi, so I read the book." She couldn't believe I would read the whole thing in one sitting, but was excited to hear I did it just so I could call her. We didn't talk much about the book. We had too much else to say, about ourselves and whatnot. The conversation in the park wasn't enough.

While trying to sober up a bit for the drive home after going to the club, we'll eat at a diner. She'll have french fries with gravy on the side. I'll have grilled cheese. I'll tell her she looks tired when she asks if she looks drunk. She'll still be beautiful to me. She'll warn me about her ruining me. I'll shrug it off. She'll stare.

"Or maybe you'll ruin me," she'll say out of the left side of her mouth. It'll be hard to believe that I had been watching her talk out of the left side of her mouth for two weeks already.

"I can hope, now can't I?" I'll say back, while praying that it'll be true.

I told her while we were in the park that I had never just run up a hill and sat in the snow before. She hadn't either and decided that's what made it special. I joked with the notion of going back and taking a picture of where we left impressions in the snow. I didn't though.

The first time seeing each other in class after tonight will be odd. I won't know what to expect. I'll wonder if she'll really pounce on me. I'll want

to kiss her, I just know it. But instead, I'll bring her Hershey's Kisses, thinking they're the next best thing. I'll give her a few in class. After class, I'll ask her if I could give her another kiss. I'll say I'm out of chocolate. She won't mind.

I won't know where she'll go off to for a moment as I'm still on top of her. She'll seem to be searching my white t-shirt for something that's not there. I'll comment that it isn't such a fancy shirt and ask if she wants to draw on with a Sharpie. Luckily, I'll have a red one. She won't let me look as she writes above my heart. When I look down, there is a "I (heart)..." and her name. I won't want to wash the shirt, fearing the writing will fade.

end of part one