

The background is a complex, circular word cloud. The words are arranged in concentric rings, creating a sense of depth and movement. The colors of the words range from light beige to dark brown, blending into the overall warm, golden-brown palette of the image. The text is small and densely packed, making it difficult to read individual words but contributing to a rich, textured visual field.

**deep thinks
think deep**

• *For Nishat, who told me to follow this spark, and for Brian, who makes me feel like a poet* •

«THE ONLY PEOPLE FOR ME ARE THE MAD ONES, THE ONES WHO ARE MAD TO LIVE, MAD TO TALK, MAD TO BE SAVED, DESIROUS OF EVERYTHING AT THE SAME TIME, THE ONES WHO NEVER YAWN OR SAY A COMMONPLACE THING, BUT BURN, BURN, BURN LIKE FABULOUS YELLOW ROMAN CANDLES EXPLODING LIKE SPIDERS ACROSS THE STARS.»

-JACK KEROUAC, ON THE ROAD

Confessions of an Introvert

It's okay

It's really okay

Let me be a link in this bracelet of flashy charms

Cubic zirconia

I have the kind of voice that can't scrape above others and that's okay

I'll sit

I like to notice things

You jiggle your knee, but only when you're talking

I count crimson cups (18)

Nails painted (29.5)

I smile when appropriate

(With my mouth and not my eyes, which I hear you shouldn't do)

I start to spea-

 No that's okay, what were you gonna say?

Maybe again in a few minutes

I'll wait till the clock says 9:40 exactly

So I sit

Phones out (5)

(6)

(5)

Sometimes I don't have to think about it so much

Laughter comes naturally and my thoughts don't slip away

Mostly I anticipate going to bed

Think about everything that happened and didn't

If you want to lie with me that's okay

I don't notice being alone, one's company

Two's just fine

Lonely happens with too many people

Are you okay?

 I'm great!

Q&A: What's a question no one's ever asked you but you want them to?

Never -

Fingers up, are you a prude?

I guess we'll find out.

Knuckles already straining under the weight of *experience*

Bones broken&hair dyed...

Come on, let's get to the good stuff

Have -

Everyone has one

Folded quietly in back pockets, between breast&bra

You're proud of this one – it starts to squirm

Not *haven't* but *have*

Not to be uttered except by another

I -

Went skinny-dipping once

Skin prickling as the lake (Nym, he's named) absorbed me

In my ever-fashionable *birthday suit* (notmybirthday)

And though the water was, indeed, *everywhere*

I mostly remember how it slid between my toes.

Ever -

Wandering hands&playful tongues

Embarrassing&naughty&everything but what I want

Stay close, my glowing secret, stay close

Just in case someone –

clap

{ I love looking at you and knowing I can keep looking at you }

This is all very foreign to me, this love thing, this “we” thing, this *forever* thing – sure, no one is perfect but I feel bad because sometimes I don’t want to fall asleep on your chest.

I feel so unlike those from whom love takes their sight; I see your pimples and I *want to pop them so bad* and when you argue we’re not *there* and I rebut that you also reserve popping privileges you go and say that you never see mine because you only look at my eyes, which is false because you won’t hesitate to point out the oregano chunk pasted to my incisor.

You’re proud of your jawline but I’m proud of your dimples – when you break into a smile sometimes I want to just *poke them* and sometimes I want to fill them up with water and float in them.

In case you were wondering – probably not – the nicest thing you ever said to me was when you read one of my poems and you looked over and said *Keep doing this*.

I think about that and my chest sizzles and simmers.

The recent discovery that I have drooled actual drool on your shoulder is mortifying and also satisfying as payback for the times you’ve tried to dutch oven me under the sheets – I take long moments pondering if this is how love works for other people and then I remember I don’t give a shit.

Often, when you’re talking to me and you’re saying nice things that you don’t need to say but you mean them, I briefly dissociate because you couldn’t possibly be talking about this person, this person right here.

That you look at me and see something beautiful makes me want to see it too.

That I look at you and see something beautiful is what I can’t wait for you to believe.

Some Weeknights

There's no point to speak unless spoken to
I've learned –
I've seen my comforts ricochet off of your ears,
Your staunchly shallow eyes letting my gaze slip over them
A smooth pebble skipped on a frozen pond

One hand twitches – thumb and middle finger pinching
Clasping one of your racing thoughts like a pimple
I intercept –
With one hand under control the other starts
Pounding&Pounding&
I intercept –
Both hands are down, the pads of your fingers still *drumming drumming*
The panic swims down to your feet
They're dual snakes&
I intercept –
Leaning my small, icy toes on your digging heel&
I expect you to call me monkey like you do but
Nothing

LookatmeLookatmeLookatme –
I love you, it's okay.

What's wrong with me?

Nothing.

What's wrong with me?

Nothing.

What's wrong with me?

Nothing.

A Passing

Through a spotted window of the black
rumbling vehicle, raindrops frozen in place from
a day the driver may vaguely remember, I spot
a humble sedan that has rolled up next to us.

