

I Hardly Know Much about Love

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I hardly

know much

about love

but.....

Our knees brush on the bus. There is the smell of peonies in the air, and the boys next to us probably haven't shaved in over five days. You smile, mouth large and wide, and pass me an earbud. It is corded (you are the only person I know who uses corded earbuds these days), and the melody of *Bonnie and the Jets* takes over the narrative as end-of-the-school-day-chatter circles around us. The air is a bit too warm, causing the seats to turn to honey, sticky, as sweet as you. I hope I am not sweating too much, and that I don't have anything stuck in my teeth, and I wonder if you are thinking about our knees touching as much as I am thinking about you.

Our knees brush on the bus. And you are wearing a bright blue sweater. The kind that brings out your eyes, and matches the tone of your laugh, and I watch you through the lens of my camera. *Your face is too far in the shadows*, I tell you, and you lean closer, closer to me, but really just more into the sun. Click, and there you are, stored in my camera like something from a history book. When I get home, I'll look at it (just once so it's not creepy), and hope you don't think I am only talking to you because of your looks.

Our knees brush on the bus, and it's gray

outside, the type of gray that you seem to shine within, as if you take everyone else's damp mood as nothing more than a challenge to pursue. You smile, your foot pedaling up and down to the shared music between us. *Ain't no sunshine* this time, and the dirty yellow shoes you wear bounce in beat to the tune and I notice your pink socks poking through the holes in your shoes. I am drawn to your color, and when you take a pen out of your bag to draw a star on my hand you add some of that color to me. I don't wash my hands for three days after that, at which point I realize I am being a bit ridiculous (not to mention unsanitary), and rub it off all in one go.

Our knees brush on the bus and you put your head on my shoulder and push yourself a little closer to me and suddenly there is so much more of you I need to touch. I think, if forever was just us on this bus, I would be here to stay. Yet I know this is life, (and I hardly know much about love), but as you pass me an earbud, I wonder if there could be anything more intimate than sharing music on a crowded bus, noticing even the smallest things:

a butterfly's wing,

a new cotton spring,

and our knees allowed to touch.

I hardly

know much

about love

but.....

I know your favorite color. It's that teal in between two panes of really thick glass—like the table at your grandmother's house. You grabbed my hand when we walked towards her door—you had never done that before—and my breath tripped itself on the way out of my lungs. It was dawn when we visited, so little drops of dew still stuck to the grasses outside, the sun spilling its sweet syrup over the rolling hills in the distance. Your hair swung against your back, long and freer than I could ever dream of being. I don't think I ever told you that teal might just be my favorite color too.

There is teal in the ocean, did I ever tell you that? It flashes and falls with the rise of each wave, and I laughed despite myself when you said you didn't like the beach. It clashed with your color, the tone of your laugh, the little shell necklace strung round your neck. *It's the sand* you say *how it sticks to your skin*, and I wonder how you could hate such a tiny little thing. Still, I imagine us there, tangled and tied like the knots in your hair. One day I will wonder when they got there.

I found your color in a jewelry store. The teal

was wrapped tight with silver and I thought I could put it around... you. A declaration of love, for your strange crooked toe, and the way you eat chocolate (without breaking the bar) and suddenly I realized how far... I could fall. Because it turns out your color is everywhere, in the windows of *Joe's Muffin Store*, or the swoosh on the side of my new running shoes. You must have hired a crew (bought a ladder? found a production store?), for there is teal all over—like you painted the town—for it's even in Neptune, gummy sharks, and my favorite old cartoons.

But your seat is empty, and my sweatshirt smells a lot... cleaner. It's cold and rotten, thrown under my bed, and my eyes trip and tingle along its loose thread. And I know they all told me your laugh was too much, but for a while I thought I could deal as such.

but..... it turns out, the rumors are true

I hardly know much

(about love)

about you.