

High Yellow Dead Letter

Marcus Clayton

It's funny about 'passing.' We disapprove of it and at the same time condone it. It excites our contempt and yet we rather admire it. We shy away from it with an odd kind of revulsion, but we protect it.
— Nella Larsen

Because I've seen the underside of power / It's just a game that can't go on / It could break down any hour / I've seen their faces and I've known them all / We're on the wrong side of the power / It's a shadow / It's just a fire thrown across the wall
— Algiers, "The Underside of Power"

Dear J []¹,

You hated it every time I called you “famous.” Said you were a daughter of Ojai, CA, and only played enough gigs to pay electricity bills, but your Tinder photo convinced me that your name fit well on marquees and that you had a voice powerful enough to illuminate moons: The background an electric white, you sat with a semi-hollow electric guitar—an auburn burst Ibanez—firm on your lap, the strap slung across your shoulder like a hitchhiker’s bag. Your hair caught in the wind, the curls cascading away from the camera to better show the vivid olive skin accentuating sundry shades of both your mother and father. The photo was very punk. You didn’t get that the first time I told you. I tried saving the comment, mentioning you had “Sister Rosetta Thorpe” vibes; Black woman guitarist from the ’50s and ’60s who predated rock and roll. Her voice was powerful. I wish I could have shown you how she performed “Didn’t It Rain?” in 1964. She belted out *my angel’s got the key and ya can’t get in* with ferocity and without a microphone—everyone heard her clear even in actual rain as she casually strolled on a wet floor, big fabulous coat and golden wig, strumming a white Gibson SG to a roaring audience hypnotized by her confident Black hands. I wish I had her hands; they knew work and melody; they knew how to hold an audience’s gaze the way *she* dictated. But you said, “Oh, I *think* I’ve heard of her.” I moved on, doubling

¹ All instances of “[]” in this piece are intentional.

down on your fame, noting your Tinder picture, if nothing else, looked like a promotional photo for an upcoming single *by* an upcoming single. I don't remember if you laughed at puns, and I apologize if you don't.

I fear being pretentious. Growing up an Afrolatino punk, having both arms pulled by Black and brown folk alike, I become very protective of things I know make me feel whole. Music, especially, comforts me in times my monolingualism makes me feel less Costa Rican or when my light skin distances me from my Blackness. Seeing your guitar and your mixed skin made me believe you figured it out. The synthesis of blood and music cradled in your body, and I became jealous; needed to become your student in fitting pieces together.

At the time we matched, I adjuncted at community colleges, teaching composition to students unsure of their career or degree paths but who were certain the books I taught were boring. Nonetheless, I pretended it didn't destroy me to know the things I loved did nothing for them. I pretended to be at a 10 at all times, feigning the excitement and energy to teach them. As I told you, in my off time, I play in a punk band with other teachers. On stage, I also have to be at a 10. Punk calls for release, to let othering disintegrate into noise, so every show we play has to be violent. No one gets hurt, don't get me wrong. Between my job, my ethnicities, my pretension, my silencing of said pretension, punk allows me to surrender to the anger. I aim it at white folk, the folks who took rock and roll from Black musicians and placed it into Elvis's hands, and make noise louder than my own voice could handle. Of course, this is only some nights. Most of the time, I grade papers about why some white kid did not like *The Bluest Eye*.

Your job is music. God, I wanted that. One of the first things I said to you was how starstruck I was meeting a celebrity, which you answered with laughter. But my awe was sincere; you made money gigging at wine bars, Irish pubs, and courtyards in your hometown. Even in Ojai, where I quipped, "Isn't that where rich white people are invented?" your performances were respected. How could I not admire that? A Black woman—"dominantly" Black, as your white side stresses—making a living off audiences listening to your songs without interruption. No change thrown at your feet in a subway, no white simulacrum with painted lips and inflated white gloves—a caricature of the melodies you work hard to birth. But I do not want to be pretentious, so I'll just leave it at being jealous. It's more universal, I guess.

We didn't talk about music during the first date. Instead, we ate barbecue. Bludso's Bar & Que lives somewhere between Ojai

and Long Beach, so we agreed to meet up there for a quick “get to know you” dinner and beer. The drive came after a long day at work for both of us—yours in the studio, mine in a classroom. Rain clouds covered the afternoon sun.

