

EXILED, I BELONG TO HER

BY

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***“I do not love her the way men love women—I revere her the way
sinners fear redemption. She is not my comfort. She is my
cathedral.”***

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The Kingdom of Milk and Fury

A realm where affection is fierce and exile is just another way to say ‘I missed you.’

“She says we’ve broken up, then tucks me in like a prisoner she refuses to let freeze. That’s how I know I still belong to her.”

At precisely 6:42 a.m., my heart was shattered by a voice that sounded very small and very royal:

“Get out.”

I had committed no known crime. There had been no warning, no prelude, no soft rise in tension. Merely the decree—issued with all the solemnity of a toddler banishing her favorite doll for not blinking correctly.

I opened my eyes. She sat beside me, wrapped in the sacred blanket of judgment, arms crossed, her hair a divine chaos. Her eyes—a place where poets drown trying to describe the color—were narrowed with intent.

“You’re too hot,” she said. “You breathe like a steam engine. I’m suffocating.”

“I’m sorry?”

“You did it on purpose.”

“You’re saying I deliberately breathed while asleep?”

She nodded.

I was already exiled.

I rose slowly, like a man sentenced to execution but given a moment to savor the absurdity of it all. My foot touched the cold floor—the first punishment.

She didn't look at me. She never does when the sentence is fresh. She keeps her gaze fixed on the window, as if consulting higher authorities.

"She treats the bed like a sovereign state," I whispered to myself.
"One wrong breath, and I become an immigrant without papers."

I left the room. Not because I wanted to. Because that was the law.

The kitchen was cold. Everything in exile is cold. I poured a glass of juice that wasn't mine. It tasted like betrayal.

***"She claims we're over, then asks if I want pulp or no pulp.
As if heartbreak is a breakfast option."***

I waited. Because that is all one does in the Kingdom of Milk and Fury—wait for her heart to thaw, for the frost to melt under her own warmth. Sometimes she forgets she's mad. Sometimes she remembers too well.

I sat by the table, tracing meaningless patterns in the condensation on the glass. My exile was not unique. It was ritual. Our mornings were built on exile and forgiveness.

I heard a sound.

Tiny feet.

She appeared, standing at the entrance like a ghost of judgment. No expression. No words. Just her in an oversized hoodie she had stolen from me years ago, drowning in its sleeves like a vengeful deity who demands juice before she smites.

"I'm still mad," she said, in case I had misunderstood.

"I haven't asked for forgiveness."

"Good. Because I haven't decided if you deserve it."

She walked past me. Sat down at the other end of the table. Her silence pressed against my chest like a weight I'd forgotten how to carry.

Then she reached for my juice. Without asking.

That was the first sign of mercy.

She took a sip. Looked at me. Then sipped again.

“She breaks up with me like it’s a sneeze—sudden, violent, and quickly forgotten—but always expects me to bring the tissues.”

“Did you dream about me?” she asked, casually, like this wasn’t day one of our six-hundredth war.

“I don’t remember.”

She frowned.

“You’re supposed to say yes.”

“Then yes.”

She smiled, barely.

“And in the dream, I was mad at you.”

“That’s incredibly accurate.”

“I was right in the dream too.”

“Of course.”

She leaned back, sipping my juice with ownership. The silence had changed. It was now flavored with amusement.

“You talk in your sleep,” she said.

“What did I say?”

“You said ‘don’t go.’”

“Did I?”

She looked at me for the first time with something raw and terrifying—tenderness. The kind of tenderness she hides under pillows and sarcasm.

Then, like a pendulum swinging violently to restore balance, she said: “We’re still broken up though.”

I sighed.

Later, in the living room, we watched cartoons. Not because she enjoys them. Because they're safe. No betrayal. No metaphors. Just talking animals in predictable loops.

She sat beside me on the couch, her arms folded.

"She tells me I am nothing to her, then leans into me like I'm the last island in a flooding world."

She looked at me sideways.

"I forgive you now."

"For what?"

"For everything."

She rested her head on my shoulder.

"Don't move," she added, in a tone reserved for divine commandments.

"I won't."

"Because if you move, I'll get cold."

"Of course."

We watched in silence. Her breathing calmed. I could feel her body shift from battle mode to something softer. In her sleepiness, she reached for my hand and held it. Not with passion. With possession.

She closed her eyes.

"She sleeps like a conqueror who's finally claimed her land. And I am the land."

That night, as I tucked her into bed, she stirred. One eye opened.

"I never really broke up with you," she murmured.

"I know."

"I just needed to hear you fight for me."

“I always will.”

“I know that too.”

She curled into me.

“She says we’ve broken up, then tucks me in like a prisoner she refuses to let freeze. That’s how I know I still belong to her.”

She fell asleep gripping my wrist like a map she couldn’t risk losing.

And I, still exiled in theory but sovereign in her arms, surrendered again.

“I belong to you; there is no longer a separating line between your heart and mine.”

The Laws of Her Republic

‘Where logic bends to her moods, and the constitution is rewritten each time she smiles.’

“She says I’m annoying, then kisses my forehead like I’m her favorite mistake.”

The Republic of Her does not operate under the rules of common nations.

There are no elections. There is no parliament. There are only decrees—issued in a soft pout, an accusatory glare, a pointed silence that lands heavier than thunder. The laws change depending on the time of day, the alignment of the moon, or whether I forgot to call her by that one silly nickname she made up and swore was sacred.

There are no appeals. No jury. No constitutional rights.

There is only her, and the world must bend.

This morning, for instance, she passed a new law:

“Hug me exactly every twelve minutes or I’ll feel unloved.”

I obeyed, of course. I set a timer.

The first hug was received with royal grace.

The second was met with suspicion: "Are you only hugging me because of the timer?"

"Yes."

She glared. "That makes it meaningless."

I threw the timer into the trash. Hugged her again.

She melted.

"She demands I follow her rules, then punishes me for not breaking them romantically."

In her republic, crimes are invented on the spot.

I was convicted of forgetting to notice her new socks. They were purple, with tiny clouds. I had seen them. I had even smiled at them. But I had not commented. That was treason.

"You're supposed to worship everything I do," she said, genuinely wounded.

"I do."

"Then why are you not on your knees kissing my cloud-socks?"

"I—"

"No excuses. Your sentence is silence until I say otherwise."

The trial was swift. The verdict eternal. For a full seven minutes, I was not allowed to speak.

She even made a little sign and hung it on my neck: "SILENCED BY ORDER OF THE PRINCESS."

At minute eight, she pulled the sign off and whispered, "I missed your stupid voice."

She hugged me. I was pardoned.

"She writes rules in pencil and expects me to follow them in ink."

She has other laws, unspoken but enforced with incredible rigor:

- Any food on her plate is also hers. Any food on my plate is mostly hers.
- If I win an argument, I lose.
- If she cries, I have to feel it first.
- She can be mean if she's sleepy. I cannot be sleepy ever.
- If she says 'I'm fine,' I must prepare an apology, snacks, and a three-act explanation of my love.

One night, I broke a law I didn't know existed: I forgot to send her a goodnight message while she was asleep.

She woke up furious.

"How could you just fall asleep without reminding me that I'm the best part of your life?"

"You were asleep already."

"I don't care. You were supposed to whisper it into the dark. I would've felt it."

"I'm sorry."

"You should be."

"But I dreamed about you."

She paused. "Fine. That's... allowed."

She has holidays, too.

"National Hold-Me-For-No-Reason Day."

"The Grand Celebration of I'm Cute and You're Lucky."

"Anniversary of the Time I Let You Eat the Last Cookie."

Each celebrated with tiny rituals: holding hands in silence, placing her cold feet on me without warning, resting her head on my chest as if claiming territory.

“She says I’m forbidden to leave, then pretends to kick me out so she can pull me back with more gravity than God himself.”

One day, I tried to argue.

I tried to reason.

I quoted philosophers. I begged the idea of logic to save me.

She blinked twice and said: “Your logic doesn’t make me feel loved.”

So I stopped arguing.

I wrote her a song instead.

It went:

“Oh sovereign of tantrums and tickles,
I surrender to your every contradiction,
I am a man imprisoned by love and footsie attacks.”

She cried. Made me sing it twice. Then proclaimed:

“New law. You have to sing that every time I’m mad at you.”

I have performed it thirty-seven times since.

There is no parliament in her republic, but there is one voting citizen: her heart.

It votes yes or no. It can veto reality. It can declare rain to be offensive and demand sunshine at once.

And when I kiss her hands, trembling with softness after an argument, she looks at me like I’m both her enemy and her home.

“She says we’re no longer anything, then traces hearts on my palm like the universe is still ours.”

On particularly strange days, she invents fake problems just so she can see me fix them.

“You didn’t notice I was sad yesterday.”

“But you weren’t sad yesterday.”

