OLIVIA

You are a soprano headed down a good career path, and engaged to the man you have loved since you were a student. Everything should be good. But sometimes it can be overwhelming, playing all your different roles in life. You see a psychologist, but you don’t want anyone to know. You don’t want anyone to know about what you’re doing.

Your Lines

EVAN: How was your day?

OLIVIA: Good. I walked around town a lot. I smelled hot dogs everywhere. Coming out of doughnut shops and up the sewer grates. You wouldn’t believe how much I wanted a hot dog. I salivated for hot dog.

EVAN: Was today the day you gave up being a vegetarian?

OLIVIA: No. I ate a lettuce tofu wrap instead.

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OLIVIA: Can I tell you something? I did eat a hot dog today. In fact, I ate three.

EVAN: How was it?

OLIVIA: They tasted so good. I didn’t know a hot dog could taste so good.

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[A series of different letters you have written.]

Hi, Evan!

Thanks for your note, as well as your poem. Smiley face. I would love to grab coffee but my schedule is a bit full this week. But I am heading downtown to the symphony on Sunday, and would not mind having company, ~~if you would like to~~….. if you are not bored by orchestral instruments. The Frankfurt Philharmonic will be performing Bach, so it will be a classic, and I am friends with one of the violinists .... (Does he need to know that? It's not like we’re GOOD friends) .... ~~There is also decent coffee~~…. There is also a great wine bar around the area that I’ve been told to check out.

There is never enough time in our lives to do what we love and what we must. That is the biggest dissatisfaction, isn’t it? I know that what you want to do in life is to write poetry, just like what I want to do in life is to sing, and what we both want is to love each other, but then there are the things we must do, like go to work, buy groceries, eat, sleep, commute. If only time were limitless, I would spend ten thousand years just loving you....

Do you know what I love about art? I mean, what it is about art that makes it necessary and impossible to live without? The thing about art is that there is truth in it. Even if it is just a tiny tiny kernel hiding somewhere inside the highest, most difficult, most unpleasant note. Underneath all the makeup, and the costumes, and the stage lights, and the interviews, and the posturing, and the smiling, there is truth. And that is the only time I can ever, ever tell the truth.

I just want the world to shut up sometimes. I want there to be a still point, a silence. I just want things to stop sometimes. How can we ever think, to know our thoughts, to feel our bodies, if we aren't ever able to stop? I just want to stop. I want to stop.

Birds stop in flight. I want to watch the swallow stop in flight. I want to watch the swallow fall out of the sky. There are thirteen ways of watching a swallow fall out of the sky.

Stop talking about me. Stop looking at me. Stop thinking about me. Stop wanting me. Stop waiting for me. Stop masturbating to me. Stop re-naming me. Stop manifesting me. Stop creating me.

Poor little bird. You never liked surprises. If you want me to regurgitate into your mouth a worm as long as the equator, please be prepared to swallow the worm, dripping with my saliva and my bile.

Poems you like

"Song, by Your example, does not concern desire,/

Nor pursuit and attainment of its object;/

Song is – to be. Trifling for the god;/

But when shall we be? And when does He/

Alter the earth and the stars in our being?/"

….

The trouble with pleasure is the timing

it can overtake me without warning

and be gone before I know it is here

it can stand facing me unrecognized

while I am remembering somewhere else

in another age or someone not seen

for years and never to be seen again

in this world and it seems that I cherish

only now a joy I was not aware of

when it was here although it remains

out of reach and will not be caught or named

or called back and if I could make it stay

as I want to it would turn into pain