On the drive, I listened to Janelle Monae’s *The ArchAndroid* front to back. I figured you would enjoy her stylings as much as I did, hoped her sound was a nice middle ground when the topic of music came up. Punk, I felt, was a lost cause, and my ardent disdain for Jason Mraz and Jack Johnson would not compliment your admiration for their styles. But I wanted to ask about how much you loved Monae; her fashion, her dance moves, her lyrics in “Cold War” where she exclaims, *I’m trying to find my peace / I was made to believe there’s something wrong with me / . . . this is a cold war—Do you know what you’re fighting for?*

The rain hadn’t started yet, so I walked inside dry as a bone. I scanned the benches inside after telling the hostess I was meeting someone. Your hair was a giveaway, full and coiled, covering your face as you sat alone on a bench with a blonde ale. You recognized me immediately, getting up to give me a hug. This was our first interaction in person, smiles and an embrace, as though we knew each other already. You wore a vibrant Marvel sweater, and I wore a muted black and gray plaid button up. We talked about the drive, then movies and comic books. We did not talk about Janelle Monae.

You swore by the tri-tips, but I avoided the greens. Being the only Black kid where I grew up, anything Black was the target of insults, of stereotypes, of othering by othered people. My high school friends made me afraid to be Black, unworthy to be Costa Rican. Since the school sat in the heart of South Gate, everyone was Latino. Being half Black, despite having lighter skin than theirs, I was the designated “Black friend,” their “free to make race jokes because we’re all oppressed anyway” friend, their “free n-word card” friend.

Most lunches, they exercised those “friend” privileges. Some walked up to me, patted me on the shoulder to say hello, following up with, “Oh damn, sorry! I hope that didn’t hurt the whip scars on your back.” Then laughter, Oh’s with fists to mouths, and I put on a smile because sixteen-year-olds need to avoid bridge-burning confrontations with “only friends.” I smiled when asked if the black gristle underneath the cafeteria stove was somehow related to me.

One lunch, the guys asked, “Where do you go to for fried chicken, foo,” when we discussed the best spots in South Gate for Ma and Pa grub. I was silent for most of that conversation because they were talking about taquerias in Spanish. English is

my mother's second language, but she never taught me Spanish. So quiet was my default.

"I wouldn't know," I told them. "I'm not big on fried chicken."

This was true, but the guys rolled their eyes, alluded to another time I told them I didn't like watermelon—also true—and told me I was the *nega-nigger*.

"You never do anything a real Black person does."

I was never a punchline in a Wayans Brothers flick or *Chappelle's Show* sketch, which disappointed them. I was not the Black they wanted. They only knew Black bodies from images in white history books and television; understood that white entertainers wore Blackness as costumes to make Americana feel cultured—the painted big lips, the gloves, the southern slang, the Black face. All to sanitize what I grew up to believe as beautiful, to tell me I am wrong. They were mad I wouldn't dance for them, and I was mad they wanted me to fight for the Blackness they gave me in lieu of the Afrolatino they didn't need.

Once, I felt their unfortunate acceptance when the lunch bell rang and I walked off to Honors Trigonometry. They split off to either woodshop or "Home period," and they were begging me to insult them back. Talk about them being illegal—even though they weren't. Talk about their broken-ass English even though it was perfectly fine, if not better than mine. Talk about The Salvadorian being a pinche cerote wannabe Mexican even though I'm also mixed and had no issues with Salvadorians. But I heard a rogue "come on, nigger" with an "er" hard as stone. I shouted back, "Well, I'm heading to a class that will help me *not* have to stand in front of a Home Depot after we graduate, so I'll see you guys later." Then came the Oh's with fists to mouths, and I walked away with pride reserved for As on trigonometry tests.

Don't worry; the pride washed away after class when I ran into The Salvadorian in the hallway before heading home. He was glowing with laughter, so thrilled that I "got them good." So happy to be dehumanized. It was all he and the others knew of joy—laughing at mutated cultures like a stand-up special, like a stereotype pixie begging Dave Chappelle to order fried chicken over fish. I really wish I could have laughed with them, but I didn't know what identity of mine had the best laugh track.

Luckily, I say none of this on our first date. I get the tri-tips and mac and cheese, and you school me on the differences between the Avengers' *Civil War* comic books versus the movie. A nice conversation. I kept a real smile going until my stout was empty and the last bite of my tri-tip was in my stomach. After I did my best to not rant about why Christian Bale's Batman

voice gets too much grief, we called it. Altogether, the first date lasted two hours, and I managed to keep my pretensions at bay like a rabid dog in a muzzle, hoping you would get my *Simpsons* references, praying you wouldn't quote *Milk and Honey*.