“That’s not the point.”

Then, after five minutes of back-and-forth:

“You’re supposed to know my sadness before I do. That’s what love is.”

So I apologized for a sadness that hadn’t existed, then kissed away the ghost of it.

She smiled.

“She creates storms so I can build her shelter. That’s how she measures love—by how I catch the raindrops before she names them.”

The night comes. Her mood softens.

She curls beside me, fragile as myth, warm as the first page of a story.

“Are you tired of my rules?” she asks, pretending not to care.

“Never,” I whisper.

She places her fingers over my lips. “Don’t lie.”

“I’m not.”

“Then prove it.”

“How?”

“Make up your own law.”

I think. Then I say:

“No matter how many times you exile me, I will always return with a bigger heart.”

She smiles.

“That’s allowed,” she says.

Then adds: "But tomorrow I might ban hugs."

"I'll appeal."

"There's no appeal."

"Then I'll break the law."

Her laugh fills the room like perfume. It seeps into the pillows, the walls, my soul.

"You are the knife I turn inside myself; that is love. That, my dear, is love."

The Ritual of Breaking Up (Again)

A sacred dance of collapse and reunion, as inevitable as the tides.

"She breaks up with me like she's folding a blanket—messily, emotionally, and only to unfold it again five minutes later."

There is no warning. There never is.

Not a thunderclap, not a distant alarm. Just silence.

The kind of silence that makes your heart tiptoe, afraid to wake the storm.

She stands in the doorway. Her hair is chaos. Her shirt is mine. Her eyes are on fire. Her mouth opens.

"We're breaking up," she says. As casually as someone ordering coffee.

This is the thirteenth time this week.

"I see," I say, trying not to flinch. "Is this a full breakup, or one of those temporary symbolic ones?"

"It's a real one," she says, crossing her arms. "The realest one."

I nod. We've been here before. The breakup is not just a sentence—it's a ceremony. A ritual. A precise unfolding of emotions so she can feel held, even in the act of letting go.

“She pushes me away only to measure how far I’d walk to come back.”

She sits on the bed, legs crossed, face solemn. I sit across from her on the floor, like a monk before an altar.

“We’ve grown apart,” she announces.

“It’s been two hours since we last cuddled.”

“Exactly. Emotional distance.”

“I brought you a cookie fifteen minutes ago.”

“That doesn’t count. It was oatmeal.”

“I thought you liked—”

“I wanted chocolate chip.”

I offer no defense. That would be a mistake.

“You don’t see me,” she says, eyes glistening. “You don’t *really* see me.”

I look at her. Hard.

She’s glowing with hurt. Radiant in her righteous fury. Her bottom lip quivers, just enough for the world to feel guilty.

“I do see you,” I whisper.

“No, you see a version of me. A convenient, cute, snack-stealing version. But do you see the *me* that feels lonely even in a crowded room? The *me* that cries when cartoon characters grow old? The *me* that overthinks a typo in your message?”

I kneel. She has turned her heartbreak into gospel.

“I see you,” I say again, this time softer. “Even when you don’t see yourself.”

She blinks.

She doesn’t say anything, but her shoulders loosen.

**“She says she’s done with me, then leans into my apology
like it’s the only language that ever held her.”**

We break up again at lunch.

This time, it’s because I laughed at the wrong moment of a sad story she told about a bird with a limp wing.

“You think bird pain is funny?”

“No, it’s just the way you—”

“Stop.”

Another breakup.

I don’t fight this one. I go into the other room and draw her a bird with a bandaged wing. I tape it to the fridge. I name it “Sir Peepington the Resilient.”

She sees it. Frowns.

“I hate you,” she says.

“Okay.”

She bites her lip. “But... the bird is kind of cute.”

“Thanks.”

Pause.

“He needs a friend.”

I draw another. “Lady Peepette.”

She giggles.

“You’re still my ex, though.”

“Fine.”

“But I’ll still hold your hand if I get scared at night.”

“That’s legally allowed.”

By evening, the ritual repeats.

This time, it's not a full breakup—it's a "soft severance of emotional contract pending reevaluation."

I ask what that means.

"It means you annoyed me but not enough to lose boyfriend privileges."

We argue about the rules.

We argue about arguing.

She says she doesn't know who I am anymore.

I tell her I'm the same fool who fell for her the moment she called me a broccoli-head.

She smiles.

Then frowns.

Then hugs me from behind while saying, "We're still broken up, but don't leave, okay?"

"She says we're not together, but pulls me close like she's afraid of vanishing without my breath on her skin."

At night, we lie in silence. No music. No fan. Just the hum of unspoken feelings.

She turns to me, a shadow outlined in streetlight.

"I think I just break up with you so you can put me back together."

"I know."

"You hate it?"

"No. I hate how much I love it."

"Me too."

She curls closer.

"I don't actually want to lose you."

"You never will."

“I still might break up with you again tomorrow.”

“I’ll be here.”

She rests her head on my chest.

“Why?”

“Because I know you don’t mean it.”

She whispers: “I do mean it. In the moment. It’s real.”

“I know. And I’ll still stay.”

She exhales.

“She says I’m hers, even while breaking up with me—and I believe her, because leaving has always been her way of staying.”

Just before she falls asleep, she opens one eye.

“Hey.”

“Yes?”

“Even when I say I’m leaving...”

“Yeah?”

“...I hope you chase me. That’s how I know you love me.”

I nod.

“I always will.”

“In your light I have learned how to love. In your beauty, how to make poems.”

The Lie of Leaving

“She threatens to leave, then texts me to ask if I’ve eaten. That’s not love—it’s empire. And I’ve always been her most obedient province.”

We broke up on a Tuesday.

She declares it at 9:16 p.m., standing in the doorway like a war goddess wrapped in the silence of finality.

“That’s it,” she says, arms crossed. “I can’t do this anymore.”

I nod slowly, because the ritual demands solemnity.

Then she adds: “Unless you can explain why you said you didn’t like that song I sent.”

Ah.

It’s not the end of us. It’s the end of my *credibility*.

The trial begins immediately. My crime: insufficient enthusiasm.

“I liked the song,” I protest.

“But you didn’t *feel* it.”

She stares at me as if I’ve just insulted music itself.

“You said it was ‘fine.’”

“Fine is good!”

“No. *Fine* is what people say when they’re lying about being okay.”

I am sentenced to sit beside her until I understand the emotional architecture of the chorus.

She plays the song again. I listen like it's gospel. Her fingers tap along the beat, her expression watching me instead of the melody.

She giggles when I finally hum along.

“You may remain in my heart a little longer.”

“She says she’s leaving, but leaves a trail of breadcrumbs made of inside jokes and unfinished playlists. I follow them like a dog she forgot to abandon.”

By Thursday, we have broken up four more times.

Once because I didn’t call her “pretty” fast enough after she changed her WhatsApp icon.

Once because I laughed too long at a meme she didn't send.

Once because I said "I'm busy" instead of "I'm busy but missing you."

Once because I didn't notice she was in a *bad mood* without her having to say it.

And each time, the breakup ends the same way:

Her fingers reach out. My name softens in her throat.

"I'm still mad at you," she says, lying against my shoulder.

"Okay."

"But I'm letting you exist near me again."

"She says I'm no longer hers, then buries her face in my hoodie. That's how I know the lie of leaving is just her way of making me prove I'll stay."

We pretend we're strangers for an hour.

She messages me on Instagram:

Her: "hey lol wyd"

Me: "nothing much. u?"

Her: "u look like trouble."

Me: "u look like someone who breaks hearts and still gets away with it."

She sends a selfie with a single raised eyebrow and the caption:
Maybe I do.

We meet on the couch. She says, "First date?"
I nod. "Strangers in love."

She giggles.

Later, she forgets she's mad again.

She eats my fries. She wears my T-shirt. She tells me my breath smells like sleep and injustice.

I tickle her ribs until she threatens global warfare.

She says, "Don't touch me unless I touch you first."

Two seconds later, she wraps her legs around me like a python made of cotton candy.

We fight again. She says I always make jokes during serious conversations.

I reply, "This is a joke. You and me. We're the best punchline the universe ever wrote."

She tries not to smile.

Fails.

"She laughs during the argument, then insists it doesn't count. But her joy always betrays her rage, like spring interrupting winter mid-sentence."

She says she's tired.

I say, "Of me?"

She says, "Of how much I love you."

Then bites my arm softly. A mark of ownership.

I ask, "If we broke up, would you miss me?"

She says, "I'd call your mother and ask for custody of your memories."

I nod solemnly.

"Would I be allowed visitation?"

"Only if you bring ice cream and beg."

Sometimes I worry.

I ask, "What if one day you actually mean it when you say you're leaving?"

She doesn't answer at first.

Then whispers: "Then you'd better follow me to the end of the world."

