



i can
remember
the meaning
of every
tarot
card
but
i can't
remember
what i
texted you
last night

elle nash

I CAN REMEMBER THE
MEANING OF EVERY
TAROT CARD BUT I
CAN'T REMEMBER
WHAT I TEXTED YOU
LAST NIGHT

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"Perhaps if I had not been weighed down by the whiskey in my belly
I could have run faster."

– Elizabeth Ellen, *The Last American Woman*

the moon

a list of the identities i inhabit include

pretty girl eating salad at mod market
counter reading a book

night hands coming in from cold air
to rest on my nearbody

animals eating each other

really wanting to touch your throat right now
but speaking slow

putting my cellphone on my chest to
feel my heart beat against it

daughters of lesser nobility

the texture of water

sowing the myth i tell myself
which is that i can hold my liquor

the sound of gunshots on tv

the orgasm and when it's happening
is everything but then it ends and
it's nothing

asking when did we become wolves

ten of swords

four half gallons of vodka is 168 shots
168 shots of vodka in six days
split between two people that's 84 shots of vodka
per person in six days which is an average of 14 shots per day

tonight we fought again about
the ways in which i can't get out of my head

i used to feel nothing at all
now i feel everything all at once
it comes out in violent outbursts

i throw things and our mouths are diseased
he says that i am making a choice when i do it

a list of things i have broken:
expensive glasses
porcelain heirlooms
cell phone
pride

if he would just hurt me a little harder
each time it would feel justified

if he would crawl up into my brain
into the "no" center and turn it off
i could be better than myself
i could say yes all of the time

four of cups

i'm so bitter about people
with close families

there is an old man in the cafeteria
who pulls the meat off an entire cooked chicken
with his bare hands

i close my eyes and the press falls
the water falls
my eyes are envelopes sealing
my eyes are bottles locking their liquor up tight

i am always lacking empathy
smoking cigarettes rolled with another man's spit
holding heavy beautiful things

the first time he enters me
i question my stance on atheism

the inbetween time

most times we make love without kissing
the way prostitutes do

i smoke cigarettes but i try not to
because i've already aged enough

a part of me tries to accept my ugly
but how often have you pulled flesh from carcass, too?

if you were my man you wouldn't be texting me
but here you are

maybe it's because you are younger than me
i can't really tell

six of cups reversed

face down ass up that's the way we tend to fuck
it's here we manufacture romance
it's here i'm never going to feel taken care of

it's here i'm going to grow up
sad and overworked like my mother

it's here i'm befit
this hard rage teeming
ghost deer in the woods
white fawn stands still in the green

a real partnership is when the man you love
gets to break your heart every day
snowmouth holds still on the receiving end

what am i saved as in your phone? it makes me
wonder when i text you

it makes me wonder if someone else sees it
what they'd think of me

did you know that for years
dollface was still in that phone
did you know in the before time dollface
and i used to be best friends

when you called me by a different name
it was not romantic did you know
you fucked her when we broke up did you
know it took me leaving to make you realize
i was a star

this is what i wanted:
water that sounds like spells being whispered

deathcloth laid over my face like a veil

white life pouring between my legs
my hips to crack wide open

and feel the earth pulse in between them
fatty hot diamond on my finger like a crystal skull

we don't spend enough time
with our skin stuck together

i guess all acne was bad
my face thick and red
the oily skin of the ouroboros
i wondered how long it would take for us

to do this again
how long it would take for you
to call and you never call you just hide away
and you chase these black tar dreams

moon big rising on the horizon
heavy is the hammer that bangs the nail

the wheel of fortune

when you spin
where do you go

all the clocks are wrong
they are telling you

you have time
but you do not

this is the history
of your masochism

it hangs above
and so it is beneath you

you are snake
belly up in burning grass
splinter against skin

the come-back king
the come-back kind of person

each wooden crown breaks
rotting gold in its place

frayed rope wrapped around
each axle released again

the creaking timber of a branch
when predator leaps for prey

the king of pentacles

i left you to find myself but i still don't know
who i am because i lose it every time that i am with you

spent the morning
asking old boyfriends
what i was like when
i was away from you

when did you get married to sad
how long will it take you to figure me out
probably not long
but you will give up on trying
much sooner than you think

do you know how hard it is to hold words inside a tongue
to become paralyzed by choice
to have too much

do you think i will ever tire
of being excited by you
and your exit wounds

one on each temple
i was consumed by you
all i desired was not to disappoint you

the fool

my heart is hurting this week
is yours also hurting?
i have been trying to get you
to replicate the cycles we go through

i have been trying to get you
to open up your rib cage
until the bones crack

perhaps this is only a thing that i do for you
perhaps this is why my heart is hurting
perhaps i am expecting too much

and wait, just now
i want you to rest on the precipice,
with your foot dangling over the edge

wet blossom of my heart in your hand,
the other in the air, pointed towards the sky

this is my favorite part,
suspended in the space
between the come up and the climax

the part where we fall in love again
like it's the first time

you asked me to run away with you,
but it wasn't the first time you did that.