When we left Bludso's, it started to rain. Since we both parked in the pitch-black back-alley neighborhood a few blocks from Bludso's, I walked you to your car. You intentionally stepped in puddles with the protection of rain boots, but you let water drizzle into your hair. Your coat didn't have a hood, but you happily let your hair—so full, bursting with curls, unapologetically Black—drink the water. My dreadlocks were barely a month old, coddled with a tightly fastened bandana to avoid air, bugs, heat, and white people's hands, so I was amazed by your bravery to let your hair breathe despite the hazards of Earth.

You watched your steps like a child splashing puddles—the innocence of young boots learning to walk on water. We walked on the street itself and finished our conversation about comics. Your car was a quaint, white sedan. Maybe a little older than my car, and something that had seen its share of miles. I expected some form of Mercedes or an Audi fresh off the lot, but I guess even the most famous musicians tend to stick to beat up touring vans. I didn't say any of this to you because it sounded stupid. You kissed me on the cheek and drove back to Ventura.

The second date came about a week later when you gifted me a whole day of your presence. This time, we met up in Glendale to eat lunch at Porto's, where I swore by their potato balls. We sat in the center of rush hour, bodies coming in and out, standing in massive lines to order food and pastries. Many of them disgruntled. Regardless, your smile was unfazed. You wore boots again, designer this time. Your black jeans and red sweatshirt let you meld into the crowd, let you drink in anonymity like lemonade.

Luck allowed us to sit at a table to eat. You picked at your Cubano sandwich, but smiled as you swore you enjoyed the food. Trump had been inaugurated in the week between dates, so we couldn't help but vent about politics this time. I told you about my white allies friends who refused to vote for Clinton knowing Bernie was no longer in the running for President. You told me how red voters around your city were vocal about swallowing pride in order to cast a Republican vote in November—how backwards it should have been, we joked.

Then music came out of our mouths for the first time. You told me about performing protest songs the day of the Women's March. Driving down to LA was out of the question, so some music friends of yours got together in Ojai to talk about free-

dom, to tell each other that you were all visible in a crowd of angry Americans, to play songs and remember your voices still worked. In Ojai, people knew your name from marquees around the city, so to know you were using *that* name, the [] name, to spread peace of mind to people who all lost safety on the same night was a beautiful thing. When I said that, you didn't cringe. Whether you embraced the fame or were numb to it, you soaked in my allusion to your widespread appeal. You smiled. Maybe this was flirting.

Outside Porto's, D.A.R.E. asked us to donate. Normally I walk right past those tables—I don't hate charities; my anxieties simply intensify being broke and unable to give to said charities. You are much more extroverted, had much more money in your pockets, so you welcomed their requests, signed away a few bucks without issue. One of the helpers kept me company while you signed things. Asked me how my day was, asked me what we had planned and hoped it was nice, then asked if you were my sister.

Had he been a white guy, I would have chalked it up to some micro-aggressive ignorance and dumb curiosity. But he was a Black guy who saw past my light skin and into the texture of my baby dreads, the shape of my face, the tone of my voice. My mother's Costa Rican skin tone covered me more than my dad's, and my forced rejection of Blackness manifested from my high school friends often meant I kept forgetting I was Black. Sure, it came through clearly when the slurs hit me, or when cop cars pulled me over, or when my cousins in Costa Rica tried and failed to speak to me in Spanish and reacted with a nod of "of course you don't speak our language," but my high yellow and my privileges made me feel ejected from the Blackness I wanted to protect with academia. Regardless, the D.A.R.E. worker saw bodies born from Black ancestry, and he recognized our identities without question. Nothing *nega* about it. On a romantic level, a mood killer. When you finished, he and I ended our brief conversation, and I said nothing about how he confused us for siblings.

You remember, I know, going to the Museum of Contemporary Art shortly after. You remember consolidating our cars at Griffith Park, how I drove us to the museum while trying (and failing) to keep my cool with LA traffic. I couldn't tell if my brief outbursts against drivers impressed you or was an eventual deterrent, but I cursed at them with comfort. I cursed at them knowing you were on my side of these non-verbal arguments of the road. Nonetheless, the comfort in the car opened my mouth when my iPod sang on shuffle.

