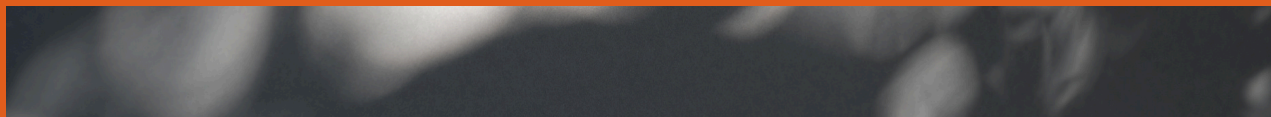




IF THERE'S SOMEONE OUT THERE



## • The Lobby •

I'm waiting in the lobby,  
face full of freshly-dried tears,  
just wanting somebody to say that they love me,  
and comfort all of my crying-in-waking fears.  
I thought I had gotten used to being alone,  
watching the sun rise without somebody  
on the other side of the phone,  
but that was before I realised that  
all of my friends were getting married,  
and I was still standing on the side of the road  
with a bag full of exes that needed to be buried.  
I should just burn it,  
unlearn it,  
let the ashes rest at the base of the river  
where the gardenias used to grow,  
pluck the flowers and the weeds that  
I so stubbornly allowed to be sowed  
in every wooden panel of my now-hollow heart,  
but I can't,  
because I won't lie and tell you  
that this agony doesn't bring me a certain kind of warmth,  
knowing that before the pain and the bloodstain,  
someone actually cared about me,  
enough to hold me in the coldest conditions  
when we were fighting for our love up north.

but alas,  
I am faced with reality,  
that I am cold and alone,  
with sins to atone  
and flames to be fuelled,  
with great cans of gasoline.  
do I not deserve to have my shackled heart set free?  
unbound by a body that could  
let me rest my head on their shoulder  
as time went by and we grew older.  
I ring the bell with great despair,  
wanting to know if there's someone out there  
that would want my company,  
and before my sadness could kill me any further,  
I hear a voice,  
summoning me to the thirteenth floor.  
this voice,  
it has a familiar afterglow wrapped around it,  
but I am naive,  
and so I see it as new,  
and without fail,  
this voice compels me to crawl up thirteen floors,  
in the hope that I could be hers,  
and feel her beating heart beat against mine.

and so I arrive at Room 304,  
and stand at the door  
where a small gust of wind pushes it open,  
and there she stands,  
the one that left me all those years ago.  
I turn and I run,  
straight down the stairs  
and through thick waves of her raven-black hair,  
all until I pass through the lobby  
and I'm standing outside.

DIALING, DYING



you told a friend of a friend that I wasn't doing too well,  
like it was some sort of sick, twisted bombshell,  
but I,  
I get it,  
it's odd for me to not want  
to take advantage of the sun outside,  
because instead,  
I'm counting til five,  
to pop my next pill and die slowly on that same hill,  
where I swallow hospital lights and count to nine,  
leave one second for myself to die inside,  
just to come back to life,  
then want to die a prize and not a mangled token  
of something once good turned to shit,  
because all I wouldn't want  
was to look down from heaven,  
and see that I'm remembered  
as the guy who took hit after hit,  
and didn't say anything  
until it was too late for even a compromise,  
but if I had the chance,  
would I have saved myself  
from all degrees of devastation?  
those burns with enough heat to scorch a nation.

I just don't know,  
all I can ask is for you to forgive me for my indiscretions,  
the things I should've shared,  
rather than lying to myself  
until they became too much to bear.

THIS WARM NOBODY

you look good,  
sat across the table from me,  
and if everything was to just stop,  
you'd hear our hearts humming in harmony,  
but it's not like that,  
because I could never make it go quiet,  
at least not with this obstruction in my mind,  
a little thing called you not understanding me,  
and I don't know if I should label it as such,  
a distraction,  
because it's true,  
you don't understand me,  
none of you do,  
and none of you ever will.  
I see through you because  
all of you see right through me,  
but the difference is;  
I don't do it on purpose,  
you just happen to shine brighter than the crescent sun,  
and you do look good while you do it,  
but all that does is illuminate the emptiness inside of you,  
those hollowed hallways filled with nothing,  
and maybe I should give you a chance,  
because nothing is at least something,  
right?

