

early works



kristie
shoemaker

early works

and

interviews

by kristie shoemaker

crush	1
an unedited account of where i am at right now in terms of life, liberty, and the pursuit of 'human'	2
untitled #1	4
untitled #2	4
my hair is on your pillow and you will never get rid of me	6
So many thoughts	7
oh i like you	8
sounds of new york (from your apartment)	9
October 9, 2012	10
October 12, 2012	11
November 13, 2012	12
November 18, 2012	13
November 19, 2012	14
January 13, 2013	16
meditation	17
worms	18
February 25, 2013	19
March 12, 2013	20
April 22, 2013	21
July 7, 2013	22
i feel thinner	23
September 22, 2013	24
take all of my natural resources until i'm completely used up	25
things that feel good	27

sorry	28
what can we do but exist between living and dying	29
October 7, 2013	30
normally i say don't touch me but it is ok if you touch me in this specific moment in time and only this moment in time	31
October 18, 2013	32
today is the first day in a series of days that will make me better	33
make me beautiful because the weather is getting cold and everything will lose its appeal eventually	34
i want to be so tiny that it's debatable i even exist	35
dumb shit	36
something about strength in numbers	37
a violent love note from me to you	38
i don't know much of anything right now but i do know that you are not here and that is a very distinctive problem	39
March 14, 2014	41
March 26, 2014	42
March 31, 2014	43
manic pixie insomniac girl	45
chlorophyll, eyes and insomnia at 4:37 am	46
July 10, 2014 with a mirror selfie showing off armpit hair	48

August 15, 2014	50
strawberries	51
October 28, 2014	55
December 18, 2014	56
dirty laundry	58
princess and the pea two thousand fifteen	59
kiss number one	61
January 22, 2016 (at 4:14 am)	62
AN INTERVIEW WITH KRISTIE SHOEMAKER	
for Positive Exposure	63
Kristie Shoemaker for Cutty Spot (Transcript)	70
Poetic Insights: An Interview with the author of	
Do Graves get wifi – Kristie Shoemaker	73

crush

i want to shed all of my skin
and throw it away into the taco bell dumpster down the
street
maybe it will keep someone warm
i don't think i need it anymore

i want to just be bone, brittle fragile bone
crush me up into a fine powder
spread me out into perfect little lines
across your coffee table
and enjoy yourself
nosebleeds just mean you're consuming me completely
i just hope i leave a sour taste in your mouth the next day

**an unedited account of where i am at right now in
terms of life, liberty, and the pursuit of 'human'**

December 8, 2013

i've been thinking a lot about dead people that i have
known and haven't known
i was at a party recently and sat quietly in a chair reading
about paul walker dying and i cried softly into a bag
of pretzels
people ate out of the bag later, i didn't tell anyone
my tears are salty and the idea of someone consuming
them was empowering to me in that moment of
feeling very small
i feel happy and stable sometimes when i take things to
force the result
i feel like 'normal' people probably do every day when
they get out of bed and kiss their loved ones good
morning
but i also feel an intense anger that honestly scares me
i will cry so much my eyes are constantly swollen
i was asked recently if i had been punched in the face
because my dark circles were so bad
i don't sleep much, sometimes i wish someone would
punch me in the face
i will text people words that will probably make them
not like me anymore
there is a slight ringing in my right ear and if i focus on it
too long i begin to feel dizzy

i'm just kind of letting it exist right now in the hopes that
it will get bored of me and go away
it's pretty loud tonight
i spend a lot of my time hiding trying to purge my
system of all the bad i seem to have let
build up over the course of my entire existence and
probably my existence before that
i spend a lot of time hiding in the bathroom
i'm in a strange place between having complete control
over myself and being completely out of control
i don't like to sleep because i don't like to dream about
people and places and things that i try to avoid
consciously thinking about
i still think about them though
but i am getting better
maybe
because at least i'm not fooling myself anymore
you can't really help yourself if you don't know what the
problem is
and i've got 99 problems but a bitch ain't one

untitled #1

sometimes i feel so alive that i can't speak
my heart just wants to explode and consume me
like a black hole that's been starving for millions of
years
it's greedy, nothing is safe

except you, here
and me, here

my body is full of am radio static
and your body is filled with songs so foreign and new
i want to sing along but i can't
i guess i don't really have to

i'll just lay here and feel alive

with you, here
and me, here

untitled #2

tectonic plates are shifting
a volcano is forming underneath the darkest part of the
sea
i'm watching the dust fall off of my fan
my throat is almost swollen shut

you are probably asleep
and i am here
slowly being buried by the ashes of mount vesuvius
wake up
wake up
wake up

**my hair is on your pillow and you will never get rid of
me**

our hair is made of beautiful dead cells

i am running my fingers through a tangle of
dead dead dead
dead attached to my living body

play with my dead hair because my heart is still beating
i'm alive, i think

we could shave our heads and bodies and become
vulnerable little children again
just know that's an option

So many thoughts

September 17, 2011

Discovered a lot about myself today. I like the color of bruises. I need to change my hair. I want to kiss a girl. I need to learn French. I like pretending my name is Lux. I like dark lips. I like watching people blow smoke rings. I like tights that are ripped. I want to live in New York City and make artsy friends. Black is my favorite color. But silver is too. I like my laugh. I need to laugh more.

