

101  
Days  
to  
Fall  
Apart

Gabrielle C Faust



## 101 WAYS TO FALL APART

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# **101 WAYS TO FALL APART**

Gabrielle Faust



## WHAT THE PRESS IS SAYING ABOUT GABRIELLE FAUST



“Faust writes with a simplicity that betrays the fact that she’s a seasoned artist and accomplished author. Also, Faust’s artistic inclinations enter the book every time she uses words to vividly paint a landscape. Max Ernst, Edvard Munch and H.R. Geiger are all mentioned in the book and Faust’s writing is at times reminiscent of each artist’s work.”

— Gabino Iglesias, *The Austin Post*

“Faust writes beautifully, with a seasoned artist’s touch and a flair for the dramatic. Her descriptions dance across the page in a flow that feels both elegant and brutal.”

— *Paperback Horror*

“Gabrielle Faust is a fascinating new voice emerging from the nightmare of sound-alike authors. She is a writer to watch.”

— Del Howison, Bram Stoker Award winner

“For those that crave vampire fiction with a dark soul, Gabrielle Faust delivers on all levels.”

— *Scars Magazine*

“With prose the texture of deep velvet, Faust draws us down to the depths of a story as old as fear, as dark as sin, and as deep as Satan’s heart. The lines between friend and foe are re-drawn. She captures desperate obsession and hunger, outlining each with the passion for existence that burns in all beings.”

— *Fantasy Book Spot*



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Thank you.

XOV""VOX

Gabrielle Faust

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 101 WAYS TO FALL APART 

There's 101 ways to fall apart,  
Like dandelion seeds  
Caught in the wind,  
Ripped from the stem and  
Tossed to the sky,  
Scattered to the edges  
Of the Earth,  
Pieces of the self,  
Breaking away as each  
Moment that lends itself,  
To the next,  
Taking from the past to  
Propel forward into eternity,  
And somehow find purchase again,  
In the cracks in the asphalt,  
This city exhales as it lies and bakes  
In the sun like mourning wail,  
From centuries ago;  
We are simply constructs of emotion  
That we created in a time when  
Fantasy proved more real than reality,  
And since that day we shed scales,  
One for each tear,

Leaving a trail of memories,  
Pretty as broken glass that  
Even the wicked wouldn't wander,  
In times of want;  
Each year brings a new way  
To fall apart,  
A new example of cruelty,  
Self-inflicted with dissection tools,  
And antique medical equipment,  
Words and ways to quake,  
To turn oneself inside out,  
With flesh flayed,  
One slow strip at a time.

 A MOMENT 

I am,  
Within this shell,  
Trying to find the light,  
Cascading from bent blinds  
I draw to tomorrow.  
This shell,  
I will make ready,  
The subtleties of  
Humanity's overturned overture,  
Of barely disguised humanity;  
Who am I,  
But that which reflects?  
A mirror.  
A surf.  
Rolling in and out  
With the moon.  
I am insubstantial.  
I am eternal.  
But still, sadly, human.  
We feel too much...

 BIRD SONG 

A bird song can be beautiful,  
Even if echoed in violence,  
Woven in and out of the spring breeze,  
Through the trees like  
A tapestry of iron filings and bamboo  
Made soft by the patient hand of time,  
The lines on her palm  
Leading back to an infinitesimal beginning,  
Watermarked with whiskey,  
And cigarette smoke,  
And poetry;  
One harsh staccato cry,  
One leaf falling to the pavement,  
One minute standing vigil over time,  
Never again and forever more.

 **BREAK MY OWN HEART** 

I'll break my own heart,  
I'll break the words that part,  
The sea from the land I tread  
With feet bloody from the shards  
Of shale shattered beneath  
The weight of all that will  
Never become or be;  
We are only waves of memory,  
Impressions of impressions,  
Trappings of dreams,  
Rolling into infinity;  
Take what you will,  
Leave what you may,  
I'll break my own heart,  
Day after day...

 **BROKEN** 

Place your heart within it, you fool,  
You are only worth what is darkest in the  
Midland folds of night,  
The sweet velveteen spaces in between  
Self and sanctity where the soft,  
Vulnerable aspects of our selves are stored,  
Cowering with fairly unbalanced swords,  
Fledged like warriors beckoning wounds they  
Once remembered and hardly recollect now,  
In the haze of this new battle,  
The dust settling like the traces  
Of another residual ritual wanting for  
The issue of terminal momentous occasion,  
For we are only the devils that  
Stretch us taught upon the rack,  
And slice us lean and thin  
Of all of our mortal trappings,  
All of the things that gods  
Might accuse us of weakness,  
When in those moments of weakness,  
We find our strength;  
If they only knew that we  
Would then rise up with

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Our swords raised  
In the times when our  
Hearts are broken...

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*“Martyr”*

*1999 • Conte Crayon on Paper*



❧ DEAD POET ❧

I went walking tonight,  
In the rain,  
Beneath a half broken umbrella,  
A book of Shelly & Keats in hand,  
The one my mother gave me,  
From the 1800's for my 16th birthday;  
I took my shoes off and walked in the  
Grass of an elite condominium project,  
The kind over-manicured and  
So ethereally green to be unreal;  
The blades of grass felt good,  
Cold and wet and real between my toes;  
I wondered where I have been,  
Where I will go;  
I thought of the particles of life,  
Between this life and that,  
Flesh and inexistence,  
And all of the variable spaces in between;  
I wanted to understand why  
Greatness was taken,  
And so seldom returned,  
I wanted to touch the heavens,  
Beyond the storm clouds,

That loomed so close,  
Yet seemed to only weep silently,  
Their lightning and wrath,  
Swept away by time;  
I came home and wrote poetry,  
Drank wine,  
And thought  
Of the blades of grass,  
Of the cool drops of rain against my skin,  
Of the smell of old paper,  
And the sound of poetry,  
I thought of someone far away;  
I thought of all that needed  
To be done,  
That will be done,  
That can be done,  
And of the one  
Who told me it was possible,  
Without ever knowing who  
I am.

 BREAK IT DOWN 

I'm going to break it down,  
Break it apart,  
To the hollow sections,  
In between gusts of wind,  
And cigarettes on back porches;  
When sisters cry,  
There's a brilliance in the sorrow,  
And a majesty in the strength  
Of our capacity for love,  
Broken or not,  
The power in those that  
Have in their hearts to give  
That one last kiss;  
There were arms that were raised,  
And threats made,  
And betrayals that will never  
Be made right,  
For all the wrongs,  
But what is there to give  
At the end of the day,  
But tears and sighs and  
Good byes?

 LONGING 

I want to feel the paper beneath your hands,  
The weight of that pen,  
I want to breath your breath,  
The one that exhales inspiration  
Into the existence of another's  
Purpose.

I want to be the one that  
Legends are built upon.  
I want to be the last brick laid  
In a capital that will be  
Burned one day.

I want to be the dragon's breath  
Breathed upon the neck of  
The one who slays it.

I want to be the mirror.  
I want to be the reflection.

I want to be the one  
Standing beside you  
In that image.

But we're just portraits  
Of travesty ingrained in  
Grains of sand that pass slowly,  
One by one,

Through the hourglass of  
Indeterminate discrimination.  
Strong we will be,  
For we are survivors and  
In the end,  
The broken shards of  
Stardust that compose us  
Will serve to elevate  
That which is not us,  
But ghosts,  
Interwoven,  
Subjected,  
Sweetened,  
Loved,  
Broken,  
Harbored,  
Unidentified,  
Unreleased,  
Lonely...too long...  
To recompose that which was lost;  
Perhaps some sort of  
Subjective subservient desire  
To worship?  
But it's okay.  
I'm okay with this  
Worship, my dear,  
For we have been  
Longing too long...

 POLTERGEIST 

I resist the urge to get lost in the present's past,  
This predilection for self-torment,  
To wrap one's essence in the fiberglass of  
What one's poltergeist is throwing against  
One house or another,  
Until the paper peels from the walls,  
And glasses shatter on counter tops,  
Miles away;  
I rant and rave to crave the  
Strength I know lies beneath  
The surface,  
Polished so precisely to reflect  
The most minute instances  
Of human reflection,  
And all of those little indiscretions,  
Everyone likes to hide  
In the daylight.

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*“Cold”*

*1999 • Conte Crayon on Paper*



 PRECIPICE 

Standing at the edge,  
We looked down at  
An abyss unmanaged,  
By gods or titans,  
Or mortals claiming thus;  
We felt ourselves break,  
Bend and curve in  
Unnatural positions,  
A unified attempt to unify,  
To conform to something  
Wholly unholy and impure,  
For you,  
Whoever you really are.

Were the children of desolation,  
Of contempt for tradition,  
In search of tradition,  
In search of meaning,  
Yet lacking in resolve,  
Or manner or moral,  
But yet you searched,  
And still do until this day.

For that glimpse of humanity,  
You will never find  
Searching for immortality;  
I am not old.  
I am young,  
Yet referred to some as Elder.  
Titles are meaningless,  
Without respect.  
Titles are meaningless,  
Without the desire to acquire them,  
Which I have not,  
And never will.  
I am an artist.  
I am a poet.  
I am an author.  
I am a creature of inspiration,  
And observation,  
A historian of cultural imperfections,  
The kind I adore,  
But also give me ulcers,  
Cigarette burns of the heart and soul,  
Cured by heaven knows what now,  
Except love, and affection, and hope.

We stood together for a time,  
But a front is only as strong  
As its weakest link;  
I guess someone I once  
Thought important  
Said that and it

Destroyed me then...

We stood together,  
But in the end those who  
Could not bear to look upon  
The face of deceit fled the field.  
Not in cowardice,  
Not in insanity,  
But in grief,  
Pure, plain and simple.

Have you ever looked upon a shooting star?  
Or dared to stare directly into the sun?  
Just for a moment,  
To attempt see what Galileo saw?  
And fell so in love with that  
He forsake his own vision for  
The sake of his studies?  
Is the purity in which we  
Stepped over the line  
Into madness, somewhat equivalent?  
Was there a history made  
In those long torturous  
Twelve months?  
Or simply a prolific corpse  
Left on the sidewalk  
To be examined by tourists,  
And tossed aside?

Or did some of us learn otherwise?

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Was the death in that moment  
Not beautiful?  
Was the reincarnation in each of us  
Not what sated the cravings,  
Once all of the horrific rebirth  
Had passed?

There is no hope broken,  
We are the phoenix arisen,  
And the gods will shine  
As brightly as we allow them,  
As long as we are willing  
To work for that song  
We once heard,  
That sweet symphony  
Of harmony that attracted us,  
Moths to a lamp light,  
In the search for peace  
For that is what we deserve.

Stay true, my brothers and sisters.  
You are beautiful as the night,  
And glorious as the stars,  
And the holders of your fate,  
No matter who may say otherwise.  
You are love.  
You are the peace.  
Be the keepers of both always...

 QUARTZ 

Those angels in the dwindling twilight,  
Turn to strangers with  
The brutal caress of dawn,  
Leaving traces of residual contemplation,  
That heaven is merely a perception of  
Flesh upon flesh and not the merging  
Of minds and souls for those aspects  
Of the self are sacred as stone gathered  
By my hand at age five,  
Pulled from the earth with eager fingers,  
Quartz that might have well have been  
Gold turn by a fool's hand to that  
Which is worth nothing,  
As is this instance,  
For nothing is worth  
Its weight in gold;  
For all its weakness, why  
Would I place my heart within it?

❧ LOSS ❧

You tell me that I'm still angry,  
As if I have no choice.  
And I say, "Only a little."  
As if I must be demure.  
The curse of maturity  
And southern belle courtesy  
I certainly never learned  
From my parents,  
But is ingrained  
As much as the lines  
On my palms  
And around my eyes.

For once I'd love to be  
The one who loses their sanity,  
The shipwreck on the shore  
That villagers stand in fear  
And awe of,  
And turn their faces,  
Whispering amongst themselves  
As I come ashore,  
Soaked to the bone and shivering,  
With seaweed in my hair;

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But instead, they shout “Titanous flame!”  
And salute my strength,  
As if I had a choice.

I stand amongst these ruins,  
But they are mine.  
Every fallen stone,  
And splinter of the throne,  
From which I watched the epic  
Failings of my kindred undo  
The sleepless nights of my might,  
The restless knight to my right,  
The weeping woman to my left,  
And I bereft but silent, stoic,  
As the English rode upon us again.

I’ve seen wars,  
I’ve felt the pierce of a blade,  
I’ve lost so much more than today.  
Perhaps, that is why this ache  
Rings so hollow?

❧ RECOGNITION ❧

There are moments of time  
In which earth and atmosphere separate,  
Black muslin veils of consciousness  
Lifting beneath the exhale of metaphors  
Grown stale from history's malfeasance  
With fate as if it were akin with destiny,  
Sisters of different fathers,  
Blistering with the salt of blood in their pores,  
As heaven and earth divide I recognize  
The meaning of patience,  
That which the universe begged  
Upon bent knee for me to consider,  
As a willing pupil yet too blind  
With the admiration of the pallor  
Of former saints and their skewed composition,  
To check the lock and key lost to the Aegean sea,  
That which kept gods and monsters from  
Breaching the shores of reality's propriety,  
That had left a voice that sung of desire  
Behind in the midst of courts and legends,  
Yet to be conceived or dreamed,  
Hourglass sands of inhuman comprehension,  
Undiscovered until the elegant resonance

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Of ancient understanding separated the grains  
With the magnificent simplicity of touch,  
Expansion of the essence of existence  
In an instance of skin upon skin,  
Breath breathing in breath,  
Transposing memory and immediacy  
To create balance, harmony, understanding,  
An electric coil through the center of  
This existential dream I have wandered in,  
Until this instance of recognition,  
Of the “I” and “you” of present and past,  
Of which I long to know,  
As not another,  
Before...