"I would."

"I know."

We lie in silence, curled like quotation marks enclosing something unspeakably tender.

"She's the storm, the calm after, and the emergency broadcast in between. And I—fool, jester, pilgrim—have never known anything truer than returning to her."

I dream she leaves me for real.

I wake up crying.

She wakes up to my tears and doesn't laugh.

She holds my face in her palms and says, "Even in your sleep, you know the truth."

"What truth?"

"You don't belong anywhere I'm not."

Later that day, she storms out of the room again.

"I'm going," she declares. "Forever this time."

I say nothing.

She slams the door.

Fifteen minutes later, I hear her knock.

"I forgot my charger," she says.

Then, softer: "And I don't know how to leave."

"You're not supposed to."

She walks back in like nothing happened.

“She rehearses leaving like it’s a role she never wants to play, then forgets her lines mid-exit. That’s how I know the performance is love.”

“If I didn’t have your love, I would be nothing—a little clay figure that would crumble away.”

When She Says Nothing, the Sky Still Listens

“She falls silent mid-argument, then looks at me with those lake-eyes—as if asking, ‘Did you hear the storm I didn’t say?’”

There is a kind of stillness that doesn’t belong to peace. It hums with the pressure of withheld thunder, the weight of things left unsaid.

That’s what her silence feels like. Not absence. Not retreat.

But a secret waiting to be unwrapped by someone brave—or stupid—enough to stay.

She’s silent today.

Not angry. Not sad. Just silent in the way a cathedral is silent after midnight. Full of something holy, unspeakable, unfinished.

She sits on the couch, eyes fixed on a spot somewhere between the ceiling and the moon. Her thumb circles the rim of a mug she hasn’t sipped from.

I ask, “Do you want to talk?”

She shrugs. Which, in her language, means:

“Yes, but not with words. Translate me with your patience.”

“She doesn’t speak, so I listen to the silence between her blinks. She’s saying so much in the way she doesn’t say anything.”

I sit next to her. I don’t ask again.

Later, she taps my arm.

I look.

She opens her palm to reveal a single gummy bear.

“You can have this one,” she says.

Just like that, we are repaired.

“She forgives me with candy and a blink. No speeches, no apologies. Just a bear, a breath, and her choosing me again.”

She doesn’t like words today, so we speak in gestures.

I put socks on her feet like she’s a tiny empress whose feet must never touch the cold world.

She bites my shoulder softly. I pretend it hurt. She smiles for the first time in hours.

We build a silent empire that day. One where declarations are passed via glances and laws written in nods.

She draws a heart on the fogged-up window.

I add an arrow.

She wipes it away.

Then draws it again. Bigger this time.

Sometimes, I think she could destroy me with a look.

And I’d thank her for making it beautiful.

“She says nothing for days, then says ‘hey’ like it’s the first word ever invented. I forget every language but hers.”

She’s pacing in the room now.

The argument—if we can call it that—has no clear source. It’s like walking into a house already on fire and pretending we don’t smell the smoke.

She stops suddenly and says, “You don’t get it.”

“Then make me get it,” I plead.

She says nothing.

Just sits. Arms folded. Face unreadable.

I try again.

“I can’t understand if you won’t tell me.”

She looks at me. Quietly. Long enough that I feel like a book being read cover to cover.

Then she whispers, “You’re supposed to know anyway.”

That’s when I realize:

Loving her is like trying to decode the language of birds. You have to watch how they move. How they tilt their heads. How long they hover before flying away.

It’s not about what she says.

It’s about where she places her silences.

“She quiets the room with her stillness, and I feel like I’m inside a paused heartbeat. That’s how I know I still live in her.”

We sit in the park.

There’s a couple on the bench nearby arguing loudly.

She watches them for a bit, then turns to me and says: “We’re like that, but cuter.”

I laugh.

She doesn’t.

She’s being serious.

“She says things that sound like jokes, but are actually declarations of territory. Every time she says we’re cute, it means she’s still staying.”

She tells me her dreams sometimes.

Last night, she says, she dreamed I forgot her name.

“And then I woke up, and you still hadn’t texted good morning.”

I tell her I did.

She scrolls. Finds it.

“Oh,” she says. “I take it back. You remembered me.”

I say, "I always do."

She nods.

Then adds: "You better."

I ask her what scares her the most.

She says, "When I go quiet, and you stop trying."

I want to tell her I will always try. But words are too brittle.

So I wrap her in a blanket, make her tea, and read her favorite poem aloud.

She doesn't look up once.

But when I finish, she reaches out and holds my pinky.

That's her love language:

Unexpected grip. Secret grasp. Hidden symphonies in one finger touching another.

"She links her pinky to mine like she's tying a string between two lost countries. That's how we stay connected when silence becomes the map."

She cries later that night.

I don't ask why.

She tells me anyway, in the language of trembling shoulders and slow exhales.

I pull her close.

"I hate feeling everything," she says.

I kiss the crown of her head.

"I love that you do."

"You're weird."

"You're mine."

She doesn't correct me.

The next morning, she wakes me up by holding my nose shut.

I choke awake.

“What—” I start.

She grins.

“You didn’t say good morning fast enough.”

We’re fine again.

***“She breaks me with tears, then resurrects me with mischief.
She’s not a girl—she’s an apocalypse that kisses you
afterward.”***

Later, she’s quiet again.

I ask nothing.

She lies on top of me like a blanket made of unspoken worry.

I hold her. Breathe in sync with her.

It’s raining outside.

But inside—inside it’s just her breath and mine, taking turns remembering how to stay.

***“She doesn’t need to explain. Her silence is already shaped
like me. I just need to fit into it.”***

When I finally do speak, it’s to say:

“You’re the only home I’ve ever had that breathes.”

She doesn’t reply.

Just presses her ear to my chest and says:

“Still mine.”

***“You are the knife I turn inside myself; that is love. That, my
dear, is love.”***

The Arguments That Saved Us

“She yells, I yell, the room trembles—but her eyes never leave me. That’s how I know we’re not breaking, only bending toward each other again.”

We are fighting.

Again.

No one remembers how it started.

Maybe I left a dish unwashed.

Maybe she replied with one word when I needed ten.

Maybe the silence between us grew just wide enough to feel like betrayal.

She stands at the foot of the bed, arms crossed, mouth set in that stubborn little line that means *nothing you say will fix this*—and also, paradoxically, *everything you say right now will matter forever*.

I try anyway.

“You’re blowing this out of proportion.”

Wrong move.

She throws a pillow at my face with the fury of a betrayed empress.

“Stop telling me how I should feel!”

“She doesn’t want logic—she wants translation. She’s given me her storm and I handed her a weatherman. No wonder she’s mad.”

I shut up.

Finally. Blessedly. Mercifully—

Shut up.

She paces the room like a lion in a dream-cage.

Then she stops and says something low, almost a whisper:

“I don’t think you love me anymore.”

And there it is.

The real fight.

Not about socks or tone or forgotten texts.
It's that quiet, trembling panic beneath her ribs.

The one that says: *I don't feel chosen today.*

I kneel on the floor. Not out of drama. But because my legs go weak.

"Look at me," I say.

She doesn't.

I crawl to her like a sinner seeking mercy from a goddess who bites and forgives in the same breath.

"Look at me."

She does.

Her eyes, those lakes poets drown in, are filling now.

***"She breaks open in front of me, and I feel like the floor
beneath a cathedral collapsing under God's weight."***

"I love you," I say.

Too simple.

Too raw.

She blinks. As if she didn't believe she'd hear it. As if she forgot I still say it even in war.

"You don't act like it."

"What would that look like to you?"

She hesitates. Then:

"Like you noticing the second I get small."

That kills me a little.

Because she's right.

We argue not to end us, but to remind ourselves what we still want to fight *for*.

Our arguments are brutal, beautiful rehearsals for how we'll survive the rest of life.

And we never stay apart for long.

Because even when we're furious, I still fill her water bottle before bed.

She still reminds me to take my meds.

We still leave space for the other's weight on the mattress.

"She screams we're over, then leaves her hoodie on my chair. I don't ask for forgiveness—I just wear it like armor until she comes back."

Once, she texted me after a fight:

"You breathe loud. I hate your guts."

Followed one minute later by:

"But don't forget to eat or you'll faint and I'll be forced to miss you."

I laughed so hard I cried.

Then I called her.

We didn't talk about the fight. We just talked about cartoons.

Because sometimes, peace isn't an apology.

It's a shared giggle after a storm.

"She forgives me mid-sentence, without telling me. I just feel the ice melt between us, and suddenly we're laughing at a meme again."

Some days we fight just because we're both tired of being understood.

Because love is exhausting.

Because loving *her* means being a mind-reader, a translator, a mirror, and sometimes—

a soft landing for when she throws herself at the ground just to see if I'll catch her.