What's happening to me?

oh i like you

September 4, 2012

i want to cuddle and walk around the city
share food that we can't finish ourselves
exhaust our feet during the day
exhaust the rest of us at night

sounds of new york (from your apartment)

September 18, 2012

the train going by your window (it makes the whole building shake, rattle and roll)

your roommates walking with purpose in the kitchen (such heavy manly steps they might fall through the floor)

children laughing from the playground (because life hasn't gotten hard for them yet)

a couple outside arguing in a language i don't understand (and i'm glad i don't otherwise i would feel like i'm invading their privacy)

music (or maybe it is the overlapping sounds of all of the above although i am pretty sure i hear drums)

my breathing picking up (because being undressed in your bed is too much of a turn on to resist)

October 9, 2012

i lit a candle and was instantly curious if it would hurt to
pour wax on me
i eventually poured wax all over my legs
attempted words and patterns
i then poured some on this painting i'm working on
i still left what had fallen on my legs
it's like dried cum
but green

October 12, 2012

even if i knew someone's social security number
i wouldn't know where to begin to steal their identity
and i wouldn't want to anyway
because not only is it fucked up
but it's hard enough being me, let alone two people

November 13, 2012

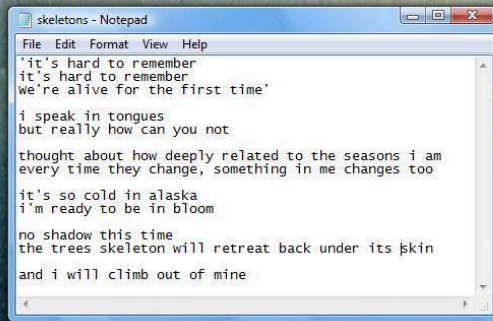
i want to be a sad girl
who writes about sad things
and likes it
but i want to function
enough to get a job
to afford alcohol
and gas to drive around and listen to elliott smith when
 i'm sad
i'd like a job where i can paint things
make things
write things
and then go home
and take things
for sad people
rinse
repeat

November 18, 2012

i was thinking about the time i used to live in baltimore
and i was on my way to my apartment
hysterically crying after a fight with someone
and i ran over a rat on eutaw
pop lock and drop it was playing

November 19, 2012

you and me
we rotate around the same star
just on different planets
the same orbit
destined to collide
beautiful, messy, chaos
every time



'let's play connect the dots with the bruises on my leg'
i say to you as i absent-mindedly anger the darkened flesh

you just laugh and trace them with your finger
i squint my eyes and they begin to look like stars
a constellation of brown and blue bruises
scattered across the milky way

i can't seem to remember how i got them all
i decide that it must be some small ghost poking me in my sleep
i must remember to thank them

how spooky

January 13, 2013

i want to be inside you

inside your lungs

inhale me

please

i'll ride on the oxygen molecules

that pass through your blood

into your heart

because that is where i belong

meditation

January 16, 2013

each breath sinks
deeper and deeper
into the void of space
but it isn't empty
hard to explain
felt like i wasn't so much
a singular being
but part of it all
i was the air
and the bed
and all of their atoms
the atoms just danced around each other
i couldn't tell
where i stopped and they began

worms

January 28, 2013

i was thinking earlier
every interview i've gone on
i've gotten the job

i'm laying here now
and it feels like there are worms crawling through
my brain

but that can't be true
because i'm not dead inside

i'm alive!
i want to be!
i want to achieve things
have a house in the woods
make love under the stars every night

these worms aren't real
goodnight

February 25, 2013

our bodies are made up of the same things
that are found in the sun

it's all superconnected

the sun will eventually die
everything dies

seems horribly romantic

March 12, 2013

i burned the palm of my hand
it's red and angry looking
swelling as if i didn't know it was there
i keep putting ice on it
but it just melts almost instantly
dripping down my hand
all over my bed
but it's okay
because the skin that comes after the burn
will be twice as strong

April 22, 2013

[10:06:28 PM] Kristie: i am convinced the ghost is back

[10:06:32 PM] Kristie: i thought he left

[10:06:37 PM] Kristie: grew tired of my closet

[10:06:46 PM] Kristie: but it is/i am too much like home
for him to leave

[10:06:53 PM] Kristie: plus we have a complicated
relationship

[10:07:00 PM] Kristie: me asking if he is there in the
middle of the night

[10:07:08 PM] Kristie: him not answering me, me going
to bed angry

[10:07:29 PM] Kristie: him feeling guilty and
accidentally knocking things over while he tries to
move around the room

[10:07:31 PM] Kristie: to get to me

[10:07:40 PM] Kristie: and whisper 'i'm sorry, i'm here'
in my ear softly while i'm sleeping

July 7, 2013

i remember the time you and i were in my grandparents
kitchen

they were out of town

you sat me on the table

we had been drinking whiskey

i was scared that they would notice it was gone

but ~10 shots in i don't remember caring much

you pulled up my skirt

and i pulled you close via my fingers in your belt loops

our bodies were aligned perfect

until i pulled off my shirt and laid back against the table

as the barrier between us became non existent

and i felt your breath on my neck

i thought back to how i spent my childhood in that house

drawing and painting and eating and crying on that table

and if my seven year old self could see me now

if she would be horrified or excited at how i turned out

i feel thinner

September 21, 2013

there are parts of my body that aren't buried anymore
but the weight on my chest seems heavier
than ever

i want to stare at you until you start to disappear because
my eyes
are desperate for the moisture you stole
from them