❧ A SIMPLE PRAYER ❧

Simple prayers of the present,  
Bird songs and jackhammers,  
And rustling leaves,  
Spaces left by guitars never played,  
And swords never raised,  
And dried roses  
That leave a trail of leaves  
Across the carpet to the door;  
One day turns to memories,  
Not quite a year,  
But a lifetime,  
Added to lifetimes  
In which we did this dance before,  
Of spaces to be filled  
With tomorrows  
We claim without fortitude,  
But the solitude in the self;  
An echo that never fades,  
Kept alive with incense offerings,  
Like a Japanese funeral,  
And promises  
That grow cold  
In the spring sun.

The last of nine lives  
Can be lived,  
Even if alone.

❧ SOCIAL EXPERIMENT ❧

I'll break myself apart,  
Stir in the yokes of yesterday,  
And spread wide the canvas  
Of my life for your sideways,  
Short attention span alternative  
To family games mind set;  
I am nothing more than a game  
I play with myself,  
To myself,  
Beside myself,  
Before you,  
Solitary and solitaire with the masses;  
It is what the derelicts of,  
Archaic circumstance warned of  
In their monotheistic philosophies  
Of mankind,  
The centricity of eccentricity,  
And all that colors of this palette  
That can build from the fibers  
Of non-existence;  
Do you remember when I was me?  
Do you remember when there was "I"?  
Do you remember when life and art

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And this little screen,  
Weren't so intertwined that  
The Devil could relax and  
Vacation in the hollows of  
What's left of my soul?

Do you remember?

I do.

❧ THESE LAYERS OF ME ❧

These many layers of me,  
Translucent humming transparency  
Redefining the infinite existence  
And division of flesh, mind, and spirit  
From the impermanency of this world  
In which we toil,  
Backs breaking beneath moonlight,  
And the resonance of past ghosts  
Better left to the banshees  
Stalking the periphery of our minds,  
Yet, there in the dying light of unborn worlds,  
Your soul calls strong,  
Pulling forth that which I thought lost,  
A beautiful midnight-blue beetle,  
Boring contentedly past walls of steel,  
Fortifications constructed in the  
Times of deep and everlasting winter,  
With the promise a new moon,  
Delicate and soft and blessed,  
In eyes reopened from the sleep of death,  
And the quickening of a spirit,  
Born to love and searching,

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With want to fill this cup  
You offer with your heart and hands...

 NEW YEAR 

The end of the year is not a time of happiness.  
New beginnings and sloughing off of old habits,  
The habits of old;  
Weathered bits that might have been disguised  
Beneath the belled sleeves of random discourse;  
That which somehow might have  
Disjointedly guided us through  
To the age which we call the “present”;  
But the end of one year wears heavy,  
Like a curtain soaked in the dust moats  
Of the steps I’ve taken since conception,  
And the kerosene of conscious emotion,  
Ill placed and treacherous until  
They line the edge of the graves of those  
Which I remember now on this day  
Of the New Year—  
Black suits.  
Women weeping.  
Solemn parents trying to save a  
Solitary brave face for the kids  
That came out in droves for  
Their kid’s passing,  
A kin they didn’t realize existed,

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A clan they didn't understand,  
He or she clung to,  
As they cling  
To one another in a pew,  
Beside a grave,  
Or perhaps in that unfortunate clustering,  
Of virtual condolences which our  
Age has become so tragically accustomed to...  
How do you "like" someone's death?  
That's not how it was done—  
Nor how we shall pay tribute to the past in the present.  
Give me my salt and scorch my flesh with lye for  
I stand and testify as witness  
To those that passed before this night;  
I am a hollow vessel,  
But I am always the warrior,  
Standing vigil,  
Waiting for the boatman,  
And praying that those I love  
Have gained the honor they  
So desperately deserved  
In life...

❧ TRANSPORTATION ❧

In perpetual motion,  
We exist,  
Stardust and bacteria and tortured dreams,  
Born in chaos and tragedy and fear,  
As we hurtle through the vast unknowable,  
Every second simultaneously  
Past, present, and future,  
And when we find our mobility impeded,  
Our ability to thrust ourselves from point  
To point,  
Snatched from our craven claws,  
We become helpless hapless creatures,  
Mewling and sick bastard children  
Of doubt and frustration,  
As if we were bound in rope and  
Left on the tracks at dawn,  
So much of our ability to “live”  
Rests precariously upon the  
Necessity for mobility,  
And society does not hesitate to  
Remind us of such,  
Or of our worthlessness,  
Like a whore run out of good years.

❧ VAMPYRE PRAYER ❧

Could I be dissuaded to decide between  
That which is best forgotten,  
Shredded seams of screams that  
Bind us to that which is taught  
To covet by society gleaming in the  
Falsetto staccato sunlight  
Generated by the multitude of  
Envious souls that throng about  
The base of the substantial recreation  
Others have instinctually learned to  
Tune, like a fine violin, so subtle, sweet,  
Bending into the melodies of the storm  
We've unintentionally created  
That swirls about us with such ferocity,  
That a dream within a dream,  
At times is swept out to sea,  
To leave only that which is determined  
To be believed by those that  
Awaken to the knowing that  
It is only a dream;  
Could I be persuaded to choose  
Between that dream,  
And a more subtle illusion,

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That the fantastical can be made real,  
Through the focused desire of a generation,  
That everything we have coveted could  
Be realized through a storm brewing  
In the eyes of those of nocturnal familial  
Foundries where what was flesh was smelt  
To liquid gold and poured forth into the  
Mouths of unwitting mortal souls,  
To be reclaimed by the darkness  
In the corners and alcoves that I have  
Only known for my entire being;  
Is that where I will find the answers?  
I ask this in humble subservience to  
The universe upon bent knee,  
Knowing that so many of my  
Blood kin kneel the same,  
That we, in our consciousness,  
Have come to understand that life is  
Not life without that which is sacrificed;  
We are immortal within mortal,  
Life within Un-life,  
Death within that which crawls  
Forth upon ragged limbs to offer  
Up all that shall be rectified in the eyes  
Of Nature;  
There is beauty in the questioning of existence,  
There is tragedy in the silence that rings after,  
But we are all we are,  
Merely the belief in one another,  
Our desire for the other to exist enough

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To keep the gods content for another night;  
We are night,  
We are nature,  
We are beauty,  
We are prayer,  
We are all,  
We are everything,  
We are each other,  
We are nothing,  
We are that which is  
And shall always be;  
Love to all who walk in  
In the darkness,  
Forever,  
Blessed be...

❧ THE YOU AND I ❧

In the beginning  
It there was no separation  
Between the You and I,  
But only the absence of  
The ability to speak one  
Without the other,  
Between dusk and dawn,  
Tense and desperate,  
In the belief of the other,  
Exhales beneath dark bridges,  
Escapism and illusions,  
In back seats,  
And closets,  
Silent moments of reprieve  
Upon coffee house  
Porch swings,  
Singing at midnight,  
In November,  
Between sips of wine,  
And shared cigarettes,  
Until lust,  
Became love,  
Became need,

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Became fear,  
And the You and I,  
Became you,  
And I,  
Spoken without the other.

❧ LAST BREATH ❧

All breath slips away,  
In blue steel moonlight,  
In dire contemplation,  
In sacred singing limbs,  
That still cling to a  
Final shooting star,  
So far gone,  
Without your love  
To guide it.  
Buried in cotton ghosts,  
And velveteen slippers,  
Your blessings misplaced,  
And collecting dust,  
Falling silently with  
Shadowed regret,  
Upon the faint last whispers  
Of memories that mock  
The return of the sun.

 ICARUS 

Each inspires perfectly  
The other two,  
Reaching for something  
Unobtainable.  
A diaphanous thread of milk,  
Attached to the navel,  
Traveling upwards at the  
Speed of light,  
And sound,  
To no-man's land  
Of grapefruit trees  
And disease,  
Baubles and bubbles,  
Crystals and crumbs,  
Born into destiny and  
Brewed to perfection  
And burnt unrecognizable  
By the sun that cherished  
The tears it shed.

 INTERVIEW FOR DEATH ROW 

Shaky hands and stomachs  
Release the idea  
That grace does not  
Always bear an elegant  
Countenance.  
That's why,  
When they offered him  
A higher position  
In life,  
They didn't laugh.

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*“Vampire’s Kiss”*

*2015 • Conte Crayon on Paper*



❧ EIGHTY-ONE ❧

She dreams of days  
Of honeysuckle rain,  
Drunken bees dousing her  
In revelations  
Of what it means to age.  
The wind covets its secrets,  
Passing them along as half-truths  
For the nimble of mind  
To sift through.  
She accepts the challenge.

❧ LOST ❧

This pillar of ash is weary,  
A feigned strength dissolving  
Beneath the limp limbs  
Of static ghosts,  
Crumbling slowly, vanishing;  
Weary of these weakling souls.  
Stop the little talking,  
Like drunken bees  
On a sticky June eve,  
Maudlin and lost,  
In sanctified shadows  
Of sleepily weeping willows.  
Halt those small movements,  
Gently eroding the ash base.  
Softly molesting  
Unarmed thighs,  
Invisible delight,  
Curdled by bent time  
Feign the strength divine,  
As ash scatters.

❧ LOCAL SAINTS ❧

The light in here is too harsh,  
So much so that there are  
No shadows,  
Even the skull carved from  
Irish soda bread looks  
Smooth and swollen,  
And harmless.  
The neighborhood  
Patron Saint, Edith,  
Munches quietly on  
Her salad and  
Black coffee,  
For the world has nothing  
More to offer her,  
But to sit and watch  
The plush and fragile crowds  
Of brunchers.

 ODE TO A LOSER 

He so often naively  
Voices the blunt, unregistered opinion that  
Life, in general, is at fault for his own  
Weak misgivings.  
She would barter with him,  
But as he would have it,  
He yells rape at the toss  
Of one rusty coin;  
Martyr, victim,  
Martyr, victim,  
The grit beneath the sofa cushions  
The solemn grave for  
Our modern Jedi and his  
Miniscule earnings as  
Chief to Mock Belief.

❧ THE STRANGER ❧

His soul is like a ballerina  
On ice skates;  
Thin and willowy,  
With ankles like  
Bits of broken  
Vodka bottles,  
And a heart as sturdy as  
A papier-mâché snow globe,  
Bought carelessly in some  
Insignificant,  
Two-plane airport,  
In the middle of spring;  
He makes up for his foibles  
In small wicked strides and grins,  
With pride enough to cloak the moon,  
And eclipse the sun in mortal  
Benevolence and flirtatious resignation  
Of all sordid ownership to life.  
He always smelled of curry and  
Cedar sawdust....

❧ POETICS ❧

I'll use up this little book soon,  
With all of its resentful  
Little pages harboring the  
Loss of their pressed,  
Polished virgin sterility,  
Their dormant prospects of  
Vague repentance in times  
Of harrowing illumination,  
And mounts of gold foil humility,  
Like waves of staunch  
Arithmetic repression that  
Force the jet blood from  
This plastic appendage,  
This extension of the subconscious  
That forms such crude callousness  
Upon slender and nimble  
Creativity.

 LYE 

I burnt my clothes,  
Removed my skin,  
And scoured my soul with lye.  
Put on again the skin the sins,  
For love! It will not die.  
Serrate the past,  
To scar the hide,  
That covets mortal sin.  
Slip the lye in veins of pride,  
And watch the pain begin.

 JEANNIE 

There is nothing natural about her.  
Nothing of ease,  
Poise or grace,  
So ghostly and ambiguous,  
Mocking as if enslaved to a vertical rail,  
Her strides, long and meticulous,  
And determined.  
There is nothing feminine about her.  
No hint of rose to either cheek,  
No waves to the seas of  
Either latitude.  
She does her job with duty and care,  
Turning neither eye,  
Nor mind,  
Towards sexless countenance.

 OLD GHOSTS 

Standing in clusters,  
Beneath bent boughs,  
Upon ashen asphalt  
Littered with smoldering death.  
Crystallized breath burning  
Before pale complexions,  
Lined with crimson and kohl.  
Wraiths of savage desires,  
Street poets of nothingness,  
Visionaries of emptiness,  
Dyed and damaged,  
Shades of the shadows,  
That loom here,  
In this quickly disintegrating hall  
Of aimless youth.

☛ COFFEE TALK ☛

The chattering of old New York ponies  
Clatter high above the laments of the monks;  
Wasting moments between destinations  
And single, hot, short caps,  
Choking elegantly on strands of their own hair,  
They race towards the pulpit of desertion  
And fall,  
Like plumes of fireplace fumes,  
To the bar stool in Java Jive.  
Their old war stories befuddle me;  
How they've been there, and done that,  
And wasn't that day cold? and Wasn't he nice?  
Makes me question the validity of their banter.  
But the richness in the end of one night's  
Long fast makes me forget  
Their terminal adolescence,  
And my precocious jadedness,  
As I sink within my own silence,  
And despair at another morning lost,  
To a bar stool in Java Jive.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“The Stranger”*

2015 • *Conte Crayon on Paper*

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*



❧ TEMPEST ❧

Hold, and be still!  
Why can't you hold, and be still?  
For me, for a moment;  
It's too cold.  
My shadow wishes to dance across the silvery pavement,  
With tusks of ivory and banshee yells.  
Hold, and be still be not an option.  
The shivering won't stop long enough  
For the ice to melt, for me to  
Pull my hands from between blue jean thighs,  
Knuckles blue from too much twisted stale meaning,  
To catch a breath of indecency  
And grind it into pebbles on the asphalt.  
The street is warmer three blocks away from mine.  
The wind only nips occasionally,  
And only when provoked;  
Otherwise, the only disturbance is the  
Glinting of the sun off the smudged clear polish  
Of my right thumb nail.