YOU DON'T



UNDERSTAND ME

I'm so blind,  
that as I get up to run to the bathroom,  
I knock over an old version of you in the process,  
but who can blame me,  
I saw right through you and didn't notice you were there,  
and I know that isn't fair,  
I should probably change my prescription,  
and you'd ask if I meant glasses or pills,  
but who the fuck cares.

WHAT DO WE CALL THIS?

alcoholic,  
that's what they called you,  
diving in dazed and drunk in the dead of night  
through the bathroom window like a dying playwright,  
and I fought for your good name,  
tooth and nail and all,  
heck,  
I even took the fall,  
when they found the evidence  
of what you really were,  
a third-degree adulterer;  
but wait,  
I'm still defending you,  
and it's killing me  
to stay loving you.  
the men at the bar called it  
a modern tragedy ... but I'd call it a testing of my capacity,  
to see how far you could drive that nail in  
before I screamed out for the friend  
who didn't protect you like I did,  
just to tell them that they were right about you all along,  
that you were nothing but the subject of a folk song,  
written to deter everyone from your type,  
seething and lying and trying to seem like they were  
something they were not,  
and that single thought plagued me until I turned to rot,  
writhing from the inside,  
drowning in a cold, high tide.



you're a **firestarter**,  
a captivating mix of arson and starting shit  
that you can't afford to stir,  
listening to your neighbours through the thin plaster wall  
to find something you can use to abuse  
and make a buck or two  
to buy the usual from the one behind the diner.  
I knew you then,  
but I know you more now  
and what a shame,  
to see you spiral like this  
but I can't spiral with you for any longer,  
I'm done.

**RUNNER**

I COULD NEVER LOVE YOU  
I COULD NEVER LOVE YOU  
I COULD NEVER LOVE YOU  
I COULD NEVER LOVE YOU  
I COULD NEVER LOVE YOU  
I COULD NEVER LOVE YOU

we were young,  
free,  
two dormant bodies who were meant to be  
bound by the hip through a slip of the tongue,  
and before you or I could blink,  
we were swimming in a perpetual,  
lovestruck and unbroken brink,  
a swirl of proportions that no alchemist could define,  
a liquid haze where I could call you mine,  
and for two years, three months and one week,  
everything was fine,  
and just fine,  
because at some moments,  
I felt like I was levitating  
high above the clouds in joy and delight,  
and in others,  
like I was damned and suffocating  
on the mouthful of apple of which I took a bite,  
one that looked like heaven but tasted like hell,  
and looking back,  
it's clear that decision did not serve me well.

I know you're reading this,  
and so I'll ask,  
was any of your love true?  
I gave you all of me,  
and wrapped myself in everything of you  
until I turned the darkest shade of blue,  
and yet you still let God come between us,  
cross so many lines  
until he ended up with us in the bedroom,  
staring down in disbelief,  
and that frightened you to no end,  
to the point where you couldn't pretend,  
that what you wanted was my love,  
and don't even try to lie to me,  
because weren't you the one  
who went to bed each night quoting Psalm 34:13?  
I've signed faithless treaties  
to try to get you off my chest,  
plastered battle wounds  
to show them that I could forget  
the moment you painted  
each wall of the home we built in grey,  
and threw all our photos in dust-ridden frames  
into a box and dumped it in the attic.  
I won't use a swarm of rhythms or rhymes,  
because I'm just a boy who wants back his time,  
as I could've spent it on somebody else  
if I had known that this would be the end result.

I could never love you,  
again,  
because I've moved on  
and so have you  
with some guy I don't know much about,  
other than his misguided belief that you're still a virgin,  
but does he know?  
know that his holy one isn't so holy after all.

