

They Say All Girls Are the Same

I am pretty, no I am not as half as pretty as you. To me, you are a traffic light humming in $\frac{3}{4}$ time and your hair is pounding against the green, and everytime I blink the sky turns into tin foil and reflects your version of pretty: your cheeks are always caught red-handed by sun and your forged freckles shine like a gallery of deers and dears: darling, you are the lingering superstition of fake email sign-offs. Do you not get it? You told me how time behaves like lukewarm honey as if snail-slow and loyal to gravitational legislatures but I say I only believe in your type of time, you, asking me if your knuckles looked philosophical under fluorescence while brushing lint off your sleeve. You are a good American daughter. Your hair smelled like library dust and bergamot so when you spoke about Derrida, I thought of seahorses and how the males carry the babies. How unfair it is that I carry you in every sentence! In class, someone said you got perfect scores again and I said *of course she did* except this time except your name appeared in my Spotify queue after *Glass Beach* and *Ecco2k* and smelled like ambition or something equally acidic. At my chipped nail polish you laugh guiltless because you always get them gelled so I redeem myself with a rationale of performance art. You say art is dead and you're gonna major in comp-sci but but your lips were cherry-red and the coffee you spilled is symmetrical as divine entropy forming galaxies on the counter. Every time you tilt your head, an entire theory of consciousness collapses. I mean that as a compliment. Everything I say about and to you is a compliment, sweet and savory alike. I quote from you like a cult: 1.(y)our beauty as being a habit, 2. we're all just constellations of accidents, 3. my spirit is a breaststroke swimmer when rinsed in too much salt water and that my silence has a pretty shape of sea glass. Whenever my shadow arrives late it must have followed your scent again. You must've been walking somewhere bright. Your laugh left fingerprints on my window. There's nothing I can do about it. If I ever dream of you again, please rearrange my organs alphabetically and bend my crescented envy into a spoon. I hate that I love you.

Penny Wei

FINALIST, 20th Annual Poetry Prize for High School Girls in New England & New York
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