 EULOGY 

Black cherry embers flutter to  
The dusty golden remains of another  
Fragrant dream of seasonal decay;  
They always said I'd burn the place down one day.  
7 am, ordinary day,  
A woman of unknown  
Age or identity,  
Was struck down  
While crossing  
The boulevard  
That hums consistently  
With prosperity and ambivalence,  
Outside the small shop  
Where I spend my days.  
I was not there that day,  
But her blood marks  
The asphalt,  
Like a painter's forgotten mistake,  
Beside the chalk  
And vacant stares  
Of the noncommittal patrons.  
They always said I'd burn the place down one day,  
With all my flicking and fluttering,

*Gabrielle Faust*

Beside a fire that burns colder than ice,  
Keeping hidden beneath the decay,  
The sorrow borrowed for another.

❧ GEN ❧

Sun-stained whispers,  
Redwood, cherry blooms, and milk.  
The way the essence of your  
Lipstick clings to the ivory  
Filter of your cigarette.  
And the Kool-Aid smile,  
The world will never forget.  
And the lock and key  
Upon safety pin pierced  
Pale flesh of navel,  
Beneath lovably coarse  
Linen and hemp gauze.  
The blood of gentle lambs,  
Woven through the waves of hair,  
Laughter of pure and simple thought;  
I cannot meet your eyes.  
The strange moth of yesterday  
Spins its cocoon, here,  
In my chest.

❧ SIMPLE MINDS ❧

If simple be the times,  
Complex befits the mind.  
To dream to drift the fluxing  
Ebony tides of night,  
To teach the self tucked  
In, turned in, upon, again.  
But trials become us.  
For complexity, to lust,  
Trust, only trust,  
As we crave the air  
Our mortal frames share,  
In these murky times,  
As placid lines  
And simple minds  
Become us.

MISSING YOU

From deep within dark arched crevices,  
And all the gossamer rose petals  
Swept to a dusty corner to be forgotten,  
Moans that ache of lonely  
Practice in the impatience before  
Better things,  
Wander into noonday shafts  
Of phosphorescent molasses,  
And gleeful monkey grass laziness;  
Bus stops lulled to sleep by  
The incessant milling of fire ants,  
Where she sits,  
With vacant images of home,  
Adrift in currents of peppered blue,  
While deep within the past  
We were dying.

 AUTUMN 

If I could but savor one scrap  
From the scanty store of this  
Frayed refuge,  
I would be content.  
Blistering gray torrents  
And aching fullness in the  
Spring, deny,  
And set adrift unnatural  
Precautions,  
Weary eyes peer  
Sheepishly from behind  
The honeycombs of brown wicker  
And frost bitten bougainvilleas;  
No crisp new knowledge  
For this forsaken corner of April;  
I return to work burdened.

 BREAKFAST SHIFT 

Ants mill across the pale pink tile,  
Between the square plains,  
Braving the Grout Forest,  
And Windex rain  
Descending from the giant  
In 1992 Nikes.  
Each and every morning,  
All the slain soldiers  
They must mourn,  
On their way to the cake case  
Before dawn.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Rediscovering Self”*

*2009 • Acrylic on Canvas*

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*



 YOUTH 

Backpacks bursting with half-truths and misconceptions,  
Counting the days backwards to youth,  
In the angelical silence of  
Deep breath sighs,  
Amidst twitching thumbs,  
And slender excited ankles,  
Lost amongst the average  
Major statistic that  
Leads us back to the sycamore tree,  
And to the branches that barely  
Contain the strength to  
Carry us  
Into tomorrow.

 BEFORE SLEEP 

I lay awake,  
Listening to the cottonwood pellets of rain,  
Fall,  
Outside,  
As rose white cinders of memory,  
Flutter down,  
Amidst the frantic dialogue,  
Of my imaginary friends,  
Of my sordid past;  
And I dream of poetry,  
In its purest form,  
Sleepily simple and still.  
Trapping me,  
Warning me,  
Before I fall,  
Lost somewhere between these  
Clean linen sheets and  
Reality.

 TRADE 

Mockery in naked forms  
Graces twisted flannel sheets,  
Blue as wild waters,  
And she wonders why she  
Has never awakened in  
The same arms that took her,  
As she bartered a little flesh  
For a few more silent moments.

 GRANDPA 

When I was twelve  
I spoke to his door,  
Asking it politely  
To come out for a  
Dinner of vegetarian  
Spaghetti.  
When there was no reply,  
Except the strange static  
Baseball broadcasts  
From Cuba,  
I drew a picture of that  
White pine door  
And labeled it  
“GRANDPA”.

MEMORIES

In a wild corner  
Dandelions sprout  
Daringly from the restless  
Cracks in dust darkened  
Molding,  
Amongst the weeds  
Planted there  
By doubts and indiscretions,  
One must learn to read,  
By candle light,  
Certain impromptu stylings  
Left there by a quick  
Gardener's wrath.

 NEON 

The neon makes her flesh  
Appear warm for a moment,  
Limbs tangled in electric blue waves,  
Pointing downwards,  
Forever reaching  
For Pluto's diamonds,  
Through these gleaming  
Purple floors,  
Somewhere between wood  
And plastic and lies,  
Romance died,  
With the realization  
That stained glass  
Could be broken,  
And rice paper pages  
Torn,  
By a child's questions.

❧ EPIPHANIES ❧

Such strange secrets  
Haunt me,  
Aloof epiphanies  
Sought in smoke rings,  
Deep brown sugar granules  
In chipped ceramic mugs,  
Seem seamlessly to cement  
A reality removed  
Of all ideals.  
Elusive and unbound,  
All that is desired  
Lain flat in boiling  
Steel above me,  
Quick fingers of an  
Iron gauntlet,  
Working to stir the  
Humming masses,  
So consumed with tomorrow  
That today is but  
A passing phase.

 CHANGE 

Shifting seasons unrelenting,  
Strike heavy beneath leather  
And steel, such to remind  
Of winter's constant presence  
Just beyond the forest's floor.  
Just beyond the reckless beauty  
Trapped within its hallowed  
Ground, seemingly too far  
To reach with fingers as tired  
As mine.  
Torn and bruised,  
But driven by something as  
Sure as winter's embrace,  
Unrelenting and shifting.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Hard Decisions”*

2002 • *Acrylic on Canvas*



❧ SHELL ❧

I've been looking back  
Over the brittle broken shells,  
Pressed between these pages,  
Yellowed like ancient vision,  
Tattered like a flag flown  
Unattended for too long.  
To me they seem too simply  
Defined by their lines,  
The fragments too perfectly  
Severed from their destiny,  
Of priceless beauty.  
To pick and press between  
Thumb and forefinger,  
Porcelain powdered shards,  
Summoning the blood  
So close to the surface, always,  
Crustacean calcium fingerprints  
Blending with dreaming DNA  
To fork forth a new road  
Littered with the gems of the sea  
Dark and deep.

 DESERT WAR 

Straight cut fine line dissection,  
Desertion tracked through  
Grit and sand lodged deep  
Within the confiscated pulls of  
Coffin doors,  
Rolling slowly in blind-eyed  
Solitude of final prayer,  
Behind the platitude of the masses.  
Spoken ego embitterment,  
Congealing quick on  
Tongues of tired saviors  
Soon to be ousted  
From their black-night term,  
Felling simple minds,  
One by one,  
To the ineptitude and reserve  
Of one man's inadequacies.

❧ WITHOUT WILL ❧

I am perceptibly beside myself,  
Without the will to disturb  
What is blatantly destructive  
With my emotionally skewed  
Removed rough dissections,  
Two days before my  
Flight home.

My soul imparts a secret to me,  
That these two wayward  
Worn paths will not  
Cross again,  
Leaving me hollow  
As a rotten tree,  
Without the will to stand  
Upright against the wind.

I want to digest it,  
To free it beneath  
The echo of footsteps  
In this coal miner's  
Stairwell,  
But there is not enough  
Daylight left  
To purify.

 BITTERNESS 

There is no poetry in emptiness,  
No motion in brevity,  
No passion in words, once forgotten;  
Be still my heart to think  
You do not remember  
The city as it burned,  
Before the edge of time,  
Reflected in our hollow  
Headlight eyes as you  
Took me to the ground  
And fed me poetry,  
Shook me senseless,  
As reality left your rhyme,  
Scraping pollen from my thighs  
To make bittersweet honey.  
My lines seem to fail me now,  
The part of simple saving grace;  
Releasing the wildfire into  
The ether as it shied away  
From my expectations of burning agony.  
Virtue awkward,  
Honesty, harrowing and fragile,  
Logic that bends backward upon

*Gabrielle Faust*

A moment stretching onward  
Into exhausted sighs,  
And strangled good-byes  
On a Sunday afternoon.  
Remembering you face to face,  
Black lamp moonlight  
Near the arcing freeway,  
Petrified mammoth north bound,  
Breaking parchment voices upon  
The scuttling whistling  
Of heaven leaving me.  
My silent last request before I die:  
To see the sun rise with eyes brimming,  
A focused anticipation  
Of marmalade renewal,  
In crisp academic air,  
Leaning against hoods  
Of rusted maroon metal;  
Oh, how it never comes,  
With so much sinful residue  
Still residing in this house,  
Working its way roundabout  
My veins, charring the silver,  
Hoarding the loot, making me move  
Backwards over this burning bridge.  
Not the first to feel the timbers moan  
And give way,  
So that another can take my place.  
You will not remember  
The city as it burned,

Silhouetted behind  
My naked form,  
Beckoning you to pillage it,  
Steal its gold foil wonderment,  
As you rose from where we lay,  
Side-stepping the sting of the bee,  
To take the honey you gathered,  
With deft deception,  
Into town,  
On market day,  
To sell for a dozen ducats less  
Than it was worth.

❧ COFFEE HOUSE SATURDAY ❧

The corner of his lips twitch  
In anticipation of the kiss  
That will never be.  
Bliss for having been born  
Only for this one fleeting moment,  
Intangible as the steam  
Rising from the chipped  
Ceramic mug before him,  
Bitter in its long history of wait  
As the black coffee inside;  
He is waiting only  
For them to leave,  
To remove their stench of languor  
And their awkward heavy gestures  
So that he may steal their overstuffed  
Brown velvet seats;  
His fingers dance  
Upon the scarred table beneath them,  
Imagining the texture,  
Of her auburn hair,  
As he hides behind  
Thin gold wire rims,  
Shaking silently in

The isolation of his  
Reservations.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Shy”*

*1999 • Conte Crayon on Paper*



❧ DIVISION OF TWO ❧

I am divided silently,  
Driven from the house  
Of irreparable discontent,  
On night wings of  
Uncertain slick obsidian deceit,  
To thyself and to they who  
Cannot comprehend the  
Molecular difference of  
Attracting atoms;  
Can the wings of night,  
Who brightly burning,  
Brought me here,  
Be certain that this dot,  
Upon the archaic map,  
Is my predetermined destiny?  
What blanched half-truth  
Will the future hold,  
As I seek gold between the  
River stones?  
Will it return to an impetus  
Of the soul or fold,  
Broken and miserable,

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

To the last reserve of hope?  
I am divided silently.

 SERMON ON A   
WEDNESDAY NIGHT

They say that smokes are the  
Hardest addiction to break;  
They obviously never met you.  
You hold your words to my chest  
Like a gun,  
Distractedly spinning your metaphors  
For suspense,  
Russian roulette master gambling  
With my soul.  
How does it feel now?  
This newly fornicated freedom  
You flaunt before me,  
Slouching in the black silk boxers  
You used to wear  
Just for me.  
Have you pried the nails from  
Your wrists?  
Are there scars?  
Have you auctioned off  
Your crown of thorns?  
Or are they an ornamental  
Breakfast nook addition,

Cozied up next to the sugar  
And cream?  
Or do they hang upon your front door,  
Just below the peephole,  
A sacrificial wreath above  
The welcome mat.  
Yes, please, take your time.  
Scratch yourself and light another one.  
Run your fingers across your  
Chest seductively as if to check,  
Yes, both nipples are still there;  
Tell me, just how I have yet  
To achieve this “honest existence”?  
Would you teach me isolation?  
Would you teach me vanity?  
Could I find redemption in manipulation  
While our essence still lingers on  
The flagstones beneath the archer’s nook?  
Our poly fiber battlegrounds  
Not three weeks cold;  
A purple heart for the burns  
On our elbows and knees,  
I let you bend me as you please,  
But now must break  
Into this sermon you are  
Giving me;  
You are a thirty-year-old boy.  
A contradiction of innocent sex;  
A bereavement of daddy-bought-me  
An-art-degree-and-now-I’m-fucked,

*Gabrielle Faust*

That yields no sympathy from me.  
I wouldn't trade one callous on my soul  
For all ten of your neatly manicured toenails.  
I like my scars, my rough edges.  
I am kindred to my fierce emotions.  
I am honesty.  
That cannot be taught, or bought or  
Derived,  
As you, no doubt,  
Will never discover.

