

White Prayer Pages

By Callie Miller

This Is My Childish Mouth

Married to Jesus. A very interesting phrase to learn when you don't know anything about marriage, except that you love each other, and you trust each other, and you're there for each other. And you never, ever hurt each other.

If I'm being honest too, Jesus seemed pretty damn superior to all the potential suitors in my Sunday school classes or Easter sermon prayer groups. If I had to marry a Christian boy, I prayed it didn't have to be one of them.

Sebastian bragged about how his girlfriend tried to kiss him on the playground every week. When Kevin started telling me he wanted to play chase during recess, I found myself staying inside to draw on coloring pages of Noah's Ark.

Maybe Jesus was looking out for me or maybe my simple avoidance had done the trick. After a week of me wearing down the same crayons to the nub, Kevin had found himself a different girl who would take turns on the swing set with him.

I could have ventured back out to the playground after that. It started getting cold and snowy then though, so really it would have been miserable to follow through.

No other boys would have tried to chase me either.

My mom and dad got divorced six years later anyways. I wish that would have hurt more to say.

It Was All I Knew

At the lunch table Christina complains about how she has been on her period for about a month since she last saw her lady doctor for that thing you stuff up your uterus. I tell her to get that checked out. She ignores me.

I've never understood why anyone would want to go through that kind of pain and torture, but also I guess if Christina wants to be a hoe so bad then it makes sense. I'm not being rude, that's just what the virgin friends call the others. The hoe-ish ones.

I swear ever since she got her license she's been spending each night at a new boy's house. And I refuse to look any boy in the eyes in class just in case. I'm sure there's nothing more I want to know. And eyes can sometimes tell me everything.

Sometimes I wish I were more intrigued by how everyone around me is spending their time outside of quadratic formulas and five paragraph essays. How I could be imitating that. It's nauseating. And it just seems painful.

You know what? No. I still don't understand.

She Was Prettier Than I

I thought girls were supposed to mature much faster than boys, but now Kathryn's real pissy about what she calls *my attitude*. Apparently *I can't speak on matters I know nothing about*.

I'm sorry that boys are stupid, I guess? I think that response would have been terrible, but I can say that to her from now on. Kathryn hated that I told her she's a poor conversationalist and needs to communicate better with her partners. Granted, she walked out of the bathroom the second I got half that sentence out. What did I even say wrong?

Sometimes it seems like I'm the cliché *nobody understand me* girl, and I feel overplayed when I have to roll my eyes at the obvious.

All I know now is that Kathryn and her boyfriend are probably going to break up before the end of the day. It's really too bad that he never learned how to listen to her silence. If only he'd have known what she really wanted when she looked at him with those eyes and that luscious brunette frame.

I'll give it an hour before she asks me to break the news to him like we're a bunch of fifth graders. She asks me to relay heavy information for her at least once a week, but I'm over arguing about it.

At least I know how to speak my own mind whenever I need it...but I can probably speak hers even better at the moment.

I'll just wait for Miss Priss to come bounding through the library looking for me during this off-period just in case I'm right about everything. I'll know it's her by the way all the boys' faces go flushed and pretend to keep reading.

This library, I realize, is much too small, but I think if I actually screamed today, I'd still fail to attract a single glance.

Speak About Me, Please

There always seems to be those girls who have a boy to themselves at any time of the year. I'll never be like that.

Kathryn has herself a new guy. I can see her holding his right hand. His left hand just acquired tickets to whatever the latest movie hit is these days.

The dashboard of my newly used car is reflecting off the windshield. It's so cold outside. My tiny breaths are already fogging the car windows over. Then again, I've been waiting on my mom to return to her passenger seat for a good fifteen minutes, at least.

Kathryn is still over there in her short maroon skirt we found at the mall the other day. We both really loved it on her. Even if she had showered and shaved her legs an hour ago, now the chill in the air has definitely replaced the prickly mess. By this, I mean I probably won't hear about this new blonde in her hand until a second date. Somewhere warmer and softer.

Is that Kathryn? Is that her boyfriend? He's cute. My mom is back. I just shrug, refusing the conversation. I know that talk would lead to asking me about my "romantic life." I wish she would leave that alone more often than she already tries to. She and I both know how to be alone.

