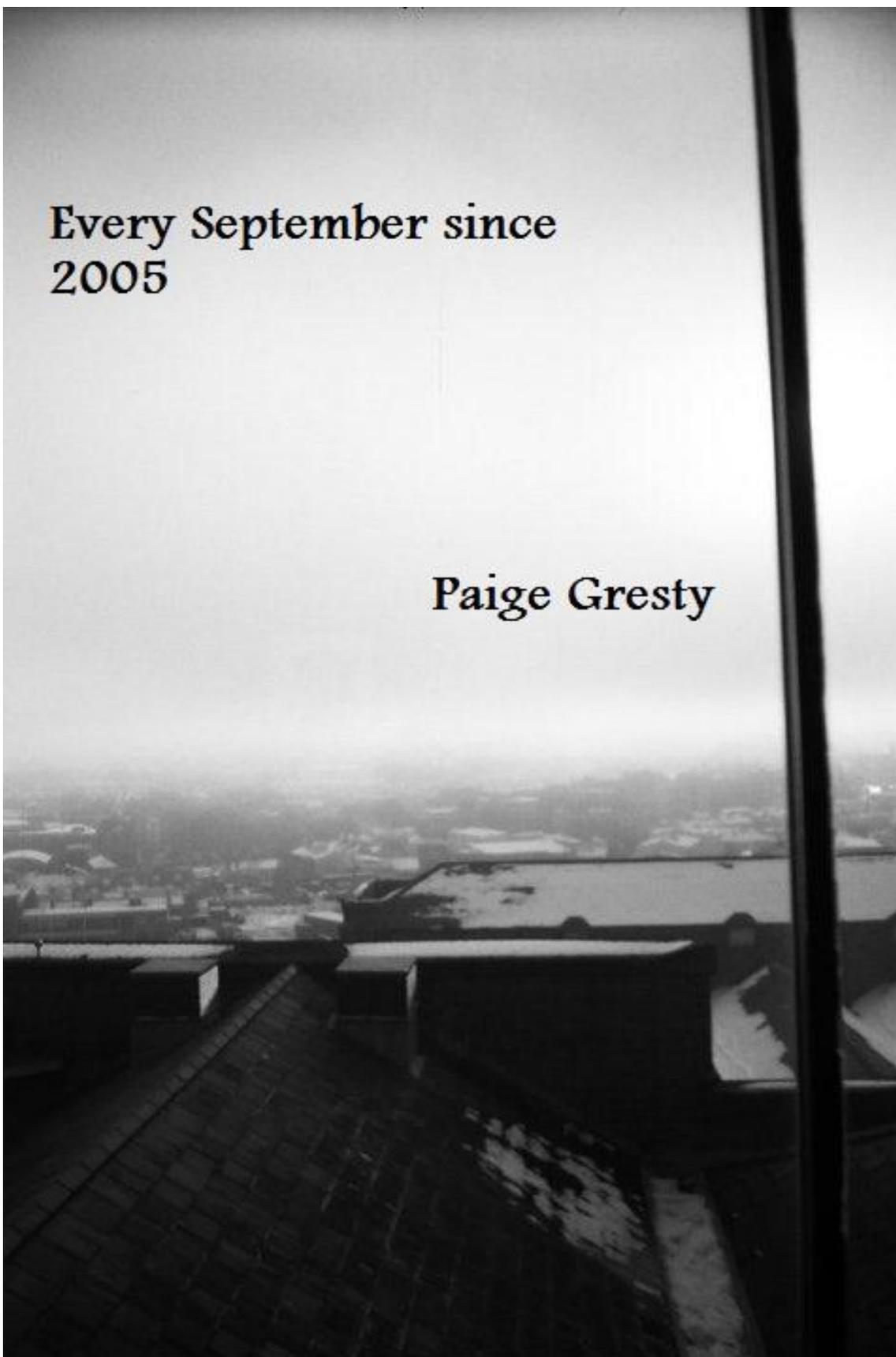


Every September since
2005

Paige Gresty



Every September Since 2005 by [Paige Gresty](#)
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*'i could not get through september without a battle...'
-the microphones, the glow pt. 2*

Things I Think About When We Are On Your Deck

How angular your body is and how much I want to touch you[1], where are the cookies in the pantry, I really like those chocolate covered Belgian ones, when will this bikini look good on me[2], I hope I don't get a tan- I like that you're so tanned, what dress should I wear next Thursday for Yom Kippur services[3].

