

Like any worthwhile activity, it starts with the desire for total obliteration of ourself  
or does it start from a fear of change  
if we could crawl inside you and never leave  
no  
if you could crawl inside us and never leave  
we could know you would never leave us  
is this what we crave  
homeostasis

Or perhaps this can be a divided reasoning from

1. Moments of intense anxiety where we are apart from you and we fear above all losing you: from death, from an argument, from catastrophic or mundane events that will lead to a breakup. We wish we could be with you at all times, receiving reassurances, little kisses, et cetera, and how much easier this would be if you had crawled into our skin already and you were always with us, our little endoparasitic lover.
2. Moments of intense pleasure together when fucking is not enough and we need you to crawl into our skin and you bite down hard to find an entrance, to get underneath, inside, down to the muscle.

Both scenarios, while polar opposites, contain the same thought: there is no closeness that is close enough. A psychoanalytic construction of desire predicates desire on absence: a person wants what they do not have. But we know, we know, that even when with you, we want more. In scenario 1, the yearning is for a permanent state of being together, a yearning for an end to uncertainty about the future. In scenario 2, the yearning is for an endless, uninterrupted, infinite orgasm, a moment of intense pleasure together that would never cease. Both are probably solved by fusing together.

It takes a while. Each bite your teeth dig in, but leave only a deep impression in the skin, bouncing off the epidermis. You suggest making a small incision with something sharp – a scalpel? a serrated tomato knife – but we think the point is that it needs to be a single puncture, followed by locking on. It has to be perfectly moulded around your teeth, we say, so that when our skin starts to heal it fuses around your gums, the wetness of your lips will cause a sore to form on our flesh from constant contact and these too will start to melt into each other and then – ah! we feel your teeth dig deep into our skin, and that is it. The conversation is over, all conversation is over, forever. You look up at me, lovingly, slightly awkwardly due to the angles, and we wait.

David Wojnarowicz: *When I put my hands on your body on your flesh I feel the history of that body. Not just the beginning of its forming in that distant lake but all the way beyond its ending. I feel the warmth and texture and simultaneously I see the flesh unwrap from the layers of fat and disappear. I see the fat disappear from the muscle. I see the muscle disappearing from around the organs and detaching itself from the bones. I see the organs gradually fade into transparency leaving a gleaming*

*skeleton gleaming like ivory that slowly resolves until it becomes dust. I am consumed in the sense of your weight, the way your flesh occupies momentary space the fullness of it beneath my palms. I am amazed at how perfectly your body fits to the curves of my hands. If I could attach our blood vessels so we could become each other I would. If I could attach our blood vessels in order to anchor you to the earth to this present time I would. If I could open up your body and slip inside your skin and look out your eyes and forever have my lips fused with yours I would. It makes me weep to feel the history of your flesh beneath my hands in a time of so much loss. It makes me weep to feel the movement of your flesh beneath my palms as you twist and turn over to one side to create a series of gestures to reach up around my neck to draw me nearer. All these memories will be lost in time like tears in the rain.*

1.

We cannot stand the anticipated grief of losing you.

We are haunted by a Connecticut slipware plate attributed to John Betts Gregory (1782-1842) which reads, 'Why / Will You / Die'

*Simone Weil: The beings I love are creatures. They were born by chance. My meeting with them was also by chance. They will die. What they think, do and say is limited and a mixture of good and evil. I have to know this with all my soul and not love them less. I have to imitate God who infinitely loves finite things in that they are finite things. We want everything which has a value to be eternal.*

We want everything which has a value to be eternal. We have always been this way: fearful of change, fearful of an unknowable future, wishing for total mastery, wanting to know – and control – everything to come.

PIP assessment

work capability assessment

social housing registers

DHP payments

waiting for decisions from

instability and uncertainty

people keep telling us that uncertainty is a natural state of being and we think

we will rip your tongue out and eat it

The less control we have, the more we seek it. The less certainty we have, the more we seek it.

Our desire for total stability is understandable. Our desire for total stability is not realistic. We want to know that we can protect ourselves against all future pain. We want to know that our feelings will never change, our circumstances will never change, we want to be constantly and endlessly safe and

protected and stable and unchanging and unchangeable. We want to know that the future is knowable. What we want, truly, is highly solipsistic: we want an end to our anxiety.

