Love {

Holden Lee

People in stories can read faces.

Look into others’ eyes and tell what they are thinking.

He wishes that people could read his face.

He often walks staring at the ground, hands thrust in his pockets, eyes blank and hollow, bending over in an unhealthy way.

How can it be more obvious?

“He is seeing lines of code, snaking around in the sidewalk cracks,”

his friends say in wonder.

He imagines sitting in the lounge at 10pm at night, someone he once knew and never thought he would see again walking in, and him saying, as if continuing up a conversation with a close friend, “You know, I never thought this would happen to me.”

I’m in love

I am gushing water

But the world is an infinite sponge

He is staring at a pair of braces,

devoid of meat {

}

But he can’t pick up his fingers to type

the program he has already pseudocoded

in the last twenty pages of his twenty-fifth notebook

But his thoughts drift to

I wonder what her hand feels like

And he doesn’t know why

But he takes out the pair of earphones, almost crushed in his backpack, never used

He goes on Pandora and he types in love

if life were a contest of effort {

he would pass with flying colors

} else if life were about intense longing {

how much you could screw your brain thinking about something

he would win

} but when life is a contest of happiness

{he flunks}

He doesn’t waste time friending random people

That have nothing to offer him

Corollary:

He can’t friend people who he has nothing to offer to

Either

She is a facebook glowbug

numFriends = 1000

She’s typing in three different chat boxes

And her reflection in the screen in the too-bright sunlight

Is more beautiful than everything he’s ever seen

And seems happier than he has ever been

He has only one plug

And it’s USB.

throws CompatibilityException

He’s typing in the console, spitting out the same lines of angry errors at him

His reflection, ugly, old, a face drooping, wilting from unachievable longing

How glad he would be willing to trade all of the A+’s he’s ever gotten

just to experience the inexplicable happiness of long strings of conversing people flowing down the sidewalk on a Friday evening

he always wondered where they were going

that night

in life

Surrounded by a Friday evening crowd

Her choice of dress the pink of a blossoming phoenix

And he has no hold

He tears off his earphones

He runs down the stairs, out the dorm

They are already far away, heading into the party

He looks questioningly at the brothers hanging out besides the door

But they can’t read faces either.

He tries to dance

His hands waving falteringly

His feet walking aimlessly

and she comes up {

This is how you move, she says, grasps his hand and raises them against the sky

Swings them around in a great arc

Pushes and pulls his arms until his feet are knocked into rhythm

He looks up at her face, her beautiful face in wonder

His eyes those of a city boy, suddenly landed in the wilderness, the million-star expanse of the night sky opened up before him for the first time

And he wonders, whether this can really be happening

Is the God’s reward for all my hard work?

Or some impossible chain of causality?

} but she gently withdraws her fingers

He slows down and follows her leaving figure with his eyes

She wanders to the next awkward dancer

And he knows why she is a glowbug

And he knows he has no hold

The music is a crystalline trance

And he glides in it as if it were ballet,

Lifts his head up to the sky

No one hears him when he says quietly,

Why must I have tasted a crumb of fairy food

Only to be locked away from it forever?

The music is loud and blasting again

He gives himself up to it

And lets himself be

carried away by the tide {{{{{{