Your voice is breaking now, as an adult, and I find that sometimes when I call you you sound like a man and I'm not sure if I like that, I'm sorry I keep falling asleep in your bed when we're meant to be talking[4], I wonder what we'll be like when we're older and if this will last, it's funny when you play Bob Marley outside, your neighborhood is so nice and all the houses are so big[5], that time you showed up with roses on my birthday a year ago[6] and the jungle gym afterwards, how you told me you lied and your mom wasn't coming to pick you up so could you come over to my house.[7]

Would you notice if I wore that plaid skirt again and what it meant[8], could we have Caesar salad at the Daily Grill and talk, what are our conversations about I can't remember[9], I want to be with you on the couch inside because it's starting to get cold and the leaves are blowing on my face, can we sit on your white couch inside and avoid your dog and listen to your turntable while I put on your sweater until it's time for me to go.[10]

[1] You weigh 135 pounds and have collarbones like an aristocratic 17th century Augustan painting, in the shadows they are chiaroscuro and I want to put my tongue between the dip in your clavicle

[2] Your father asked you what you wanted for dinner at the beach and then turned to me and said I know you haven't eaten. I didn't know what to say. Yes, you noticed.

[3] A Shiksa in the temple, I cried, profusely, when they talked about forgiveness and thought about my father and when I would forgive him; if; when, if I could, I could find him; what I would do if I found him; the deluge of tears made your family wonder if I was 'okay'.

[4] I like napping in your bed as the music plays and the trees through your window in the summer look like a painting, I thought, when I was really high from that shit you bought on vacation. Everything was mauve and folk and you were my face.

[5] When those people had a keg outside on the fourth of July; when we went sledding down the hill in that park we could never find again; when we broke up and I parked outside your house waiting for you to come outside to kiss me

[6] You said you could smell my perfume a mile away and you knew I was coming but I guess upon reflection that meant I was wearing too much perfume

[7] Your chest on my chest was the most exhilarating sensation I had had up to that point in my entire puny life.

[8] You did, and how you did, and how that skirt would recur again and again

[9] For hours we talked on the purple phone in my room cause cell phones were too expensive and I took a picture of me talking to you on the phone that night, how nice my teeth looked and how bright my eyes-

[10] The headlights in the driveway are the last thing, always the last thing, even after it all.



Parked

Later when they were in the warm car by the suburban park, next to the hill where she had first written a poem about sledding that ended up in the school's literary magazine, she would think it was ironic how many ways they were 'parked' for how much the car was moving as they attempted to get into slightly more comfortable positions. They had spent the day with hands out of windows, a kind of Saturday arranged over instant messenger that ended up driving from quiet coffee shops to 14th street, hand-in-hand over the crispy fall leaves and the abandoned house where Borf had his last solo show before getting arrested. He played a lot of shoegaze and talked about 33 1/3 in Crooked Beat, then hopped in the car and smoked Marlboro Reds which she at first demurred because it would ruin her voice. At differing intervals he would bring this up when she started smoking seriously.

Proto autumnal adulthood suited them, him; in his black skinny jeans and darker features and green eyes and (then) seemingly unending knowledge of late 70s to early 90s British bands. He had been surprised she didn't know Joy Division, and then took a lot of pleasure in explaining their cultural significance on post punk. When that Ian Curtis biopic came out a few months later, she was versed, although they didn't see it together. She didn't love him.

They strolled the barely-finished townhouse development above Busboys & Poets with quiet derision, him at various points putting his arm around her shoulder and talking about the yuppies who would probably move in when it was finished. There was a Whole Foods and an organic juice bar in the bottom level. Later, her mom would look at one of the apartments just on the market and she would have to explain, without explaining, that it was just bad to live there, okay. She thought his arm was weirdly placed and too familiar for the fact that they had only hooked up once and she wasn't his girlfriend. He liked that she was blonde and went to gigs and had big boobs, a fact that he mentioned frequently especially when she wore red. After they fucked he had mistakenly overshot his enthusiasm by extending this aggrandizement to include her ass. She didn't turn around in his presence again and he felt like shit about it for a while.

For now they were in the backseat, ostensibly trying to make out but it was proving somewhat aerobically difficult in his mid-sized sedan. He thought about how stupid the baseball sexual rating system was, how there was a massive gap between third base and home and how he was, stupidly, way out in mid-field at the moment. It was rather left-field, this whole situation, because they only had virtually a handful of mutual friends and a shared appreciation for live music downtown. He had to remind her several times that he didn't need interesting stories to be interesting, and stood by that every time she'd bring up her past. In the summer after he got into college in New York he would tell her his idea of perfection would be staying up all night with her, then grabbing a coffee in the Village and listening to the Velvet Underground. She agreed, sort of. They didn't really know about Brooklyn back then.