Before you, we had been in the process of contracting our life, not leaving the house, drifting away from friendships, et cetera, removing all elements of chance, and every day the world shrank just a little bit but every day it became smaller until it could fit comfortably inside our bedroom and then we would never have to leave

But it was not enough. Every day our body would assert itself in ways we had not expected. Global events still occurred. Bills went up. We started to think that an endless sleep was the most desirable state, an endless sleep suspended in a gelatinous liquid, possibly, and at this point the logical conclusion seemed to be to return to the ocean and wait to slowly dissolve into it.

2.

Still with a desire for stasis, our desires have shifted, and opened out. They have become shared, for we know you want this too: we know you want it every time you bite down on a part of us and we sense both your pleasure and your frustration that it is not enough, it is never enough.

There are over 300 species of anglerfish, and of these, approximately half live in the deep sea. Of this group, roughly 25 species mate through sexual parasitism. The male anglerfish – a tiny, wisp of a fish a fraction of the size of the female – has the largest nostrils in proportion to its head of any known animal. With these, he hunts for the pheromonal scent of a mate. He follows this trail to her, and he will bite into her side with his pincer-like teeth. And as she begins to heal, his skin grafts onto hers, and gradually they become fused into one: first only by epidermis, mouth to skin, then by a shared blood supply. He will remain attached for the rest of his life.

These species of anglerfish are able to achieve such fusion as they have eliminated one component of their immune system, and no longer produce T cells or antibodies. The female anglerfish cells do not recognise the male as a foreign body. The loss of boundaries between self and other on an intimate, cellular level.

They will never lose each other.

Hélène Cixous: *For us, eating and being eaten belong to the terrible secret of love. We love only the person we can eat. The person we hate we 'can't swallow.' That one makes us vomit. Even our friends are inedible. If we were asked to dig into our friend's flesh we would be disgusted. The person we love we dream only of eating. That is, we slide down that razor's edge of ambivalence. [SEP] The story of torment itself is a very beautiful one. Because loving is wanting and being able to eat up and yet to stop at the boundary. And there, at the tiniest beat between springing and stopping, in rushes fear. The spring is already in mid-air. The heart stops. The heart takes off again. Everything in love is oriented towards this absorption.*

It is GOOD to have boundaries (it is correct to have boundaries). We know this, we know it is correct. It is GOOD to have boundaries and edges to ourself, and to feel and know them.

It is also good, for short periods of time, to lose our boundaries, to lose track of where we end and you begin, to be unclear who is touching who, to be consumed by desire and also to consume it, to be unclear who is eating and who is being eaten. It is GOOD for this to be temporary (it is correct for this to be temporary). Yet we know that, like us, you wish it could be permanent.

Helene Cixous: *The person we love we dream only of eating.*

There is something profane about the permanence of being eaten that is also why it is so alluring. A split second decision, perhaps, a set of actions that follow from just, you know, making out really intensely, the sort of kiss where you totally forget what you are doing or that anything else exists, a highly cliché and yet deeply knowable description and how else could we write it, and you shift down the bed and suddenly, a part of us is missing from us, forever, and it is in your mouth, this lump of flesh from our side that once was ours and now is yours: you are latched onto our side, chewing on fat and sinew and muscle, breaking them down to a mushy pulp, swallowing, and waiting, waiting for me to become a part of you.

Georges Bataille: *A kiss is the beginning of cannibalism.*

There is a spectrum of sexual acts that spans from a kiss to cannibalism. In the middle are all the different ways of fucking that could conventionally be described as sex – how very Augustinian, how very Freudian, to determine that only specific acts may receive this distinction, when even holding hands can be a form of fucking – and then somewhere in there are all of the various wonderful forms of kink and BDSM, we think this diagram may need to be expanded into a third dimension, probably, but undoubtedly, the end point, the culmination of all these acts, is cannibalism.

1.

