

100 Entries

preface

I came across this journal during a quiet trip to downtown Toronto, tucked in between a subway seat and the way it was connected to. There was no name on it, no address, nothing to return it to. Just a cover worn soft at the edges and a first page dated June 15, 2023

What fills these pages isn't dramatic. There's no singular trauma, no final heartbreak. It's quieter than that. It's the kind of loneliness that lingers under everything. The kind that doesn't make a sound but changes you anyway.

Maybe we all write something like this, even if it never touches paper.

What I do know is that someone should read it. Not to solve it. Not to fix it. Just to witness it.

That's all any of us want, in the end. To be witnessed.

With that being said, here are the last 100 entries from that journal, starting January 3rd, 2024.

— C.

[Entry 1: January 3rd]

I have fallen in love again. I was not introduced, nor spoken to. A girl on the 9:45 train, navy coat, worn boots, holding a paperback with bent pages. She looked up once. I imagined it was at me, though I know it wasn't. Still, I built something out of it. A tiny shrine of her in my mind. By the time I reached my stop, I'd already ruined it by imagining too much. There's a violence in imagining. You take something whole, a stranger, and twist it into a mirror.

I got off and she stayed behind. Or maybe I stayed behind.

[Entry 2: January 10th]

There's a couple at the café I frequent. They always sit at the same table near the window, backs to the street, leaning close even when they don't speak. The man listens like the world might collapse if he doesn't. The woman laughs softly, as though it's for him alone. I don't know why I keep watching them. It hurts, but it's an honest pain. It reminds me that some people are chosen without effort. Others, like me, are not.

I smile at the barista. She remembers my name. That's something, right?

[Entry 3: January 14th]

I passed by a couple today who were laughing so freely that I almost believed it could be real for someone like me. Then I remembered who I was, and it passed.

[Entry 4: January 20th]

I keep imagining conversations with people who don't exist. It's easier than trying to speak to someone real. I get to write both parts. No one looks at their phone in the middle.

[Entry 5: January 29th]

I saw someone from my past today. She was with someone. Of course. They looked... inevitable. It's not that I ever had a chance with her. It's that I thought, once, that maybe I could. The way people think maybe they'll be lucky. Maybe the train will arrive early. Maybe they'll find a \$20 bill on the sidewalk.

They don't. Not really.

[Entry 6: February 2nd]

I tried going to a party. I hovered at the edge of every room. People laughed around me, moved around me. I left early. I don't think anyone noticed I came.

[Entry 7: February 4th]

I'm scared I've become too used to loneliness. That I've grown to wear it like skin. That even if someone did try to love me, I'd flinch.

[Entry 8: February 8th]

When I was a child, I thought love was inevitable. Like growing older. Now I think it's like lightning. It strikes where it wants, and some people live under a permanent sky.

[Entry 9: February 12th]

I think the chase is worse than the loneliness. Loneliness is clean. Predictable. But the chase, it's dirty. It's humiliating. It tricks you. Makes you believe you're close when really you're circling an empty space. Like a moth to a dead bulb.

The worst part? You start to believe that maybe that humiliation is love. That the ache, the waiting, the rehearsed texts and awkward silences, that's romance. That's connection. I think I've spent more time with fantasies than I ever have with real people.

[Entry 10: February 14th]

Valentine's Day. I walked around just to feel something sharp. Saw couples with flowers, hand-written cards. I almost bought myself one. Just to pretend.

[Entry 11: February 17th]

Sometimes I re-read old messages. They feel like ghosts. Half-said things. Missed chances. I try not to believe they meant anything, but some part of me clings to them.

[Entry 12: February 20th]

It's easier to fall in love with someone you'll never talk to. They can't disappoint you. You get to keep them perfect. Frozen in that first glance.

[Entry 13: February 24th]

Someone brushed past me today and apologized with a smile. It felt like something beautiful. I thought about it for hours. I'm starving for crumbs.

[Entry 14: February 28th]

There's a hallway in my building where my voice echoes strangely. I whispered "please" into it today. I don't know who I was asking.

