

DATING
A FAREWELL TO ADAM
written by *Danielle Ma* | December 5, 2015



This is the piece I've been too afraid to write, the piece I've put off for days, now weeks, quickly circling a month. At first, I didn't want to write it because I didn't want to fall apart. I didn't want to get pulled back into the pool of toxin I had just sucked out of my body. I also didn't want to give him any more power or presence in my life than he already had. Writing immortalizes people, for better or for worse, each moment and emotion crystallized into eternity.

The story of Adam & me is a trite boy-meets-girl tale, with the modern day matchmaker of Instagram. It's a story that has rippled out into the world, of our meeting, falling, & recovering. Well. Maybe I haven't fully recovered. I can't speak for him.

This piece is the ending to our story. The most epic chronicles have historically been trilogies, but my heart can just bear the weight of this sequel.

And so, on a windy Thursday right before Valentine's Day, I met Adam.

He was going to get there before me, I knew it. How did that always happen? He offered to cross neighborhood lines to meet me near my work. I was exactly one street away from the spacious, hiply decorated taco restaurant, and somehow, I was still a touch late. I had initiated the rendezvous, picking the most innocent of meals: lunch. Dinner's too sexy, breakfast plays coy, and brunch can't help but be adorable. Lunch is nondescript. With a defined ending, a need to return to the day's work.

I opened the door and scanned the entrance left to right. In a few rapid-fire heartbeats, I found him waiting by the stools. We exchanged smiles, hugs, and unspoken thoughts. He said something about it being packed, something about our table. I don't really remember. I don't even remember if I was breathing. His eyes though were perfectly grey-blue and thoughtful. They widened to take me in. That, I remember.

"Are you nervous?" I asked

He paused for a beat before saying, "No, are you?"

"A little," I admitted, unable to be anything but honest around him.

Visibly softened, hand grazed my back. "Don't be," he soothed.

It was too much already; my heart splintered quietly. We were shown our way to the table, and I remember wishing our conversation would be fine. Fine because fine is pleasant but forgettable. Fine because fine is not magical or impactful. Fine because I wasn't stupid enough to wish for it to be bad. We weren't capable of bad.

We reached our table and took refuge in the menus. Not as stunning as the grey-blue in front of me but much easier to comprehend. He ordered three tacos, and I got a quesadilla. And then we looked, we talked, we listened – simultaneously present and holding court with our inner monologues. Apparently, we weren't capable of fine, either. Our conversation flowed easily and wonderfully as I told him about my boss & the other people I work with. The most vivid characters, I described them to him, and he asked if I had known them from before.

"No. I just bond with people quickly."

A instant smile spread across his face, "Yeah. I know."

He then told me about his work trip adventures, the sweetest Christmas presents from family, and the New Year's plans he ditched. It was in this last story that he slipped,

"We di—I didn't do anything."

His retracted use of "we" lingered in my consciousness as I pictured him with his girlfriend. The scene silver and gold in my mind, the sparkly colors of New Year's Eve. With no plans, nothing to do but be together, kissing or laughing or fucking as the clock struck midnight. More splintering.

We neared the point in our meal in which I had to give it up. I had to say the reason I wanted to meet, the reason I had asked him to the most innocent of meals. So much had happened since we last saw each other two months earlier. When I originally wrote about that night, I wasn't expecting him to write back. But he did. He did, and I fell into his adoring words, his intensity that burned brightly & matched mine. And it was a spiral that never stopped. We continued to talk, and I continued to turn him into poetry. But it had to end. It had to all stop, and I had to be the one to stop it.

The check came. He insisted on paying, and then we stalled. Finally, I started,

"You know when you first told me you had a girlfriend? You said we should stay in touch, on Instagram or however. And I was well adjusted & fine & said yes. Well. I can't do that anymore."

His response was immediate, "I completely understand."

"I mean, I can't do any of it."

"I get that."

— Later, I would tell one of my best friends about this, about his instant, resolute understanding. Knowing me well, she wouldn't have to ask what I meant or how I felt. She gently told me, "Well, babe, he has nothing to fight for you with." How right she was. —

"Okay," I bit my lip and thought aloud, "I barely know you. It's not supposed to hurt this much."

His expression answered my musing. Something between us was breaking, and we both felt it.

Eventually, our legs carried us through the restaurant, back into the biting New York air. He pulled me close into a hug, a close-my-eyes, breathe-him-in, never-let-go hug that made me dizzy with emotion. Before I had time to pretend to compose myself, he pulled a colorful stack of chocolate squares out of his pocket,

"Happy Valentine's Day."

The splintering spidered into a full break. There was no longer hope in pretending; I wouldn't be able to meet his eyes again. So I turned to go, leaving pieces of our relationship strewn on the pavement as I made my way back to work. My muscles were on autopilot, weaving through people and crosswalks. Every second that I didn't cry was surprising to me. Maybe this time, I wouldn't. Maybe tears were a limited resource, and mine for him were used up.

Back in front of the glass office doors, I realized I had left my keys inside. I had to call someone to let me in. I dialed my safest option, and she came to get me. The second those doors opened, the tears came. She took me into an unused conference room, and I cried and cried and cried on a bright blue couch. I cried for our connection that would never be realized. I cried because I knew I would miss him. I cried because I wished desperately that we could be friends. I cried because I knew that was impossible.

I still think about him sometimes. I wonder what it would be like to run into each other. The boy I'm seeing now knows about him, about the last person to touch my heart. I imagine our coupled selves meeting at that little annual food festival downtown. Hand in hand with our respective loved ones. Happy & healthy & whole, with just the slightest splintering twinge of what could have been.

ADAM BREAKUP DATE DATING FAREWELL RELATIONSHIP VALENTINE'S DAY

0 comment | 0 hearts | f t i g +



DANIELLE MA

Danielle is a passionate twenty-something living in New York City with too many interests and not enough time in the day. She works at a boutique ad agency next to her favorite building, the Flatiron, and spends a lot of time in parks with coffee. She frequents food festivals, listens to science podcasts, explores comedy clubs, and writes, a lot. She diarizes the moments and conversations in her life, writing mostly about dating, love, and sex in the city on her blog. Here's The Thing.

previous post

PUSHING THROUGH VULNERABILITY POST-BREAK UP & HOW IT CAN BE EMPOWERING

next post

STOP CALLING GIRLS 'PRETTY'

YOU MAY ALSO LIKE



WELCOME TO MY CRAZY THOUGHTS BEFORE MEETING MY EX
April 25, 2015



TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF TINDER
January 25, 2015



WHAT I WISH I HAD KNOWN DURING MY FIRST HEARTBREAK
September 11, 2014

● ○ ○ ○

Type and hit enter...

KEEP IN TOUCH



THE TSL NEWSLETTER

TSL's latest and greatest in your inbox to start off each week!

Name...
Email...

INSTAGRAM



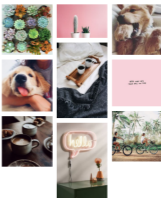
FROM THE ARCHIVES

- Top Tips On Seeing Your Ex For The First Time**
December 23, 2014
- Are You the Only One Putting in Effort?**
June 5, 2015
- Questions Guys Want To Ask Girls**
July 13, 2014
- Why Having Different Opinions In A Relationship Is Healthy**
July 25, 2015
- Should've Put A Ring On It!**
July 1, 2015

TWEETS

Missing consumer key - please check your settings in admin > Settings > Twitter Feed Auth

PINTEREST



THE DETAILS

Privacy Policy

Terms of Use