“Any requests?” I asked, as you said the music was fine—good even—and asked about the artist. You said you dug the soulful voice singing juxtaposed with a sample of Fred Hampton’s “I Am A Revolutionary” speech.

“Algiers,” I said, naming the band, playing them up as “that Black Lives Matter type music people ignore and shouldn’t.” I mentioned how important it was to have a Black person front a punk band with biting social commentary that’s also commercially viable for a wider audience. This was more *me* than I hoped to show on a second date: melodiously prejudiced, transforming musical notes into a pretentious dissertation. You didn’t seem to mind.

“This is punk?” You asked. “Doesn’t sound very punk.”

It’s hard to translate how difficult it was for me to not talk your ear off about what *real* punk was, to not dictate Bad Brains and Alice Bag’s entire biography from the top of my head, to not espouse the anti-racist rhetoric of punk started by people of color but lost to white punks who stole the genre, to not talk about how seeing the afros on Cedric Bixler-Zavala and Omar Rodriguez-Lopez of At The Drive-In convinced me that there was room on this planet for an Afrolatino like myself. I let the mantra of “She doesn’t care, she doesn’t care, she doesn’t care” echo in my mind, entombed inside my sedan.

“Punk can be a lot of things,” I conceded. “But this is definitely an important version.”

Part of my anxieties lie with the oscillating fear of not saying enough in a public forum and the fear of saying too much. So before I could spiral into a bottomless well of esoteric bands you would never remember, I asked, “Who do you like? Who influences the great J?”

You laughed off the fame and said Judy Garland.

“Her voice is so beautiful and pure,” you said. “I grew up watching *The Wizard of Oz* and always marveled at her songs. Dorothy’s unbreakable innocence, the stars in her eyes stayed illuminated in color or in black and white. Captured on film forever and ever. All of it. She made me want that: to sing and create music that lasts forever. I have other favorites, of course, but she leaves me shook every time.”

If you had seen my tongue at that moment, you would have seen my taste buds lined with teeth marks and blood. I wanted, badly, to ask if you had seen the movie *Everybody Sing*. Judy Garland struts out in complete blackface—southern Black girl ponytails sticking in every direction, her arms and face painted the color of tar, and those lips; those lips painted to make her own mouth appear three times its normal size to draw atten-

tion to her singing. She sings a jazzed-up version of “Swing Low (Sweet Chariot),” turning the tune from a negro spiritual into a family friendly jingle. She did jigs, worked the shoulders, got the facial expressions down. She made Blackness safe for whites to approach without worry.

This is the Judy I think about, with the innocence of broken glass.

I understand Ms. Garland was fifteen when she did that movie, three years prior to *The Wizard of Oz*. No one has a handle on who they are or should be at that age. I understand that the '30s gave enough space to blackface to weaken its position as a racist act, normalizing the dehumanization of Black folk. If anything, movies like *Everybody Sing* or *The Jazz Singer* saw blackface as an act of rebellion by the white person singing the negro's jazz. Judy's character—Judy—used the song and dance to discover herself, using “subversive” arts to entertain within her means. Being fourteen and a hungry actress means saying yes to a lot of things. I understand that this role is rarely, if ever, talked about in a positive light when discussing her career, but I don't know how to forgive a white person impeding on a marginalized culture, making it more invisible, for the sake of fashion.

So, should I believe she changed, that she truly hated racism later in life? She got so much praise for being a fierce proponent of the Queer community around the time *A Star Is Born* revived her career in later years. Her minstrel act became forgotten in the mainstream like a bad hairdo. But I cannot forget the sound of applause for Judy Garland in blackface being a poisonous cacophony of violent hands. White palms thunderous, deafening ears when the voiceless scream in hopes to be made human, begging to keep their identity. Maybe that's why I like punk so much—makes me feel less othered for screaming all the time.

What is your secret, J? Why do you forgive? How do you pardon such thrashings to your bloodline? How does a middle finger to your mother's womb translate to undying inspiration? Did you learn something about your identity that I didn't? Was it easy?

Why do you forgive, J?

What is your secret?

