

6-22-2012

## A Concise Romantic History

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### Recommended Citation

Gustafson, Anna (2012) "A Concise Romantic History," *Fishladder: A Student Journal of Art and Writing*: Vol. 10: Iss. 1, Article 34.  
Available at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/fishladder/vol10/iss1/34>

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## A Concise Romantic History

There was the one who kissed me on the cheek when I was five. We were in music class watching Peter and the Wolf. We sat on those hard, metal, folding chairs, our feet dangling six inches off the ground.

There was the one who kissed me every morning before school. Our third-grade classmates would gather around us in a circle for the daily display. It was always close-mouthed, but somehow still very wet. My mom found out about the ritual and made me stop.

There was the one who asked to be my boyfriend, then didn't speak a word to me until he broke it off two weeks later. I wrote a horrible poem about my broken eleven-year-old heart. I showed it to my mom and asked whether or not I should share it with people. She told me to wait. Thank God for my mother.

There was the one who was at least a foot shorter than me. I looked down at him in his oversized khakis and hideous sweater, as we slow-danced to KC and JoJo. Correction: as we picked up our feet and set them back down, somehow revolving in a circle.

There was the one who wrote me a note every single day. He folded them into perfect squares and stuck them through the grate of my locker door. He was one melodramatic thirteen-year-old. He would wax poetic about how I was the love of his life and we'd always be together. In my yearbook he wrote (among other things), "I love you and I always will. You'll always be my girl no matter where we are in life." Spoiler alert: it didn't work out.

There was the one who almost kissed me under the dock that day. The sunshine made the water glow green and made playful patterns of light that danced across our faces. Less than eight inches apart, treading water, we stared at each other. Water dripped from his eyelashes and the tip of his nose. He blinked, lost his nerve and splashed me instead. That should've

been my first real kiss.

Instead, there was the one who attempted the end-of-the-night-doorstep routine. He went in for an open-mouther, while I attempted the simple pucker. It did not end well. I stuck my lips inside his mouth and ended up with a ring of spit that ran from over my chin to under my nose. It was cringe-worthy. Horrible. Awful. Let's move on.

There was the one who was, like, totally in a band. He made me a mix CD. I listened to it over and over, sure that I could decode the lyrics into messages of affection specifically for me. I think he just liked the songs.

There was the one I switched schools for. I gave up my scholarships and rent-free living situation to be closer to him. That fall, I began my first semester as a transfer student, a single transfer student.

There was the one I almost married. He was a carpenter applying to medical school with a degree in French. I fell in love with him on Halloween. The first time we saw each other, I was wearing a wig and had a cigarette dangling from my red lips. He was undead. A year and a half later, I had a ring picked out. He bought it. But the question never came, and he left for medical school.

There was the one who treated me like shit. He'd spout words of desire one day, and then forget to call for a week. For months I clung to those occasional words. Finally, I wrote him a letter calling him out and asking if we could talk about it. He never spoke to me again.

There was the one I didn't deserve. He did everything right. He was interesting and funny and kind. Apparently I'm not attracted to interesting, funny, and kind.

There was the one who wrote me a love letter from Taiwan. He read Shakespeare to me out loud and made me guess the play. He convinced me to travel to Europe with him.

Then he changed his mind overnight and decided he'd rather travel alone.

There's the one who just walked into the coffee shop. Hello, there.