

bloody at the knuckles

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by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

collection of writing snippets about the goldfinch

Notes

someone suggested that i put these on ao3 as well as tumblr, so here. mostly prose-ish stuff.
most of these are posted at vegaschapters on tumblr!

Chapter 1

so you kiss him. right there in the street, taxi waiting, clumsy teeth on teeth, the smell of blood hitting your nose before anything else.

you kiss him until your lungs give out but you keep cradling his face because you love him too much and this would be the way to go, you've been expecting him to kill you from the start. you held his head under the water that one time, but now you're the one who is drowning. who will save him in new york? who will steal for him there?

there are cars in the street in a city like that and you won't be there to push him out of the way or lie next to him. you steal his heart and keep it wrapped in newspaper and you hide it away, you're chained to it like the bird's foot to the platform, hoping he will be chained to you the same way and come back. either for you or for the painting.

so you see him in the street again, not lying down but standing tall, visibly stiff when you call his name. and you think he might kill you again, you want him to, you deserve it and you know this.

you took from him like he took himself away from you, and you're willing to die for it, to keep his heart safe again. but he knows you and he sees you and he turns around, all he mentions after it goes down is the bullet in your arm, and you think yes, this was worth it.

i would steal from him again and lie down in the street. i would let him kill me for loving him too much. but he stays. and things aren't okay, but he knows now, and you know that he knows, and you're still alive.

so that is more than you dared to think of when you were 16.

Chapter 2

of all the things i've touched, you're my favourite.

i've had blood in my mouth before, but never blood as sweet as this, your bloody knuckles to my bloodied mouth (i'm sorry we both got hurt that night). we stole a lot back then, nobody could tell that it wasn't our bodies alone filling out these jackets, and we shared with eachother by nature, no questions asked (i'm sorry i broke the rules).

there were hands and lips in the dead of the night, was it you or the desert making me warm to my insides? rules about where and when and how, we hoped nobody knew, you wouldn't even write it down, remember? (i'm sorry the cab driver saw).

you wouldn't stop screaming about my arm in the car, but i would have taken a bullet to the heart, the brain, both legs and my soul to bring back what i took from you, what we shared, what was taken from us (please see what i'm trying to tell you).

i dragged you back from the road and to the house more than once, i could deal with the screaming and resistance, that was nothing new, but i'll drag you back to life and i'll drag you to antwerp, i'll drag you forever and beyond with me (i'm sorry i can't give you more than forever, i'm sorry if it's not enough).

(i'm sorry about the bloody knuckles and i'm sorry you never got married) / (i'm sorry your heart is in a glass box now, 5 dollar entry to see your mother in a museum again) / (i hope things end with a different explosion this time around)

Chapter 3

love doesn't break you, it's just a punch in the face and a broken nose, holding your head under water, knowing neither of us would ever kill each other, but that it wouldn't be such a bad thing either way.

you're too intense, i get too cold, i'm sorry, we both know how this story goes. the desert heat gives me burn marks on the inside but there's a hairband tying cold wet stuff around my heart (it needs dusting, like it's been hidden away for too long, like i haven't been using it, like it's been wrapped in newspaper and hidden in backpacks, behind bedframes, stolen and hidden away again).

i'm impulsive, i'm reckless, i'm sorry, i'm unafraid (spot a lie or two among the adjectives), you think i'm a hot knife but i only burn myself, we're both spread too thin and our bread is too stale to really tell who's spreading who anymore. do you blame a knife for cutting or do you blame the arm that's guiding it (i don't know which is which and neither do you but i feel myself melting and i feel you melting with me, i don't know how to turn the heat off but i kind of like being this close, we can't talk. it isn't real when we can't talk.)?

i'll let you, i'll let you, i don't know what yet, but i think i've lost my head so i'll just let you. it's that simple. this part has no narrator, our voices melted together in a container standing on the kitchen counter, it's unsalted butter but there's something bitter about losing yourself and not knowing why. eat up, enjoy.

you don't try to break me but i bend my knees to fit the shape of your body inside my bedframe. i think i've killed for you. i don't think you asked me too.

i think i stole from you, i think i did it out of love.

you can't relax around me but you can sort of drown in it, sharing our bed like castaways (promise me i won't be a castaway alone), there's more heat but i can't tell the desert from burning iron anymore. we can't afford butter for much longer and we haven't made up our minds. the bread is nothing but crumbs digging their way into the carpet. there's a fresh pat of butter on the counter, this one hasn't melted. there's a knife by the stove, but both are cold. we should go to the store. something's missing and i'm getting cold.