He was a virgin. She suggested they have sex mostly because she was tired of giving blowjobs. When they were done he quoted 24-Hour Party People and she felt instantly disgusted with him and with the situation. He didn't know anything was off then, only a few days later when he called her in the middle of play practice and she picked up and her voice was tremolo and he knew it was pointless. She was standing outside in the cross-over between stage-left heading to stage-right and it felt like every September since 2005. She heard him hear her and he heard her hear him hear her and they didn't talk for a while. After they were done she didn't feel like putting her stockings back on, so just stuffed them into her purse and went barelegged up the steps to her house. She didn't want anyone to know anything and felt that if anyone asked her a question her face would give it away, so she just shut the door and went up to her room and listened to Silver Mount Zion for a few hours.

She bought a bra at Victoria's Secret that clasped at the front with him in mind because it was white with silver lace and he was an extremely visual person. It was moot because they never had sex after she bought the bra, although he had wanted to and devised a lot of ways to get her to come to New York when she was home. He borrowed her Dave Eggers and read every page, with its highlights and notes in the margin, as the muted correspondence of the adolescence he was slowly exiting on the Upper East Side. He smoked heroin with his girlfriend and stayed up all night talking about conspiracy theories. His girlfriend had a lip-ring and black hair and they were together for a while before they broke up.

Later, whenever he drove through Georgetown, Adams Morgan, Dupont Circle, the park at 2am it would remind him of coming downtown to meet her and pick her up. They kissed in the park in Georgetown by the water where he'd kissed pretty much every girl he'd ever kissed until he went to college. Later there were plans to destroy the park, but he came home one September and found out that they had just put in a fountain and some weird amphitheatre structures around it. He was glad it wasn't destroyed and had the urge to put on his old pair of Converse and invite her to have a chat but she didn't live in the city anymore, so he just sat by the water for a while with an unlit cigarette in his hand until it was too dark.



Dustin Hoffman

i am gripped by the memory of wet april afternoons walking down wisconsin avenue from tenleytown metro and i am wearing a puffy pink vest from the gap that i didn't really like but you did, walking along to the deli with the pickles and eating a pickle and feeling guilty; i am remembering one april afterwards and you morosely opening your garage door at one in the morning in your boxers and i was so mad that you couldn't be bothered to put on any clothes and you were so mad that i had bought a new dress because we weren't supposed to be thinking of each other, but yet here i was; i remember the first april when you surprised me on our anniversary and i was wet from the shower and you spilled candle wax on my carpet, and after things were over the candle wax was still there and i picked at it in the vain hope that it would be gone—that second april i bought a long necklace chain with hearts on it and as we were fucking i said i love you and you literally stopped and looked at me and got off and you were still hard and i was both saddened by the fact that you would stop fucking me because i said that and simultaneously really impressed that you managed to stop mid-thrust with a hard-on; i am walking with you to the metro after my exam and im wearing that black dress that you think makes me look really hot and we're going on a date to dupont circle but when someone asks us where are you going your friend just replies obviously they are going to fuck and we laugh but are also extremely uncomfortable-- sitting in your backyard everything so cool and sad and i love you in a way that is terrifying for me to think about now, i loved you so much that i wanted you to never leave me and i wanted to always be with you and although i now know you are not a good person i am still sometimes so sad to think that i loved something so much that doesn't exist anymore, how can something i believed in so much not exist anymore; that second april when i gave a guy from my high school a blowjob in a playground parking lot and i was so angry at you that i texted you 'i just blew some dude' and you called me a slut and then cried and sent me an email about how you stayed up all night holding my picture in your hands and i didn't want to be anything but yours and i couldn't find anything that was mine anymore because you made yourself me and i made myself you... that first april i listened to it raining outside of your window as we lay in your bed, the nicest bed i had ever been in and you made these little intakes of breath like a child about to be fed and it made me want to throw up it was so beautiful and i knew i was doing something to please you, instead of in that second april when i was on my hands and knees and i was blowing you and you asked have you been practicing and i said huh and you said cause your technique is way better and i stopped and asked was i bad before and you said no its like you know how dustin hoffman is really good in some things, but then he's amazing in midnight cowboy it's like that and i didn't understand why you would compare a blow job to dustin hoffman but i took the compliment anyway; that first april when we would turn up the sound of the television in your basement and have really loud sex in the hopes that your family wouldn't hear it but they definitely probably could hear it especially when we would intentionally try to make each other laugh by screaming the weirdest sexual things that we could think of like fuck me like a pack of puppies or when you would insist on having normal conversations in the middle of sex about mundane things and i could not stop giggling; i am trying to think of who you are now and who you were then and i don't think we even really knew each other because how could we have known who we would be then but i can't stop remembering spring mornings and being yours and being so confident that you were mine, whatever that meant then.