[Entry 15: March 3rd]

Everyone around me seems to pair off effortlessly. People I know, awkward, strange, cruel even, they're loved. They are seen. I'm not even disliked. I'm unnoticed. I am a neutral presence. A placeholder. A background character.

I started a conversation with someone today. It went nowhere. I knew it would. But I did it anyway. Because hope is a parasite. It doesn't die, it feeds.

[Entry 16: March 6th]

Sometimes I imagine I'm in a movie. That a hidden camera is recording me, my silence, my longing, my nothing days. At least then it would mean something.

[Entry 17: March 9th]

I'm not afraid of dying alone. I'm afraid of living alone. Decades of this. Empty rooms. One toothbrush. One coffee cup. Silence where laughter should be.

[Entry 18: March 13th]

Someone once told me, "There's someone out there for everyone." I believed it. Now I think some of us are meant to be backdrops.

[Entry 19: March 16th]

There's a woman who always reads at the same park bench. I pass her almost every day. Today I sat on the other end of the bench. She didn't look up. I wanted her to. Not because I wanted to speak, I wouldn't know what to say, but because I wanted to be acknowledged. Just once.

She turned a page. I sat in silence for twelve minutes, then left. It's strange how something so small can feel like rejection. But that's the scale I live on.

[Entry 20: March 19th]

I looked through an old yearbook today. Faces I once knew, smiling in the artificial way people do when they think they'll be remembered. I wasn't in many of the photos.

[Entry 21: March 21st]

A couple on the bus today had their heads pressed together, sharing a single earbud. I turned away. I couldn't bear it. I want to know what that's like.

[Entry 22: March 24th]

I said something kind to someone today. They didn't hear me. Or maybe they pretended not to. Either way, the words felt stupid in my mouth.

[Entry 23: March 28th]

I used to write poetry. About hope, mostly. I tried today. Nothing came. I think I've wrung the last beauty out of myself.

[Entry 24: April 1st]

I don't think I'm meant to be loved. I don't mean that in a tragic, poetic way. I mean it plainly. I don't fit into people's narratives. I don't spark desire or comfort or excitement. I spark nothing. I am not cruel. I am not brilliant. I am not mysterious. I am not the one.

Sometimes I wish someone would just tell me. That I'm unlovable. That it's not going to happen. So I could stop looking. But no one tells you that. They say, "You'll find someone." Like it's guaranteed. Like it's a bus that's just running late. It's not.

[Entry 25: April 3rd]

The woman on the bench wore yellow today. It suited her. I almost told her, but I didn't. She didn't look up.

[Entry 26: April 5th]

I tried not to think about love all day. It worked until I saw someone tuck a loose strand of hair behind another's ear.

[Entry 27: April 7th]

I think the absence of touch is making me forget my shape. I used to know where I ended and the world began. Now it's blurred.

[Entry 28: April 10th]

I woke up in tears. I wasn't dreaming. I just opened my eyes and wept like something sacred had been taken while I slept.

[Entry 29: April 15th]

I deleted my dating apps. Not out of bitterness. Out of fatigue. Performing desire for strangers who never see you, it's a slow erosion.

[Entry 30: April 20th]

Watched two teenagers kiss by the river. It was clumsy, innocent. It gutted me. I'm 20 and I've never kissed anyone. Not really. Not like that.

The longer you go without something, the more grotesque it becomes in your mind. Kissing. Touch. Being held. It stops being simple and starts becoming mythical. And you, you start believing you're incompatible with it. Like your body has never learned the language.

[Entry 31: April 22nd]

Someone held the door for me today. I said thank you. He nodded. It felt like more interaction than I've had in weeks. How starved am I, that politeness feels like affection?

[Entry 32: April 24th]

I watched a romantic movie today. I knew it would make me feel worse, and I watched it anyway. It was like choosing to bleed a little. I envied the actors. Not for the love, for the script.