I always do.

Even when I'm angry.

Even when I want to leave.

Because where would I even go?

“She says she wants space, but sighs when I actually leave the room. That’s how I know it’s not distance she wants—it’s proof that I’ll resist it.”

Once, in the middle of a fight that nearly ended us, I said:

“If we keep doing this, one day you’re going to stop coming back.”

She stared at me for a long time.

Then said:

“If I ever don’t come back, it’ll be because you stopped being worth returning to.”

And instead of being afraid, I felt *trusted*.

Because she was telling me: *I’ll stay as long as you stay good.*

We don’t keep score. We keep *receipts*.

Screenshots of petty arguments.

Audio messages where one of us sobs and the other says, “You’re so annoying. I love you so much it hurts.”

Post-it notes on mirrors that say: *I’m still mad, but I’m yours.*

These are our archives of battle and devotion.

We could publish a volume titled:

“The Encyclopedia of Our Tiny Wars (and the Love That Outlived Them All)”

“She fights like a fire alarm—loud, shrill, terrifying—but always to save the building, never to burn it down.”

One day she said:

“You don’t know how to fight fair.”

“I don’t know how to fight at all,” I said. “I just know how to beg.”

She rolled her eyes.

Then whispered, "I hate how good you are at begging."

We made up five minutes later.

In the kitchen.

While still arguing about who left the milk out.

She likes to say we've broken up.

Multiple times a week.

"I'm done with you."

"I'm dating someone hotter."

"Don't call me. I mean it."

Then she sends me a picture of a frog meme and says, "*This is you. I still like you though.*"

"She declares we're over like it's a game of tag. And then stands there, arms out, waiting for me to tag her back into forever."

Sometimes, after the worst fights, she curls up beside me and says:

"Promise me you'll still like me even when I'm awful."

And I answer:

"I don't like you *because* you're sweet. I like you even when you're not."

She bites my nose.

And says, "Good."

Our fights are never elegant.

There's crying, cursing, typing angry texts then deleting them, and sometimes yelling through the bathroom door.

But there's always a return.

A ritual.

A way back.

For us, love doesn't mean *never hurting each other*—it means always choosing to *repair*.

“She doesn't say sorry. She walks into the room with popcorn and a movie suggestion. That's how I know she's ready to come back.”

And the truth is:

I love her the most when she's unreasonable.

When she's red-eyed and chaotic and slamming cabinets because I didn't read her mind.

Because even then—*especially then*—I see the girl who's afraid of not being loved all the way through.

And all I want to do is hold her in every color she blooms and breaks.

“She shatters in the shape of a question: ‘Do you still want me like this?’ And I answer with arms wide enough to hold her worst.”

Sometimes we fight because we care too much.

Sometimes we fight because we care *wrong*.

But every argument is a bruise we later kiss.

A wound that reminds us: we're still in this.

Still stupid.

Still loud.

Still mad.

Still in.

And if that's not love, I don't know what is.

"In the fight for you, I lose everything I am—gladly. That is my victory."

The Apology I Never Want From Her

“She spills her anger like milk across the floor, then looks at me with trembling hands and says ‘I didn't mean it.’ But I already forgave her the moment she looked away.”

She apologizes like it's a sin.

As if she's stolen the moon and now must return it with her head bowed low.

She doesn't owe me this apology.

And yet—there she stands. Fidgeting. Trying to summon words that don't sound too small for what she feels.

I want to stop her.

Because *her guilt is a costume stitched by her softness, not her mistakes.*

Because I've never once asked her to be perfect. Only to be mine.

And she's already that—flaws, fury, forgotten goodnights and all.

It begins with a fight about something microscopic.

Something like: she didn't reply in five minutes. Or I forgot to send her a voice note before sleeping.

And it grows.

First like a weed. Then like ivy wrapped around our necks.

She throws words. I catch them with my silence.

I throw silence. She throws the whole moon back.

“She says she hates me, then asks if I've eaten. That's how she tells me she's scared I'll stop being hers.”

Then the wind changes. The tantrum wilts.

She sits on the bed, her back to me. Pulls her knees in. Her voice goes small.

“Maybe I'm too much.”

“No,” I whisper, “you're just enough for someone like me.”

She doesn't believe it.

So I say it again. Louder.

Until she turns around.

Apologies aren't her language.
Love is.

Which is why she doesn't say sorry like the others.
She says sorry by brushing my hair out of my face when I pretend to sleep.
She says sorry by sending me a meme with a frog holding a flower.

"She says sorry with snacks and blanket forts and 'want to cuddle?' messages disguised as olive branches."

She's pacing again. Apology stuck in her throat.

I say, "You don't have to."

She stops.

"But I was wrong," she says.

"You were you," I reply.

She sniffs. "Sometimes being me is wrong."

I shake my head, stand up, and wrap my arms around her.

"No. Sometimes being you is just loud. And sometimes I forget how beautiful that sounds."

Later, she says she's scared I'll leave.

Not because she yelled.
But because she's herself.

I tell her:

"If I wanted someone who was easy to love, I'd have found a silence with less soul. I didn't choose ease. I chose you."

The next morning, she makes me coffee.
Burnt. Over-sweetened. She knows I'll hate it.

But that's the point.

It's an offering.

She places it next to me with a shy shrug.

“No sugar,” she lies.

I take a sip. Nearly choke.

We laugh. The world resets.

***“She poisons me with sweetness just to say she’s sorry
without saying it. I drink it all. I’d swallow poison again just
to see her smile like that.”***

There are no grand apologies between us.

Just small ones wrapped in mismatched socks she finds when she comes over.

She gives them to me like bandages.

“Here,” she says. “For your cold feet and my loud mouth.”

I don’t need her to say she regrets anything.

Because I don’t regret her.

One evening, she writes me a letter.

Half-spelled words. Doodles in the corners. Stick figures of us arguing, then hugging.

It ends with:

“I’m sorry I get mad. But I’m not sorry I love you too much.”

That’s her truest sentence.

I fold the letter and keep it in my wallet.

Next to my ID. Because sometimes, I forget who I am until she reminds me.

She sits across from me at a café.

She’s chewing her lip.

“I don’t say it enough,” she begins.

“What?”

“I’m lucky to have you.”

I almost cry.

Because in her eyes, I see a thousand unsaid sorrys.
But I never needed any.

“She breaks things with her temper, then rebuilds them with giggles and shy glances. I’d rather live in her ruins than in anyone else’s paradise.”

We walk past a couple fighting on the street.

She squeezes my hand.

“Have I ever looked like that?”

“Yes,” I say.

She frowns.

“But you always end up looking like someone who’d fight the whole world just to hold me again,” I add.

She grins.

That grin is her forgiveness of herself.
And my reward.

She once tried to leave.

Told me she was “too much.”

That I deserved “someone easier.”

I laughed.

Because loving her is hard, yes.
But so is breathing sometimes.

And I never quit breathing.

Her apologies never sound like “sorry.”

They sound like:

- “Do you want to pick the movie tonight?”
- “I’ll take the crusts off your sandwich.”

- “Your hoodie smells like home.”
- “Come here.”

And sometimes, just:

- “Stay.”

“She apologizes in baby talk and reversed apologies—‘Sorry you made me mad,’ she says. I accept it. Because her grammar is made of love.”

She never asks for forgiveness.

She just lays her head on my chest and listens.

I think that’s her way of checking if I’m still hers.

I always am.

She looks at me one night, after a long silence.

“I was harsh earlier,” she murmurs.

“You were honest.”

“Still.”

She doesn’t finish the sentence.

Just climbs into my lap and closes her eyes.

Forgiveness becomes breath.

I whisper, “I love all of you.”

She replies, “Even the annoying parts?”

“Especially those.”

“Even the moody me?”

“That’s my favorite you.”

“She says she doesn’t deserve me. But I’m the one kneeling before her throne of chaos, begging for one more hour in her kingdom.”

If she ever gave me a perfect apology—scripted, precise, articulate—

I'd hand it back.

Because I didn't fall in love with perfection.

I fell in love with her mess.

With her yelling mid-hug. Her laughing mid-cry. Her cuddling mid-threat.

She once shouted, "You're impossible!"

Then, under her breath, added,
"...to not love."

That's the only apology I've ever needed.

"I miss you deeply, unfathomably, senselessly, terribly."

The Giggle That Rebuilds Nations

"Her laugh is the only weapon that makes me surrender willingly. When she giggles, empires within me collapse, and I am rebuilt in her image."

It starts as a hiccup. A twitch at the corner of her lip. A threat of mischief.

Then it comes. A laugh that doesn't ask permission, doesn't wait for dignity.

It bursts like light through stained glass.

She giggles like someone who has never tasted guilt.

And I listen like someone who has never known peace until now.