We kissed behind the apartment block
On the opposite side of the parking lot
After we'd smoked a bowl
[He disputes this, and claims it was a jay]

We kissed because I kinda made a move with my mouth
Because there was an tangible lull in the conversation
I'm pretty sure we weren't talking about anything
It just stopped and it was acknowledged that of course we were gonna kiss

We talked about it recently, I just said remember that alcove
Uhhuh and he smiled and I sent him a copy of my writing that evening
And he said no, it wasn't a bowl it was a jay
I guess it doesn't matter because we both have the impression of ourselves
In the alcove of the apartment block, kind and young and excited and enveloped

/////

'You're a good egg', paper crumpled in sweaty hands
Shakey face, I know now that face I knew then that face
But between us roamed an entire school of superfluous mouths
So instead nods thank you and he slid off.

Inhaling night lights later, skirting around it
Driving back to the countryside on 270
Houses so dissimilar and far away and green
His house, I wouldn't have spotted it in the daylight

Basement sitting, remote went dead TV
Snow on screen no sound, turned head, I knew the face
'If we do this you can't tell anyone'
Didn't take anything off really, just fumbled over and through jeans
Bare feet across leather couch, cool kitchen floor, clutch of my car

Text saying 'are you home okay' reply 'no I'm still driving'
'you live really far away'
Reply 'yeah sorry I always forget it's farther away from where you live'
'not just from school'

Monday in class, seat-back empty in front of me
Next five days empty, shamed and hot
Called him, he just said he was 'feeling bad' and that he'd been in the hot tub
When his head was back in front of me, we didn't talk again for months.



Train To Caersws

He lifted up my hair with his fists and asked me if I cared, because I was a little girl, that his feelings were getting hurt. If I knew, because I was a little girl, that I was fucking up his feelings. I was semi-consciously aware of the fact that his complicit friends at the bar could probably see through the window to our smoking area and that he was pulling me by my hair, and even demi-semi-consciously aware that they probably didn't care because they had already seen me with cut-up knees and bruises and crying several nights before. I had had to have been drunk for days.

I had briefly been in the emergency room, because I couldn't stop throwing up, on the big scary monolith-looking building on the hill. I don't remember being hospitalized or what happened but apparently I couldn't stop screaming that I didn't want anyone to call anyone. I apparently had to be carried down the stairs by my feet. When I woke up in the hospital I didn't have shoes and I was covered in vomit and I was alone. I sort of shambled out and he was there with his car to take me home, comprehendingly profiled.

We walked along another hill with a lot of high street shops, I guess it could have been a nice town if it had been completely different circumstances. We took a lot of mephedrone in the graveyard by the castle two nights before one of my papers was due; I was pretty scared to write it and to watch Paranormal Activity. I had to take a lot of 5am, 6am trains and when I did he was never there to meet me at the station despite the fact it was a five minute walk from his apartment. Flat, whatever.

There was a bar by the seaside where we sat across from each other, playing a board game, and he called me a hipster and it was long enough ago that I cared enough to defend myself against ersatz identities. The candles in the beer bottles had burned down to nubs and I remember disassociating how unpleasant everything was from how very pleasant this little bar was in this shithole town by the sea. The sea was really lovely and I did spend so many of my visits running out of the apartment, flat, whatever, and just sitting by the sea listening to Animal Collective and willing myself to be back home.

I remember I once got on the train to go home and had the worst panic attack ever, the seats were closing in on me and I couldn't breathe and the conductor knew and I had to get off the train. I got off in this little middle-of-nowhere town and called him and told him I didn't know what to do, could he get in his car and maybe drive me part of the way until I felt better and then I'd get back on the train, and he said no and I read a Bukowski poem on my phone and thought life couldn't get any worse than this, probably, and then went back to him anyway.



Small Talk

Wearing your two socks
I am wearing your boxers
I am wearing you

I am not myself when you are not around me but I can think you

If I wear your shirt
Meaning I am being you
Deliberately

When I think you on the train and the bus and the river can I know

My little sparrow
Your little sparrow boy hips
How can I fit in

I asked you if you think me, you don't, and it's probably for the best

Your big plaid jumper
Gentlemanly, you in it
Looks shit on me though

How can I bore into your skull I need to know what thinking you are

Catch our reflection
You are lithe and beautiful
How can I be you

Are you lifting are you reaching are you trying when I am not there

How are your fingers
Good at some video games
I want to know this.

Are you sitting there, listening to the cars honk, thinking about food

I want to eat you
I want to eat your ribcage
Swallow your leaf bones

Is the razor on your face streamlining your jaw bruxing against you

I want to crawl in
I want to sleep in your face
Be your jumper here

Do you think me when you cook or when you shower or when you run out

When we sleep at night
Sometimes we rotate bed sides
Different sides each night

I know you think me in the way that you always do quiet-like you

This is the closest
This is the space where I'm you
And you're me and we're.