DISTANCE

## *South of France*

I'm standing still,  
perched by the windowsill,  
waiting and watching for her  
to come into frame,  
to take my last name,  
be my eternal flame,  
the centrefold of this waiting game,  
and then it hits me,  
like bullet casings falling on the frontline,  
like the stubborn reading a sacred text  
and feeling so asinine,  
does she even feel the same?  
does she care to come back and write one,  
two or ten a new page after what we  
captured in last night's photo frame?

those illicit moments stay silent,  
swaying in the arms of a defiant crescent shower,  
one wanting to bring forth  
something from this singular affair,  
hold together the now-growing tear,  
that simply conceals an older wound,  
one that feels forever doomed  
to stay open.

why is it that I have this desire?  
do I miss the flames of a warmer fire?  
like the one my last lover lit to keep away the  
frost when we were fighting up north?  
how could I not want that,  
the finality I felt run through my veins  
as we stood on frozen ground,  
staying silent as our demons breathing  
was the only sound  
that played as we clenched our breaths  
waiting for cleaner air to come,  
and it did,  
but even the good can fall apart,  
and it did.



it was only hours ago  
that I came close to forgo,  
those moments held up by shaking pins  
that foresaw all of the sins,  
I was about to commit,  
and commit them I did,  
as she took me south of France,  
and as she did,  
I thought as to how this had  
started with one dance  
that started with two pairs  
entangled from across the bar,  
while the only three thoughts in my head  
were about the time I crashed my car,  
speeding to escape the pain  
and the location of all my  
battered window frames.

I am delusional,  
to think that this summer fling  
could turn into wedding rings and two children.  
what a narrative that has been spun,  
and I just let it run,  
like the faucet did the night she almost overdosed.  
I know this,  
and yet I stay,  
right at the epicentre of this orange haze,  
smiling and crying and trapped in a fucking daze,  
but I wouldn't have it any other way.

I am yours,  
a complete vessel that only lives for you.  
I am yours,  
a full machine that you don't see through.  
I am yours,  
a giver that would give you all of him until he turned blue,  
because there is nothing that I wouldn't do to run my hands  
through your hair at the autumn fair in the middle of a light  
shower at an evening hour where only we remained.  
I replay the moment I laid eyes on your fair skin,  
dark hair, soft eyes and warm glow  
and replay it until the film in my head begins to flow like  
the end credits to a coming-of-age where you wonder what  
happens in the next frame,  
and ponder on this in the shower,  
on a morning walk,  
a train ride  
and moments before you sleep at night,  
but you never find an answer,  
just like I could never find an answer to the question of how  
a single look could make me fall to my knees and beg for  
any piece of your perfect history,  
just so I could make new memories in its place.



I remember our first night at the beach house,  
the moment I leaned in to kiss you and you leaned in too,  
and I felt every part of me quiver  
at the thought of what we could become,  
and no,  
it wasn't jumping ahead,  
it was just forward thinking,  
and I hope that this would save me  
should this ship ever be sinking.  
I love you,  
so much so that I would let you rip me from limb to limb,  
claw your way into my heart,  
and feast on every part  
that moved when it felt you,  
wept when it held you,  
hoping each time wouldn't be the last.  
I lay under this lamp post,  
watching you feast on my organs,  
and I smile as I study you eating up my love,  
and all of the above,  
while blood drips from your chin.  
if this is what it feels like to be eaten alive,  
let it never end.

# ~~FROZEN GROUND~~

how did we get here?

standing in the midst of this quiet blizzard.

when did the future become something to fear?

a collection of sleepless nights

where all we saw was our love, withered.

I never could've imagined this,

how an endless summer could turn so cold,

and there we'd be in the eye of the storm with enough

warmth from each other to reminisce,

on the open field days where we had sworn to uphold the

love that had withstood every dagger that swore to tear us in

two fragments at almost every waking moment where we

woke up next to each other,

under the sun or the stars or even now,

laying on the frozen ground,

chilled to the bone,

with our breath as the only sound with sins to atone, as you

breathed a deep breath when I said I wanted something

more, and I had breathed a deep breath when I had slammed

the door in your face at half past four on that evening in

July, because all I wanted to do was to cry in agony and

disbelief, as I no longer knew what you meant to me, and

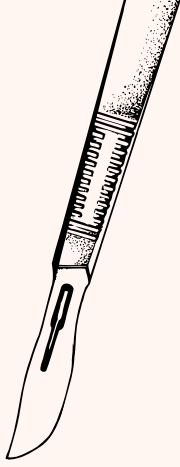
that was bigger than any Shakespearean tragedy, as I could

not do much about nothing as I thought you had faded from

me into obscurity, leaving behind just your outline in the

passenger seat, and leaving me as the only soul in this car.

we've been here before,  
so why don't I feel that it could turn into something more,  
as it usually does.  
is this the end of the road?  
have we reached our destination?  
a dead end,  
a frozen wall,  
our bodies blistered with frostbites and a baited breath  
being let out to to whisper that it's time to go,  
and put this battered story to rest,  
and let our legacy to attest,  
that we fought a cold war before we died  
and let our carcasses smash onto the floor,  
and that we gave up because we no longer envisioned more.  
  
that might have been the happiest ending for us.