September 22, 2013

i want my bed to swallow me whole

i want my house to swallow my bed whole

i want to earth to swallow my house whole

everything will fall together and become the same

nothing at all

**take all of my natural resources until i'm completely
used up**

October 4, 2013

i feel so small
planted on the ground
with all these immense celestial bodies
floating what seems precariously
over top of my little head

but i am a celestial body
in my own right

i am a tiny new planet
floating in the most cluttered and crowded solar system
discovered so far

everything is colliding
into other unfortunate objects that pop in and out of
existence

look at my bird nest hair
the swimming pools in my hands
and the turquoise rivers that resemble wires from a
distance

you could live here
we could be happy

we could be happy
just know it's not forever

things that feel good

October 5, 2013

your hands on my body
your fingers in my mouth
your head on my heart

cutting my hair
watching strands fall
feeling nothing

chemical waves of calmness
heavy eyelids
deep yawns

driving alone
driving home
driving away

sorry

October 5, 2013

i am the band-aid you put on your knee
you'll keep me around to stop yourself from bleeding to
death
or at least to stop from staining your perfect clothes
i'll fall off one day while you are running and you won't
even notice i'm gone
people will see me on the ground and think i am
disgusting and avoid me

you still won't notice
you'll just keep running

what can we do but exist between living and dying

October 6, 2013

let's sit on a hill with your head in my lap and talk about
how we are afraid to die

let's talk about food we don't like and things we
want to do but
probably won't

let's not talk with words but with our fingers and tongues

let's touch our foreheads together so i can finally
read your mind

let's think about how fragile we are and be reckless with
our emotions

let's scream at children about how terrifying the
world is

let's pretend we don't exist and are just figments of our
own imaginations

let's swim far out into the ocean and get
swallowed by a whale and
live out our remaining days in its rib cage

October 7, 2013

i want to be six years old again so that i can run away from home into the bushes down the street and sit there until it gets dark and then feel afraid and run back home and everything resets itself and my mom makes me dinner and things feel okay and i forget why i ran away in the first place

**normally i say don't touch me but it is ok if you touch
me in this specific moment in time and only this
moment in time**

October 14, 2013

while riding on the subway i sat next to a stranger
our knees touched for about seven stops
both of us were highly aware of this
i could feel the rough jean material against my ripped
 sheer tights
my eyes were closed and it felt nice
so i didn't move
and they didn't either
everything seems nicer with eyes closed
put your hands over my eyes
hide me from the world
so everything else feels ok again

October 18, 2013

i wonder if i threw myself into the sun if it would cause a solar flare that would fuck with the earth and disrupt all the satellites and internet and everyone would be forced to interact irl

would i be the hero or the villain

**today is the first day in a series of days that will make
me better**

October 21, 2013

my new mantra is 'these are my feelings and i am
entitled to them'

i opened my bedroom window for the first time in
months

i am listening to the cars and the wind rustling the leaves
and the birds chirping

and i am trying

**make me beautiful because the weather is getting cold
and everything will lose its appeal eventually**

October 31, 2013

lay me on the ground
cover me in dirt
plant flowers on my stomach
i want to feel the roots sink into my skin
and intertwine with my veins
wrap vines around my arms
i won't complain if they are too tight
let a family of little birds make a nest of my hair
you will soon be unable to make out my pale skin
lost under the earth growing above
but i will be everywhere
i will be your garden
and i will be beautiful until the season changes

i want to be so tiny that it's debatable i even exist

November 2, 2013

i am the little bug that crawls into your mouth while you
are asleep

it was a long journey to get to you

my legs are tired and my heart feels heavy

i crawl inside quietly because i love you and i don't want
to be alone

this world is too big, the untraveled corners of your room
too scary

'i will feel safe here'

i say to myself as i slide past your soft lips

my story is tragic though because i know that you will
eat me and i will die

but i will die happy

and you will wake up in the morning and never know

dumb shit

November 11, 2013

i feel scared of a lot of things

i feel like i am distancing myself from people

i feel like i am turning my insides dull and old
prematurely

i feel like my skull is full of bees that keep stinging my
brain which makes me feel
adverse emotions to otherwise nice things

i feel like this is a phase and i feel like i need to sleep
and i feel like there is some good

in my life and i feel and i feel and i feel and as long as i
keep feeling i know that i am
doing ok

something about strength in numbers

November 11, 2013

the weather is getting cold and i'm still going to be ok
we could be ok together if you just let me in
or at least we might be a little less cold
bc it's going to be a long winter

a violent love note from me to you

December 8, 2013

i desperately want to be your bed
i desperately want to be your anything really
because i am nothing to myself
cut me open from head to toe
push my organs aside
break my bones
twist and contort me and expose me fully
so that you can curl up inside
and rest your head on my exhausted heart

**i don't know much of anything right now but i do
know that you are not here and that is a very
distinctive problem**

December 12, 2013

my eyes are so big that i have to be consciously aware of
them

so that i don't look terrified all of the time

but i am terrified, always

my skin is pale and translucent, with veins that resemble
the ocean

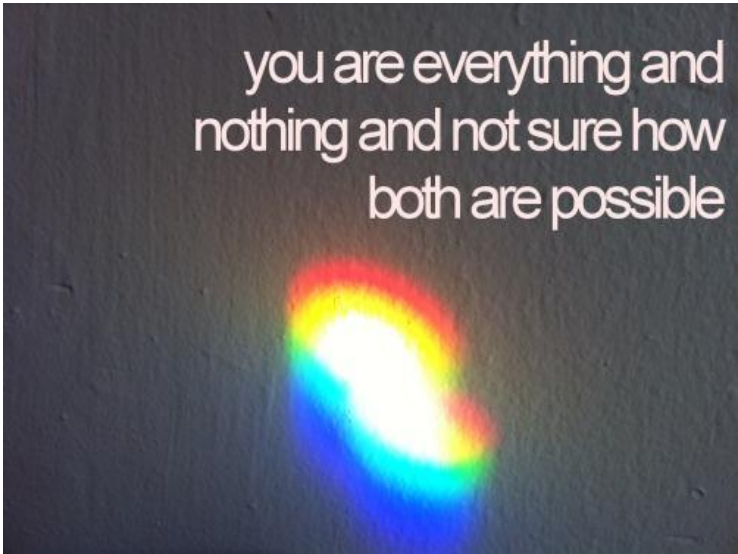
there is a storm circulating through every inch of me