prompt: not to me, not if it's you

there's a line from one of your mother's old songs, i hummed it before you left, a last attempt to get you to stay. it's crackled out through tangled headphones in the middle of the night more times than i can count. i know what it meant then, i know what it means now, i really wish the night could last forever.

but i guess you closed the door, i guess it didn't last forever, i guess it was too much too little too fast too late, and now i'm sorry. it's not regret, it's remembrance, it's knowledge, it's holding my own hair back bent over in the bathroom knowing i'll have to clean up myself, knowing there won't be any barking when i enter the door, understanding why you liked to lie in the middle of the road and knowing why you yelled at me when i dragged you back into the house. you called it rotten work but it never was, rolling your body to the other side of the pavement at the first sight of headlights (there were never any headlights, i was just careful and out of my mind, i'm sorry i forced you to stay alive with me). i took something that didn't belong to me, but you trusted me enough to tell me it existed, and i haven't been trusted before, hands ghosting cheeks and hipbones in the dark but never in the daylight (bright light hurts your head, the aftermath of a night spent trying to forget, but finding specks of drywall and dust at the bottom of the bottle), so just trust that i will return, come back from the dead even if you're dead. you might have left but here i am, desert heat delirium, nursing your heart wrapped in paper at the bottom of my wardrobe. if you're dead, know that you weren't rotten work, it wasn't work, it wasn't hard to be young and reckless and hold back those three words we both knew well enough (i think you wrote it down somewhere). this was what we did, what i do, what you might be doing if the new york roads are empty enough to let you live.

and it's been ten years. you're still alive but you look like the pale hollywood stars of black and white tv, like ghosts in the snow, memories of vegas hidden in a storage room downtown. you're still alive, and i hope you've started to care for yourself like i care for you, and i'm sorry that i didn't think taking the small image of a bird and a chain would be so much like ripping your heart out, but the aftermath is hitting me like a bad hangover. so here i am, watch me and my bleeding arm, every drop of blood painting the picture of the times i've cared for you. i may have stopped bleeding and your pills may have run out, but the pictures are still being painted, one day at a time, amsterdam to antwerp, vegas to new york, i'll take care of you. you won't have to call it rotten work, you know now, we both know well enough. not to me. not if it's you.

Chapter 5

i would recognize you without the black eyes.

i would know you sober in the coldest spot on the planet. i would know you opposite and equal, left and right, like the back of my hand. better than the back of my hand because it's not like i know myself that well, who i was, who i am, who i will be. so maybe you're my hands right now, that's okay, i knew i would need you forever the first time i saw you. i can't cut off my hands, but i want to when they reach out to touch you.

it's you in a 3 am nightmare, you i'm singing to in the middle of the wreckage, it's you, and you, and you.

and then it's not you for a long time, but i'm still consumed by you and confused by you (and you, and you) in a way that makes my ribs ache.

i have known you in a place where i couldn't read 'sobriety' in a high school text book, and i've known you before i knew that i could know you.

blood of your heart, but i'm bleeding out.

i knew you the morning after i almost died. i saw my mother, and i saw you, you, and you, stealing from my plate in a hotel room, and i've never felt quite so clean while being so dirty. sometimes i think you're the only clean part of me.

so, i knew you. and i know you, and you leave sometimes, that's okay. i don't usually stick around. sometimes i think you like me better with a needle in your arm. but i'm the blood of your heart and i'll pump you alive alive forever.

i didn't know you when i knew you, but i knew that i loved you when you left me. well, really, i left you, but you stood still and i drove away and it still felt like you were the one leaving.

i'm on a bus and my heart's missing and i won't know this for years but it's in your closet and it's you because it's always been you and i hate that it's you but it's you so i can't really hate it that much.

you do these things to make me hate you so i can't hate myself, and i love you, and i know it's you, and it's you, and you, and you, and i can't breathe in an amsterdam hotel room.

i think i died in the desert next to you. i think i woke up in your bed in new york. i think i died in amsterdam, you died in amsterdam, we'll be bleeding immortals in antwerp and i'll die in your arms or i'll live away from you.

because it's you. and it's always been you, every you, every self, every version, every life.

you've found me each time i've died, you've found me in my afterlife

it'll always be you, and you, and you. maybe it's me, too.

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