Sandor Ferenczi: *For, we reflected, what if the entire intrauterine existence of the higher mammals were only a replica of the type of existence which characterised that aboriginal piscine period, and birth itself nothing but a recapitulation on the part of the individual of the great catastrophe which at the time of the recession of the ocean forced so many animals, and certainly our own animal ancestors, to adapt themselves to a land existence, above all to renounce gill-breathing and provide themselves with organs for the respiration of air?*

we cannot halt all life in order to avoid negative events in the future  
we cannot halt all life, we know this, we do not want it, but sometimes, sometimes  
the horror of being in the world when you are not in the world, the horror of loneliness  
the horror of being alone with our thoughts  
the comfort of having no thoughts  
the comfort of dissolving  
yes it is very comforting to think about dissolving

We cannot calcify the present without killing it. A true end to anxiety can only be an end to ourself as a discrete and bounded entity. The only way to protect against the unknowability of the future is to accelerate the only parts that are knowable: at some point, we will die, and our cells will be broken down into molecules, and these molecules will become part of other creatures, and lives, and matter, and material, and it will feel like an endless, comforting, deep sleep with no end.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer, describing heaven: *I was happy... Wherever I was... I was happy... At peace. I knew that everyone I cared about was all right. I knew it. Time... didn't mean anything. Nothing had form. But I was still me, you know...? And I was warm. And I was loved. And I was finished. Complete... I-I don't understand theology or dimensions, any of it, really... But I think I was in heaven...*

We knew it would be like this. We wanted to be the mist hitting the face of a hiker in the brecon beacons / we wanted to travel down the urethral channel of a goat, and up the xylem of a woody stemmed pelargonium / we longed to be the sheen of mucus on the skin of a slug, the jelly-like sac of bacterial cytoplasm / we wanted to find ourself in the pitted edges of the endoplasmic reticulum of a nerve cell, somewhere along the leg of an instagram influencer / to be part of the Nile / to be an egg, boiled in a pot of bubbling us / we longed to be the snow trodden underfoot on Mount Kita / to be the caustic, evaporating bubbles in the bottle of Mountain Dew / this was a profound desire

What we now know to be true is that our desire to dissolve into the ocean and scatter across the water table was at once deeply communal – a yearning to be part of the great ebb and flow of Life, an understanding of the world as Empedocles wrote of it, ruled by the twin forces of Love and Strife, coming together and falling apart, but always, always, moving together, in a collective breath – and

then also highly isolating, a lonely wish formed in solitude. The desire to fuse together is a shared goal, we both wish to halt time and be joined together forever in an endless orgasm. Daddy Freud tells us that our desire to disperse into the ocean was a form of polymorphous perversity and that our desire to fuse into you is a more appropriate genitally oriented desire, except that it is side-wound oriented.

2.

Over time, the male anglerfish will lose all of his internal organs, his eyes will fall out, his bloodstream will connect to hers, only his testes remain. He will be one of around six males fused to her. They are all totally taken care of by their host, who is also their partner.

Slowly disintegrating, melting into someone else.

The male anglerfish does the initial biting, but it is the female anglerfish who eats him up, absorbs him into her, digests the parts of him that are no use. Where does sex begin and end with the anglerfish? Do you see how silly St Augustine sounds, now? Does this sex begin with a wounding, or is the wounding the sex? As he releases enzymes to break down the tissues of her side, in order to better bond with her, is this too, not sex?

Audre Lorde: *When released from its intense and constrained pellet, it [the erotic] flows through and colours my life with a kind of energy that heightens and sensitizes and strengthens all my experience. [...]*

*And yes, there is a hierarchy. There is a difference between painting a back fence and writing a poem, but only one of quantity. And there is, for me, no difference between writing a good poem and moving into sunlight against the body of a woman I love.*

Bataille made a clear distinction between the erotic and sex, saying that *Eroticism, unlike simple sexual activity, is a psychological quest independent of the natural goal: reproduction and the desire for children.* How silly, how deeply deeply heterosexual (silly), how extremely Augustinian to limit sex to what could be reproduction, and the erotic as everything else. As with Lorde's understanding of the erotic, the boundaries of what constitutes sex do not need to be expanded, but completely dissolved: anything can be sex, just as anything can be erotic, when done with intention. Looking at each other across the room can be a form of fucking. And so it is we find ourselves here, with you fucking us, which is to say biting deep into our flesh.

In an interview with a male anglerfish, he said  
nothing  
because his mouth had dissolved into her belly

Hélène Cixous: *Everyone in love is oriented towards this absorption.*

1.