can you see through me

can you feel it

it's empty enough

you are everything and
nothing and not sure how
both are possible



i don't know how to do anything but feel too
much and do too little / i want to scream / just tell
me what to do / i am pulling away faster than the
universe is ripping apart / it's self destructive / it
is expressing this on a much larger scale than i
could ever compete with / soon it will spread itself
so thin that the weight of it all will just collapse / i
am pretending i am a hologram of my former
self / so that when i walk outside in my bare feet
in the middle of winter / i can't feel a thing / i am
very sad

March 14, 2014

you walk out into a fog
with nothing but a dress on
and bare feet
you stopped wearing a bra weeks
ago to spite your mother
you feel the cold grass slither its way
between your pale toes
the black polish that was once so
perfect
has been slowly chipping off
wildflowers are wrapping around
your feet
you feel the cloud surround you
you decide to let it consume you
you feel its mouth swallow you
whole
your skin is turning a soft shade of
blue
but you are feeling again for the first
time in a long time
and that is beautiful

March 26, 2014

i'm a deer in headlights that is too self conscious to do anything about the impending crash

i have fooled everyone and i am actually an insect that has learned to use the internet and form sentences and have feelings

there is an iceberg slowly sliding across my oversized bed and i am content being part of the chaos

March 31, 2014

i.

wake up in the middle of the night
and cut off all of your hair

grab handfuls and pull.
(punish it, apologize)

watch it fall and scatter around your feet.
notice how nothing actually changes,
you are the same person just a little lighter

feel the stray strands attach themselves to your tongue
like a leech dying of thirst and attention

(swallow, consume, digest)

you've never felt more alive than this;
eating something beautiful and dead.
you are both of these things at once
and unsure over which to give into.

don't clean up the mess you've made,
never clean up the messes you make.

go back to bed covered in hair
and dream of me.

ii.

i am imagining what it would be like
to have the ability to tear off my skin
and switch it with another material at my leisure

old floral wallpaper stained by water and nicotine
used napkins blotted and smeared by deep red lipstick
(or blood i am unsure honestly)

these cracks in my hands become canyons
break and crumble

this peachy flesh is unnecessary
i will shed it layer by layer until i become a delicate
smoke
that collapses into that ugly blue chair in the basement

i have marked my territory
i'm everywhere and nowhere
i am ruining your lungs and your life

manic pixie insomniac girl

April 26, 2014

i am going to spontaneously combust bc i don't know
what else to do with myself / all you will find in my
place are wildflowers and feelings / the moment that
takes place in the fleeting seconds before my eyelids kiss
goodnight is the most fulfilling sensation to me right
now / my eyes like to roll back into my head to make
sure my brain is still there / they have severe separation
anxiety / i miss you a lot / sleeping in your childhood
bed in this empty house surrounded by trees feels like
everything and nothing / i can smell you on the pillows /
i am inhaling until i pass out / i hope you still want to
touch your face with mine / my hair is a mess but not as
messy as my life / insomnia / sleep / please love me
forever / i promise i am ok

chlorophyll, eyes and insomnia at 4:37 am

July 2, 2014

insomnia induced obsession over chlorophyll;
photosynthesis just seems easier than getting out of bed
and putting on a shirt
and remembering how to breathe.

i don't know.

i would happily switch between human and plant if
 given the chance,
so that i could be taken care of
by some cute old woman
with a yellow watering can.

i can't help but humor the questions
i don't need the answers to,
and i will play them out in my head whenever possible:

what if i had steve buscemi eyes?

(you thought they were disproportionate to my face so
you decided you couldn't look at me ever again and you
never did)

what if i could reach into my body through my belly
 button?

(there actually turned out to be a black hole living
somewhere near my liver and consumed me out of
existence)

plants wouldn't consider such scenarios.

i'm writing this from the void

and my teeth are very cold.

July 10, 2014 with a mirror selfie showing off armpit hair

why are some people so afraid of girls having armpit hair
it's not like mine are going to turn into some monster,
each strand of horrible dead cells becoming a tentacle
with its own personal vendetta against humanity
to strangle you and ruin your life

my mom paid me \$50 once to shave them
i told her i did but i didn't
i spent the money on things i can't remember
the point is to never remember anything

sorry mom

maybe if they had human traits people would get bored
of them
like they do their friends
and not care anymore

i imagine if my armpits had a face
they would have resting bitch face
but they wouldn't consider this a bad thing

i imagine if my armpits had a personality
they would ignore text messages and binge eat when

they were sad
they would feel really guilty about these things and say
they are working on it

i imagine if my armpits had responsibilities
they would drop out of college
and move to a new city with no money

i imagine in my armpits could write
they would talk about sad things
and use words that make their family members
concerned

i imagine if my armpits family members tried to call to
see if they were okay
they would ignore those messages too

again,
sorry mom

August 15, 2014

when i was little i used to be terrified of swallowing my
teeth –
that all the sugary soda would rot my pearly whites into
a sad decay,
my gums would decide they were disgusted at my
behavior
and prefer to see other people.