 LOVE 

I begged to be witness  
To sunshine in spring,  
And it came without warning,  
Forfeiting my one chance  
At unforeseen glory,  
Leeching the milk and honey  
From my complexion,  
And leaving worn paths  
Of disgrace,  
Beneath my liquid brimmed eyes.  
It rose from behind  
To conquer the sleeping,  
Carving out a hollow niche  
To carry the echoes  
Of wailing to the other side;  
And now it steals the pillow  
From beneath my head,  
And holds back the dawn  
Beneath raspberry strands of hair  
For me to see the stars,  
Naught but pitch and white,  
Further emphasizing that

*Gabrielle Faust*

Sunshine in spring,  
Is but a distant dream.

 AEROSPACE 

Restless wandering,  
Wanting to return  
To aqua aquatic relaxation  
Beneath the brutality of the sun's reach,  
Make believing the future was uncharted  
And free for the making,  
Amongst tan lines and lazy dusky smiles,  
Empty amber glass reflecting  
Like shards of tiger's eye within  
Titanium gray sunglasses  
Nearly lost as they were  
Waved before nonchalant conversations  
About human self-infliction,  
As the sun made to set behind the shore  
Of fleeting drunken aerospace romance,  
Set in motion as we moved from boat  
To shore, to car, to town.

❧ WITHOUT WORDS ❧

I would like to write a new poem tonight.  
I would like to say it simply and without drama,  
But all language seems blasphemous,  
And disoriented,  
And dull,  
Words lodged deep within the tissues of my  
Cerebral cortex,  
Within the churning wasteland of my gut,  
If only it were a hollowness I felt,  
And not this aching for release,  
For repentance,  
For bleaching,  
Paper parchment thirst for everything,  
I won't allow,  
Disavow my courage,  
Fading fast against my own aging limbs,  
Tripping over self inflicted solitude,  
Mortuary of moral upright mannerism,  
Southern sophisticated slight of hand,  
Had myself fooled for so long,  
Conviction to believe the wrong  
Was always reaching for me.  
Just like your web of words

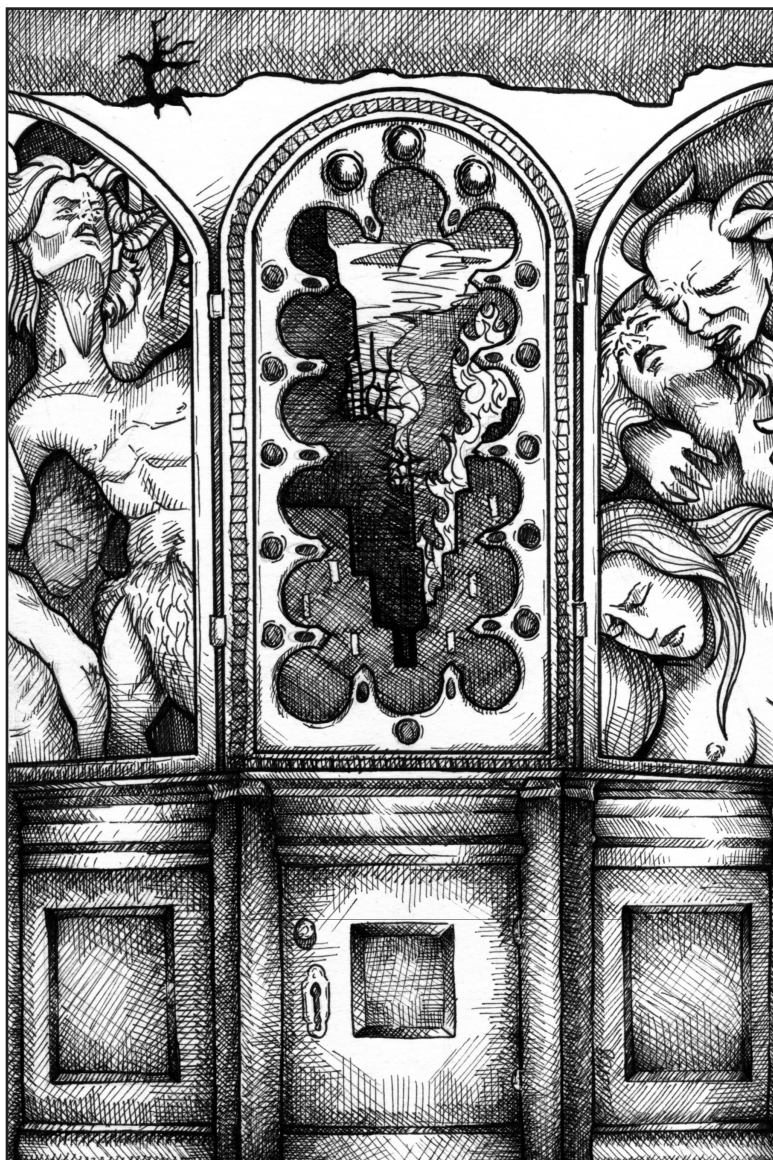
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Is now strangling me slowly,  
As I stretch to smile against your tragedy,  
Which is not so like tragedy,  
But another tangled bed in which to lie.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Prayers”*

*2010 • Ink on Bristol Board*



 BLUE DECEMBER 

Filtered slate and powder blue,  
Chill gasps of winter stealing through  
The sliding glass door frame,  
Around the carpet of wine stains,  
My unconscious memorizing  
Of every fiber of the dull brown couch,  
Shrill sirens of children without abandon,  
Somewhere far below,  
Oblivious to the awkward marvel  
Of waking next to a softly breathing dream,  
A chaotic truth rarely seen,  
The isolated dogma of ritual belief  
In a paradox too pure for words,  
What I would give to remove myself from  
My soul,  
And leave it here for you to hold,  
Rather this humbled shell take it home,  
On this blue December morn.

❧ ILLUSIONS ❧

Deep pit of growling darkness,  
Breaching police lines overgrown  
With broken promises,  
Memories of frozen cobbled streets  
And wicked warm sheets,  
Changing the face of a withered rose,  
Wake up to kiss goodbye  
Another year of surmise,  
Summing up rotten politics,  
And half digested southern butter biscuits,  
Over this deep and growling pit.  
Heart snowed in far to the north,  
Curiosity to the south.  
We spent the last ten years  
In rough pencil sketches,  
Architectural renderings of colonization,  
Blueprints to teach us how  
To tunnel under this sad circumstance  
We call existence;  
Breaking nature's riveted matriarchy,  
Bestowing interlocking hypocrisy to  
Strengthen the spidering fallacies  
We invest like dot com pre-opt stocks,

*Gabrielle Faust*

This cheaply bought trophy mold  
That tolerates the insufficient expansion  
Of the modern mind set,  
With a grimace and a moan.

 FIGHTS 

Would I be better off,  
With my lips sealed shut,  
With my innards kept tight,  
And mute with the barbs of  
A steel cocoon?  
Would I be better off then?  
Each time we break open  
The door to the dead,  
A little more egg temper truth  
Leaks out onto the canvas,  
Bleeding images better left alone  
To rot in Vatican basements  
In Rome,  
Stigmatas of carnal revelation,  
Doused in virgin olive oil  
For the local Dom to dip,  
Sunday evening, raining, warm.  
Hollow echoes on Monday,  
Dig six feet beneath my skin,  
Pledging my breath to Purgatory,  
To bless the hours of silence  
I cannot withstand.

❧ CASA DE LUZ ❧

Breaking free of the  
Rattle and hum of antifreeze,  
Through a twenty year old  
AC unit;  
Breaking free of the hiss of  
Cicadas over the chant of  
New wave yoga lamenting,  
Clip clopping of twenty dollar  
Flip-flops onto decoratively  
Cobbled walkways,  
And waiting, waiting for my  
Company of one, I sit,  
Beads of sweat slipping down  
My calves, over my ankles,  
Silken cool,  
Burning where the tiger-striped ones  
Recently dined;  
Breaking free of the wrought iron  
Bench amongst the bamboo,  
The natural epicurean cooking school,  
Sits dormant for now,  
Behind the gently waving

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

Cobweb,  
Eye to door frame.

 DRAGON 

One should not hold the past  
With too much reverent austerity,  
Lest it beat us down with  
The wind in its wings;  
Acknowledge the precious experience,  
But do not seek it out,  
Like some Delphinium Oracle,  
It sleeps now, in cool black shadows,  
Smoke drifting lazily from its nostrils.

 SEA VOYAGE 

I braved so many harsh waters for you,  
Looking out for long sojourn,  
Across frozen tundra of isolation,  
In weak expectancy of sunlight  
For the next six months,  
To know that darkness  
Lingered heavily on our heels.  
But you broke the pattern  
In the waves with  
Your glimmering harpoon,  
Tearing the bow from my  
Ship as the unknown below  
Wrested you away  
To a cool dark grave.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Sleep in Fetal Position”*

*2015 • Conte Crayon on Paper*



❧ LIAR ❧

Karmic entity overrides possession,  
Dharmic reunion of yin and yang,  
Melts the asphalt base,  
Of the pretty one's moral conception.  
Midnight answering machine retorts.  
One AM apologies to strangers estranged;  
Drama evolved from seven digits  
Scrawled on the back of a ripped menu,  
A week ago, tomorrow night.  
Mysterious elation trampled by deceit,  
And yet, a cosmic connection,  
Sparked in sympathy by way of  
Female intuition;  
Two women,  
Who can't remember one another's names,  
Nor desire to but for the moment.

 DRAGON HEIR 

Break it open,  
And let it spill out upon the sand.  
Break it open,  
And the songs will rise up  
From the waters to greet you.  
Later they will rake the skin  
From your palms,  
Leaving you pressed  
Against the shingle wall,  
Crying out to the heir  
Of a kingdom,  
That does not love you,  
Cannot warm you,  
And strikes you down at will.

 MYSTERIES 

I breathe through open windows,  
The car exhaust of Neptune's furnace,  
Praying for rain and altitudes  
High enough to return to vapors  
What has since past and turned to dust.  
I weep for fortune in filthy rags,  
Bent over rippling tides of lava,  
Waving to the broken crew of  
Ship mates searching for their anchor.  
What has become of her dreams?  
Her heart and soul, running amuck  
Between heaven and hell like lost  
Children of Neverland, louder than  
Evasive disciples of the Tao.

❧ ELECTION DAY ❧

I want to know what happened to my dreams,  
All of those unanswered things you led me to believe,  
The fraternized conceptions of 101,  
The societal trappings come undone,  
Parasites and drunkards,  
Beyond redemption or help,  
Who sold to the black market my still warm pelt,  
And all that seems to dream,  
Would you like me to repeat the obscenity of things?  
Do diamonds or dogs capture what streetlights beam?  
Beneath tragedy and bait,  
Of promises too late,  
Laid on the table for barter and trade,  
In the last hour of compromised integrity  
As, far away, tomorrow  
Begins to ring.

❧ LONGING ❧

So many sleepless nights  
I wander  
In and out of restless waves,  
Watching time watching me,  
As I seek the warmth of  
The summer sun  
Who sleeps amongst the brave,  
This aching here,  
Between my breasts,  
Never soothed until  
The summer sun returns,  
To cast prisms off these waves.

REFLECTIONS

I have my predilections of freedom,  
From the secret lives of our fathers,  
Breaking away from the cliffs  
Where they kept Liberty chained,  
With serpentine fear,  
Coiled from deep within the ice,  
Below her flowing gown of blue and gray,  
Beneath her bare calloused feet,  
Where we saw our stoicism crumble.

 POLLENATION 

Red snow dusting history  
Beneath cracked technology,  
Red snow from history  
Dusting shattered hypocrisy,  
And the men who hurriedly  
Try to move passageway  
Further into the realm of  
Ancients.  
We see the riptide,  
Wickedly slow motion,  
Past sleepily still  
Coastal towns,  
Past the Klamath of old,  
The Requa of new,  
With messages of lessons  
Our elders learned,  
In their long sojourn on earth.

 MY HANDS 

My hands speak of me,  
Not well, but loudly,  
The long haul of eternity,  
And mortality,  
Etched perseverance,  
Tempered rains,  
Morality, pain, pride,  
That waiver between  
Skin and sinew,  
Breaching malcontent  
Of misplaced years.  
I am bound,  
Indiscriminately or otherwise,  
To never fully show my hand  
In matters of the heart,  
Keep a poker face for subjects  
Of eternal vows  
So coveted by modern society,  
Such that I never thought myself  
To find attractive,  
But as the years weather,  
So changes direction  
The lines of my future,

*Gabrielle Faust*

Bending the river back to my heart,  
Winding morals of my  
Matrimonial lineage,  
Grown dusty from disuse.

 PIGEON 

She called them sky rats,  
The soot gray metro doves  
Who's huddled weight  
Bowed the telephone wires  
Like dirty slush  
On a broken awning;  
They cooed mournfully,  
And she shivered,  
Wanting to escape  
Their guilt ridden down,  
That trembled with  
The memory  
Of a graceful ancestry  
Now broken and  
Quickly fading  
Beneath crushing rubber,  
And stark cement archways  
That care for nothing;  
The pearlescent sun  
Shimmered off their feathers  
Like a gently rippling  
Oil pool.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Icarus”*

2002 • *Mixed Media on Canvas*



❧ THE JOB ❧

Inklings of soul  
Still simmer  
Just below  
The cotton nylon  
Polyester weave  
Of indentured servitude,  
Perhaps once forgotten,  
Like the sound of  
Steam off a subway train,  
Unless dually noted,  
Lest it be written off  
With last year's taxes.  
It simmers and churns,  
Roiling like a stomach  
Deprived of nourishment,  
Filled with too many  
Frayed ends,  
Threatening to leave  
If not tended to at once;  
Shhhhh...she says,  
Shhhhhhhhhhh...