A mother and daughter. The silence between me
and their car is a thick plastic bubble. The silence between
the two of them is a fat, dull brick. Mother has her drooping,
unmascaraed eyes resting on the road, or maybe somewhere
else. Daughter imitates me with her head turned, neck
craned to the right, a net of limp hair tied loosely behind
her ears. Dozens (hundreds? No – couldn't be) of cars
bisect us and head to their homes, jobs, mistresses, while
we wait – interrupted. When I tear my gaze away for a
moment I inspect each small red bulb that, combined with
other small red bulbs, glare haughtily over my head, a hall
monitor. I glance back to my pair of girls. The tint on their
window, which I did not notice had previously been
a holographic red, flits to green and Mother lifts her shoulders slightly.
Her thumb slides down to catch the wheel. Daughter does not
turn. They pass before I can determine if she has a face.

Amélie (2001)

I've never had a television in my bedroom before, but now I do so I can light a candle and eat olives as Amélie cries in her bedroom which has red wallpaper or as she spies on the man with the red shoes (everything in this movie seems to be red and that makes it feel frantic and I'm inspired to paint my toenails red).

Everything is in French but the producers have kindly provided English subtitles, and I wonder how much has been lost, how many colloquialisms have been mangled to make sense to my fat American head. In one scene they rattle off a slew of rhyming word pairs and as I listen and watch the words dangle hand in hand on my screen I know there's no possible way that the rhyme can exist in both English and French yet that's what I'm expected to believe.

I once heard "no" but did not see it on the screen.

I'm on to them.

I will learn French.

I feel very high-society.

I feel as if I can think very deeply.

"What constitutes a deep thinker?" I was once asked.

I'm not sure I know.

Am I to consider myself a deep thinker simply because I watched a film in French and it made me feel romantic; because I, posing as a cynic, was moderately disappointed that it had a happy ending; because I noticed all the red?

Am I to consider myself a deep thinker because I recognize that I'm engaging in all of these pseudo-deep musings to distract myself from the possibility of you giving yourself up for *two years* and from my own selfish, panicked thoughts of *what does that mean for me?*

Does that make me self-aware?

Or does that make me a coward because I want to stand in your way?

I look at all the red in my own room so I don't have to think.

Instead, it suffocates me.

'Pregnant' Kylie Jenner alludes to sex of 'baby'

– Daily Mail • 7 hours ago

Huge shirts – baggy dresses – strategic camera angles –

Kylie, what are you trying to hide?

A google search of “pregnancy euphemisms” yields:

Bun in the Oven | Knocked up | Eating for Two | *With Child*

The internet is **obsessed**

They say you're having a girl – of course, only you and Travis Scott know for sure –

Paul (໒_໒) (@mrpwhitley) says “Kylie Jenner pregnancy news on TMZ the day before the Kardashian 10 year special airs. Kris is a genius.”

Like it is a publicity stunt.

Twitter is coated in pictures of you “looking for your birth control”

Like it was an accident –

What if it wasn't?

Maybe you couldn't get enough

Stretching and pulling and inflating your slim lips with jelly

Or cream, like a donut –

You will let this baby (probably the size of a clementine at this point) distend your belly

Kneading your insides with its heels

Your organs will make room for this creature as it tests the elasticity of your skin

A slow, slow-acting injection

The Padaung tribe in Southeast Asia still coils brass around young girls' necks to make them grow taller, taller

weaker, weaker

In Papua New Guinea they slice up their boys' skin because they believe humans were created by crocodiles

Is she pregnant? Is it a girl or a boy?

I think it's art.

When I Have Children

When I have children they will pick their own clothes. I reserve the right to compose as many horrible baby outfits as I wish but when they get a little older they will pick their own clothes because who am I to dictate their sock choices when I can barely dress myself.

When I have children I will read to them. They will be able to project fantastical creatures and adventures and love and hurt onto the inside of their foreheads and they will *love it* and they won't even ask for a damn iPad.

When I have children ~~I will consistently make them healthy, balanced meals~~ I will do my best to make them nutritious food or I'll have my husband do it.

When I have children they will love everyone; I will not let hate grow in their hearts.

When I have children I'll be terrified to let them see their favorite musicians, to let them go on a date to the movies, to *send them to school*.

When I have children I will not let hate grow in their hearts, but who is stopping someone from hating them? Hurting them?

When I have children they will know how to hide from a wandering firearm, they will know how to disable a sexual assaulter, they will know to scream as loud as they can.

When I have children I will keep them prepared while trying to keep terror from infecting their sleep and their drifting thoughts.

If I have children –

Green St.