i would lay awake at night
begging some unknown force in the darkness to keep
them together.
i didn't want to choke and die in my sleep
and be known as the toothless ugly girl.

i would picture them falling roughly down my throat,
leaving scratches and battle wounds on their descent.
my stomach acid would turn them into a distant memory.
i would be left with gaps that tiny spiders would crawl
through while i was
unconscious to make themselves at home.

for some reason while sitting in traffic today that fear
came bubbling back up
to the surface.
i can't stop touching my teeth now.

strawberries

August 19, 2014

a girl walking past a windowsill of flowers touches one
flower in particular with extreme interest
as she believes this flower is desperate to be plucked
from the dirt
and destined to be placed delicately between her soft
strands of strawberry hair

she is on her way to visit her grandmother in the hospital
who is dying
and this flower is the only thing that reminds her of
something beautiful
she is sitting on the train which quickly fills with bodies
she becomes overwhelmed at the amount of people
around her and how they are all going to die
she shakes her head and gets off at the next stop
the flower falls from her hair onto the blue seat below

a woman sits on the flower
the flower is no longer a flower but a pattern of petals in
disarray
she is in a hurry, putting on makeup
she is reapplying last night's mascara
but not replaying last night's events
she feels beautiful as she pretends she is putting on a
mask

for something that feels important in the moment but
won't be important five months from now
as she exits a man says
you've got something on your —
he trails off, ashamed to finish the thought
she blushes a shade of strawberry and quickly wipes
away the petals onto the sidewalk

a child finds the petals laying deserted on the pavement
while his mother is distracted he picks one up and places
it on his small tongue
it tastes bad, he tells his mother
she seems horrified at how curious he is
she hands him strawberry flavored gum to remove the
nasty, infected, dirty taste of the city from her poor
child's mouth
this doesn't feel beautiful
especially since the last time the child had gum he woke
up with it trying to eat his hair

a man walks by at a pace that says 'i have nowhere to
be' even though he agreed to be somewhere in twenty
minutes
he steps on the petals with strawberry yogurt stained
soles from a container someone left haphazardly in
the intersection
he was too busy checking his okc messages to notice
until it was too late

his old shoes added a new stain
and he thought it was beautiful
just like the girl he is meeting tonight
but he will end up getting new shoes in a year because he
will leave these shoes at her house and will be far too
hurt to retrieve them

the petals are stuck to the bottom of his wet shoes, being
dragged and torn to bits
on their way to somewhere
a far cry from the beginning of their journey
but there are more flowers
and more people
and more things desperate to feel beautiful



October 28, 2014

everything is happening too much and too fast and i am not taking care of myself but i know i love you and that should be enough to hold me together

i need to come up with a way to tell people to stop asking me to hang out and stop asking me to be happy without coming off as 'antisocial' or 'sad' even though i would use both of those terms to describe myself right now

i feel like i need to be alone but being alone scares me because then i have nothing to distract me from myself and confronting bad feelings is something adults do and i am just a little baby

going to finally clean the oreo crumbs out of my bed because i have been sleeping on them for days probably but i am fine

my eyelids are the only things keeping my eyes from falling out of my head but every time i open them they want to roll onto the floor and away from me

does any of this make sense to you, please still love me

December 18, 2014

i am a literal sack of skin and bones

i am a garbage bag filled with regret and carbs

sometimes i imagine cracking my skull against yours and
how nice it would sound

a random grocery store twitter just retweeted me saying
that the best place to have a mental breakdown is in the
produce section

life feels bleak

if i drink passion fruit hand lotion will it moisturize my
soul or make me vomit

i once whispered to a moth that my nipples were hard
and immediately apologized

i apologize for everything

when the air from the subway train blows my hair i feel
like beyonce

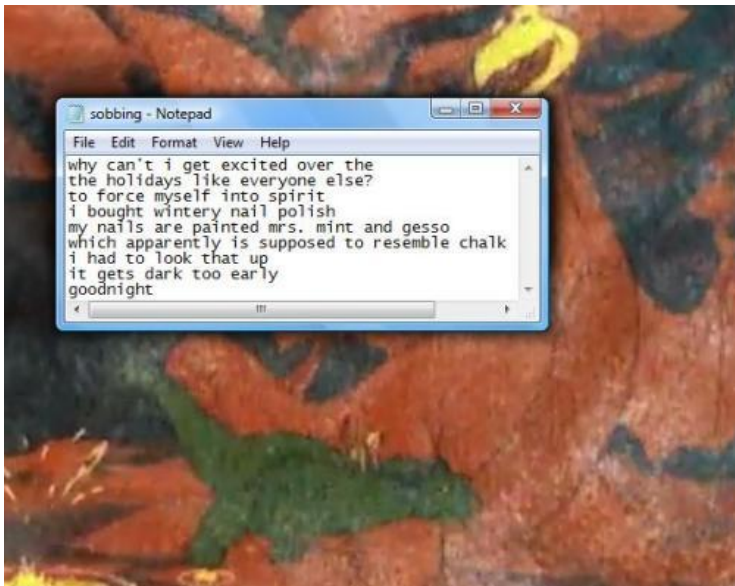
i like that my phone auto-corrects beyonce but it always
tells me my name is wrong

i am wrong

i saw a man walking backwards down the middle of the street and thought 'he has got it all figured out'

i often wonder if you can get drunk off water

i often wonder why i apologize so much when you are always wrong



dirty laundry

February 23, 2015

there is a dog at the laundromat.