# Surgery

please,  
can't you do something small?  
I know you can see my broken heart  
beating out of me like an unstrung guitar,  
throwing blood on the white walls  
with every odd, celestial pound.  
but I don't need surgery,  
I just need something temporary,  
as I have a role to play,  
that happy boy who smiles through  
the pain of his bleeding heart,  
even though he knows he could collapse at any moment.  
just hurry,  
I have people to please and damning air to breathe,  
so some stitches will do,  
and don't bother with the good kind,  
someone is bound to tear me open again soon,  
I just can't tell whether there's a higher chance  
of it being a werewolf on a full-moon  
or the person I gave my life to.  
I'd rather the werewolf,  
because at least I could excuse them  
for being under the influence.



# I KICKED A HORNET'S NEST

seventeen,  
and there I was,  
a battalion of broken dreams  
and a face covered in ghostly gauze,  
racing down the side street  
with the twins from three houses down,  
ice creams melting in our hands  
as we ran with a will to leave this town,  
and find some thing in some body in some place,  
a warmth, a story, heck, just a different face,  
as we had studied every patch of grass on every front lawn,  
and breathed every breath of fresh air  
that came from staying up until dawn,  
and think of leaving we did,  
until the weight pushed on our eyelids,  
and we slept and gave in to the sound of the silence  
telling us that it was not our time to leave yet,  
but I digress,  
I had this chapter, these friends, these desires,  
all in the palm of my hand,  
and I just threw it away;  
all because I kicked a hornet's nest;  
and I could tell you that I tripped,  
but you and I both know that it would be a lie.

eighteen,  
and there I was,  
standing on the shore,  
still driving people away,  
just so I can fuel the notion that  
I needed to have little company to live through another day,  
because that's my thing,  
I meet someone and push them off  
the ledge before they have the chance to strike,  
because I plague myself with damned thoughts of the  
'*what ifs*' and the '*how comes*'  
and that severs any connection  
I have ever had or want to have.

nineteen.  
I can't do this anymore,  
you get the picture,  
I'm a fucking problem.

HUNTING SEASON



wilting roses lay in death on the coffee table  
as I lay in surrender writing this ironclad fable,  
a gripping exposé of mangled thoughts  
that I lay out for you like an open buffet.  
but don't think that I'm still distraught,  
I've chosen to walk in reverse on barbed wire lane,  
and look from afar at me washing my blood down the drain.  
I owe my completeness to a series of devastating events,  
ones that have set rather alarming precedents,  
for what I'd feel for years to come.  
and sure enough,  
I still sometimes go down like a sinking battleship,  
but nothing quite reaches  
the deafening lows of some time ago;  
winter evenings where the salt  
from my tears would strike open wounds,  
keeping me warm and somewhat composed.

I say somewhat because I was being  
held up by the thinnest of strings,  
a valiant eagle turned to a lowly bluebird  
who would sing the saddest of songs on plaid-shirt days  
where I was meant to be out and about,  
but instead,  
I was gripping to whatever part of me remained  
as I laid on the bathroom floor,  
and would continue to do so until four in the morning,  
and that might have been the final blow,  
as I had run out of shotgun ammo,  
and pointing the gun to  
the back of my throat became pointless.  
and so I complied,  
with the pleas of my family and friends to see some  
renowned therapist who would gladly listen to my worries  
and woes and watch as such recollections would make me  
writhe in an autumn-brown armchair,  
all for a small fee, of course.  
I didn't know whether any of the help would help,  
pull me out of this half-sunken grave,  
but yet I still gave all I had to find the will  
to crawl towards the light at the end of the tunnel,  
and finally funnel  
all the rot and misery out of me.  
I did all of this,  
so that if I couldn't find the will and I died,  
the people would say  
'at least he tried'.

