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## disappearing act of a secret

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# disappearing act of a secret

if you live in an unwell body that bears no visible markers of being unwell, (un)wellness can be an alienating and complex thing to grapple with. your body mirrors the secret you keep; it sits latent beneath the surface; people might know, but they say little to nothing.

you walk around with a disappearing act of a secret.

your ex-boyfriend might say *have you been eating ok?* he might follow up with *I don't mean to be annoying like that, sorry.* you'll want to scream through your iPhone screen *please never stop asking; please save me; please tell me I'm not disappearing.*

some days when you look at yourself in the mirror, you feel re-introduced to your collarbone, your ribcage, your hip bones; everywhere there are bones you haven't known for years. you feel that you've never looked sexier. you haven't been this thin since high school; there is pleasure in this. lurking beneath the pleasure is the threat of disappearance. you feel skeletal, but sexy? you think about scales, tape-measures, counting calories; you consider each avenue of worsening, of further disappearing.

your friends might ask *have you eaten?* your answer is almost always *no.* you find yourself being fed by those around you. you wonder if they see you as incapable, as unwell. *at least they see me.* you realize you cannot eat unless those around you eat. one night your friends might show up early, or more likely you put off eating for too long, because their foodless arrival means your meal ends.

it is a paradox: eating feels too visible, yet not eating spells your disappearance. it is everything and nothing at once to you; food becomes all-encompassing yet unimportant, and the hours go by unfed with little attention.

some people might even see your (un)wellness as positive; they don't recognize the fact that you are unwell. an acquaintance at the bar where you work might greet you as follows: *wow, you look great—so skinny*. when your response is wordless, she'll re-engage fifteen minutes later, *have you been working out?* you might shrug, begrudgingly whisper a *no*. she'll catch you off guard: *what, not eating?* you disappear and blend into the bottles behind you, finding refuge at the hurricane machine whose gears scream as they grind ice, tequila, syrup, triple sec: feeding itself with the sustenance of others. despite this noise and ample distraction you will meditate over the comments of a pseudo stranger; you might think about food and what you've eaten for the rest of the shift, but you won't eat.

sometimes your stomach starts to grumble—not as often as it used to—mainly around dinner time, seven or eight o'clock. it is at this point that you might start to wonder—*how much have i eaten today? have i even eaten yet?* when you really start to fixate on the day's consumption, winding back the hours of the day to nine when you left your bed first, your vision might start to blur, the room might spin ever so slightly—you go dizzy, you drink some water, fill your stomach with invisible contents, make disappearing easier—snap out of it. walk away, walk toward the kitchen, feel lighter, too light, lifting.

you seek out food in people. you might be texting a good friend when you insert your secret into dialogue, exposing it: *should I eat something?* you start to realize that the people around you always answer *yes*, you might start to wonder *are they telling other people no; can they see my unwellness; am i visible to them?* you might make excuses, *oh, but it's late; it is past 10:00 p.m.*, and they might say *so what?* you start to think about what 10:00 p.m. means if you've eaten nothing yet.

you think you hear the guy you're fucking say *damn baby, you're so thick* while he has his left hand gripping your hip and his right on your throat. you might have misheard him. *thick* reverberates around your skull while he slams into you before gliding out. you think about moaning, *call me thick again; tell me i have a fat ass; assure me that i'm not disappearing*. your knees are on your shoulders now and your hands are pinned against either side. he brings himself in from above: deep. he's in your stomach now; you wonder about what else might be in there. you were good that day: two full meals, and ample snacks. you start to feel yourself get nauseous. think about moaning, *you fill me up; i feel full*.