

For the love of men

Pazgal Eriq

*'For The Love of Men'*  
*By Paqal Eriq.*  
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## *Editor's Notes*

Poetry has always held a very special place in my heart and In this publishing house so proofreading and compiling this lucid body of work was easily one of the better projects I worked on in the first quarter of 2024. I only ask that you take the collection in the same vulnerability the writer intended it with. The rawness and vulnerability in this collection is its best feature and authenticity is always so enjoyable. 'For the love of men' yearns and calls out to the romantic in all of us to relate to the most human emotion, love. Let yourself feel something.

Clara Jack,

Editor in Chief

Pencilmarks and Scribbles.



**LOVE CYCLES 1**

To be afraid of love,

Is to fear living.

For a broken heart,

Will. Keep. Beating,

Let it, let

go,

let it, let

in,

Breathing, healing.

## Trigger Conversations

It's a cold morning and all my sweaters itch,  
Because they no longer fit,

And I do not care about forgetting the feeling of warmth,  
I have come to understand that it comes back anyway,

Sometimes so intense it burns everything.  
My father is bare but for shorts,

On a wooden bench with nails sticking out,  
And I want to sit next to him,

Making a joke about how they pierced me last week.  
He will say I was pricked by them before,

And how I will let it happen again  
Because I am too quick to forget the pain.

I will talk about needing a new sweater for 3 years now,  
Not about how he fails to buy them,

And I somehow do not blame him for it,  
You can only try to care for what you were never prepared to have,

But it is most likely my fault and I should apologise for existence,  
And maybe I do but in whispers,

And I claim it is better than how he communicates,  
Which is everything else but words.

Somehow we find all of this to be funny and giggle,  
I focus on how we laugh and sound alike,

And not on the reality that I do not know him like that,  
Or on the possibility that I might never.

## **Reflective Rebirth**

We learn to love like the ones before us.

So, place my love before a mirror,

And all you see is my mother.

I have learnt to hand you these pieces of me,

Knowing you will never appreciate them,

Half wondering why you should,

Aware that I deserve better but still staying,

Because I believe my love is a healing fountain,

And every past lover was once too thirsty,

Or I, too generous with my water;

As I dried to dust.

## NICE TO MEET YOU AGAIN

*(After 'Somebody That I Used To Know' By Gotye & Kimbra)*

*"You're really tall"*

*"Yes I am"*

It all began here, didn't it?

A spark we cannot confidently claim to have fanned into a flame,

So we say "It just happened",

from sittin' across from you to sittin' by to sittin' on.

Do we agree this is how the story goes?

That summer of 2020 I spent most of my fleeting time fantasizin' about unrealistic dreams,

While emailin' a collection of my pain for you to read about, soothin' your sweet tooth,

Dreams we were just too young to ever actualize but still wanted anyway.

The rest I spent pourin' into the ears of my friends about the lightness of your gaze,

And the heaviness of your thighs,

And how I liked that I had to raise my head to find your smile, helpin' me ignore all the signs,

Actin' colour blind, claimin' to my friends that red just suits you more.

So, they use the materials for their jokes about my uncertainty,

And I swear it is not obsession regardless of how far from healthy it is.

*"why didn't you tell me"*

*"I'm sorry"*

I tried to ground a Virgo boy into steadiness,

A selfish need for your betterment under the guise of healthy affection.

We cannot pretend we didn't see comin',  
Even with the fear of validatin' its approach and certifyin' the need for it.  
I know you cried, I hoped you did, even a little,  
While feelin' a tiny bit of shame that I did,  
Holdin' warm mugs on cold summer mornings that leave us dream-walkin' into each other,  
To avoid lookin' at our phones every five seconds like you had access to my presence.  
At social nights, passin' Js while, avoiding eye contact as we lied about trying to forget,  
Drownin' this yearnin' with all our friend's liquor,  
Half-hatin' the taste of vodka and gin but still drinkin' to keep the thoughts at bay,  
Why let them in to stay knowing they will be of no use now,  
The thirst remained mild but present,  
Giving us even more reasons to drink again.