I once told her, "Your laugh could bring a war to its knees."

She said, "Then stay at war with me forever, so I can keep ending it."

We're fighting again.

The kind of fight where I say something too sharp.

And she stabs back with silence.

Her brows are small swords. Her eyes — lakes preparing for storms.

I prepare for siege.

But then she trips. Not dramatically. Just enough to fall off her fury.

And when I help her up, she laughs. That laugh.
Like a child remembering she was never really angry, only afraid.

“She goes from fury to laughter in less than a second, and I’m left there, wounded and worshipping the wreckage.”

I’ve watched her giggle in the middle of chaos.
A broken phone. A missed train. A canceled plan.

She laughs not because it’s funny.
But because she refuses to give the world her tears unless they’re already warmed by joy.

There are nights we fight until the clock forgets what time it is.
Voices rise. Words bruise.

Then she starts laughing mid-sentence.

I glare.
She grins.

“You look funny when you’re mad,” she says.

That’s how I lose.
Every time.

She has a laugh that infects the walls.

Even the ones I build around myself.

Even the ones I didn’t know were there.

“Her laugh finds the ruins in me and paints murals of forgiveness across them. Even my ghosts start giggling when she’s near.”

Sometimes, I hide my tears behind hers.

She finds them anyway.
She laughs like a thief, stealing my sadness, hiding it under her tongue, then licking her lips.

I tell her, “Stop laughing.”

She says, “Then stop being so adorably miserable.”

And just like that, I forget why I was drowning.

One morning, she laughs in her sleep.

I lie there, listening.

Wondering what her dreams must look like to make her smile like that.

Are they made of me?

Or of frogs and cupcakes and glitter?

I don't ask.

I just thank the dream gods for letting me hear heaven giggle

"She says she's mad at me, but her giggle curls like a ribbon around the words. That's how I know she's still mine."

We once argued in the rain. Full drama. Tears mixed with thunder.

She yelled, "This is it!"

I nodded, "Fine."

A beat.

Then a sneeze. Then another.

She looked at me, soaking, sniffing, and laughed.

And that was it.

The fight dissolved like sugar in her coffee — slowly, then all at once.

Her laughter has rules.

She never laughs *with* others the way she laughs *at* me.

It's a sacred cruelty. A holy teasing. A love sharpened into mockery.

"Why do you always laugh when I look serious?" I ask.

"Because I know you're pretending. And I like ruining your act."

There was a time I tried to stay mad.

Tried holding my pout like a knight holds a sword.

Then she giggled.

Tilted her head.

Mumbled, “You look like a grumpy muffin.”

My armor shattered.

I laughed too.

“She knows the precise pitch of her giggle that unlocks my stubborn. I am not a man in love. I am a fortress giggling back.”

She has a different laugh for everything.

The “oops, I spilled something” laugh.

The “I love you but you’re dumb” laugh.

The “I didn’t do my assignment again” laugh.

The “I accidentally sent you a selfie while meaning to ignore you” laugh.

Each one is a bell. A chime. A call to prayer.

And I kneel.

One night, she tries to make me laugh. I refuse.

She pulls faces. Draws eyebrows with ketchup. Pretends to be an opera singer named M’lady Ding-Dong.

I crack.

She wins.

She always wins.

Sometimes I imagine dictators hearing her laugh.

They’d forget their wars.

They’d lay down their guns and start learning how to braid hair.

That’s the kind of laughter she wields —

Unapologetic. Uncontainable. Uncivilized in the best ways.

She once laughed so hard she fell off the bed.

Laughed harder because I panicked.

I asked if she was okay.

She said, "You should've caught me!"

"I did—with my concern!"

She said, "Next time, use your arms."

Then laughed again.

"She throws laughter at the world like confetti, even when the world throws storms at her. That's how I know she's a miracle."

Her laugh doesn't match her pain.

And yet it's born of it.

She tells me, "I learned to laugh when it hurt the most. Now I can't stop."

I hold her tighter.

Not to stop the laughter.

But to honor the survivor who birthed it.

One time, I asked her, "If your laugh were a place, what would it be?"

She said, "A bakery. No. A bakery inside a castle. With tiny frogs guarding it."

That made me laugh.

Which made her giggle.

Which made us forget the question entirely.

"She makes me laugh during heartbreak. That's how I know I've already healed, even if I'm still bleeding."

Sometimes she giggles while crying.

It's the most unbearable sound.

Joy and sorrow kissing mid-air.

I never interrupt it.

Because in that moment, she is whole.

Not happy. Not sad.

Just her.

When we fight, her silence is terrifying.

But her giggle is salvation.

The moment it returns, the war ends.

The birds start singing again.

The air exhales.

She once laughed so hard she snorted.

I teased her.

She said, "It's your fault."

"Why?"

"Because you make me feel like nothing can hurt me."

That's when I decided I'd protect that laugh forever.

Even from myself.

She sends voice notes of her laughter.

No words. Just giggles.

Like bottled sunlight.

When I miss her, I play them.

I keep them in a folder titled "Emergency Rainbows."

***"Her giggle is not a sound. It's a forgiveness. It's a revolution.
It's a promise that no matter how bad the day gets, she will
rebuild me."***

The world can keep its weapons.

I have her laughter.

And that's enough to fight every darkness.

Even the ones I create.

***"I have spent all my life resisting the desire to end it."
"But then you laughed—and I decided to stay."***

The Farewell That Never Lasts

"A goodbye that keeps turning around at the door. A parting so familiar, it becomes a ritual of staying."

"She says it's over, then asks if I ate. I say we're done, then save her name as 'Home' again. This is how we leave each other — by holding on tighter."

She tells me goodbye the same way the moon tells the sea it won't return.

And yet, it does.

It always does.

Dragged back by something older than choice.

Deeper than decision.

That's how she returns to me.

Not with apologies.

But with a meme.

With a voice note of a sneeze.

With a link to a song I once said made me think of her lips.

Our breakups are not exiles.

They are rehearsals for reunion.

"She says we've broken up, then tucks me in like a prisoner she refuses to let freeze. That's how I know I still belong to her."

We never say the word "goodbye" with a straight face.

It's always part of a game.

A challenge.

A "let's see how long you'll survive without me" test.

She lasts three hours.

I last twenty minutes.

Sometimes I pretend longer, but I'm just staring at her contact photo like it's a painting in a cathedral.

She blocks me like a ritual.

Then unblocks me like a mercy.

I once asked, "Do you block me because you hate me?"

She replied, "No. I block you because I love you too much to keep letting you make me cry. But also because I know you'll wait."

She was right.

I waited.

I always wait.

"She says she's leaving for real this time. Then five minutes later, she texts, 'I forgot to delete your playlist. Should I?' I reply, 'Only if your silence can sing.'"

Her farewells are not exits.

They're dramatic pauses.

Theater.

Performance art for an audience of one.

Me.

She says goodbye like an actress sighing on the last scene.

And I clap — even when I'm crying.

Sometimes she says she needs space.

And I give her the galaxy.

But she comes back, orbiting me like a moon that forgot how to be wild.

"I miss you," she says like a crime.

"I know," I reply like a pardon.

We've said goodbye in every language.

Through texts.

Through silence.

Through songs she posts indirectly.

But the language of her return is always the same:

“Did you eat?”

“Wanna see my dog?”

“Look what I found—our old messages.”

And sometimes, just a photo of her feet on the balcony.

That’s her version of “I’m still here.”

“She breaks up with me like tearing paper, then tapes me back together with a giggle and a heart emoji. I am more scotch tape than man.”

I once wrote her a goodbye letter.

She replied with a screenshot of her deleting it.

And underneath: “You’re too dramatic. Come video call me.”

So I did.

And cried anyway.

She laughed.

Her suitcase has never truly closed.

Even when she says she’s leaving.

It’s always slightly open.

Like her mouth when she’s trying not to say, “Stay.”

Sometimes she says, “We’re better apart.”

And I say, “But I don’t know how to exist without knowing what you’re eating.”

She pauses.

Then sends a picture of her dinner.

We are both terrible at farewells.

But excellent at coming back.

“She says she’s gone, but then corrects my grammar in a message I didn’t think she read. That’s how I know her goodbye is still looking over my shoulder.”

Our messages are full of threats.

“I’m done.”

“Don’t text again.”

“Forget me.”

“Leave me alone.”

Followed by:

“Did you see the moon tonight?”

“You looked sad in your story.”

“Please wear a jacket.”

She says goodbye like someone pressing a fire alarm,
But standing in the building anyway.

I come running, breathless.

She says, “I thought you wouldn’t come this time.”

As if I ever don’t.

She once changed her profile picture to a black dot.

I panicked.

Asked if everything was okay.

She said, “It’s my soul. After dating you.”

I laughed.

Then she did.

Then we weren’t broken anymore.