there is a wanting that is different now,
that makes it feel new again

a wanting that ascends to need

queen of swords reversed

i'm not that pretty
so why am i here

what i do is find the tools
i need to keep feeling

kyanite vein mined
from geography of wrist

what i do is keep reaching
elk migrate through grasslands
blood moves through arteries
starlings murmur under sky

razor blades
cut quick and
leave big
beautiful mouths

mouths that speak in silence
mouths that speak for me

how can i live
without migrating out

six of swords

the memories of my family
are more faded than i would like to admit

but your brain suppresses fire against
the beautiful plague inside it

you will forget
more than they'll ever learn

i've forgotten the first night i met you

our first kiss
a finger dip
ripples in the lake

riding on highways
a wednesday night date

cloaked in too much beer
a belly full

fried pickles and ranch
the way a humid winter
sometimes feels like spring

the lovers

being here after the break
makes you a new self before the sun
i woke up different the day i left you

the way your high school looks foreign
when the lights are off and the doors are closed

i am the same place
only a stranger to your heart now

i like to listen to classical music
and drive through beautiful neighborhoods
to look at houses i will never afford

think about the sunshine and its crosses made
on sandy carpets our feet will never touch

the plastic creak of her target-bought
high heels fades in the distance
and then reappears

i don't remember the last time i missed you

the sun

you will see the way the
sun moves in thick butter
slices across the bed and my
wrists exposed will burn with your
vision, hot and wanting

you will be there when
i take my hair down

you will see the way
the curls fall

against the pattern of a bed
a wet desert rain prism light spraying
from the smack of our lips

our tongues dense and thick
persimmon slices against thumb
and palm of hand

cactus skin and prickled hairs
with sweet teeth underneath

you can only ever look at one eye

you can go through the search history
the next morning to find
all the music videos
we forgot about

you can tell when people aren't
afraid of themselves

loving you is like sleep
in which waking up
is the hardest part

it never gets easier no matter
the fact i do it every day

magician and the star reversed

sometimes you hear what sounds like
skin moving or body wetness or sex
but it's not that at all

ear against the door against the ground
the slightest gasp or moan
it's just my foot pressing
against the chest of earth

cool river hurls itself
between my toes

crumbles wet and soft
rivers swell to swallow

the first place your head goes
when you don't know where you are

recount the constellation
of each event, hand first
then carafe, then gone
birth as the first orgasm

i followed the north star
by seeing its reflection in the river

i followed it
into the sex sounds of your heart

nine of swords reversed

the most painful realization
of my adult life has been that
most people are not interested
in meaningful exchange

there are things in between
one point and another: a pane of glass
several panes of glass. a keyboard
a glass of scotch. milk with brandy

fake smiles with fake teeth
with bleached teeth with false lips
i have slowly been going blind
i am starting to examine

the craters of my face a little too close
to the mirror. i was at the
doctor's office when he flipped
a new pane of glass over each eye

and said, "better?" and i said, "yes"
when i placed the new prescription
on my nose, i thought, *glass wall. better*
two panes of glass,

a blue computer screen,
my face the color of a mirror
the mirror is me. i am always surprised
by the realness of my skin,
the acne scars, the way
makeup sits on my face. in the sun
my skin casts shadows.
icepicks in glaciers. mountainside skin
now i get too close
because i can see more mistakes
my face the shape of a gemstone

my eyes are rotting. am i here
is this an avatar. now i know

my insides match the outsides
the truth of the matter is
that sitting up in bed at night
with my scarskin face in my hands

is a waste of time. unless
we tear the roof down
unless we burn up the walls
unless we fuck underneath

the heavenly stars wide open wild
let me blind you for a second
take those glasses off and let me look
perfect while you look at me, a perfect me