DO ————— YOU ————— SEE  
ME ————— CRYING?

come closer,  
I don't bite,  
I just want to tell you something,  
break off a piece of how I really feel  
and shove it down your throat,  
ruin you for making me your personal scapegoat,  
a punching bag for all your pain,  
and a clean cloth for all your blood to stain.  
I really did take it all,  
and more,  
and didn't say a single word,  
even when all my lines were being blurred  
by self-inflicted concussions and hateful discussions  
with myself in the mirror at some highway motel.  
I soaked up all your deficiencies,  
like some pathetic, lowly sink sponge,  
doing so for years upon years  
and when my fantasies danced with my own fears,  
and I waltzed into the blue flame to burn,  
you weren't there to pull me out,  
in fact,  
you didn't make a single sound,  
you just did what you do best  
and that was to shut your door  
when mine was breaking down.

I hold your jaw with brute force  
and bring your face into the moonlight,  
just to see you one last time before I leave you behind.  
I'm not sad,  
I'm just mad,  
and that feels so juvenile to even write  
but I have no other words to describe the way I feel,  
and how funny is that,  
because you were my everything  
and I truly did love you like a brother,  
but now my mind doesn't even bother  
to think of you as anything  
but another thing that I'll let fly with the wind  
down the street where a promise was once made.

I say one last goodbye and turn and walk away,

JACKALS

Turmoil , burning

the fireplace crackles as the record comes to a halt,  
and the orange glow,  
the silence and my dried eyes  
take me back to two blue moons ago  
when I slammed into the asphalt,  
completely devoid of any life,  
a shell imbued with chaos and strife,  
once a mix of colours but now swirled into a deafening grey  
that would fill my airway  
each and every time I called out for help.  
I had the biggest wings,  
but they cut them off right there under the hospital light  
as they had become tainted  
by drops of blood that flew towards me  
and I shielded everyone but myself,  
I could only explain it as being the only book  
with their spine facing inwards on the bookshelf.



I feel the rich flames caress my cheek  
as I sit in great turmoil,  
tumultuously turning at the thought that I was once broken,  
a shattered dinnerware set made up of a scattered mind,  
a broken heart and bloody hands,  
each souvenir mutilated by a different tourist  
who had different intentions with me each time,  
and I said nothing as they tossed me around,  
and when they were done,  
they left me to fade away on some playground.  
how bittersweet,  
that I was once used and abused,  
and now I live silently without attention,  
it's a complex that I cannot define,  
or care to.

I take another sip of the whiskey,  
and stare out the window in drunken disbelief,  
no one's coming for me anymore,  
are they.

# INSOMNIA

I'll meet you at the diner,  
twenty past twelve,  
and yes,  
I'll be buying what you have to sell,  
a night with you under the stars,  
at some lookout that we'll get to in the stolen car,  
that's parked out front next to my childhood scooter,  
staring me down with its lifeless headlights.  
I can't sleep,  
the medication is useless,  
just a bunch of hard pills that puncture me and nothing else,  
how underwhelming.  
I stare at the ceiling,  
watching the fan spin as I lay like an unfeeling  
wretch with only ice-cold blood in my veins,  
a drawer of dislocated bodies on haunted home windowpanes,  
ones where the priest would exorcise  
the demons of the home and those of my own  
to partial success,  
as some would remain,  
invite themselves to my dinner parties  
and possess all the other guests,  
leaving me to be,  
as I'm sure you can see,  
I'm already haunted.

I grieve in silence,  
for this insomnia has taken hold of me,  
my words are fragments of something whole  
that has now left through the front door,  
but leaving an inch of it open for a potential reunion.

**THIS GIRL LOVES MY  
BROKEN ARM**

## *South of France (Reprise)*

I am ill,  
weak,  
sat by the windowsill,  
meek,  
staring out in disbelief,  
past the truth watching me,  
begging me just to see  
that she might have been a thief,  
but would it be right?  
she might have quietly left in the night,  
but she loved me,  
right?  
tell me something that's not awful,  
like she got lost along the way,  
but is surely coming back to me,  
because we shared a drink  
and slept together for fuck's sake,  
that has to mean something,  
right?