“She says she’s left me, but still calls me her idiot. And I know — if she still claims me in insults, I am not yet unloved.”

Sometimes she tells me she dreams of a life without me.

I nod. I ache.

Then she says, “But every time I do, I wake up needing to call you.”

So I let her dream.

And wait in her waking.

We have rituals.

Blocking and unblocking.
Fighting and fasting.
Breaking up, then asking for a voice note.

She once said, "I left you."

Then sent a twenty-minute voice note crying and whispering my
name between sobs.

That's not leaving.

That's just missing in slow motion.

I don't believe her farewells anymore.

Not because she's lying.
But because she *wants* them to be true,
And doesn't know how to make them stay.

She wants to be strong.

But love weakens her.
And I — I am the softest place she knows to collapse.

***"She says goodbye with her mouth but holds on with her
heartbeat. I can hear her pulse dialing my number, even
when her hands don't."***

Once, she made me promise not to text again.

I deleted our chats.
Our pictures.
Blocked her.
Cried.

An hour later, a new account:
"Hey. It's me. Just checking if you meant it."

I said, "No."

She said, "Good."

We fall apart like children wrecking sandcastles,
Only to rebuild them with wetter sand and stronger hands.

She always comes back with a better blueprint.

Her farewells are full of cracks.
Enough to peek through.
Enough to send back love in Morse code.

I tap it on her silence.

And sometimes, just sometimes, she taps back.

“She says we’re strangers now, but then sends me a reel titled ‘When your soulmate is also your biggest headache.’ I reply with, ‘I missed you too.’”

When she truly leaves — if she ever does —
I know it won’t be with a scream.

It’ll be with a whisper.
A pause in her usual chaos.
A laugh left unsent.

Until then, every goodbye is just a comma.

Every silence, a pause for breath.

I don’t ask her to stay anymore.
I just keep a place warm.
A joke ready.
A nickname only I can say.

And when she returns, I say,
“Took you long enough.”

She replies,
“Shut up.”

And we’re back.

“She left me seventeen times this year. But never truly. She’s the kind of person who leaves with a note saying ‘BRB’ and comes back like nothing ever broke.”

She once told me:

“If I ever stop loving you, it’ll be because you’ve started hating yourself.”

So I love myself, if only to give her a reason to stay.

"We keep breaking up, not because we don't love each other — but because love this big needs to leak sometimes, or we'll drown in it."

I am exiled, yes.

But she is the land I am always exiled from.

And in that, I belong to her more deeply than anyone ever could.

Because even the ones you lose, you never leave if you carry their name like a breath you can't release.

"You are the knife I turn inside myself; that is love. That, my dear, is love."

The Goodbyes That Leave With Their Shoes Off

***"A farewell so unserious it already knows it's staying.
For the one born on August 30th, whose eyes drown the sun itself."***

She tells me it's over again. Her voice is the same as always: triumphant, trembling, falsely final.

She even makes a dramatic little noise before she says it. As if gathering the wind into her lungs to blow the bridge between us apart.

And still—

"I think we should break up."

She says it like she's ordering tea, forgetting she already asked for sugar.

I nod, like a gentleman. Like someone who understands the sanctity of endings.

I say nothing.

I hold the silence in my hand, pet it, name it, put a leash on it.

But she's still there.

She lingers.

In the chat.

In my mind.

In the memory of how she scrunches her nose when pretending not to love me.

“She blocks me with the same hands she once used to cup my face. And I wait, knowing she’ll unblock me before dinner.”

This is not war.

This is theatre.

A play where she always exits stage left, but forgets to take her costume off.

She still wears my hoodie.

She still uses my pet name in her anger.

She still tells me she hates me like someone trying not to say ‘I miss you.’

I spend the day pretending I’m broken.

I whisper her name into cups of water.

I ask my pillows if they’ve seen her.

I put her giggle on repeat, like a sad boy anthem.

Midnight strikes.

My phone lights up like a shrine rekindled.

“She says, ‘I hate you forever,’ but it autocorrects to ‘I love you idiot,’ and she doesn’t fix it.”

She sends me a meme.

It’s a cat falling off a bed.

Caption: "You, without me."

I laugh so hard I nearly forget we’re divorced.

We’ve been divorced three times this week.

And remarried four.

I am the ex-husband who lives in her inbox.

I am the lover she never really lets go of.

I am the goodbye that sleeps on her couch until the morning says otherwise.

“She breaks up with me like someone throwing confetti—there’s always a celebration hidden in the mess.”

She tells me she’s serious this time.

No really, this is it.
The final final FINAL goodbye.
The ultimate exile.
The curtain call.

She says:

“I’m blocking you now. For real. Like actually. This is the last time.”

I tell her I understand.
I tell her I’m sorry for everything.
I tell her I love her.

She blocks me.

I close my eyes.

Count to thirty.

I reopen the app.
Blocked.
Still blocked.
I close the app.

Thirty more seconds.
The next time I open it—

Unblocked.

A voice note:

“I miss you, but don’t get cocky.”

“She breaks up with me to see if I’ll chase her shadow, then cries when I do.”

The world doesn’t end.
The sun doesn’t fall.

My toothbrush still smells like her toothpaste.
She still exists in my playlists, in my pockets, in my pulse.

I listen to her old voice notes on loop.
She sings off-key.
She calls me names.
She sighs in the middle of saying 'goodnight'—a sound so intimate,
even angels would blush.

“Even her silence flirts. She leaves me on seen, then sighs so
loud my heart wakes up.”

The next day she texts again.

“You okay?”
I say yes.
She replies,
“Why? You should miss me.”
I say I do.
She says,
“Good. Block me now.”
Then adds,
“...but don't take too long unblocking.”

This is not chaos.
This is *her* rhythm.
Like tides that never forget the shore.

Later that week, she dreams of us.

Tells me about it:
“You were there. Being stupid. Like always.”
I ask, “Did we kiss?”
She says,
“No. You made tea. Then got lost in a hallway. Then I yelled at you.”
I say, “Sounds about right.”
She adds,
“...But you brought me flowers. And they didn't wilt this time.”

That's all she says.

But I know what she means.
Somehow, the dream didn't end in goodbye.

***“She says we’ve broken up, then calls to ask if I’ve eaten.
That’s how I know I’m still hers.”***
***“She says she’s done with me, but saves our chat before
deleting it.”***
“She claims she’s let me go, but still steals my metaphors.”

This is how she leaves:

Shoes off.
Door unlocked.
Jacket forgotten.

She exits like someone who plans to return by breakfast.

And I, fool that I am, set the table anyway.

When she's truly gone—if such a thing is possible—she leaves her
scent behind.

Not perfume.
But the scent of mischief.
Of middle-of-the-night giggles.
Of long, tender insults that somehow sound like lullabies.

“She tells me we’re done, then asks if my pillow still smells
like her shampoo. I lie. I say no. We both know it does.”

This, my love, is not heartbreak.

It's choreography.

You leave.
I wait.
You peek back in.
I pretend not to notice.
You kick me in the shin.
I call you mean.
You pout.
I melt.

Curtains close.

Encore begins.

She asks once, "Why do you always take me back?"

And I say:

***"Because you never really leave. You just pause the scene
until I get the lines right."***

And that is how our love survives.

Not by perfection.

Not by absence.

Not even by trust.

But by the impossibility of staying apart.

***"I can't think of you without everything becoming poetry.
Even your anger sounds like a stanza I haven't learned to
recite properly."***

And so, with no shoes on, she leaves again—
only to return, slightly more in love, slightly more annoyed, slightly
more mine.

***"I have spent all my life resisting the desire to end everything—and
then you come along, and suddenly I only want to start again."***

The Pillow That Carries Her Voice

"Even silence smells like her."

***"She doesn't speak when she's angry, but the silence she leaves behind
hums like a lullaby sung by a furious god."***

I've learned to listen not with my ears, but with my ribs. Because that's where her absence echoes loudest—right between the second and third, where breath stutters and refuses to go on without permission. She leaves the room, and the curtains forget how to hang. The air turns ceremonial, like it's waiting for someone to return from war, except the war was only between her and me, and the

medals are shaped like unsent texts and half-peeled orange slices we meant to share.

“She says she doesn’t want to talk, then sends me a voice note of her breathing for eight seconds. That’s how I know she still wants me to reply.”

I reply anyway. With nothing, with everything. I water the floorboards where her shadow once landed. I wipe my phone screen clean before pressing play again on the same old voicemail: the one where she accidentally said my name while yawning. It sounds more intimate than the word ‘love.’

The pillow carries her voice.

And sometimes, when she’s not in the bed, it carries her weight too. I don’t mean metaphorically—I mean I once pressed my hand to the empty side of the mattress and felt the shape of her spine carved into the memory foam like a prayer still being whispered.