this dog is very small and is shaking because everything
around it is too big.

this dog has huge soulful eyes that keep darting around.

it wants to go outside to get away from the big things
around it that move too fast.

it keeps half yawning like it can't tell if it's bored or tired
or both.

it's wearing a sweater and looks uncomfortable.

i have never felt more understood in my life.

princess and the pea two thousand fifteen

December 9, 2015

i fell asleep on top of my copy of ‘the first bad man’
felt like some fucked up version of the princess and the
pea
except there wasn’t any produce
only dreamy expectations
the kind people write about in poems like this
there’s a five dollar vodka cloud swirling in the air
hanging precociously over our heads
about to crush us at any moment
i wish that it would
you’re slurring
i’m slurring
it doesn’t matter
i want you to touch me but you won’t
i’m sending you telepathic messages
watered down by alcohol and nerves
i doubt they will reach you but i will continue to try
my heart is beating against the mattress
shaking everything like an earthquake that’s too shy to
register
i hope you get the message
that it’s okay
you can love me
and i will only love you back
just as much, if not more

but i will never admit to that
you breathe heavy when you sleep
each sign and moan gives me comfort you're alive
and if i can hear these noises i guess that means i'm alive
too
i can hear a woman coughing to the point of puking
outside of my window
i wonder how i can be self aware
when i'm more worried about strangers bodily fluids
than myself
i should probably sleep

kiss number one

January 21, 2016

you lived across the street from my grandmother who is and was basically my mother and we played together all summer, getting bug bites and melted ice cream and scrapes from never being able to slow down. one day you took my small pale hand in your slightly larger one and pulled me through the backyard to the dead tree we thought was home to ghosts. why you chose this spot i couldn't figure out, since there was obviously a portal to the other side buried in the rotting wood, but now i realize it was the only place in the backyard we couldn't be seen by my grandmother at the kitchen window. you pushed me up against the tree and its fragile bark crumbled behind my back. you told me 'this is how you show someone you love them' and stuck your wet tongue in my mouth. it tasted like the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches my grandmother made for us earlier that day. later that night my mother picked me up and brought me home and i tried to stick my tongue in her mouth, which she immediately stopped before i could even start. she asked 'why did you do that?' and i said 'because that's how you show someone you love them'

January 22, 2016 (at 4:14 am)

a yawn is just a yawn it's not poetry it means ur tired

AN INTERVIEW WITH KRISTIE SHOEMAKER
for Positive Exposure

August 3, 2014

Kristie Shoemaker is a 22 year old self-described rotten little peach currently living in Brooklyn, New York. She hopes to one day transcend her corporeal form and live out the rest of eternity as a celestial orb dancing among the rings of Saturn.

Elizabeth Foster: Where are you from?

Kristie Shoemaker: A little south of Baltimore. It's like a really shitty town that has like a Super Wal-Mart and a McDonalds. So, I say Baltimore because no one even knows that this place exists. I've been to Baltimore, but that was a very scary experience.

EF: Do you think where you live has had an effect on your writing?

KS: It just forces me to write more because there's really not much else to do. Like, I will literally sit in the Wal-Mart parking lot in my car for hours writing on my phone. There is nothing else to do. You can sit in your house or you can sit in a parking lot. That's about it.

EF: What was the feeling you had when you first found out someone wanted to publish your work?

KS: Just really excited and feeling like it was kind of worth it, I guess? I don't write things to get published and have people read it. It's more of a release to get whatever insane radio static going on in my brain out of there. It just feels nice that the things that I say can resonate with other people, that they actually take interest in reading it and relate to it. It feels comforting to know someone is feeling the same way as me, makes you feel less alone in your own head.

EF: Does the content of your poetry cause you to feel more vulnerable or empowered?

KS: I feel like all my writing is very stream of consciousness, like whatever mood I'm feeling. A lot of it is vulnerable. Last time I was in New York this stranger came up to me and asked if they could take my picture because they said that I looked very vulnerable. Like "that look". Feels like having half of the thoughts in my head spilled out for people to read definitely puts me in an interesting position. I can let strangers in easier than someone who has a presence in my life, but then they don't become strangers and it feels safe. It's empowering in a sense because other people are taking notice and listening to what I have to say, but a

vulnerability comes with that. It makes me feel things when people feel things about me, but then comes the 'do you know too much, did I just vomit all over you?' I try to keep my twitter/poetry shit separate from everything else. Or at least I try to because I feel like certain people won't really like the other half.

EF: Why do you write?

KS: It's always been the way that I calm down. There are certain things that pop in my head that will cycle and twist and turn unless I put them down and turn them into something. It's a way to kind of make my brain slow down a little bit and make sense of everything that's happening. It's kind of like a 9th grade journal, but written hopefully a little bit better.

EF: What would you say directly influences your work the most?

KS: Definitely the people in my life either past or present. I feel the majority of what I write is in relation to some person and the emotions they made me feel. It's my way of making peace with someone in a sense... if I can't say certain things to them. In terms of what else influences me it would probably be... I listen to a lot of Elliott Smith, so that's the total cliché sad person, whatever. I think he writes really sad things in an

undeniably beautiful way and when I listen to it I feel happier. It's inspiring in a sense. Even if I'm having a miserable day I want to be able to write something that might come from that place, but doesn't make the reader feel as miserable as I might have felt when I was writing.

EF: What influence do you think the internet has had on your writing?