Lee Edelman: *For at the bottom, the imperative of optimism is the normativity of happiness, with its promise of a consistent pleasure in and access to one's objects. Such consistency (even when associated with variety or change) imposes a deadening rigidity, a calcification, a sort of carapace, that functions like the anticipatory act of bracing before a collision and aims to provide protection against the insistence of the world in its alterity, exigency, and unpredictability.*

I wante to fucke the see and forsopie

I wante to fucke the see and forsopie

I wante to fucke the see

We said it over and over to ourself, wrote it everywhere, an incantation, an attempt to make our desires concrete through their articulation. Fucking the sea was dissolving into it. Fucking you is dissolving into you.

2.

We are always being consumed by you. Whenever you are in the room, whatever room that is, nothing else matters. So we do not work, we cancel plans with other people, we want to spend every second together, focused on you. We avoid funding applications, PIP assessments, we sabotage our future to remain in an endless present. You, too, put your life on hold, avoid emails, and invoices, calls from friends and WhatsApp messages. We are lying on your chest in bed and your arm is around our shoulder and our arm is sprawled across your chest and we say oh god we need to pay for the visitors parking permit and you pull your arm out from under us and edge down the bed and you look up at us and you bite into our side and that is how we are both found, weeks later, dead, infected, rotting into each other [humans still have T cells and antibodies]. The car is covered in parking fines.

3.

We write in a note to ourself: Do not be seduced by the neatness of the analogy to the medieval eroticism of Jesus's side-wound and the parasitic sexual behaviour of certain species of deep-sea anglerfish.

In multiple high medieval manuscripts, though, the side wound is depicted as an orifice, a vagina, deeply sexual and deeply healing. The side-wound is an access point to Jesus's heart which is her womb.

Julian of Norwich: *A mother holds her child tenderly to her breast, but our tender Mother Jesus takes us right inside his blessed breast, through his sweet open side and there he shows us a glimpse of the Godhead and the joys of heaven.*



The Prickyng of Love: *At þe openyng of his side mai owre herte entre & be ioyned to his.*  
*[at the opening of his side may our heart enter and be joined to his]*

The longing is always, always, to crawl into Jesus's side wound and merge with her. The Prickyng of Love, a text about the love found in Christ's wound. In her analysis of the text, Sarah Beckwith writes: *The boundaries of Christ's body and the body of the devotee are made so soft and continuous with each other that where one ends and where the other begins becomes indeterminable.*

The yearning to dissolve into something or someone bigger than yourself? In the sexually dimorphic anglerfish this is quite literal, the female being ten times the size of the male. And in religious iconography of the high Middle Ages, deeply influenced by Byzantine artistic styles, symbolic representation was far more important than realistic: as such, often persons of most importance were far larger in the image: and so, we too in such a scene would be a tiny appendage on Jesus's body. Oh, to be a tiny appendage latched onto Jesus's body, dangling just below the nipple on her side wound! Oh, for Jesus to create a special pocket in which to carry us around, our mouth gently melting into the flesh of her torso!

I hope this email finds the orifice of your side-wound slowly fusing with the mouth of your lover

1.

There is a parallel life in which we do not leave our room. The walls slowly contract, we lose touch with our friends, our health continues to decline, we remain unaware of your existence and you of ours, we are just some stranger slowly decaying, and we gently, softly, fade away, rot down, to become, eventually, a part of the ocean.

2.

Hélène Cixous: *Eat me up, my love, or else I'm going to eat you up.* Fear of eating, fear of the edible, fear on the part of the one of them who feels loved, desired, who wants to be loved, desired, who desires to be desired, who knows there is no greater proof of love than the other's appetite, who is dying to be eaten up, who says or doesn't say, but who signifies: I beg you, eat me up. Want me down to the marrow. And yet manage it so as to keep me alive. But I often turn about or compromise, because I know that you won't eat me up, in the end, and I urge you: bite me. Sign my death with your teeth

emails pile up and parking fines pile up and missed calls, missed texts, missed WhatsApp messages  
pile up  
rotting slowly together  
fat and skin and sinews and tissues breaking down and puddling and merging into the bed  
a  
fusing  
shhhhhhhhh  
stop  
stop thinking  
no more thoughts  
just endless  
comforting  
silence