*"Why Are you asking"*

*"I can't JUST be asking?"*

Two years playin' pretend hopin' it would become our version of reality,  
Wonderin' if it took from you as much as it took from me,  
Dreadin' the distance while recountin' how its absence meant the loud speakin',  
The misreadin', bitch-talkin',  
Everything between here and where we thought whatever we had was leadin' to,  
But I had to be sure, if it didn't hurt can you call it love?

*"I can't remember"*

*“Me neither”*

Forgivin’ and tellin’ you while leavin’ me to be eaten by my own words,  
Aware that I might deserve it.  
It wasn’t your place to save me anyway,  
Or mine to save you,  
Though we never try so much to loosen up this soul tie.

*“Just come kiss me already”*

*“Ah, there it is.”*

What do we call her?  
This longin’ we have hid for years at the back of our minds,  
But still crawlin’ back between us as we find each other again,  
Behind phone calls and hesitant words,  
Claimin’ the other didn't think of this but wanted it,  
Waitin’ patiently for the new growth reveal,  
And all the thoughts spillin’ on this bedroom floor,  
Waitin’ for you to tell me who you have become,

*“Use your words”*

*“I miss you too”*

Pushin’ buttons, Cheshire grinnin’ and softly gigglin’,  
Lightly noddin’, I am listenin’...

## **Guilt-Tripping**

Everyone speaks about the one who kicks the bucket,

Never about what happens to the bucket afterwards.

Was it able to pick itself back up?

Did it hate itself for killing him?

Was it its fault?

Did he not know to look where he was going?

## TO LOVE IS TO PREPARE FOR MOURNING

*(After 'Broken Clocks' by SZA)*

Remember the night under the pouring rain,

I had appeared at your front door, teeth chattering from the cold,

Muttering threats under my breath.

It is how I see you,

A cup I must keep filling even with the fear of running out soon,

Holding neither the string we dangle on nor the shakey hands holdin' us up,

All are mine, a pact to an end that could never involve us both,

I did try to see you differently, I swear it,

But what to do when I have been given so little to work with,

A different light, a new impression, everything and anything,

All futile as an intervention,

Because some nights are written in stone,

And most of those nights, the stone is your heart,

That i never stopped trying to make beat for me,

It will be mourned on this night too,

Where I sit with you,

Listening to your favourite music on TV.

## **Love - A Performance Art**

You are an entertaining mess

In a hall filled with all of them,

An audience with forever-hungry eyes

at a conflict of interest,

Only to realise they dropped their humanity

at the ticket stand,

Ready to feast on your pain.

## **A Spotify Blend**

*(After Tonogon by Lojay )*

It is a shameful thing to say that you sound like the rhythmic beauty of an album by a problematic artiste I swear to stop listening to but I never do.

I remain oblivious to what to do with you while constantly replaying every track to 19th February,

A reluctant night out to kiki that led to what I like to call our beautiful chaos,

You were just inches away from me and I could swear I felt a tugging gaze on my shirt,

While shamefully basking in it I found your eyes,

It felt almost perfect like my favorite R&B song of '21 with the title deserting us.

You came to me flashing a smile ready to steal me from myself,

Promising not a crumb left.

A few months down that road I will explain how it was always my plan to be taken away anyway,

Craving to lose myself in the arms of a forever-fleeting lover,

You looked like I imagined he would,

Face like the moon with the stars twinkling in your eyes,

Mocking in foresight my inability to reach them no matter how much I tried,

No matter how close you pulled me with your arm 'round my waist,

While mutually wishing this club was an empty room we could even be more bare,

This will forever be an endless cat and rat chase,

Two strangers dancing too fast, missing every beat and refusing to take the hint to breathe.

Is hope just the refusal of a certainty?

That if we closed our eyes hard and said it out loud,

We might feel it and then believe it,

Only to eventually have it.

I will need you to remember what they say about horses,

While I wonder if you will sacrifice being called a beggar for me in a heartbeat.

**CPR**

*(After Summer Walker)*

Floating feels

Like drowning,

When you

Start gasping

For air,

As you

Fall to

The floor.