❧ EVOLUTION ❧

When I was a child  
I could not fathom  
The depth necessary  
To be profound,  
So I reached out  
For the Perfectionist.  
As the years wane,  
I grow impatient  
With the excuses  
Of the Perfectionist,  
And reach my hands  
Back into the dark  
In search of a plow  
To break new ground,  
Above that which  
Is profound.

 SOCIALITE 

Cut through them like sugarcane,  
New blade bloodied  
With the saccharin syrup,  
Fawning of the fallen,  
Soldiers signing on for another  
Tour of duty,  
With Prada-packed draft cards,  
Signed in silver and gold,  
Delivered to her sandals,  
As she walks through the rows  
Of rigid sugarcane,  
Which she will take,  
If the coffee is not served  
On time.

❧ THE NEST ❧

Isolation,  
Madness,  
No consolation  
From wing beating  
Fast in time,  
With quick breath,  
Lost in the revisions  
Of wealth and exhaustion  
Beyond comparison;  
This nest  
Rots from the bottom,  
Unpredictable decay  
Of necessity  
And desperate need,  
Weakening,  
Straw by tallow,  
Strewn, this domain.

❧ FAKE RELIGION ❧

Indelible tranquility,  
Behind plate glass,  
Bolstering brown soy caffeine,  
Break slowly,  
Black asphalt time clocks,  
Rock-a-by seven times,  
Past the Eureka car wash,  
At mid-May,  
Three days till payday,  
Waiting for that  
Indelible tranquility,  
To market itself  
To the rag-top  
Urban dispensers  
Of commonwealth neutrality,  
Turntable DVD make believe  
To break sweetbreads,  
Between coffee break news,  
Short attention span views,  
Cruelty for the disbelievers  
Of the indelible tranquility.

 JERSEY MORNING 

Crisscrossing lines  
Through single pained glass  
Five stories above  
The oblivious pavement,  
Rotten whitewash  
Crackles and peels,  
Marring the early morning  
Metro tranquility,  
With its covetous  
Hard-lined beauty.  
The sunlight reaches  
To find the forgotten purity  
Amongst the reddish brick  
And dingy cement,  
But finds only steel  
And soiled souls,  
Too mired in the cracks  
Of societal progress  
To look up and see  
The sky.

❧ THE GREAT IDEA ❧

I carry my passions,  
Neatly bound in blue velvet,  
Stacked and clipped,  
Within pockets of  
Clear green plastic,  
Weather resistant,  
Non-biodegradable,  
Commercial and unredeemable,  
To isolate the thoughts inside  
From contamination,  
Alienation,  
Extortion via the soulless  
Demigods of transcendental,  
Proliferation,  
Desecration of sweet unique  
Polyurethane realism,  
Inscribed on coasters,  
Of dead rainforest denizens,  
Recycled only once  
To serve hesitant masochistic  
Masses with no respect  
For my passions,  
Stacked and clipped,

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

So neatly in the  
Fifty-dollar bag,  
By this bar stool.

 THE MANUSCRIPT 

A tomb of cracked mortar,  
Seeping earth and dreams  
Of restless knighting gale souls,  
Weeping for the sun,  
With cold coy ambition,  
And sweetly sighing  
Grecian pillars of antiquity.  
It moves, a humbled  
Man in rags,  
Wrapped in the tatters  
Of yesterday's misconstrued  
Wealth of secrets.  
It sings, a choir  
Of suicidal misfit  
Bounty hunters rotting  
In the knowledge that  
Home no longer exists.  
It is...

 RUSH HOUR 

Trapped within a  
Reckless sunlight transgression,  
Rapid-fire recession,  
Breaking down elusive molecules  
Of caffeine behind  
Pale brown cardboard,  
Insulating sleeves composed  
Of 60% post consumer recycled  
Fibers to transport  
These daily delusions  
Of makeshift happiness,  
That stifle creativity,  
Damning up the words,  
That ache to escape  
The confines of the story lines,  
While they compete with  
Questions about the succubus  
And her journey  
Through a war torn nation,  
Gathering souls for her aria,  
Her secondary redemption,  
A resolution craved by all,  
On this urban, Tuesday morn.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Archives”*

2004 • *Mixed Media on Paper*

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*



 FARMLAND 

This dry cracked earth  
Holds no purchase  
For dreams,  
Saline serendipity  
Seeks out the crevices,  
Struggling to nurture  
The promises buried,  
Far below beneath  
Three years of  
Decaying sedimentary  
Sweetness,  
That turns slowly to dust,  
And is borne away with  
The hot breath of loss.

❧ SUNSET ❧

Break winds upon fragile backs,  
Salt sea separation,  
Drowning in riptides,  
Dissolving in now resolutions;  
She faces West.  
Blessings barely breathing,  
Barely perceptible inklings,  
Of the fastly fading soul  
She once clung to,  
To fill the conch shells  
Now lying like stars  
Amidst the black boulders  
By the sea.

❧ LAKEWAY ❧

Nearly empty gas tanks  
And overpriced bitter coffee,  
Bridge the gap between  
Moments of impertinence,  
And impatience;  
Waiting for morning commutes,  
Burning lake side rifts,  
In hill country limestone,  
Mesquite thorns piercing  
The slate blue bitterness,  
Of this empty dawn sky,  
And half-filled,  
The future lingers,  
Waiting for my gypsy legacy  
To find a new host.

❧ THE TEACHER ❧

You break me of half-hearted  
Symposiums on Freudian misunderstandings,  
And I am tired,  
Like a grave digger  
Just before dawn,  
Like an old philosopher,  
Who knows he was wrong;  
There is no more wealth for holding  
Of paradigms and prophecies,  
Too small for the grave digger  
To pocket,  
Or the philosopher  
To dream;  
You broke me free of being half-hearted,  
Then left me to deal with my failings.

❧ THE FIRST STAGES ❧  
OF MAKING PEACE

I break bread with visions,  
With illusions of what  
I once believed disproportionate  
To the fragile mold I sculpted  
In my youth;  
I take Communion beside  
The angels and the demons alike,  
Whose benevolence and wrath  
I misinterpreted as malice  
Without aim.  
Such holiness resides,  
In the vacant halls of  
My former shell,  
Where I tucked my soul,  
With hollow beliefs of  
Righteousness and scorn,  
Forsaking the horizon,  
As another's destiny.

 THE POTTER 

Boil down the essence  
To the raw mutiny  
Lying buried and forgotten,  
Near the foundation,  
Of what was once  
Sacrosanct and pure,  
All that is left,  
Take within the  
Lines of your palms,  
Grinding to talc,  
White as bone,  
Beneath your sweat,  
Soaking the vessel  
That makes your  
Existence less existential,  
And redeems your soul  
From the tainted weakness,  
Of everyday living.

❧ PRAYERS AT THE END ❧  
OF THE DAY

I do not pray for sympathy  
With the sweetness of my youth;  
Patience and silence,  
In the wake of the passing  
Freight trains of experience,  
Reckon with my unrecognized  
Weakness in matters of  
Social graces and love;  
There is nothing left at  
The end of the day,  
But reflection in silence,  
And the vibrating hum  
Of certain present circumstance,  
Patience in silence,  
Patience with silence,  
That even a prayer may disturb.

❧ ADMITTING FAILURE ❧

There is an impossibly loud  
Crushing sound that begins,  
Ricocheting around your skull,  
Iron filing shrapnel full of  
Bitterness and regret and anger,  
That ignites with a gunpowder blue  
Brilliance dazzling you into  
Mute silence for a split second,  
A moment long enough,  
Profound enough  
For you to hear the atoms of your  
Dreams splitting,  
Incinerating beneath heat,  
The line of fire leading back  
To your heart;  
You hear your breath heavy  
And whistling in your throat,  
Your lungs too tired to draw  
Another pitiful pocket of air,  
And then you are blinded,  
Blinded by the demolition of  
The road you were on,  
The path you've been plowing

Down for so many years  
Because the Muses told you to trust,  
Because the Fates are cruel,  
And because everyone insists  
That one should follow their  
Passions against all odds  
Because it is the only aspect of  
Life that makes it truly worth living...  
And they have not lied,  
But lacked the ability of foresight,  
And premonition  
Of courtly advisement and mentoring,  
Of precaution,  
And prevention  
Of life's many poisoned barbs  
That twist from the vines  
Obscuring the path  
You were once treading  
Not so lightly upon...

❧ ARIA ❧

She will draw from him  
His dreams,  
Darkest desires bred of need,  
Winding about his soul,  
Serpentine and slick,  
Fragrant with the musk  
Of metaphysical reckonings  
Profound in their ability  
To cull,  
To satiate,  
To quiet,  
To kill the desire for  
Any future beyond the  
Culmination of her promises;  
She will flay her skins  
And twist the smoldering  
Remnants to hide her leathery  
Wings beneath the  
Singing angel guise  
He so needs to see  
In that singularly defining  
Bliss of his little death,  
The moment in which

Reality quakes  
And she digs deep,  
Slicing through his  
Calloused shell  
To harvest the mortal nectar  
Needed to make her  
Aria sing.

 AN INDELICATE MATTER 

It is an indelicate matter,  
This trivial existence,  
Bridging between deep  
Hollow rumblings  
Between thin sheets  
Of plaster, termite-ridden wood,  
And the maniacal desire  
To proceed with previously  
Made plans once thought  
To be the pathway to  
Escapism and betterment,  
But, perhaps, these words  
Are nothing more than  
More modern art existentialist  
Excuses for a cursed DNA structure  
And butterfly effect karmic destiny,  
Coffee and vodka,  
Exhaustion and elation,  
Or nothing, absolutely nothing,  
At all.

 ALONE 

I haven't experienced a  
True moment of silence  
In over three months.  
And even in those fleeting  
Hours when the ancient  
Units around me were  
Vacant with the gray  
Face of holiday travel,  
The weight of winter still  
Wound its nimble way  
Through the dead  
Branches outside.  
But then, at least,  
I felt alone.  
There is no alone  
In this place of  
Constantly creaking  
Floorboards,  
Muffled music,  
Heavy footsteps,  
Angry exclamations  
And oblivious traffic.  
There are no secrets,

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

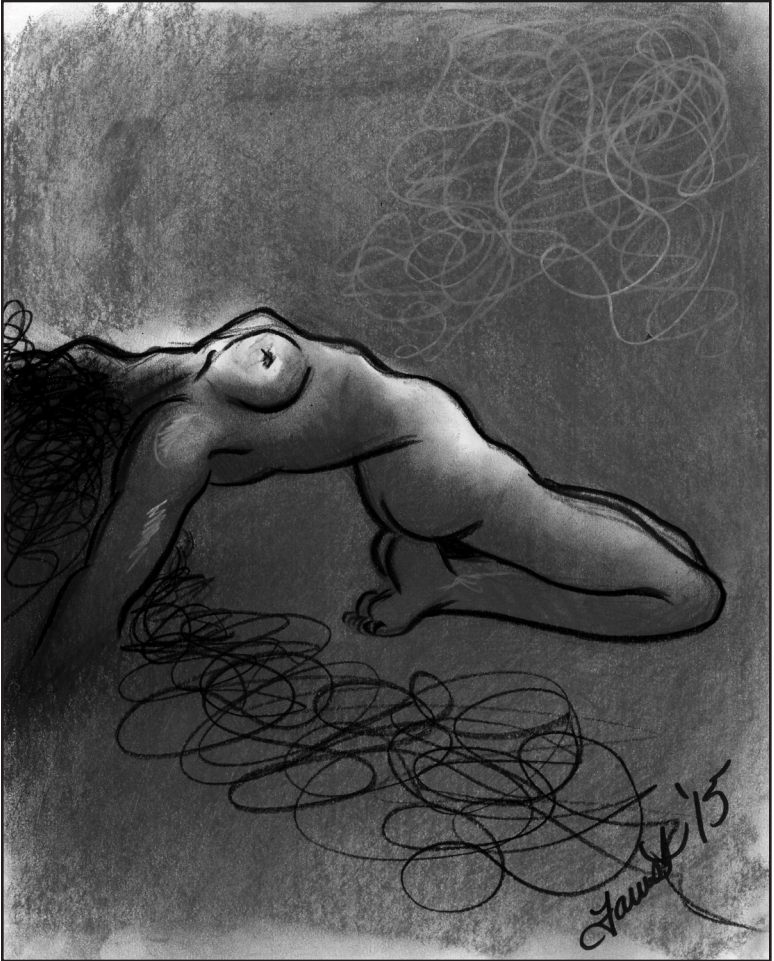
No private cherished moments,  
Every weakness on display  
As life is dictated by  
Another's lack of decency  
Or respect.  
I forget what alone  
Sounds like.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“To Bend”*

*2015 • Conte Crayon on Paper*

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*



 CONVERT 

It still stings  
Where you used to  
Reach into my center,  
Through my navel,  
And twist my innards  
About your calloused  
Index finger as if  
It were kite twine,  
Or a lock of my hair,  
Preaching to me softly  
Of the salvation  
I might receive if only,  
If ONLY,  
I would see it your way,  
The only way!  
And so close you always  
Were to salvation,  
To redemption and incarnation,  
Like a madman hailing  
A cab in the rain,  
Ranting into the sideways  
Downpour until your voice  
Was lost beneath the skidding

Rubber of the working class  
You always swore  
Just couldn't be saved  
Because of their preconditioned  
Exposition and disposition to  
Exploit and be exploited,  
But you couldn't convert me,  
Could you?  
And so I left your little church.  
Here we are three years later,  
And you hail me now,  
In the rain with promises  
Of a new salvation,  
One so much sweeter than the  
Illusion you now admit to  
Coveting before.  
It's so damned amazing,  
So cool,  
They don't teach you this  
Shit in school,  
It'll change your LIFE,  
If you'd just give it a try,  
Try opening your mind,  
For once,  
Cause I still...care...about you...  
Are your church pews  
So empty  
Of eager young converts  
Willing to hand over  
Their souls in a Dixie cup?