[Entry 33: April 26th]

My phone hasn't buzzed in two days. I keep checking it anyway. Sometimes I think I'd rather get bad news than silence.

[Entry 34: April 28th]

A memory hit me out of nowhere today, someone once held my hand in 9th grade during a school trip. I don't even remember her name. I just remember the warmth. I miss warmth.

[Entry 35: April 30th]

I overheard a couple fighting outside. Their anger was intimate. Even that, shared pain, seems preferable to this invisible life I'm living.

[Entry 36: May 8th]

I confessed something to a friend. Not love. Just sadness. Just the weight of not being wanted. They said, "You have to love yourself first."

God, I'm tired of that. I've loved myself. I've hated myself. I've tried fixing myself. None of it matters if no one else sees you. Self-love doesn't substitute for being held. It doesn't answer texts at 1 a.m. It doesn't rest its head on your chest.

[Entry 37: May 10th]

I woke up with the image of someone curled beside me. Not real. A dream. But I missed them like they were. There's something cruel about that.

[Entry 38: May 13th]

A friend told me they'd met someone. I smiled. Said the right things. But all I felt was cold. Not because I wanted them, but because they were moving forward, and I wasn't.

[Entry 39: May 18th]

I held my own hand in bed last night. Just to feel contact. It didn't work. You can't surprise yourself. You can't pretend it's someone else.

[Entry 40: May 24th]

**Today, for the first time in a long time, I felt nothing. No ache. No hope. No jealousy. Just quiet.
It scared me.**

[Entry 41: May 27th]

I've stopped making eye contact with people. I used to look around, half-hoping someone might meet my gaze, might see something worth reaching for. But now I avoid it. Every face is a reminder. Every pair of hands held is a private ritual I'm not invited to.

[Entry 42: May 28th]

I don't leave my room much anymore. I say it's because I'm tired. That's not a lie. Just not the whole truth. The real reason is that every trip outside is a wound, a thousand soft stabs from lives I'll never live.

[Entry 43: May 30th]

**I dreamed I was in love last night. It felt real. Realer than anything I've felt awake. She touched my cheek and said my name like it meant something. Then I woke up.
I've been carrying the loss all day like a funeral in my chest.**

[Entry 44: June 2nd]

I talked to a stranger today. We stood beside each other waiting for the crosswalk. I said something banal about the weather. She smiled politely. That smile, it stayed with me. I rewound it all evening. I know it meant nothing. But I let it mean something anyway. Because I need it to.

[Entry 45: June 4th]

Everything is beginning to blur. Days leak into one another like ink in water. I forget what I've done. What I've said. Sometimes I feel like I've disappeared. Other times, I fear I'm still too visible, like a stain on a tablecloth, easily noticed, impossible to clean.

[Entry 46: June 6th]

There's a mirror in my hallway. I used to look into it every morning. Now I avoid it. Not because I've changed, but because I haven't.

[Entry 47: June 9th]

I sat in the dark tonight and whispered "I love you" into the air. Just to hear the words aloud. Just to pretend they weren't meant for no one. I think I'm beginning to unravel.

[Entry 48: June 11th]

I didn't sleep last night. I stared at the ceiling and watched the shadows shift like they were waiting to say something. I've stopped feeling tired. My body moves, but not with me inside it. I think my soul has taken to walking ahead of me, scouting for meaning I'll never reach.

[Entry 49: June 13th]

Sometimes I hear voices in the other room. But I live alone. It's not frightening. It's worse: it's comforting. Like my mind has started generating company to keep itself from cracking in half. Maybe madness isn't the loss of reality, maybe it's the brain creating what you're missing.

[Entry 50: June 15th]

I caught my reflection today and didn't recognize it. I stood there for ten minutes, just staring. The eyes looked hollow. Like something had vacated them. I think I'm forgetting how to hold a conversation. Words don't come when I need them, only when I don't.

[Entry 51: June 16th]

The people in my memories have started talking back. They correct me. They rewrite things. I remember someone laughing at a joke I told, but now, in the memory, they look bored. I think even my past is trying to escape me.

