

The Day My Kisses Tasted Like Disorder

by Emmanuella Hristova

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Cover art created by Emmanuella Hristova

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Acrylic on canvas

The preface.

*When the end was the beginning, and
the beginning was the end.*

For Dora; I wish you were here.

June 23rd

In the depth of
winter, the flowers do not
bloom, no fruits
appear, the leaves
fall off, and the tree looks
dead, but deep in the
darkness underneath,
the roots grow
and grow
and
grow.

The beginning.

*I guess I should thank you,
because you turned me into a poet.*

upon identifying the day

I knew I loved you
the moment I saw you
the second time I came to
visit you in The City and you
were wearing a cerulean button-down
that matched your eyes and you
had just shaved your beard and
I wanted to kiss you, but
not like a nervous first kiss or
a slobbery wet one; but rather,

**the kind of peck lovers give to one another
after being together for years and
what they're passing between their lips
is time.**

September 21st

upon telling you

The air is cold on the rooftop,
running across my bare shoulders
as I tell you how I feel about you.
My arm presses against yours;
yours doesn't move. I use it
for support. Our bodies pressed
against the cool, gritty concrete
of the wall that keeps us from falling to
our deaths down below.
Your eyes wax, deep and
limpid like
pools of ocean water
that I see into, staring back at me,
as if you're
seeing me for the first time.
I see the fear in your face,
breath clutched
between your lips like a
piece of ice
stuck in your throat.
You're afraid to exhale. *Oh shit, oh shit,*

oh shit, say your eyes.

No shit.

upon telling me

I am sitting in a middle school classroom at lunchtime when you tell me you want to kiss me. My breath stops in my throat. Instantly, my heart beats faster and faster like an unhinged train racing down its tracks. I was hungry before, I'm not hungry anymore. A heat rises from the depths of my soul, steaming the surface of my cheeks, pouring out over the tops of my breasts, and spilling out in between my thighs. I flush. My flesh heats up, unable to contain the fireworks exploding on the inside of my heart. He wants to kiss me.

And these explosions going off inside me I imagine will be bolder, brighter, and more beautiful when you finally do.

September 22nd

I remember the first time you tell me I'm pretty. We are in the kitchen; I'm running my hands under the cool water of the sink—water washing me before I begin my day. The mascara is heavy on my lashes, my lips pink, smelling like plastic pigments, the kinds you haven't tasted on me yet. My hair spills down my neck because I go to sleep with it wet and in the morning wake up with crinkles. My arms cloaked in magenta chiffon, soft like strawberries on my skin, framing the cream a-line dress that blossoms on my body. It hugs my breasts, cinches my waist, and falls at the equator of my thighs. You appear at my side, mouth perpendicular to

my ear, your pants billowing above
the ground, puffing like pastries, popping like
popcorn as your heels
bounce up and down,
the gaze of
your ice-blue eyes
reaching the ceiling.
You look really pretty, you nod
and tell me before you
bounce away, back to where you
came from,
and I wonder
why it's taken you
so many months to tell me.

September 24th

I know you loved me when you
messed me when I was in
New York, 2,668.57 miles away
from home. While I was sitting in my
sister's oncologist's office,
500 mL of sodium chloride
pumping through her veins
like poison trying to flush out
another poison, and you told me you
missed me and
were thinking of me.

I know you loved me when
I told you my sister had cancer,
and your eyes grew ample
and opalescent like the sky an hour
after dawn, as you sat and listened to
how sad I was.

I know you loved me when
you sat with me on
my bed for two hours, waiting for
the safe cover of nightfall to
sneak on the adjacent construction site
after I
had just come out of the
shower and looked at you with
my bare eyelashes wondering what you
would think of me now that I
had washed the artificial beauty off

my face.

But you crossed your legs
with me, all the while scanning my
naked skin as if searching for
imperfections you could not find,
and your lips spread wide to
smile at me the same way
you do everyday and
your pupils rose like
helium balloons because
you loved me,
and have loved me
for many untold months.

I know you loved me when I
lay next to you in your bed,
cloaked in your plaid pajamas,
my head nestled next to yours on
your pillow as I told you what
your friendship meant to me.
You put your hand to your heart and
told me what a great honor it was,
then grew quiet as your eyes
touched the ceiling and didn't shut
for some time, and you didn't sleep
even though you
were tired.

I know you loved me because you
didn't touch me that night but you
lay next to me softly, azure wide-open
glimpses watching me gingerly
close mine as you
thought about how you loved
me, but didn't know how to tell me, as I
thought about how I loved you, but
didn't know
how to tell you.
I wonder if you/I ever will.

upon meaning

Time and distance are the
biggest deterrents of love,
but they are also its
biggest justifiers.