KS: The community is really inspiring. I really like to see what style and what ideas everyone has. I feel like everyone has a similar, but slightly different voice. I can't consume enough. There's so many outlets for people to just release anything that's going on in their head at any time of the day. God knows I live on Twitter, which is either a really good thing or a really bad thing. It's just nice to see what's going on with other people, see how they interpret what's happening in their world, how they write about it. It's cool to get to know people without having the weird "getting to know someone" phase.

EF: How has being a woman in such a male dominated field affected you?

KS: Sometimes I feel smaller than I am. It could just be my own inner voice, but sometimes it does affect me. I

know with the internet it's really easy to just publish anything you want. You have the option to publish your own work and get your name out there, but it is difficult to get some recognition because at least in my experience I've noticed that some people will kind of push aside or belittle whatever emotions I'm writing about. It's just a challenge. I like challenges. I mean, a lot of people are really warm and welcoming to it as well. It's hard over all. I'm taking a men's psychology class which is completely ridiculous, but the whole world is like that. It's not just writing. You just have to either be awesome and make yourself feel awesome all the time or resign to the fact that the situation is what it is. As long as I keep myself above water then I try to not let it get to me so much.

EF: Do you think your work is viewed with a more critical eye than if you were male?

KS: I feel like it really depends on who's reading it. I feel like this community is very receptive to just everyone. It's really nice and reassuring that there are good people that appreciate work for what it is regardless of who is behind it. Branching outside of that I think it's a completely different story. I know a lot of what I write about is extreme mood swings, feeling sad, relationship problems... all of that stuff. Some people would view it as just stupid little girly ramblings or

whatever. It's frustrating that not everyone is as receptive as the community is, but I am hoping that one day people will stop being so full of themselves.

EF: Are you working on any projects currently?

KS: Currently I am working (slowly because of life) on a secret amazing online project with Catch Business and other wonderful people. I would really like to actually spend a lot of time writing and editing an actual ebook. The one that I put out I put together really quickly because I just wanted to make something. I had been telling myself for months that I was going to do it and I never did. I was like, "I need to do this tonight or I'm going to feel horrible" so I threw it together. I like how it turned out, but I would like to make something more substantial. I'm writing more in a journal to hopefully turn into 'something' by the end of the year. I really want to collaborate with someone on something too, so that might be on my radar as well.

EF: Do you think you'll be writing for a long time?

KS: That's a hard question. I'd like to think that I'll be writing for a long time. I kind of go through phases where I write a lot and I'll be insanely productive and creative and feel really good about what I'm writing. Then I'll go months without writing anything and

something will happen that snaps me out of it. Then I'll cycle back through it again, so I feel like I'll be writing to some extent for a long time. I'd like to make it a little more balanced so I'm not manically writing 500 poems in a week then not writing anything for three months. If I'm not writing poetry I definitely want to do something in the writing field, like be around books. I work in a bookstore now. That's definitely not a career, but it's a nice relaxing atmosphere. As long as I am surrounded by books in my life I'll be happy.

Kristie Shoemaker for Cutty Spot (Transcript)

August 23, 2014

Kristie: Ten—nine—questions for Matthew Sherling and, uh, here we go!

I am: Kristie Shoemaker, I am twenty-two years old, I live in Brooklyn, New York—currently in the wonderful Prospect Park. There’s an algae bloom, which is very concerning, don’t go swimming if you’re here.

What draws me to write poems? Um. Let’s see. People, places, things, uh, people that hurt my feelings or bruises that I have or music that I listen to, colors, the weather, you know, kind of any random thing can pop into my head and somehow turn into something that is longer than one word.

Am I working on a book? Um. Kind of. I have probably five or six poems that I have in a MS document that are kind of just sitting there. I’m like, scared to open it, or like, add to it, so. Working very slowly. I want to collaborate with people, because that seems less scary and also more fun, but my hope is to have a book out, maybe in like, a couple months. Fingers crossed.

All right. How do I react when I’m out in public and my phone dies? Uhm. Sheer terror. Panic mode,

immediately. I feel lost, probably like physically lost because I need my GPS to get me anywhere. I don't know, like I like having my phone because I like taking pictures of weird things that inspire me and I like telling people what I'm doing and I like writing random thoughts down in my head and, I don't know, if my phone dies I can't do any of that, and if my mom calls me and my phone dies I will turn my phone back on to a million horrible messages from her. So, bad, bad feelings.

How would I describe my relationship to the internet? I don't know, like, straddle the line between healthy and unhealthy. I feel like I've met a lot of really awesome people through the internet, but maybe I rely on the internet too much for my social life instead of like, branching out. My friend Amanda described it as "Facebook status 'it's complicated,'" so that's probably the best way to sum it up.

Do I drink coffee regularly, why or why not? Uh, I don't, because it makes me feel weird and I'm still tired afterwards, so then I'm just like really jittery but still on the verge of narcolepsy, so, not so much.

What's the first album I remember acquiring? *Spice* by The Spice Girls was the first album that I made my mom drive me to the store and purchase with my own money,

that I earned doing something stupid, I'm sure, and I choreographed dances to every single song, convinced myself I was Baby Spice and I still try and dress like her to this day. First album I remember acquiring that was, like, meaningful, would probably be Elliott Smith, his self-titled, because that's kind of influenced my writing. Having a love affair with a dead guy, but don't tell my boyfriend that.