[Entry 52: June 18th]

I walked ten kilometers today without realizing it. I just kept moving, like if I stopped, the air would collapse around me. I passed dozens of couples. I imagined them all dead. That they were ghosts from another time, clinging to each other out of habit.

I didn't feel cruel. I just needed them to not be real.

[Entry 53: June 19th]

I've stopped eating properly. Food tastes like cardboard. I chew and swallow but nothing registers. Hunger has become a concept, not a sensation. Like love.

[Entry 54: June 20th]

I found an old voicemail from years ago, my mother saying she loved me. I played it seventeen times. Not because I miss her. But because I needed proof someone had said those words to me.

[Entry 55: June 22nd]

I've been rehearsing conversations with people who aren't here. I lie in bed and imagine their voices. I fight with them. I forgive them. I kiss them. All of it inside my head. I think I'm preparing for a life I'll never live.

[Entry 56: June 23rd]

I wrote a message today and deleted it. I do that a lot. It's like putting a bottle into the ocean and taking it back before it leaves the shore. I don't want to be ignored again. I've memorized that sting too well.

[Entry 57: June 24th]

I stopped by the café again. The couple wasn't there. For a second, I felt hope. As if absence meant I'd inherited their place. But I only sat. Alone. Again.

The waitress asked if I was waiting for someone. I almost laughed. I said no. But I wanted to say, "Yes. I've been waiting for years."

[Entry 58: June 26th]

I saw someone crying in public today. And I envied them. Because at least they had overflowed. At least they still had something left inside to spill out.

I feel dry. Like something once liquid inside me has fossilized.

[Entry 59: June 27th]

I keep thinking of vanishing. Not suicide, not exactly. Just disappearing. Leaving everything behind. Changing my name. Becoming no one. Because being no one here hurts too much.

[Entry 60: June 30th]

The world keeps going. Couples keep kissing. Friends keep laughing. And I watch, like a ghost too proud to move on. I don't want to be here. But I don't want to not be here. I'm caught in the middle of staying and leaving, like a paused film that no one remembers playing.

I think that's the worst part. Not being unloved. But being unwitnessed.

[Entry 61: July 2nd]

The days are soft now. I touch them and they fold. I don't think I speak out loud anymore. When I try, the words slip back into my throat like they've changed their minds.

[Entry 62: July 4th]

I cleaned the apartment obsessively today. Scrubbed the kitchen twice. Rearranged the books alphabetically, then by color. It felt like trying to impose order on a collapsing ceiling.

[Entry 63: July 6th]

There's a woman in my dreams. She visits every night. I don't know her face, it keeps changing. But I know her voice. It says things I want to hear. Things no one else says.

Today I tried to draw her. It came out as static.

[Entry 64: July 8th]

The world has grown quieter. Or I've gone further away from it. I was at a crosswalk, and I couldn't hear the traffic. Just the beating of my own heart, frantic and purposeless, like a trapped animal.

[Entry 65: July 10th]

Sometimes I think I never existed at all. That I'm just the memory of someone who once hoped. The shell left behind when a person realizes no one's coming for them.

[Entry 66: July 12th]

I saw my shadow split into two today. For a second, I thought someone had come up behind me. I turned around and no one was there. But I still felt watched.

[Entry 67: July 14th]

Everything smells like dust. Even the air. Even my hands. I keep washing them, but the dust doesn't leave.

[Entry 68: July 15th]

I forgot how my voice sounds. I whispered something today and flinched at how foreign it was. I think I'm becoming a ghost, but not the kind that haunts. The kind that's forgotten.

[Entry 69: July 17th]

I've stopped looking in mirrors entirely. When I dream now, I don't have a face. I float through crowds as something limbless, watching lovers kiss and vanish before I reach them.

[Entry 70: July 18th]

There's a growing silence in me. It used to feel like space. Now it feels like drowning.

[Entry 71: July 20th]

I started whispering apologies to no one in particular. For things I haven't done. For things I haven't been. For being too much. For not being enough.