I don't want to talk about Kathryn, I already do that enough.

I just want to think about how I should have bought the hideous, short skirt first. I don't wear skirts and it would have just lived in my closet.

Sleep Is Probably My Favorite

I never wake up with the sun. I stayed up with the sun today.

So four in the morning is sparkling on my face while I sit on the roof outside my window. The window was never shut behind me. I assume now my succulents are dead and breakfast tea frozen.

Now it's six in the morning. People say aubades are beautiful, but my frozen knees are hideous. Also I'm convinced the woman in the house across from me is losing her mind. Her name is Greta.

She keeps her windows open like I do. I like to listen for her grandfather clock every hour. I'm convinced its somewhere in her upstairs living room. That seems like a good place to house it along with her bookshelves and ancient gramophone.

Maybe that's a life I want to live someday.

It's barely the crack of dawn, though, and Greta is taking two trashcans to the curb wearing a black, cat ear headband. Absurd, really. Kinky maybe. Then again she might have kids. I've just never pictured Greta wanting anything of the sorts. The same sense I get about all houses in this area honestly.

I still feel inspired. This time I'll try to write something pretty.

Who I've Become Is Boring Now

Idiot girls are screaming outside my window. I'm very tempted to close it and melt in this hell-heat of summer.

I was able to finish plenty of reading that I've been wanting to get through. I really can't tell if these girls need help or if they're just so drunk they don't know how loud they're being.

My roommate is out cold, some kind of melatonin type shit I'm guessing, but heavy and in an orange bottle. Imagine lacing someone's meal with one of those bad boys.

There's a really annoying blinking light on the bottom of our air humidifier. If I turned it off though, both of us would wake up with sore throats, and I don't know my roommate well enough to apologize for doing something like that.

Now that the pitchy screams are further away, I kind of miss them. I could go catch up with them; I must've recognized at least one of those voices.

It would take too long for me to get up and dressed though. And nobody wants me making foolish choices on a Thursday night. I don't.

I wouldn't call that safe, and maybe those girls scare me. That's why I couldn't sleep with them ten feet outside.

And I Miss My Mother

Sure. This morning I'm quite the eyesore, but last night, last night I felt finally like all the other beautiful girls. Kat told me she needed the room, so I had the entire night to myself, and the biting air, and the streets, and anyone who wanted to join me. I went into one house and found myself leaving another, like I time hopped through the solo cup in my hand. Which is definitely what happened, I know it.

I came to a house I didn't know. Harry, who had escorted me there, was already inside, and I couldn't remember when, or why, I took off my shoes. But the gravel was frozen, and I called Kat, who I had always seen as empty.

I Took A Sleepless Nap

Does anyone else try to take a nap but then can't take a nap? I told Tina five minutes ago not to bother me because I needed sleep, and I do. I just can't get it.

I'm lying here completely topless after handing back the borrowed halter I snatched from Tina's closet last night, and when I returned it, she asked if I had fun in it. Said she could tell I slept in it. I didn't even apologize, and I didn't answer her question. Ignoring her smile, I left, hardly intact and vulnerable. Like always.

Bare-necked and ready for the female slaughter. Tina will never pounce though.

Tina will now fall asleep tonight in that halter, believing it smells like cologne from last night. I would never tell her it's just my own back sweat and faded bronzer that will be staining her clean, white sheets.

Believing Myself

I told him *yes, I believe in something*. I grabbed my old Bible from the bedside table and wiped off bits of dust. He laughed and I laughed too. The book was heavy and I returned it to its unfrequented drawer.

It's always annoying when he raises his eyebrows like he did, especially with the question of *god?* as if he was surprised.

It could be God. Jesus. There's something more. And I think I fell asleep on his shoulder.

In the morning I noticed a wet spot where I must have been drooling onto his light gray t-shirt. I kind of wanted him to have left but I slept so peacefully that night.

And I wanted to believe in him like everything else.

So I Feel Less Alone

I love getting drunk. Especially when my extremities go kind of numb and I can barely feel the wind picking up outside.