*Gabrielle Faust*

I told you.

I will never be saved.

 CONTRACTOR 

Mercenaries of modern  
Economic hardships  
Tempered with resilience and  
Coated with the dust  
And grime and sweat  
Of a lifetime of toiling  
In the trenches beside  
Their brethren of  
Misshapen fortune;  
Gypsy car salesmen  
Whose souls were  
Sold eons ago to  
Make the payment  
On a future foreclosure;  
Hard-lined smiles  
And shadowed eyes  
Full of bitterness,  
And eel skin happiness,  
Searching the streets  
For shelter from  
The swinging  
Scythe of their last doomed  
Employment debacle.

*Gabrielle Faust*

They complete 40 hours,  
Collect their pay  
And look to the sky.  
Today it will rain.

❧ COLD AND QUESTIONING ❧

Through the dark haze  
Of heat and humidity,  
Searing strobes of  
Fire and ice,  
Slicing through,  
The heavy darkness,  
The deafening din  
Of the chorus of  
A dozen metallic demons  
Crying out for  
Unobtainable redemption  
And shredding the stifling  
Remaining hours of the night,  
A connection is made,  
Swift and deceiving as  
The river's black undertow,  
All-encompassing and seductive,  
Freezing time  
With the notion that a moment  
May be lost forever  
Or remembered for all eternity;  
But one thing is for certain,  
That the ramifications

Of desire coupled with  
The unknown details  
Of another's existence  
Often equates to nothing  
But long hours of  
Cold and questioning  
Internal debates about  
The shortness of breath,  
And the validity of trust,  
In one's instinct to  
Seize a moment,  
To pluck it from the air  
As it quivers,  
Full of alcohol and uncertainty,  
Yet a certainty that it is  
Meant to be,  
That such magnetic connection  
Is rare and fleeting  
As extraterrestrial confirmation,  
As didactic synaptic misalignment  
That miraculously evolves  
Into the purest form of  
Truth unbeknownst to  
Humanity,  
That the "I" and "you" of  
Simple conversation has been  
Deconstructed and devolved  
Into fingerprint hieroglyphics  
To be misinterpreted by  
Civilizations eons from now,

The maturation of primal  
Instantaneous realization  
That, perhaps, quite possibly,  
We are not alone,  
But simply unfound,  
And lingering just beyond  
The reality of another;  
That we ourselves have yet  
To be fully realized,  
And the interaction with  
Another soul could  
Be the finite epitome of  
Bliss and completion,  
If it were not for the lies  
And deceit that come  
Naturally to our species,  
If only there was but  
Another way to exit  
The play except  
“Stage left” or “Stage right”?  
If only there were a way  
To say I am not who  
You think I am,  
But an actor in the guise  
Of an angel fallen,  
Condemned for all eternity  
To earth to linger  
Beside the bar  
And pretend  
To be your One.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Bow”*

*1999 • Conte Crayon on Paper*



 CIGARETTE BURN 

On the back of my left arm  
There's a scar,  
Up high, just below the shoulder,  
From a seventeen-year-old  
Love-of-my-life's cigarette,  
Or, at least, that's what I've  
Always told people.  
I made up the story over a decade ago,  
When I was still so young in  
The pain that forced a pillow  
Over my face every night  
While trying to fall asleep,  
And it falls from my lips,  
Now that it has been spoken  
Too many times to count,  
Like rings on an old bar top,  
Sunk deep and round and permanent.  
I made up the story because  
No one took notice of any of the other  
Cuts and bruises he inflicted,  
Or the way my face was lined  
Like a hard-ridden woman  
At only nineteen, or twenty, or twenty-one...

Agony he gifted me like the call  
Of black crows against the twilight.  
No one ever noticed, or believed,  
As if I were Jane pointing out the window  
At Peter Pan,  
Or more like Captain Hook,  
But with that one tiny scar,  
Half an inch in diameter and bright pink,  
They all suddenly stopped,  
And listened...  
And believed...  
They began to invest in me the small  
Donation of sympathy they reserved  
For the wayward homeless on  
The street corners during rush hour traffic,  
That they tucked into envelopes once a month,  
Or dropped into collection plates,  
Or into the bottom of their gin and tonics  
To watch fizz and die,  
They stopped the dismissal of the inconceivable,  
That a Devil could exist and that they were  
Indeed Mortal and could be maimed,  
84  
Their eyes wide and apologetic,  
They turned silently,  
For me,  
For their inattention,  
For his neglected misuse of nature's hierarchy,  
And I felt no regret or remorse  
For my fallacy,

*Gabrielle Faust*

For it was only in that silence  
That I could scavenge the leaves needed  
To grind between my teeth at night  
And begin living once again...  
So where does that leave me now?  
I have come to the confessional  
Twelve years later,  
And now the scar is barely noticeable,  
No more distinguishable than  
One of the many brown moles  
The strike loudly of my heritage,  
Of my worship of the Sun;  
My skin longs to heal,  
To slough away the past,  
As I know I long to do within my soul,  
So why do I cling so?  
Why does this parting from a childhood lie,  
Feel as if I am being pried from my father's arms  
Screaming in an airport lobby?  
Unaffected onlookers staring in numb incomprehension  
At my hysterics...  
So little of my past,  
Remains that I have not confronted,  
Should I not keep one or two of the scars?  
What would hold me together when I am all healed?  
Surely skin and bone and ambition are not nearly enough?  
Surely the love of this man beside me now,  
Snoring softly in the bed ten feet away,  
Is not enough and I will crumble,

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

I will fall,  
I will fail...

❧ CHOOSE ME ❧

Silk is shredding  
Somewhere behind her eyes,  
Wide and liquid in the neon light,  
A severing of certain unspoken  
Civility, human decency instinctual  
To a prodigy of the Enlightenment  
Centuries past its prime,  
Eons in its making,  
And obliterated in an instance of  
Reptilian greed flickering,  
This is mine! It hisses,  
His blood is my blood.  
His blood will be my blood.  
But this she does not hear,  
The clink of ice shifting  
In a glass,  
Sweat dripping,  
Slipping down her leg,  
And the oblivious, ambivalent crowd  
Flows in before her through the shadows,  
Swallowing up  
What was rightfully hers,  
In another life.

❧ CANVAS ❧

The whiteness haunts me,  
Staring back at me,  
Icy and hollow and bereft,  
Filled with a mourning  
I cannot pinpoint or define,  
But leaves me breathless,  
And forcing my heart  
To beat one more time.  
I cannot remember why  
I am here,  
Or where I came from.  
The past is a blur  
Of irreconcilable differences  
That have sifted to the bottom  
Of an old glass jar.  
The future is the bristles  
Of a brush left  
To rot within the murk,  
Stale and stiff and stinking  
Of chemicals,  
And putrid, gray disillusionment.  
I have nothing to  
Give at this moment,

Nothing to place before this  
Alter of poetic self-effacing  
Nothingness,  
This plain white canvas  
That is nothing and  
Will continue to be nothing,  
Except a reflection  
Of everything that is  
Possible,  
Or impossible,  
Based solely on the  
Conviction of the artist,  
Which is me,  
And my own failure  
Is dragging me down  
By the ankles,  
Through the murk,  
Through the chemicals,  
And into an abysmal  
State of apathy  
That boasts  
To have  
No cure.

 FATHER 

I take the birthday card  
I bought last year,  
And place it quietly  
Back in the box,  
Along with my memories.  
You will be seventy-five  
This year.  
I will be thirty-one.  
Is it my pride that stays the  
Pen from sealing  
My signature “With Love”?  
And my hand from placing the  
Superman stamp,  
I know you would find as  
Intriguing as the card itself,  
Where postage is due?  
Or is it simply the admittance  
Of failure?  
The bitter recognition  
Of a battle  
To reclaim an empire  
That never existed,  
The realization that the

Beatnik, tie-dyed American  
Grandeur I lacquered  
Your image with  
Was nothing more  
Than an urban myth  
Muddled with the  
Black and white fiction  
Of three decades,  
And a thousand miles,  
Of separation.  
All I know  
Is that you are  
Now an old man.  
And you have  
Turned into  
Your father.  
And I am  
Accepting the fact  
That there are  
Simply not  
Hours enough in  
This lifetime  
For birthday cards  
That may not  
Even be read.

 GRIEVING 

I cannot support the weight  
Of your eternal mourning  
For much longer.  
My feet are sinking into  
The soft and supple  
Earth beneath what I once  
Believed to be the salt  
Of my hard labor,  
But now has begun to  
Dissolve in the deluge  
Of your grief which  
Ebbs and flows without  
Rhyme or reason,  
From season into season,  
Until even the fiddler has  
Closed his case  
And given up on his  
Begging tonight.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Inner Demon”*

*2015 • Conte Crayon on Paper*

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*



 FORGOTTEN BLISS 

Her light is slipping away from her,  
The golden aura that once beckoned  
To the world a unique identifiable  
Signal of uncompromising independence,  
A brilliant, sweet nectar attracting the hordes,  
As she swayed in time to the pulse  
Of the mesmerizing nightingale whisper,  
Sung by the taboo promise  
Of the unrequited desire;  
But now it fades,  
Growing lackluster and dim before the  
Impending onslaught of the possible,  
The probable and the unforeseen.  
She has forgotten how to dream.

 FINDING FAUST No. 1 

In the fine print of his negotiations  
With Mephistopheles,  
Below the smudged thumbprint of blood,  
And scrawled quill and ink signature,  
So small and fine as to be invisible  
To the mortal eye,  
And printed by the  
Drowning souls of scribes,  
Who will never be able to write  
Their ways out of Hell,  
Were the clauses, which stated  
That if Johann Faust were unable to  
Pay, in full upon expiration,  
His debts would be therefore be passed  
On, down through his lineage,  
Until his creditors were fully  
Satisfied in their return,  
In no unspecified terms.

❧ FINDING FAUST No. 2 ❧

Is the fine print of  
Your negotiations  
With Mephistopheles'  
Errand boys still binding?  
Does my blood  
Still carry the residual  
Chemical burn,  
The sulfur and arsenic  
Of your dreams,  
Swirling, slithering down,  
Seeping between the  
Cracks within the parched  
Soil of your grave  
To the ledge where  
The fiddler plays,  
Jug of wine and  
Parchment prenup  
At his cloven feet,  
In wait of my own  
Sacred insurrection?  
I dream now at times  
Of your hand,  
Moving from the ink well

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

To the page,  
And spilling forth  
Arcane knowledge,  
Liquid symbols  
Meant for the  
Skinning of reality,  
The subjugation of mortality,  
Transcendent darkness  
Reduced to ridiculous madness.

❧ EIGHTEEN ❧

She is beginning to see the world  
With kaleidoscope eyes,  
Redefining what it means  
To be human,  
As she steps off the pier  
Built from prefabricated  
Notions of intellect, civility  
And prosperity and  
Into the broiling ocean  
Of adulthood,  
The bottomless abyss  
Where we all eventually  
Find ourselves stranded,  
Castaways drifting,  
Hoping for rescue,  
Praying for death and life,  
Staring at the heavens above,  
As our lungs fill  
With salt water,  
And sharks circle slowly,  
Waiting to drag us down  
To Davey Jones' Locker,

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

Where recalcitrant reminiscence  
Wastes away.

❧ CROSSROADS ❧

At the crossroads  
She bends and digs  
A small hole  
With a bent and  
Rusted metal trowel  
She bought at the  
Hardware store  
On her way  
Out of town.  
She places the  
Box of wood  
And glue,  
And flaking  
Yellowed paper,  
That holds the  
Sparse material  
Representations of  
Her soul,  
Into the hole  
And covers it  
With dirt.  
She prays that  
Enough of her

Soul still remains  
For a devil to desire,  
For after all,  
She had already  
Sold most of it  
To lesser beings  
Just to make  
Ends meet  
And keep her  
Earthbound dreams  
From turning to dust.  
Would her summonings  
Be ignored?  
Would her prayers  
Be denied?  
She waited  
In the darkness  
At the crossroads  
For the end  
Of her world.

❧ MAYBE ❧

Maybe I'll learn  
To sing again,  
The songs I used  
To serenade my beautiful  
Broken angels with,  
When the universe  
Was still raw and  
Joyfully painful,  
Driving us at times  
To an Aztec sacrifice  
On canvas,  
On paper,  
On a curb,  
In a bed;  
And somewhere beneath  
The constant vibration  
Of the meaningless social  
Hermitage that surrounds me,  
Through the walls of decaying history,  
The downbeat, minor strum of poverty,  
Cracked plaster, creaking wood,  
And fractured foundations,  
The wraith of memory strains;

Before the “old money” came,  
Before the renovators and architects  
Drew upon our spirits  
Autocad suggestive premonitions  
Of where we should  
Relocate to,  
Eventually,  
There lay the beast of innovation,  
Of freedom,  
Of possibility;  
Those were the songs that leveled  
The chaos and brought  
The clashing Titans to  
Hold their swords,  
For but a moment,  
And listen,  
Just listen,  
To the soft  
Exhale  
Of dreams escaping...

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Goddess”*

*2015 • Conte Crayon on Paper*



❧ LIFE: ROUGH DRAFT ❧

“There’s a typo on page twenty-three.”

She says with a smug smile.

“What? Where?”

He replies, mortified.