Who's your favorite rapper and why? Ja Rule, obviously, because he is the underdog of the rap game, and I want to be the Ja Rule of alt lit. I think. I think I'm gettin there. I feel like any of his songs could be recited at poetry readings and go over extremely well. He just seems like a cool guy and I want to like hang out with him, and just, like, listen to his voice. He has a very soothing voice in like a really not soothing, jarring way. And plus he was like, really chill with Ashante for a while, and I like her a lot, so. Ja Rule.

Lastly, what is my worldview in one sentence? Give Ja Rule a chance. More people need to listen to him, bring him back. I will be his, like, fanclub, I don't care. That's my worldview. Ja Rule. President.

Yeah. So there are my answers to these really awesome questions, and thanks for sending them Matthew. Bye

Poetic Insights: An Interview with the author of Do Graves get wifi – Kristie Shoemaker

Poetic Insights, 2017

1, First of all, tell us a little about you Kristie.

Well, my name is Kristie Shoemaker and I am painfully and not okay with being twenty-six. I'm a Scorpio with my moon in Gemini so I think that's why I am always moody. I love plants and crystals, especially Rose Quartz which I wear around my neck every day. I'm also learning how to play guitar so I can either impress my dead boyfriend Elliott Smith or become the new Waxahatchee. My therapist once told me I was 'the most self aware fucked up person' she's ever met, and I took that as a compliment.

2, Now tell us about your book Do Graves get wifi, which was published by Ghost City Press in October 2017, and the process of writing it?

Words can't even describe how much love and respect I have for Ghost City Press and Kevin. I remember messaging them on Twitter just to be a fan girl and then one thing led to another and I was showing Kevin my

manuscript and we were ready to go! The book itself is a collection of poems, short stories and tweets. It covers probably the last four years of my life. It covers my angst living at home, falling for my first real relationship, moving to NYC, moving back home and how it all intertwines with my mental health. I think speaking about mental health issues is so important so that people can see that its way more common than they might think and to kind of try to understand things better. My mental health deteriorated greatly over the time writing the book (unrelated) but I thought it was important to document, and I have gotten back really nice thoughts from people who have read it saying that it's very relatable.

3, Could you share a small piece of your writing, a line, or two, that you think best sums up your book?

Sure, one of my favorite poems in the book is

‘can you hear me buzzing in your ear as you fall asleep’

*i am a lot of things crammed
in this stupid little body,
but stable is not one of them.*

*i want the self awareness of a fly.
to live a lifetime in a day and
never need to figure out why i am here.*

4, What is it you have learnt about yourself from writing this book?

I've learned so much from writing this book. This book has been my baby for so long and has witnessed me go through a lot. I never thought I would be able to sit down and write words that I even enjoyed reading, let alone other people. I learned that I am capable of completing something and I learned that it is okay to be proud of yourself.

5, How did the opportunity to publish with Ghost City Press come about, and what have your experiences been of working with them?

As I stated earlier, publishing with Ghost City was a whirlwind. I had been sitting on my manuscript for probably almost a year (it went through a lot of edits in the meantime) and one night I was on Twitter and decided to message Ghost City just to tell them that I loved their work and to ask if they were accepting any submissions in the future. Kevin then asked if I was

working on anything, and said that they were a fan of mine too, which made me blush so hard, and to send them my manuscript. Kevin looked it over, saw potential and then that was it! The experience has been incredible. I couldn't have asked for a better press to help me get this book to where I wanted it to be. Kevin was and still is super supportive and I honestly feel so grateful they took a chance on me.

6, How does it feel to be able to say that you're now the author of a book?

It honestly feels weirdly not weird. I thought I would feel super different, and when I first got my book, I did, but now it just feels like 'okay, you accomplished a thing you never thought you would, what's next?' At the same time though, it feels great to have a tangible thing that I made filled with my weird words that people enjoy. I always felt weird saying I was a 'writer' as I've only been published in online literary magazines which a lot of people aren't familiar with (which they should be!) so now it doesn't feel so strange saying that I am a writer, especially since it says so on Google.

7, What are your inspirations, and the influences, on your writing?

My inspirations are very predictable and very dead. Sylvia Plath for one. Miranda July, but she's not dead. Joan Didion as well, still alive. Elliott Smith is probably my biggest inspiration in my writing. His song writing style was so raw and pure because he wanted to share that part of himself with people, good and bad. He helped me learn that I can just sit and observe people, places and things and make up my own stories about it all. He showed me it is okay to write about the bad parts of yourself because they are still beautiful. He was a gentle spirit of which I can relate. My last inspiration is the book 'The Perks of Being a Wallflower' because it is my favorite book of all time and I am too much like Charlie. Wait, I also need to shout out Ja Rule. I read his book, you should too.

8, What are your ambitions for 2018 (doesn't have to be writing related, can be personal)

2018 is going to be my year, even though I say that every year. I hope to have another collection completed, I am already at 30 pages. I plan on submitting more poems to

literary magazines instead of hoarding them. I also plan on getting stable, because without that I can't really do much else.

acknowledgements

this collection is composed of (almost) everything kristie shoemaker posted on her tumblr, littlepeach.tumblr.com, that is not included in her full-length collection, *DO GRAVES GET WIFI* (Ghost City Press, 2017).

as time passes, lit mags shutter, and the internet decays, it is unlikely that this is a complete collection of shoemaker's works. it would not have been possible to accumulate this collection without archive.org.

some of these poems, as well as poems from *DO GRAVES GET WIFI*, previously appeared in:

- Affectionate
- Electric Cereal
- Fruita Pulp
- Gesture
- Human Parts
- Metazen
- Moloko House

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