Nothing

Can

Go downhill

From here.

Your absence

will always

be my personal

Hell.

**Waves**

*(After Normani)*

I like how we paint letting go,

Like the ease of a river,

Forgetting my mind is an ocean,

Flooding me with memories,

Flipping through pages,

Feeling everything all over again,

Falling deeper into myself.

**Dial Tone (*After 'Jaded' by Miley Cyrus*)**

You sit at your desk with a wild imagination,

Refusing a reality where he might not miss you.

You claim he doesn't have a way with words and this is why you hardly speak,

Except for the sudden burst of energy when the clock strikes three,

Like that, It is only a coincidence that he doesn't have a way with actions too,

But is it ever really?

What do you call knowing but acting like you don't?

A commendable skill leading only to a stupid display of patience,

So you pick up the phone for the 11th time in the past week,

With a lump of hope at the back of your throat restricting your breathing,

Waiting till the last ring,

Ending your mini-panic as it flushes into the noticeably long beep,

And you make to speak but hesitate from the fear of the loudness of the tremble in your voice,

You give in and mumble something that sounds like affection with a shaky "I miss you"

Half hoping those words do not fall on only deaf ears,

And in that moment he picks,

And you are almost grateful he is kind enough to let you hear his voice today.

You do not bask in this possibility for too long,

Giggles have a way of snapping you back to reality,

Slow pitying giggles and silence breathing,

You sit there letting reality sink in.

### **Needy Bottles**

My hands are the parts of my body that crave you the most,  
And the only time they choose to work,  
Are on days you are drunk as fuck on my kitchen floor,  
Right next to the locker where I hide all my liquor,  
Knowing you will still find it anyway because I suck at hiding things,  
Because I never try,  
Because If I do what then are the use of my hands,  
If every night they do not carry a wasted you gracefully?

## **Drowning**

*(After 'Everything I Wanted' by Billie Eilish)*

It felt like August all over again and all the months leading to this day,  
With our windscreen kissed blind with dew trying to be shaken off at 100Mph,  
And the rush hanging in our chest.  
In the quiet, the thumping sound is calling to you,  
Begging you to stop,  
Knowing you cannot run away from all the thoughts your mind cannot help but have,  
Still, you try but sadly this is not how it all works,  
You do not come to leave your humanity at the door of my Barnawa apartment,  
With hopes that questions will not fall from my tongue,  
To my hands relentlessly presenting them to you as my feet followed behind,  
I cannot quite say what made me so sure that this could be the end,  
Maybe the slammed car doors sounded too familiar to be anything other than deja vu,  
Or how this wasn't one of your frequent rant rides,  
Where your words are begging for my mouth to speak and I give in,  
But I try to as we approach the bridge,  
Sadly, even my optimism knows when it is time to yield,  
I plant a kiss on your right cheek and calmly sink into the passenger seat.

## **Radio Head**

Your voice is always drowned by the static coming from my radio,  
And I am a box of music that remembers the lyrics to every song,  
One that never tries to forget.

*"What did you say? Sorry, I was singing along,  
Someone please turn off that radio"*

My words are breaking again,  
But you go on like you never hear me.  
You are saying something and all I can think of is how I really should listen,  
How this song playing is my song and maybe you are the ones singing it,  
Am I wrong? I never know.

*"Don't ask me what you said before.  
Come again, ple..."*

How do you fall in love with a radio?  
Please do not switch it off, do not ask me to tone it down,  
How do you love a radio whose songs you cannot sing along to,  
Or hear?  
Will you leave me in the rain to miss you,  
Songs about rain remind me of how the waves wash your voice away every time I try to listen,  
I really should listen, are you still speaking?

*"This is our song baby!"*

**Love Bites**

You've been burned by my fire  
Before, Bidding  
To tame its beauty.  
Does your ~~husband~~, wife know,  
You stand on my front porch,  
Every Friday, after your prayers,  
Begging to be burned, some more?

Paz will write some more, soon enough.

PAZ.

*NOTES...*