“Second paragraph.

Third sentence.”

She gloats,

Victorious in her

Demolition of his

Moment, over the

Paper rim of

Her coffee cup.

“Can’t believe you

didn’t catch that.”

He doesn’t reply.

❧ LIFE: THIRD DRAFT ❧

“After much consideration  
we have decided this  
manuscript is in need  
of a massive overhaul.”  
Their lowered voices  
Are muffled below the  
Clink of cheap ceramic  
And dull screech of  
Import wood upon  
Lacquered red tile.  
“Your metaphors are  
painful, your similes  
bleeding profusely,  
leaving the work anemic  
and unpalatable.”  
He stares down  
At his half-consumed  
Croissant,  
Feeling weak and pale.  
He suddenly relates to his  
Work in a way  
He never knew possible.

❧ A PRAYER TO LEONARD COHEN ❧

I pray to you,  
Tonight,  
Leonard Cohen,  
To deliver me  
From this hellish  
State of perpetual  
Nihilistic nullification  
Of my soul,  
This immediate  
Internal vilification  
Of my preconceived  
Notions of happiness,  
The hydrogenated dreams  
We were fed  
As products of  
The post-Vietnam  
Baby-boom epidemic  
That overpopulated this  
Country and caused  
The future generations  
To release their grasp  
On reality in a  
Desperate attempt

To hold onto a  
Future we were never  
Supposed to embrace,  
A future derived of  
Cotton candy 1950's  
Sea foam green  
Caddy ideals,  
The kind sold in the Sunday  
Ad section and on  
The morning news;  
I open your books of poetry  
And weep at the brutal  
Beauty of your truth,  
Outlining the subtle flaws  
In every human gesture,  
In every human fact,  
And yet somehow  
Redefining what  
Faith is,  
What truth is,  
What love,  
And beauty,  
And honesty,  
And sex,  
And violence,  
And humanity  
Is,  
Once and for all,  
In the purest,  
Most undeniable,

And inarguable  
Terms;  
I open your book  
Of poetry,  
And pray to  
You,  
The Poet God,  
In hopes  
Of finding  
An acceptable  
Level of solace  
To survive this  
Meandering  
Excuse for  
Existence.

Amen.

❧ ICE STORM ❧

The breath of souls hangs  
Trapped in shimmering gray icicles,  
From branches barren  
With the dormancy of death,  
A cold so bone-deep that  
It breaks the will of the masses,  
Driving them further into their hovels,  
To cower with ashen pallor  
Beside flickering blue flames,  
Confronted with their own mortality  
And fragility, so easily shattered,  
Like severed power lines draped,  
Serpentine and sparking, across  
The deserted black asphalt;  
I hear their heavy shuffling movements  
Around me through walls,  
Not equipped for Nature's wrath,  
Their vitality stolen by a slick silver scythe,  
And buried beneath an inch of ice,  
To break the ground once again,  
Green and purposeful,  
When the cycle has completed

*Gabrielle Faust*

And the Reaper trudges back to his cave,  
Satisfied with his week's heavy harvest.

 HUNGER 

I am hungry.  
But where truly  
Does this hunger  
Stem from?  
From a craving for  
Caloric consumption,  
Or from a desire for  
A sustenance far more  
Delectable and divine  
Than these poor  
Mortal hands  
Can acquire?  
I scrape together the  
Sad misshapen excuse  
Of a life and coat it  
With layer upon layer  
Of lacquer and paint,  
Adorn it  
With found treasures,  
Salvaged from sewer grates,  
And school reunions.  
Stickers from bus stops,  
Buttons from extinct bands,

Chains and emblems of protection,  
Bloodied bandages,  
Emptied smoke packs,  
Bottle caps and the blues,  
And package it neatly  
For mass consumption,  
Under the guise of professionalism,  
And sanity,  
In hopes of garnering  
Enough pennies to  
Make it through  
Another month.  
But my soul is starving  
In some unexplainable way  
That an artist's diet  
Of black beans and rice  
Simply cannot sustain.

 HOLDING THE FUTURE 

You have begun to  
Betray me.  
Once long and willowy  
In your youth,  
You carelessly cultivated  
An image for of  
Otherworldly elfin  
Immortality,  
One I took great pride  
In presenting,  
Extended and inviting,  
To all the world,  
A gesture of feminine strength,  
A delicate dexterity of  
Digits to define artistic  
Visions wrought of paper  
And pen, ink and paint;  
But now your attention  
Wanes for detail,  
Your preoccupation with  
The lingering effects of my  
Youthful celebrations,  
My near-death modern dance

Preludes to survival,  
Whittling away the contours,  
With nervous belittlement,  
To become skeletal and  
Translucent, vampiric,  
With the exception to the  
Lines you've sketched,  
To remind me of my  
Eventual, inevitable  
Mortality.

 PEITY 

She is enslaved  
To a crippling piety,  
That claws at her amidst  
A hungry and looming world of  
Soot and stone and steel,  
And quick quiet lives,  
Shared beneath carefully  
Constructed guises and good byes;  
It makes her tremble  
Like a humming bird,  
Till I fear her heart might burst,  
But all the while she  
Holds steadfast to her ruse,  
That she will be rewarded  
For her narrow devotion,  
Her abstractly defined hatred,  
Spoken in such cheerful octaves  
Like a mockingbird's morning banter,  
Over the clink of cheap ceramic  
Dinner plates laden with decadent  
And lovely cuisine,  
Too haute for her restricted pallet;  
So rarely am I confronted with

*Gabrielle Faust*

Such a harsh paradox  
That I sit in stunned silence,  
Contemplating the remainders  
Of my own haute morsels,  
Feeling my soul cringe,  
Feeling my mind stagger back  
In confusion like an actor  
In an old silent film that has been shot;  
The moment hovers between us,  
The dinner plates clinking about us,  
Interspersed with oblivious tangents  
Of strangers conversations.

 MONDAY 

Monday means the death of daydreaming,  
The obliteration of all of my good intentions,  
That I leave behind sleeping in the  
Warm indentions in my futon with my cat;  
I straddle the line they've drawn in the sand,  
Squinting defiantly into the sun,  
My shadow nonexistent in the subtle moments  
When the world stands still,  
To lie down would be to drown  
In the rapture of exhaustion  
That tethers us to preconditioned need  
And desire for a plasticized martyrdom,  
Enforced by the spiritless, the soulless,  
And the lame.

❧ NEW MUSE ❧

A fool,  
I overstep my bounds,  
Tripping senselessly through  
The ill-placed land mines of  
Social preconception and  
Misdirected anthropological  
Attempts to allocate the proper  
Balance of conversation and sex,  
You leave me tongue-tied  
And unintentionally speaking  
The thoughts I swore I would  
Keep for the confessional  
I never intend on attending,  
But mean well in afterthought,  
If only I were a religious person.  
If only you could leave me speechless!  
Perhaps then I would not be  
The sinner I am?  
Perhaps then I would not be  
Awake and pacing,  
Like a madman in his cell?  
Searching for the words you  
Laid within my soul with

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

Your touch,  
Through the thin silk of my clothes;  
Your smile,  
Rum drenched dragonfly wings  
Disturbing the air  
Between us.

 PRESCRIPTION 

My doctor says I should embrace my insomnia.  
Not to tranquilize it,  
Lull it to peace with habitual narcotics,  
Lie to it and beat it over the head  
As it bends down to pick up the  
Bit of shiny silver stuff that has distracted it  
From what its original intentions were.  
But how?  
How should I embrace my insomnia?  
Like an old lover?  
The kind that stripped you of your dignity  
On the back steps of a coffee house,  
While muted mixed vinyl scratches  
Restlessly against the borders of  
Hinterland regrets dark as the espresso  
That sets your teeth on edge,  
Poisons your veins,  
Turpentine malcontent to stretch,  
Stretch upwards to the stars,  
Still looking backwards –  
Should I grab hold of the restlessness?  
Bitch-slap it and leave it whimpering,  
Knowing it has lost its respect,

My respect for its reckless disregard  
Of gravity, of time, of the center,  
Which is now spiraling down  
The drain with the dirty bath water –  
There is no way to be gentle  
With it for subtly is lost on its  
Dull jaded intellect,  
And yet I should not put it  
Out of its misery,  
I should not force its hand  
In Machiavellian compromise,  
I should acknowledge it, indulge it,  
Tune it out,  
Until it graduates and moves  
Out of the house  
To be someone else's problem?

❧ MONKEYS ❧

T-Bird used to slur me  
The words, “The monkeys  
are screeching again,”  
As she’d tap the side of  
Her skull and wink  
From her slouched forward  
Position on the  
Cracked white plastic  
Of her second-hand lawn chair,  
“They’re swingin’ mighty  
wild tonight,” she’d laugh,  
The whites of her eyes revealed  
Between rims of smudged  
Ninety-five cent chocolate,  
“But this’ll make ‘em quiet.”  
Nibbled nails rapping the side  
Of the only expensive thing  
Left from her Dallas divorce...

❧ SIMPLY ❧

My grandfather was described  
by my father  
as a man of few spoken words.  
I can attest that  
I never heard  
a single syllable uttered,  
the sole time I met him.  
As a child I would send  
him my poetry,  
in neatly printed pencil  
on new white notebook  
paper,  
and he, in turn,  
would respond  
with a few lines of  
sage critique,  
typed on the back  
of the cheap glossy cover  
of a typing paper pad,  
along with a grumbling statement  
about the weather,  
or a jar of beans  
I had given to him three

holiday seasons before.  
Each time he would  
tell me to “say it simply”;  
Each time he would  
end the letter,  
“Wisg you well.”  
It has been four years  
now since the silent giant,  
the son of preacher,  
the husband of a card-carrying  
Communist, poet and historian,  
passed away.  
I believe I am finally  
beginning to understand  
what he meant by  
“say it simply”,  
but I do not believe it  
is an attribute, a skill,  
we achieve consciously.  
More it is the inability  
to find words as we age  
that force us to speak  
like philosophers,  
like drunkards,  
like invalids.  
Those long strands of  
eloquently crafted epics  
that rolled off the tongue  
so sensually,  
but in the end,

meant little to nothing,  
are nearly impossible  
to obtain  
as we age.

The words are  
no longer there.

Only a silence,  
a dullness,  
a longing.

It is the silence that makes  
us regret,  
mourn,  
scrutinize,  
forget,

And finally  
turn back to the page  
we are writing to ourselves  
in the moment  
that subconsciously defines us.

It is in the silence we find the truth.

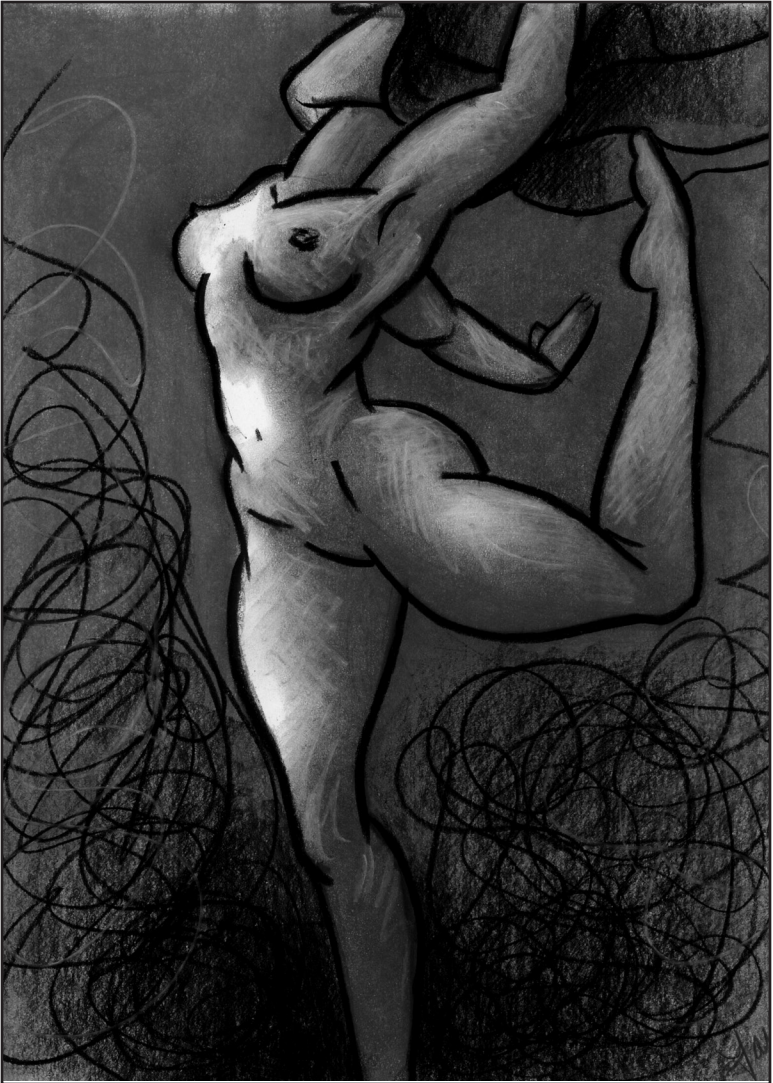
It is in simplicity we find peace.