blurred or blurring for a sec
i don't have to be vulnerable
really, its ok. we can play pretend

the hierophant reversed

i shot you in my dream
and you should have stayed dead

at first i was devastated
the dream you, a true loss in my eyes

awake in winter, my feet masticate
salt crystals on sweaty sidewalks

i could feel every pore breathing
the kind of ugliness that also harbors
a violence against the mainstream world
my heat competing with the beauty of the sky

i could have saved you, but instead i let the
blood run through my knuckles

i could have left you
but if i commit suicide
who would feed the dog

ace of wands

the steeple is the tallest structure in town
and the holy wine smells like home
some sour trash and 40 years of dust

obedience called
it's gonna go down in the water
worst to leave you
where i might exist in the future

i'm not dying
but it's the only vocabulary i have
to describe how i feel

it's easier to write alcoholism into poetry
than admit sometimes i feel
like a corpse lying next to you

white shirt white skirt
white panties in the church

so what if we have sex that i can't remember
how often am i on your mind

on a long enough timeline
you will alienate everyone around you

if you still believe in sin
or think people are dirty
then you were never free

the devil

my front tooth is fake
so is my personality

david koresh daddy let me borrow
his face razor to shave my legs tonight

stick shift high heels
feet don't quite reach the clutch

hand reaches for neck
to choke or rub it out
praying to fluorescent lights

you don't have to do that i say
mouth filled with velvet tongue

playing quiet tricks for a faster hand
i can't please you all the time

but you can't please me either
the only difference is i don't feel rejected
when you tell me no

three of cups reversed

what i care about most right now is
singing lana del rey songs and
drinking a giant glass of water and
not being hungover when i wake up and
not listening to my husband talk about how vikings make steel

i don't know what i'm doing
being a wife like it makes sense
like a normal happy person
who met her husband in college

the extenuating circumstances
in which we met involve
sleeping with the same woman
finding out
fucking each other instead
and then, together, sleeping with
someone else's wife later that year

i curl up and mumble *will you
feel this tomorrow?* and he doesn't answer
because instead of singing he is snoring
i know tomorrow my mother is going to visit me and
have her best friend drive her up the highway

neurosis is a family affair
because she doesn't drive on highways
the way that i don't take left turns

without street light signals that tell me it's ok to go

acknowledgements

The following poems first appeared on *Witch Craft Magazine's* website as part of the recurring Tarot Card of the Week series that I can't seem to keep running and sometimes feel bad about:

eight of pentacles
the king of pentacles
wheel of fortune
six of cups reversed
nine of swords reversed
magician and the star reversed
the sun

The poem "four of cups" originally appeared in the inaugural issue of *Reality Beach* as "i'm so bitter about people with close families."

In the poem "nine of swords reversed," there is a line inspired by a lyric in the song "The Key to Gramercy Park" by Deadsy. In the poem "queen of swords reversed," the mouths image was inspired by a character in a work by Chelsea Laine Wells. She'll know which one.



Thank you to the Tarot for bringing me constant grief and inspiration, to Catch Business for helping me find poetry again, to Freyja and the old gods for being my compass, to Elizabeth Ellen for constantly inspiring me to go for the throat of art, and to my husband who lives with my incessant irrationality daily, and without whom I would not be on the right path or even alive today.

xo.

Elle Nash is a writer. She lives at the foot of the Rockies with her husband and their two pets, Rookie and Nietzsche. Her work appears in journals like *Hobart Pulp*, *Blunderbuss Magazine*, and *Hypertext*.

Elle Nash is a founding editor of *Witch Craft Magazine*, where she edits fiction and essays. She also reads tarot professionally.

Elle has broken up with and subsequently gotten back together with poetry too many times.

*it's here i'm befit
this hard rage teeming
a ghost deer in the woods
white fawn stands still in the green*

"Refracted to us through the lens of the tarot, the poems here are both mythology and autobiography, legend and confession—it is impossible to read them without wondering precisely whose hot entrails are spread out during this divination, and whether the truths being whispered in the dark are the author's, the world's, or one's own."

—Sonya Vatomsky, *Salt is For Curing* (Sator Press)

"The poems in this chapbook are those of a witch, a warrior, a wolf, a goddess with claws. Elle Nash is able to balance the hilarious and tragic, the heartbreaking and the furious. She will slay you, and you will love her for it."

—Juliet Escoria, *Witch Hunt* (Lazy Fascist Press)

N!P