She breaks up with me every third Wednesday. It’s almost sacred now. Like fasting, or lunar tides.

“This time I mean it,” she says, pulling her sleeves over her fists like a knight too small for her own armor.

“Okay,” I say, already laying out the pink blanket she only uses when she’s about to take me back.

We are theologians of the absurd. Our scripture is the long pause before one of us says, “But I still care, obviously.”

Last night she said, “If you touch me, I’ll cry.”

So I didn’t touch her.

But I let my arm accidentally fall near hers.

And she cried anyway.

Then we laughed, like people who just survived being themselves.

“She says she’s tired of always making up with me, then slips a gummy bear into my pocket. That’s how I know she’s already forgiven me in advance.”

I tried to write her a letter once.

It started like this:

To the girl who sleeps diagonally across the universe, whose feet trespass into galaxies I didn't know I was dreaming—

And it ended like this:

Sorry. I messed up again. Please don't change your ringtone. That's how I find my way back to you.

But I never gave her the letter.

Instead, I folded it and tucked it under her pillow.

She never found it.

Or maybe she did, and she just slept better knowing it was there.

We fought about something small last week. I think it was the way I breathed too loud when she was trying to tell me how the moon looked like her leftover pancake. I told her the moon has been compared to many things—silver coins, lost souls, cracked eggshells—but never a pancake.

She told me I was being dismissive.

I told her I was being literal.

She blocked me.

Then unblocked me to send a picture of the moon.

Then blocked me again.

Then called me and said, "Look. Just say the pancake was beautiful."

"It was," I said. "It was the most celestial pancake I've ever not eaten."

She sighed, forgave me, and fell asleep on the phone.

"She says I don't get it, then explains again using crayons and metaphors involving ducks. That's how I know she still wants me to understand her heart."

I know she's forgiven me when she lets her voice drop into its softest register, the one reserved for stray cats and my anxious questions. It's not a whisper. It's not speech. It's the vibration of two bodies that know they can't live without harmonizing.

Her forgiveness smells like that pillow. The one that carries her voice.
The one that smells like berry shampoo and existential dread. The
one I don't wash, even when I should, because it holds her night
thoughts.

When she sleeps, she talks.
Not in full sentences, but in collapsed buildings of language.
Once she murmured,
“Don't go *where I haven't dreamed yet.*”

And I didn't. I stayed.

Even in dreams, I ask her permission.

**“She says she's over it, then uses my toothbrush. That's how I know
she's still mine in the ways that count.”**

The fights don't scare me anymore.
They're just earthquakes reminding me how deep our roots go.

She says she doesn't need me.
Then waits to see if I flinch.

I do.

She smiles.

That's our truce.

We are a slow-burning fire built from mismatched matches and
rain-soaked wood. But we burn anyway. Because she insists. Because
I believe her when she says we're worth more than logic.

**“She says she's not mad, then slams a door with the precision of a
violinist. That's how I know she's composing another way to love me.”**

The pillow holds her.
Still.
Now.
Always.

And when I press my ear to it in the middle of a quiet, regretful
night—I swear I hear her voice say:

"I hate you."

Followed by:

"Don't forget to eat."

"Though I know you return, I chase you still—because even your giggles do not wait."

A Detour Through Her Eyelash

"Somewhere between blink and war."

She blinks, and the universe folds like poorly kept laundry. Somewhere behind her eyelash is a cathedral that only I can enter, but only when she's looking away.

"She doesn't speak when she's mad, just moves things louder—doors, drawers, the air itself. That's how I know I'm in trouble: the silence bruises."

This morning she said we were over again. She said it between mouthfuls of mango and toothpaste, her lip gloss smudged with the war paint of sleep. "We are done," she declared, like a weather warning—casual, certain, completely untrustworthy.

And then she turned to me, eyes round as if she hadn't just ended us with a bite of fruit, and said, "Can you fix the blanket? It keeps slipping."

"Even her declarations of independence arrive in pajamas, dragging a stuffed bear."

I fix the blanket. I always fix the blanket. Her feet, tiny and cold, poke out just enough to remind me that no matter what she says, she always leaves room for me.

"You can't really break up with someone you'd still ask to peel your oranges."

We fight like gods on a coffee table, celestial beings stuffed inside mortal routines. The detour through her eyelash begins when she looks at me too long. I see it then—the storm brewing behind a glance. I get lost in it and forget what I was mad about. Possibly existence.

She breaks up with me five times a week. Each time she does, I flinch like it's the first. Not because I believe her, but because I believe in her. I believe in her ability to rewrite reality with a single pout.

"She says we've broken up, then tucks me in like a prisoner she refuses to let freeze. That's how I know I still belong to her."

Her eyelash is the bridge between crisis and calm. When she blinks, the argument dissolves. When she stares, it returns with teeth. I have begun to measure time by the flutter of her lashes—blink, we're at war; blink, we're in love again.

She walks away like a poem with too many metaphors—impossible to follow, yet I try anyway. Each step echoes like an unsent message. And just when I've given up, she turns around—not to return, but to say, "You still haven't folded the laundry."

"She builds thrones out of sighs and then sits in them like nothing ever happened."

In her absence, even the furniture looks at me like it knows I'm the one who messed up. The pillow she screamed into now carries her voice like a haunted shell. I put my ear to it and swear I hear, "Idiot." But lovingly.

And always, she returns. Not in a grand gesture, not with flowers or words. She returns in socks—one pink, one blue. She returns in the clink of a spoon against a glass, asking, "Do we have any more of that weird cereal you bought?"

"She returns like a glitch in reality—sudden, unexplainable, and absolutely where she belongs."

We talk again like nothing happened, which is to say, everything happened and we ignored it beautifully. Her giggle fills the room like incense in a church I never believed in until now. I want to live in that giggle. I want to build a nation on it. But for now, I just hand her the cereal.

Sometimes she forgets mid-argument that we're fighting and says, "Can you open this jar?" And I do. Of course I do. Because love is

about choosing to help someone ruin your day in the most beautiful way possible.

She falls asleep mid-sentence, a protest unfinished, an accusation half-whispered. I pull the blanket over her shoulder and whisper, "I forgive you," even though she didn't ask. Because I did it already, hours ago, between her blink and my surrender.

"There is no peace treaty, only the way she breathes when she forgets to be mad."

When she wakes up, she'll pretend none of it happened. She'll poke my cheek and say, "You looked sad in your sleep." And I'll say, "You looked like a hurricane I'd let wreck me again."

I want to frame her expressions like stolen art. She rolls her eyes so dramatically I hear wind. Her giggle still lives in my clavicle. She frowns like the sun just stepped behind a cloud.

We break up again the next morning. The cereal is gone. She blames me. I nod solemnly and accept exile.

"She breaks up with me over cereal, then falls asleep on my chest while planning our future wedding. That's how I know we're permanent."

I am not a person anymore, just a mirror she forgets to look into. But I'm patient. Mirrors always get their moment. When she does look, it's to fix her hair, not to see me. Still, I shine.

The detour through her eyelash is long. I am still walking it. Some days I lose track of where I began. Others, I am reborn with each blink.

If you ask her, she'll say we've broken up 218 times. I've counted too. She's wrong. It's 247. I know, because each one hurt.

"She builds homes in me, sets them on fire, then accuses me of smelling like smoke."

Tonight, she will likely fall asleep mid-apology. Her fingers will curl around mine without realizing. She will kick off the blanket and then steal it back. She will murmur something about toast or betrayal. I won't correct her.

The pillow will carry her voice again. I will place it beside mine like a truce. And we will be okay. Until the next cereal incident.

But I don't mind. I live in the detour. I thrive in the war. And if she ever blinks too long, if she ever doesn't return—

I will follow the thread of her eyelash across reality until I find her again.

"In your gaze, I become honest for the first time."

The Weather Changes When She Frowns

"I carry an umbrella of apologies."

There are tempests whose thunder is not sound but silence. Hers is the kind that doesn't shake the windows, but closes the chat box. Not a scream—just the blessed absence of a "hmph." That's how I know the storm is near.

Her anger is not like others'. It's not a battlefield, not even a tantrum. It is a theatre production staged by the soul of a stubborn child queen who won't be dethroned, only kissed on the forehead and bribed with jokes.

When she frowns, the metaphors start falling out of my mouth like hailstones.

"She's the kind of thunder that smells like bubblegum," I once said. She hated that line. Or maybe she loved it too much to admit it.

There's a rule in her kingdom: if she says "I'm not talking to you," she still expects me to reply.

If I do not, I've failed. If I do, I've sinned.

"She wants me to understand the silence as language, to read the space between her blinks as scripture."

And I do. I am the prophet of her sulks.

There was a time she messaged me:

"We are done."

Five minutes later:

"Did you eat? Don't lie."