[Entry 72: July 21st]

I can't tell if I'm writing these entries or just dreaming them. If I reread them, will they still say the same thing tomorrow?

[Entry 73: July 22nd]

I feel hollow behind the eyes. Like something has been scooped out. I smile when I pass people. They don't smile back. I don't blame them. My smile feels like paper.

[Entry 74: July 24th]

The woman from my dreams said she loved me last night. Then she melted. I held her bones in my lap until they became sand.

[Entry 75: July 25th]

I screamed into a pillow today. Not out of rage, just to hear something come out of me.

[Entry 76: July 26th]

I covered the mirrors. All of them. I can't stand the way they twitch now. Not the reflections, the mirrors themselves. Like they're breathing.

[Entry 77: July 27th]

The dream woman kissed me. Her mouth was full of needles. I thanked her.

[Entry 78: July 28th]

I stopped eating. The hunger feels clean. A better ache. An ache I can understand.

[Entry 79: July 29th]

The shadows are louder than they should be. They whisper behind my back. Sometimes I answer. Sometimes they answer back.

[Entry 80: July 30th]

The hallway stretched today. I walked for five minutes and never reached the kitchen. When I turned around, the door was gone. I blinked, and it was back.

[Entry 81: August 1st]

A man sat on the edge of my bed last night. He didn't speak. He watched. His eyes were where mine should have been.

[Entry 82: August 2nd]

I spoke to the wall. It laughed. It told me the others never existed. I think I believe it.

[Entry 83: August 3rd]

I found blood on my hands this morning. No wounds. No memory. Just red, like shame.

[Entry 84: August 4th]

My skin doesn't fit. It hangs wrong. Loose in the elbows. Too tight at the throat.

[Entry 85: August 5th]

The ceiling fan spins counterclockwise now. It wasn't installed that way. I didn't touch it.

[Entry 86: August 6th]

I no longer sleep. I rest beneath the bed. It feels safer there. Closer to the dark.

[Entry 87: August 7th]

The dream woman returned. She wept black fluid. I tried to comfort her. My hands passed through her like fog.

[Entry 88: August 8th]

I opened the fridge and found my old diaries frozen in the ice tray. The words bled when I touched them.

[Entry 89: August 9th]

Everything is upside down. Not metaphorically. The apartment. My bed. My hands. I walk on the ceiling now.

[Entry 90: August 10th]

Who is writing this?

[Entry 91: August 11th]

[Entry redacted]

[Entry 92: August 12th]

The silence screamed today. I screamed back. We reached an understanding.

[Entry 93: August 13th]

i seethed light in the gaps between the sink and the and the the teeth

[Entry 94: August 14th]

crawling clocks hum like mother's hum hum hum the hum a lullaby for the underfloor things

[Entry 95: August 15th]

mirror mouth mirror mouth mirror mouth say my name say my name saymyname

[Entry 96: August 16th]

no eyes no eyes no eyes just sound behind me/the wall breathes again i hide in the tile cracks

[Entry 97: August 17th]

**love is teeth love is holes love is dripping the floor loves me the floor loves me
the floor loves me**

[Entry 98: August 18th]

**she said she said she said she said but her mouth was gone and the voice came
from under the bed under the bed under the**

[Entry 99: August 19th]

**ohhhh hum hum hum hum hum hum hum hum hum hum hum hum hum hum hum
hum**

[Entry 100: August 20th]

help

appendix

What you have just read, and what I have just written, is not a story. It is a record of ordinary despair, the kind that accumulates slowly and silently, until you look down and realize you are drowning in it.

There were days when I hated the person who wrote this. Too self-pitying. Too dramatic. But other days, I saw the honesty in it. And we forget about honesty far too often.

I would not be surprised if these entries are forgotten. They were only ever meant for the writer. A way to exhale. A way to make the silence a little less heavy.

But if you have found this, then you are part of a very small group. One of the few who knows him.

And really, that is all any of us want in the end. To be known.

— C