At MOCA, you wouldn't tell me—luckily, I didn't ask, instead deciding to swim in my own repressed crises, fighting to keep my pretensions and academic tongue stifled, fighting to not tear down the Garland statue firmly risen in your head. Instead, we wandered the museum, paying loose admiration to the art as we walked a steady distance from one another. Every now and again, we'd look at a piece together, make a *Simpsons* joke or

two, but we walked at our own respective paces, only slightly differing in speed.

There was a single picture in my phone that I took of you: we walked into a hallway of wall-to-wall art, words on the ceiling, figures on the floor, and you snapped a photo of the words above you because they inspired you. You wanted to keep them forever without removing a piece of the roof, and I wanted to capture your movements to hold your innocence still forever. Forgive me, as I do not remember the words you loved because the photo is no longer on my phone. But I do remember you told me they reminded you of your grandfather.

“My grandfather once killed a man,” you said, still smiling as we started walking at equal pace exiting the museum. “I don’t think he’s a bad person. He can’t be. People tried to lynch him, and he just plain didn’t want to get lynched. He just wanted to live. Didn’t want to be picked out of a group for being different. No one does. Sometimes my mom talks about it with shame, as though killing someone threw dirt on our name. I’ll admit this one time that it’s a famous name, but my grandfather didn’t dirty it up. He fought back and got away. Got to live. It’s not a crime to never get lynched.”

We walked through the streets of Downtown LA keeping pace with one another, talking about more comics and movies, both feeling guilty about our excitement for the Power Rangers movie reboot. We stopped at a bar for a beer and stories. I told you about the few times I had been in the Ventura area, mostly for punk shows and pizza at Jimmy’s Slice. Still, I had never been in Ojai proper. Celebrities live there, as you know. You’ve seen Britney Spears around town, you’ve bumped into Tom Selleck. Close to the beach, secluded, the perfect town for anonymity, for taking breaks from spotlights and such.

Your high school was a private school where you graduated in a class of about twenty people. A healthy mix of mostly white kids, some Asian kids, and a few brown kids, you also felt the sting of Black absence. No matter: you said everyone was nice, and the intimacy kept your teen years calm and the angst tempered. You laughed when I told you about my graduating class of over 100 kids in a public school of about 4,000: 98% Mexican kids, 2% everything else, including other parts of Latin America. This was a claustrophobia you couldn’t understand, but it trained my lungs to breathe when given only so much space.

Ojai’s general population of about 8,000 paled in comparison to South Gate’s 90,000. Your town housed retired white liberals, guarded by views of forests and water. It’s where I imagined white folk flew to when they abandoned South Gate. For the

longest time, I felt my city cage us in with graffitied buildings and factories. My high school amplified this by cramming students into classrooms, overflowing woodshop, metal shop, and other trade classes; all reminders to grow up as worker bees to make white life more convenient.

Regardless of the malaise, the despair, the abandonment, I told you about my hometown with my cheek swelled by my tongue. You thought it was funny because I wanted you to think it was funny. I made my city to be sardines and not prisoners; I can't even do that for myself. But you knew what it meant to be a mixed kid among others whose identities galvanized to their flesh. Remember we were both the only Black kids in our classes; remember the solidarity in your laughter when I told you the "nega-nigger" stories. Remember the laughter disintegrating the words, our Black laughter, making "nega" impotent in anyone else's mouth. Maybe we just got used to being othered, and the laughter came to help us breathe even better.

Going to college after high school felt like betrayal, like leaving behind a starved continent to join the whites. But I had dreams—coming back to South Gate to teach, to show my people we can be free from the white gaze. That's what punk is supposed to teach: solidarity, community, DIY, escape. To bask in self-sustained noise, to blot out interference for the status quo. All that bullshit. But we sat in a nice bar in Los Angeles, spending scores of dollars on booze. You held your glass with fingers calloused from playing gig after gig in a village of white people. I closed out our tab with a debit card filled with money I earned after bowing to an academic ivory tower in exchange for a bachelor's and master's so I could teach white kids in affluent community colleges about Toni Morrison and watch them not care about Black lives anyway. I still live in the decent part of Long Beach and never returned to South Gate. I still hide behind punk and guise running away from South Gate as "escape" rather than abandonment.

Then we joked about other terrible things with more alcohol, both laughing about the possibilities of the world coming to an end the year prior as a cherry on top for 2016. All the deaths and Trump's election, and all we needed was extinction to make everything make sense. A fresh start, an asteroid colliding with the Earth to turn everything into ash—to weld us all together as a single pile of seared dust and travel in scattered directions by wind. The cracks in the gravel, the exploding bark of trees, the crashing oceans, the collapsed peoples, the chorus of screams, you said, would make an excellent song.