1. I walk past the homeless folks on Green St. every day. Some days it is too early and I play a game trying to identify a small hill of blankets and two weathered boots. It's starting to get cold. Some of them have four, five, six blankets. One layer for every ten degrees it will drop.
2. *Have there been more this year?* I was asked recently. As if talking about summer mosquitoes. *It sure feels like it*, I replied.
3. In just a few days it will be the anniversary of the death of Black Santa, whom thetab.com called "our beloved campus icon" yet it probably came as a surprise that he had a normal name, Richard Turner. It seems weird to think that he even had a last name. That somewhere there are other Turners not looking for him. Santa, giver of gifts. Black Santa, taker of coins. Interesting.
4. Sometimes I judge you. You, the homeless people. (Is it fair to treat you all as one? Or should I divide you into the alcoholics, the mentally ill, the musicians?) Walking past a woman trying to feed her son, I think *from the looks of you that son is probably a cocaine problem.*
5. I want to help you. But we've all heard the stories of the one that was faking, who threw down his crutches at the end of the day and drove off in a Porsche. Bought with cash.
6. Doesn't that concrete feel harder every day?
7. Thoreau went to live in the woods because he wanted to live deliberately. I thought maybe you, too, wanted to live deliberately, to "suck out all the marrow of life", until I learned that Thoreau lived "deep" in a cabin on Walden Pond, less than half a mile from the main road.
8. What a shame that we don't live anymore in the days of Kerouac, where one could hop on a truck bed and look for something better across the country. If I learned anything from the movies, it's that hitchhikers are invariably serial killers.
9. Sometimes I wonder where you go to the bathroom. How hard it must be once a month for women to feel the blood trickling down their legs and just have to make do.
10. I resent you because you get money for free. I pity you because to be all alone in the world is probably the worst thing. Like, *where are your families?* My wallet sizzles in my pocket as I shake my head apologetically. *Sorry, I don't carry any cash.*

Droplets, Droplets

Little beads of rain bounced from Tall's hand to the fence and back. They couldn't decide which to wet. "What," asked Tall, "is the best kind of rain?" Small looked at her rain, the long, thin paperclips that sliced through her hair and neck. "I don't know," she said. "What kinds of rain are there?" "Oh, there are all kinds," said Tall, flicking the beads off of his shoulder and into the soup Small had prepared. "There's my kind and your kind and the kind that sings and runs around in circles. There's the kind that makes itself wide and the kind you barely even see." Tall looked across the lane and saw some more rain that he did not recognize. He waved. Small smiled politely. The rain took no notice. "There seems to be the across the lane kind as well," he observed. "I don't think I like that kind," Small whispered so the rain could not hear them. "I agree," said Tall. "I like my kind best." They went inside. They left their soup on the ground.

NOFACE

Thin lipped and plump tongued,
Your eyelashes are blonde but so very

l o o o n g

You were once able to fit five fingers above your eyebrows so you sliced yourself some bangs
A thin, translucent scar burrows just behind your jaw –
An injury from before you could describe it in words, and you often finger it absentmindedly
People will say you have a long nose but you're too young to know it yet. Good.

I've imagined what I cannot see, blooming behind what you do show me:

A craning and crane-like neck, elastic with youth yet always on the defensive – such is adolescence
One ear, pink and fresh, with a hundred thousand downy hairs almost invisible
Looped behind that precious ear is a whip of warm auburn hair that will get lighter come summer
when socks are a nonissue so you can at last comb your toes through the grass
Toes I also imagine are there somewhere, lurking leagues below the glove box
Chipped purple lacquer fermenting on nail in sock in boot –
When you were little your mother said your feet smelled like roses.

Green flares on your hair and you leave me forever –
What are you?

24 Months

18 months separated

2 months divorced, officially

18 months of service

18 months remaining

7 months pregnant

5 months engaged

We grow older and our lives shift imperceptibly until

The realization comes all at once

How different a picture we would take

24 months later

Yet we think nothing ever changes



Confessions

Let's see, let's see, let's see, let's see –
Who will I play tonight?
Too cool and aloof, or
Nodding and smiling, but is she speaking?
Can anyone really even tell the difference? Can I?

Ah, here they come – the Person I Rarely Speak To But Is Now Drunk And Apparently My Friend™ and they are primed to yell some repeat inquiries about

My Major
My Boyfriend
My Plans After Graduation
Isn't It Cold Outside

5 minutes of losing brain cells and one solo cup hastily drained later I am liberated and pouring myself another tongue-loosener that seeks to serve the limp muscle eager to show off a scathing wit, always mere moments too late.

Maybe that's why I write –

My mother hounds and fusses – *Why don't you post any pictures?*
As if the answer isn't simple: I didn't take any.

Sometimes I'm convinced I am this way out of laziness, that I will seize every opportunity to go back to my bed, meanwhile letting relationships become foggy and too polite then wondering why so few people really know what lies within my skull.

It's difficult to explain why you're lonely when you don't crave the company of others.
The bear in the beanie on my decorative pillow is something like a friendly face –

Nights end the same way after I am allowed to make a faux-regretful exit: my pillow accepts my face, hundreds of tiny muscles simultaneously aching from preventative bitch face measures.
My eyelids fall without my knowledge and all I can hear is the blessed sound of my own slowing breaths.

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