

Here's a list of spooky shit:

Stand up comedy

Old timey photos

My uncle who's a ghost hunter but also a fundamentalist who also gave me a copy of  
shakespeare's full works

pimples that haven't formed a head yet

anal sex

loud noises

slurping noises

I N T I M A C Y

V U L N E R A B I L I T Y

S E T T I N G B O U N D A R I E S

And

Say it with me

Facing my parents' and my own inevitable immortality and being V U L N E R A B L E

**\*\*S/O to Rivkah Reyes for that bit b/c I am not as funny nor clever as they are\*\***

What's scary to me is the idea of letting someone into my life so closely that they can trace  
my spine and make me feel safe. Without me wanting to punch them.

The idea of being in love scares the shit out of me.

I began to write letters to my future lover. They were called "Dear Future Lover."

**\*\*S/O to Jalyn for the inspiration\*\***

It was a daily practice in the hopes that I'd manifest the perfect person in my life. To  
combat that for so long, it's been scary to ask for the love I deserve. To admit I deserve  
anything. To declare I deserve love. To fall into arms not made of cactus.

What's wild to me is that we constantly exist as two beings; ourselves (who we are) and our  
higher selves (who we want to be.) And those forces are apart from each other, but are  
necessary for each other. Have you ever met a person who's like, I am content with who  
and where I am in every part of my life? If you have, they're either lying or boring.

I'm thinking of:

The necessity of apparitions.

Of having a vision and holding it high.

The necessity of ghosts.

My Dad is a cathedral.  
My dad is a factory.  
My dad is brewery, hootenanny, divorce court, funeral home.  
My dad is a tree.

Age rings forming on the toe of his left boot.  
I used to try to stick my finger into it to feel his toe when he'd take them off after a long day at work.

My Dad is smoke stack and rolling green hills.  
My dad is 7 minute calls every two weeks asking me about my apartment and my jobs.

My dad is forgetful.  
My Dad can't hear well.  
My dad is sun set cigarette, ragged breath, and belly laughs.

My Dad is trying.

In summer of 2017, my Dad fell off a ladder and hurt his back. At the time, he had been known to be a few drinks in by 9am, so I was mad him. And I stayed mad at him. My sister was going through a divorce and living in his basement. She'd call me to vent about how Dad is driving her nuts and how he'd ask her to do everything for him. Like, open a jar of fucking pickles. My Dad was bed ridden for three months. Then had a surgery and moved into a turtle shell, still complaining. Still unable to open the jar of pickles. A few blurry surgeries, medications, and hospitals later. He was back at it. At living. Moving more slowly now, but. Still.

My father is forgetful. And repeats himself a lot. He's only, like, 67, but carries a lot of ghosts (Oooo. Callback.) with him. He is made of ash and smoke and the salt of the earth. He installed heating and air conditioning units most of his life. And there's something that tugs at my heart about imagining my dad in crawl spaces, on his knees.

One time, I wrote a poem about him. That he was a cathedral and how we were scaffolding, holding him up. Skin, tough and weathered like stone. Firm, and immovable. But not holy. Not pious. With doors closed, shuttered even. Perhaps the stained glass windows that were once dazzling are now missing panes and gathering dust. Blown out from surviving fires and tornados. Its basement tunnels, roaming with ghosts and memories. Of friends that have died. Who he'd dreamed he'd be, before he had two little girls. Maybe that's where his first wife lives, hidden amongst the silent spaces, her laughter heard in surprise corners.

The one time I fell in love, I fell in longing. And the question was “Where in my heart does longing live?” I imagined Matt, folded into the crevices of my muscle, an impossible origami. He was secret. He was close.

After I moved out to LA and decided to move back to Chicago, I took a three week road trip by myself up the Pacific Coast Highway. I was in love. Matt. There’d be days when he was the only person I’d talked to. I’d imagine him in the passenger seat. Or his hand on my thigh as we careened the open road, windows down, sun blazing, a roaring wind, music LOUD. Driving into the sun set. Occasionally, I’d look over and see him sitting there, looking forward or he’d smile at me. I talked to him a lot, but he’d never respond. I took the twinkle in his eye as one would take a head nod. The last few nights in my LA apartment when I felt particularly broke and lonely, I’d imagine the tender weight of his hand, on my side. I’d imagine him, lying next to me and imagine his breath on the nape of my neck.

I remember I took myself camping among the sequoias and I got lost trying to find the camp ground after dark. I had no cell reception and the only music I had was the soundtrack from the movie “Away We Go” on repeat. I’d driven 8 hours (mostly in LA traffic) and had so desperately wanted to escape the city. Matt is a ghost who still follows me on Instagram. But he doesn’t live in my heart anymore because when I see him or think about him, it no longer flutters.

It took him 2 years, a lot of convincing, and a lot of breath to move out.

Sometimes I look at my hands and think of all the hands who’ve held them.

Sometimes, I think of my body and my thighs and my legs and think of all the bodies, and thighs and legs who’ve touched them.

Sometimes, I think of my body as a temple with graffiti on the walls.

The graffiti of touch. The ghost of you, you, you, you, and you.

I have gotten rid of everything that reminds me of you.

Burned and sacrificed.

The ghost of NO. The aliveness of YES.

And the radical LOVE and CONSENT it takes to breathe life into either.

And sometimes, I power wash my body, my thighs, and my legs, but the strokes still linger. Ghosts haunting holy ground.

One day, I will exorcize my own demons.

For now, I am getting to know them.

From a distance.

With compassion.

For now, I breathe in the nebulous transparency of who it is I want to be and ask “why not now?”