"It'd be the last great punk song," you said.

We laughed, and laughed, and laughed, our cackles in sync as though Armageddon had already soldered our voices together. These were the laughs my younger self couldn't have, drowned out by high school friends who Oh'ed with fists to mouths: looking at the darkest inward parts of ourselves and laughing at extinction. I still wonder if I would laugh with them now. I don't believe so, but I wonder.

At the end of the second date, it did not rain despite the night clouds. We each had long drives home, so I took you back to your car at Griffith Park—we were both shocked the traffic was gone, and I was secretly shocked your car had yet to be towed. I vocalized how I felt I talked too much, but you waved it off, said I kept you entertained with the stories. So, we planned to go to the movies soon, once my semester started and I could figure out my teaching schedule better, how to go about meeting up among all the essays I had to grade and the traveling I already had to do as an adjunct. You wanted to see *Power Rangers*. I wanted to see *Power Rangers*.

Your lips landed on mine—even if only briefly—as a sign of thank you, of appreciation, of “my car is still here, hooray,” of adhering to the status quo of date protocol, of physically telling me you had a nice time. In that kiss, however, I knew there would be no romance. Maybe it's that idea of chemistry people go gaga over and the lack thereof, but there was a finality to your kiss. You drove back to Ventura, and I went back to Long Beach. At the time of this writing, we have not spoken or seen each other since MOCA. We texted here and there the weeks following, but more time passed between texts. Plans became hazier and blanketed. “Let's see *Power Rangers*” turned into “let's catch a movie” turned into “let's catch up,” then nothing.

You will never read this—I hope—because I've run out of stamps (I bought some a few years ago—the '60s edition with [] on it, your namesake—but they're gone now), and I never learned your exact address despite our promises to visit our cities, or to see you perform.

Still, I write this letter simply to say, again, I am jealous. Specifically, jealous of your hands. They know work, they know song, they are voluntarily calloused to birth your melodies every night you sing for sustenance. They are not gloved; everyone sees your fingers walk like river water. They see the Black, the white, a perfect synthesis of bones unbroken despite any violent histories. Your hands dance as proof your grandfather survived.

I write this letter to say I do not play punk as much as I wish, instead trudging through my job teaching at campuses nowhere near my hometown. I don't get to scream as much as I used to.

My clothes cover up my tattoos, my skin, my callouses. These days, my dreads reach past my shoulders, but I still reign them in with hair ties to please my bosses, to not scare the students with who I really am. I don't play guitar as often as I used to, and now my fingers are soft and afraid of paper cuts.

I write this letter to say I am jealous, but I am happy. Thanks to social media, I know you've played more shows in LA and shook more hands in the industry. The happiness you wear is tangible in the photos of bigger theaters and fuller audiences. It almost makes me regret never seeing you perform, even when I had chances; to see you use your voice to silence a room full of people who think they know you better than you do, to get a room full of white people to clap along at your will. Hell, you could summon rain to pour over everyone and everything, but you would swim in the flood, buoyed by your melodies and confidence. I know that, when you perform in front of a room full of spellbound eyes, you are not J, the girl from the dating app that ate tri-tip and explained Marvel's *Civil War* to me.

No, no, no.

You are J, daughter of Ojai, the Black Joni Mitchell, descendent of [], heir of Sister Rosetta Tharpe.

Later, you married a woman who makes you feel complete. I learned from a wedding photo posted of both of you in white, sitting on a large, decorative crescent moon. Your hair tied to reveal your face for the photo, a rejection of hiding your unmistakable hue of redbone. You kiss your wife's white face like forgiveness.

The photo is very punk. It is punk because you are famous, intimidatingly so, no matter how much you cringe, yet you live a life you dictated for yourself. You write your own songs but still sing "Over the Rainbow" when the time feels right, without losing a single shade on your skin. The photo is very punk because you hold your wife's hand, sharing your wounds with her, trusting her with fingers that dance like water.

That trust comes in handy, I'm told. I still don't remember if you liked puns. Maybe you did, and I'm the one who doesn't like puns. I don't know. Maybe I'm just pretentious, but puns are dumb. I never understood why something that exists as more than one thing is supposed to be funny.

Sincerely,
M