# YOU ARE A DANGEROUS THING

you were an arrow,  
laced with poison at the tip.  
you were a disruption,  
a quiet but raging blip,  
a ripple in my timeline,  
one that snuck into my mind  
like you did out of that evening gown  
and into something else,  
to see that other man at Bar 12,  
just to share a brief, inductive and longing stare,  
then proceed to fuck by the base of the rooftop stairs,  
and I felt that deceit in the pit of my throat  
as you slithered back in through the back door  
at the dead of morning,  
and slipped into bed as you breathed a breath of mourning,  
as you knew you had slaughtered whatever was left of us,  
pieces that I once wanted to discuss,  
unpack, bring life to,  
but now,  
I'll simply let those paper planes fly away with the wind,  
just as the jet does as it shoots  
airstreams over the country club,  
over us as I bubble under with sin,  
sitting with you on a sun-soaked table.

I stare at you with an empty gaze  
as you speak about your place  
in some high-end fashion firm,  
while I think about the lessons to be learnt  
from this low-end integration  
of my bruised heart and your blind arms,  
that wrap around me as you tell me you love me,  
but I no longer feel it,  
or believe it,  
we're just a pile of wreckage floating in a silent canal.  
you are a dangerous thing,  
you bruise me blindly,  
and watch as the pain turns me black and blue,  
like the sky was the night I wanted to walk away,  
but couldn't,  
as I was still drawn to you,  
and all those years of you building me up.  
how the hell could you throw  
that away for some misguided trust  
you felt from faceless figures whose story you didn't know.  
I was complete,  
stable,  
I could no longer be a new project with a dead pulse  
that you gradually brought back to life,  
I was just a throwaway to you now,  
so why is it that neither of us have left?  
I must like the pain and you must like the game,  
my God, we are a dangerous thing.

I'm standing in the pouring rain,  
water washing away all the bloodstains,  
that have gathered over time,  
thought one too many a dangerous climb,  
to find the exit,  
that green sign that flickered on the thirteenth floor  
or the basement door  
a tainted allegory in itself.  
I want peace,  
and for either myself,  
someone,  
or both to pick up my pieces,  
and carry them back to my car,  
so I can drive away from this perpetual grey.  
but you would never know this,  
know my mental state,  
because I do have a problem,  
but I won't tell you what it is.  
you won't see that I'm breaking down,  
I'm an expert at not showing it.



you'll only catch me with a solemn look,  
buried in a burnt book,  
trying to find the peace in the crowded pages,  
losing myself in separate stages,  
each broken piece bigger than the rest,  
but I'm sure that all the shadows could attest  
that I can put myself together again,  
over and over like a twisted turntable,  
I don't mind if my legacy becomes a sick fable,  
of how to not lose yourself to white picket fences,  
and the art of crafting shitty little defences,  
words I splashed out like wine on a white rug,  
that feel so out of place like a deafening drug.  
I'm a professional,  
I'd rather die before I show you my hurt,  
because if I did,  
I'd let you take me to court,  
and sue me for damage that can't be undone,  
and I might fight,  
tell the jury that you came too close to the sun,  
even after I put barbed wire all around me.

I gave you so many warnings,  
but you glazed past all of them,  
admirable,  
but ultimately stubborn.  
I turn and look back up at her ghost,  
staring down,  
without a smile or a frown,  
just a blank stare  
as she watches me look towards the horizon with readiness.  
  
anyway,  
my ride is here,  
it's time for me to go,  
it's been fun but I'm sure we'll do this again soon.

THE LOBBY  
INDISCRETIONS  
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ME  
FIRESTARTER  
I COULD NEVER LOVE YOU  
SOUTH OF FRANCE  
TO BE EATEN ALIVE  
FROZEN GROUND  
SURGERY  
I KICKED A HORNET'S NEST  
HE TRIED  
DO YOU SEE ME CRYING?  
TURMOIL, TURNING  
INSOMNIA  
SOUTH OF FRANCE (REPRISE)  
YOU ARE A DANGEROUS THING  
THE EXIT



WRITTEN BY NADIM SADAKA



**I**

**WON'T**

**BE**

**GONE**

**FOR**

**LONG.**