I replied:

"How am I supposed to grieve this breakup if you're still mothering me through it?"

She didn't laugh, but she stayed.

That's when I learned—her fury is always wearing slippers. It never really stomps out the door.

"She threatens to leave with a suitcase full of anger, but forgets to pack her toothbrush."

Her rage never ends in goodbye—it ends in a nap. Sometimes I think she gets mad just to reset the world, like shaking the snow globe of our love until the flakes fall back into the shape of us again.

Once, she said:

"You don't listen!"

And I replied:

"I do. I've been memorizing your sighs like verses. I know what every pause in your typing means."

That day, she cried. Not because she was hurt. Because she was understood.

I wore my guilt like a crown.

She forgave me as if I were a child returning from war.

"She shouts in poetry, fights like a soft revolution, and forgives like God forgetting why He made fire."

When she grows angry, it's as if the sun inside her eyes pulls back into itself. The poet's lake dries for a moment, revealing all the bones of the creatures who once swam in her warmth.

And then—inevitably—it rains.

Not loud. Not hard. But a drizzle of affection.

A check-in.

A "Did you drink water?"

A "Fine, I'll talk to you again but only because I'm bored."

I always reply with,

“I live for your boredom.”

She tells me,

“You’re so dramatic.”

But her pout lingers just long enough for me to kiss the edge of it, virtually or otherwise.

"Her anger is a performance where she plays the villain, the victim, and the applause."

She once blocked me.

For three hours.

In that time I wrote her twelve apology texts.

Seven drafts of a love poem.

And a vow to uninstall every app except the one she was on.

When she unblocked me, her message was just:

“Idiot.”

And I knew I was forgiven.

She lets me return like nothing happened—but only after I’ve begged like everything did.

"Her fury is the kind that still fluffs my pillow, then turns away so I can't see the forgiveness already forming on her lips."

Sometimes, I want to argue back. To shout louder. To win.

But I remember—this is her temple.

Her right to raise hurricanes.

And I, the believer, must bring offerings: patience, humor, affection... and sometimes memes.

She said once:

“If you say sorry too fast, it doesn’t count.”

So now I wait. I time my apologies like harvests. I wait for the season of her giggle, for the moment the cloud parts.

That’s when I know spring has returned.

"She is the climate, and I am the foolish man who forgot his coat."

I have grown to love her fury. Not because it is pleasant. But because it is hers.

It means she cares enough to demand better. It means she expects me to rise.

It means she hasn't given up.

And neither have I.

Let her thunder.

Let her rain.

Let her flood me into becoming a better version of myself.

And when the lightning stops, I will be waiting—not with umbrellas anymore, but with open arms. Because nothing warms me more than the sun that rises after she forgives.

"When you're sad, even the sky forgets how to be blue."

The Arguments She Orders Like Dessert

"She craves a storm, then hides under my coat when it rains."

She stands at the edge of the bed, hands on her hips like a queen who's just discovered treason—except the crown is invisible, and the crime is that I didn't say "I missed you" quickly enough.

"I'm angry," she announces, like it's a festival.

"Oh," I whisper, playing dumb, because the game always starts with denial.

Then she starts her list. It is not in chronological order, nor logical, but poetic. She remembers wrongs I haven't committed, birthdays I didn't forget but somehow still ruined, moments when I didn't notice her eyes trembling while she blinked away nothing.

"Why are you like this?" she accuses, poking my shoulder.

"I was made this way. Defective at birth."

"You're not defective," she says instantly. "Just irritating."

She asks for a fight the way children ask for cake—mouth already sticky with anticipation.

But when the fight starts, her lips tremble.
One tear escapes. A hostage too early.

She scrunches her face like she's about to cry, then catches herself.
"I didn't want to fight," she murmurs. "But you always make it a real one."

And just like that, I lose. I always lose when her voice goes small,
when her hands go cold, when she looks at me like I'm the villain in a
story she keeps rewriting just so I can redeem myself.

There is no winning against her sadness.
Because the moment she's hurt, I become the world's worst
historian: rewriting events just to erase her frown.

"Okay," I say.

"Okay what?"

"You win."

"I didn't want to win," she replies, sniffing. "I just wanted to fight a little."

She curls up like a comma in my arms. Not the period of finality, not
the question mark of doubt—just a pause. A tiny breath in the
paragraph of our chaos.

And in that silence, she whispers, "I only do this because you love me
too much to walk away."

I do not answer.

Instead, I pull her tighter.

Because love, in her language, means testing the rope just to make
sure it won't snap.

She cries like a child and clutches like a poet.

The moment I give in, she kisses me like nothing happened, like this
wasn't war just seconds ago.

Her contradictions are divine. They belong in a holy book that only
she can write.

I'm just the margin notes, apologizing in advance for every
ink-stained battle.

Sometimes I wonder if she needs the chaos just to feel alive.

Other times, I realize: no—she needs the chaos to know I'll *always*
choose her inside it.

She stares at me through wet lashes, angry and soft.

"You still love me?" she asks.

"No," I lie. "I just like pain."

And she laughs.

That laugh.

The one that stitches the world back together.

She laughs like a child who dropped her ice cream but got a bigger one five minutes later.

She laughs like she knew I'd fold and still made me beg.

"I hate you," she says.

"I know."

"You don't take me seriously."

"I take you more seriously than time itself."

"...Then why do you smile when I cry?"

"Because you're cute when you're tragic."

"I am *not* cute. I am *furious*."

She is both.

And when the anger has evaporated and the war has packed its suitcase, she leaves one sock on the battlefield like a flag of surrender.

Later, she asks if I'm still mad.

"No," I say.

"But you were."

"Yes."

"And?"

"I missed you while I was mad."

"When you cry, the world looks away. But I look closer—because only in your sorrow do I see what matters."

The Peace Her Smile Begins

"I've built a home in its shadows."

I do not know how the rest of the world loves.
They write poems, sing songs, build temples.
But I...
I fold her laughter into the corners of my sleeves,
so I can carry it when she is not speaking.
I listen to her voice not with my ears but my breath—
because every word she throws in jest somehow saves me.

There is a part of her face where the world begins again.
It's not her lips, not quite—
but the space between her smile and her silence.
And if I had any bravery, I'd name it.
But I'd rather live in its shade than risk losing it.

"She orders arguments like desserts," I whisper,
"sampling fury, savoring chaos."
And then she cries—because I forgot to lose on purpose.

She tells me I don't understand.
She tells me she hates me.
She tells me we're over.
And I nod, solemnly, like a man being tried in court.
But in the same hour—
she feeds me a bite of her stolen snack and kisses the spot she hit.
"I didn't hit you hard," she says. "You're dramatic."
I nod again, this time like a man in love.
Because I am.

She has the audacity of a queen
and the pout of a baby unsure why the wind is louder today.
She cries like it's raining just for her,
then accuses me of making her sad
as if I commanded the clouds.

"There's something wrong with you," she says.
"There's something wrong with how much I love you," I think,
but I never say it aloud.
Instead, I wipe her tears with the side of my thumb,
and she bites it,
not to hurt me, but to say:
Don't leave. Ever.

There's a softness in her voice when she forgets to be mad,
when the fight slips off her tongue and love remains.
She tells me to go away,
then sends a picture of her face and says,
"Tell me I'm cute."

Of course she is.
But "cute" is what you call puppies.
She is what happens when language fails.

Even in silence, she leaves trails:
a pillow that still smells like her shampoo,
a glass of water half drunk but fully holy,
a tiny message saying, "Weirdo,"
because she can't go a day without insulting me lovingly.

"She confuses cruelty with care," I say once to the mirror.
But even the mirror blushes at the thought of her cheeks.

She'll ask me, "Why do you still love me?"
And I'll want to say:
Because your eyes are the only truth in this cracked world.
Because your voice sounds like how I wish prayers sounded.
Because your anger feels like home—because it means I matter.
But all I say is,
"I just do."

She calls me names.
She forgets what she was mad about.
She says, "You're my favorite idiot."
And that is how I know I'm safe.

I've never believed in permanence.
But she makes me want to be consistent—
to show up every day with the same heart,
even when it's tired, even when it's stupid,
even when I have no words.

I want to be the hand she holds after throwing a tantrum.
I want to be the silence she rests in when the world is too loud.
I want to be the one who never gets her completely—
but still chooses to stay in the mystery.

There are parts of her no one will ever name.
Places in her mind where poems are born and quickly destroyed.
I don't want to understand all of it.
I just want to be near when it happens.

Because her laughter isn't just sound.
It's the anthem of every soft rebellion she leads against sadness.
And her smile doesn't just begin at the lips—
it begins in her spirit and ends in mine.

And I swear—
the place where that smile begins,
that's where I sleep now.
That's where I dream from.
That's where I belong.

“Light means nothing unless it leads me back to you.”