I've crawled through my window again for the first time in several years now. If it were bright out, people might look at me like I think I can fly or think I'm in a higher disposition. Physically, I guess I kind of am.

I like to look down on all the rooftops and imagine what my neighbors are doing underneath. I know that most of them are sleeping. Someone else ought to be dizzily staring off somewhere though. At the stars, at someone in bed, at the bottom of a glass, at a wall.

I can't remember why I ever stopped doing this.

Years ago I used to sit on my parents' roof in nothing but a t-shirt and a pair of underwear. I never cared if it was cold, the wind always sobered me up. Back then, though, I wouldn't actually be drunk. Didn't have to worry about falling off.

I feel so utterly myself up here. It's like I can see everything so clearly now. I can see all these people, and they can't see me. No one around can notice me, they'll never think of me. I'm just alone out here.

Oh. Right.

There Are Things I Tell Myself

I've pressed a limp body pillow against my back so it fits my exact curves. When I flex my back and press my shoulder blades together it allows me to feel like my bed is three feet narrower and slept-in. These sheets haven't been washed in several weeks, but they've stopped smelling familiar. My head doesn't smell like my head anymore.

It's 2am. I wish the red glare of the boxy numeric glow had hypnotized me into this trance. It hadn't. This is entirely my fault. I've been looking at my clock for four hours now.

I feel like alarm clocks shouldn't be so bright.

Bars are closing. I always notice that when all the car lights die down the night is basically dead. The last time I went out, Sami told me to keep up. Everything she had gotten to

drink, I then copied. Three men bought her drinks and halfway through the night there was a particularly dangly armed one holding her under his limp shoulder.

Keep up.

It still confuses me. That was a few months ago. I couldn't even say if she'd gone home with those heavily sloshed arms or not. The moment I was off her mind and *keeping up* was no longer the theme of the night, I caught my own cab ride home.

Girls' night never really feels like it's for the girls. The girls have more fun without me.

I could have gone out tonight, but Sami's just getting home on the other side of my bedroom wall. The streets will continue to be dark. I will continue to lie here, probably awake.

Red really isn't a settling color.

Hate This Alone

White sheets, red roses. I'd hoped for no fight this time. I'm too dizzy to start one anyways.

James is pouring his own red wine and staring at his hideous curtains, where a slit in the middle of two panels show his beautiful view of backstreet dumpsters and a scene from a movie about stray cats.

I know he's mad. I turned on the television and put pajamas on like I always do at 10pm. When it's time to sleep and everyone else should be doing the same thing.

So fuck that.

At least I'm wearing the black, silk pajamas he bought me that one afternoon for my birthday.

I Don't Think I Was Ever Actually Young

Has anyone else ever heard why life gets faster as you grow older? I can explain it this way: when I was five, that year would be one fifth of the life I'd known. This year is one twenty-sixth of the life I know.

I think about this very often. My years just get smaller and smaller, along with every moment in them. I'm scared one day I won't remember what the longer years felt like.

I still don't know where all my years have gone.

But I Am Not A Sinner

My high school boyfriend was smoother than a fucking peach. Sure, he had a full head of fluffy hair, but other than that, nothing. This boy couldn't grow any hair from face to legs. He always told me he was more evolved. I think he told himself that because he also felt like my prickly legs were at times more masculine than he could ever be.

You frighten me was something he told me every time he couldn't understand my choices. I made extraordinarily good and logical choices.

Frightening to him, though, was the idea that all his friends were getting further. In life and other things.

It was too safe with me. It scared him, and I broke that. He was paranoid and frankly afraid of the locker room. We all were. We all still are.

Now there are remnants of beard shavings in my crusted sink. I'm pretty sure for once it isn't my own animal mane clogging the shower. I've started spending more time in the bathrooms at the gym on 19th street.

I don't even keep shampoo in here anymore.

My feet feel chalky. My fingers feel swollen and I cannot get any of my rings off. I'd like to just sit here and hot box in my own sweat. I'll wait for the mirror to fog over.

Meanwhile, the person I left in my room won't leave, and I miss smooth backs and oily cheeks.