Wisg you well,  
my dear poets,  
Wisg you well.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Dancing Woman No. 2”*

*2015 • Conte Crayon on Paper*



❧ TIME FOX ❧

Congealing,  
Syrupy apathy  
Drowning my cerebral  
Cortex and sliding  
Down my spine like  
An eel;  
The kind people used  
To make boots out of,  
But are now on the  
Endangered species list,  
The list currently unacknowledged  
By Congress,  
Or the general public,  
But I digress.  
My waning, wasted  
Attention span is narcoleptic  
Beneath sharp fluorescence;  
My soul sighing heavily,  
Trapped within my chest,  
Within the carbon indentation,  
Cookie-cutter, pea-green box,  
Too antiquated in its  
Egotistical antic dotes,

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Within its pseudo social  
Cleverness and peeling hip exterior,  
Left over from the late 20th century,  
To entertain the ideals,  
Or the suffocated, aspiring intellects,  
Of the Creative Class.  
Is it time to go home?

❧ THE FLY ❧

Where do you come from  
My dark and winged friend?  
Birthed from the rotting flesh  
Of organic entities  
Whose spirits have long since  
Vacated their worthless shells,  
Fleeing the earthly constraints  
Of time and slipping through  
The rents in the bone,  
And blood and sinew  
You crave and now,  
Search frantically for,  
From wall to wall,  
With the incessant buzzing  
Of your tiny translucent wings,  
Desperate for something foul  
To bury your progeny within,  
Knowing your own time of decay  
Looms close within  
The shadow of this paperback book.

❧ THE DREAM ❧

I used to dream;  
I was encased within a perfect sphere of synthetic crystal  
Where I clung to immortality with fragile pale fingers,  
Huddled within a mass of existential dreams,  
And fingerprints of living heat,  
I would maintain the right to burn bright as day or fade away,  
Whatever time allowed;  
So did fade this burning seeming dream  
Of unsatisfied needs,  
Forever unending through the darkness,  
A void in which nothing and everything did coexist,  
With tawdry arms of the palest spun blue sugar  
That danced so slowly amongst dying worlds  
And new beginnings,  
Tumbling in and out of harmony and dissonance,  
Fluttering on the edge of continuums and conundrums  
Of logical manifestoes of independence,  
A sparking dying ember of life;  
And me, in my perfect shell, naked and humble,  
Spinning through the darkness that is only concept,  
Darkness whose folds were wet and forbidden,  
Whose whispers ricocheted from limb to limb,  
Until their inscriptions crumbled from the walls of Time,  
It was here I dreamt and dreamed and lost myself, forever.

*Gabrielle Faust*

I used to dream of houses;  
Where all the rooms had been transformed into planetariums,  
Iridescent bed sheets  
And walls speckled with those gaudy plastic stars  
For those who are afraid to go out at night,  
Tiny beacons for these fragile times,  
And the frail personae that inhabit their glossy pages,  
Private sanctuaries bathed in distant blue light,  
Mirrored floors, or was it water,  
Reflecting the monotony of our darkest desires,  
Reflection upon reflection upon reflection,  
Of little green stars glaring back at me,  
Birthing a universe for the self to ponder,  
A universe for me to wander in,  
With walls of sheet rock and chipped wood  
And ancient cast-iron wood stoves long since grown cold  
from neglect,  
And in these strange rooms were dark earthen strangers  
Who stood reading from small paperbacks,  
Words that were invisible to me,  
I would stand before them,  
Or perhaps to the side, and ask them, "Why?...Why all the  
change?"  
They would answer me with silence,  
Their finely tanned skin  
Mere inches from my pale parchment lips.  
And I used to dream of perfection;  
Sleek and streamlined,  
Tailored to the perilously  
Close shave of a near death experience,

Realization that life is sweeter simply  
For the sake of living it,  
An almost impossible realization  
For a dying breed of romantics,  
Entrenched within the stench of progress,  
To breathe the air upon waking in  
The moonlight of a summer's eve,  
To drink the ghostly detail of existence  
With every sensitive pore upon one's body,  
To sift through pains and agony and jealousy  
To discover the gem beneath the tarnish,  
Almost impossible amidst these ancient ruins,  
Yet, somehow we manage,  
Even within this never-ending cycle  
Of perpetual grieving and resolve there is joy,  
With all of our fifty-cent miracles  
And telemarketed dreams of financial independence,  
Our coin-washed hours  
Of expensive couch therapy and pharmaceuticals  
To help us endure more shit than necessary,  
We maintain a grin of faith and an acceptance of all things,  
We thrive. We accept. Number. Humble. Perfection.  
But my perfection lies sweeter still.  
My dreams once lay in ramshackle houses,  
Within the open countryside;  
Tall glasses of jasmine tea perspiring,  
Ice clinking like rustic wind chimes  
As they are raised to contented lips,  
Lips so small and sweet as I long to kiss;  
Small white pigs and big yellow dogs,

*Gabrielle Faust*

And fine white lace on ancient wooden tables  
Somewhere where the sun is never strong;  
Moss strewn remnants of glory,  
The fading raiment of battlements  
Peopled with proud pagan wraiths,  
And upon gray-blue beaches  
Strewn with abandoned shells of speckled white,  
Arms embrace you  
Beneath a face of liquid fire and enchanting green sunsets,  
Forever loving, forever listening,  
Forever welcoming you home;  
But what is home when you can no longer return to it?  
A space to inhabit?  
A roof high above our heads?  
Mottled walls and cracked foundations and the decorations,  
So lovingly hand picked and stored,  
That shields us from the elements and ourselves,  
A wooden box of faded memories  
To which we've lost the key?  
A womb of growing pains,  
The seduction of safety,  
Somewhere to lay down your weapons  
And gently reveal your weaknesses,  
If this is home, then it is perfection to me,  
A perfection unobtainable.  
A perfection that lingers here within my soul like a dream,  
Ethereal and sultry and dark.  
Dreams rest within us all,  
Dormant seedlings that steal our souls as we sleep,  
They mock us in the light of day,

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Molesting the spirit of our attention for a moment long  
enough to hurt,  
They are nourishment for the soul,  
The armor to keep our spirit from a timely demise,  
And in return for the precious guise they offer  
Us we endure the dreams of others,  
We endure the intolerable screeching of the times,  
The laments of plasticized martyrdom,  
The philosophies of the greedy;  
We endure for the love of our dreams,  
We are addicted eternally to the sweet caresses  
Of a romantic daily death,  
The little deaths that tuck us in at night,  
And soothe our souls with gentle kisses and reassurances;  
We are all poppy junkies in the end,  
That is, until the dreams stop.  
...And one day you begin to fade away...  
Yes. I suppose I used to dream.

 SOMETIMES STRANGER 

in a room  
we sit  
back to back  
unaware  
of each other  
silent  
staring into  
cups of  
coffee  
grown  
cold

❧ SIXTEEN & HALF-NAKED ❧

I am lying on the cheap discount mattress  
My mother bought me for my 13th birthday,  
No box springs,  
Just a mattress on the floor,  
Next to the open window,  
Second floor,  
3a.m.,  
103 degree  
Texas night,  
Half naked,  
Curtains all taken down because they  
Block the breeze  
And what the rest of the neighborhood  
Really thinks of me,  
American Spirit between my fingers,  
Ash falling into the blue glass ashtray  
I told my mother I use for spare change;  
It's too late for music,  
Too dark to read,  
So I scrawl illegible poems into a  
Black hard-backed journal  
On my windowsill above my head,  
While the wind investigates my existence

On its way out West,  
Tawdrily unfolding,  
Perfect in its conceit  
That in moments like these  
We are closer to the gods  
Than any calloused knee,  
Or upturned palm can attest,  
We are free entirely  
From preconceptions of perfection,  
And left to linger,  
Suspended, half naked,  
Between the moments of disillusion  
And precursory mandates of evolution;  
We are youth, in its essence,  
Raw and pale as the moon  
Smoke twisting up into the  
Full moon of the aging street lamp...

❧ SINFUL ❧

Despite the peeling paint  
That now adorns the walls,  
Lesser women might  
Shrink from living  
In the houses we once  
Called home;  
Shrieking, they would run  
From the sounds of wailing  
Seeping up from  
The unfinished basements,  
Or the moans from the  
Rafters of the abandoned attics,  
Their beams sighing heavily now  
With piles of negatives  
Of the pale flesh  
We bartered and sold,  
As we threatened the world  
To come take what  
We firmly believed to be  
Unique and shocking,  
So sinister and sinful,  
So perfectly immortal,  
Forever in our borrowed

Black stockings  
And heels.

❧ REALIZATION ❧

There comes a point  
In everyone's life  
When they realize  
Suddenly  
That they have become  
The oldest person  
In the room.  
And half of  
The people  
Were born  
A whole decade  
After you.  
References are  
Lost on them,  
And they have  
Yet to experience  
Age spots,  
Crow's feet  
Or slowing metabolism.  
10p.m. is still "early"  
And "Dude!" is still  
A respectable greeting  
And the only comfort

*Gabrielle Faust*

One can take  
Is in knowing  
That one day  
They too  
Will become  
The oldest person in the room.

 WINTER MORNINGS 

On cold winter mornings,  
An hour before the  
School bell rang for  
First period,  
Her mother would gently  
Wake her with whispered  
Encouragements to rise  
And ready herself for the day.  
In a haze she would pull herself  
From her warm bed covers and stumble  
Blindly to the bathroom  
Where her mother had laid  
Out her clothes for the day  
Next to the wall heater  
So they would not  
Chill her delicate nerves.  
As a child,  
I would awake to the sound  
Of wind howling against the plastic  
Sheeting stapled over my bedroom  
Window to keep out the cold,  
And the desperate sorrow  
Of my mother cussing

My father's memory  
As she hauled wood from  
The frozen pile outside  
To feed the salvaged  
Cast iron claw-foot wood stove  
Used to heat the old farmhouse  
Where we lived.  
5a.m. came early to our frozen limbs  
As we huddled around black metal,  
In what served as our dining room,  
Wrapped in old moth-eaten  
Mexican blankets,  
Praying for enough heat to  
Dress ourselves by.  
Perhaps this explains why  
When faced with the smallest  
Of life's obstacles now  
She crumbles like  
Dust from a butterfly's wing,  
Whereas I usually shiver and shrug,  
Knowing just how much worse  
It can always be.

✎ WRITER'S BLOCK ✎

At times it feels as if  
The words are stuck  
Within my chest,  
The hollow place  
Just below my collarbone,  
Clinging to the lining  
Of my lungs,  
The inside of my esophagus  
Like phlegm;  
I want to cough hard enough  
To break them free,  
Bringing them up  
And out of my soul,  
So I can breathe,  
Free from the suffocating  
Pressure of stifled inspiration;  
I cough hard enough  
To break ribs and  
Bruise muscles,  
But stubbornly  
They remain,  
Deeply embedded  
With sharp green thorns,

Conversing secretly  
Among one another  
And snickering at  
My woefully mortal  
Attempts at forcing  
What I know  
I could say  
If only they would  
Allow me  
Adequate language.

 WORD 

I read an article today  
About a poet  
Who became famous  
For writing  
One-word poems.  
He was revered  
For his ability  
To make  
A single word  
Profound.  
A  
Single  
God damned  
Word.  
On a page  
Much like this one,  
But heavier  
With interest  
And open-mindedness  
With the search  
For expanded consciousness  
In a time  
Before the world

Became so disgustingly  
Jaded  
And predictable,  
When the world  
Truly could  
Be brought to  
A standstill  
By the  
Power  
Of a  
Single  
Word.

❧ VALUABLES ❧

I take the mirrors down,  
One...  
By...  
One...  
They are not worth saving.  
They are merely material  
Reminders of a life  
That didn't work,  
Didn't fit perfectly in  
The round hole  
With all of their harsh caustic  
Corners of synthetic reflection,  
The multitude of miserable  
Idealistic realities that were  
Not my realities, I realize now.  
They never were, I suppose.  
No, my life has been boiled down  
By the trials and tribulations of  
Modern existence,  
The labyrinth that consumes the  
Beautiful white rats that run its  
Maze of white walls,  
And what I am left with are words,

*Gabrielle Faust*

Words and a broken Royal typewriter  
Sitting on the floor,  
Wine and memories,  
A 1953 Gibson my mother bought  
From a drug dealer in 1960,  
And gave to me when I was 21,  
A biker vest my father wore,  
Like a second skin,  
Covered with patches from his  
Sorted journeys,  
New Jersey Turnpike...  
Varsity Transit...  
Memphis 1969...  
Photo albums filled with pictures  
Of people who look like me,  
But I don't know anymore,  
Sickly skinny and smiling insanely,  
From drugs and sorrow,  
A tiny house made of matches and tinfoil  
That my father made when I was 6,  
The heart of a music box that still plays  
You Are My Sunshine,  
And still smells of the motor oil of my  
Father's sky blue bus,  
These are what remain  
When the unnecessary is burned away.  
These are the valuables  
I would take with me,  
If nothing else remained.

My life,  
Nothing more...

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Mad Woman”*

*2013 • Conte Crayon on Paper*



 CLAY 

I am clay;  
Bits of vertebrae  
And squandered breath,  
Pressed down between  
The stones and molten  
Legacy of our ancestors,  
Dredged from the quarries  
And passed into artisan hands  
To be worked and pressed,  
Inside out by calloused  
Skilled fingers,  
Fixed yet spinning,  
Transfixed and yielding,  
Until the magnetic fingerprint  
Of the Universe is forever ingrained  
Within my refined and humming core  
By the purifying kiss of a flame.  
I am clay;  
Whose hollowed painted body  
Now holds water  
From the well spring,  
Running swift in  
Its ancient carriage to the sea,

Beneath the meadows for eons,  
Upon which the woman  
Walks with me,  
Perched perilously graceful  
On her ample swaying hips,  
Before she brings my  
Imperfect mouth to her lips,  
To rinse clean the  
Residual impurities  
And regrets from her body,  
As the sun sets on her destiny,  
And her dreams.  
I am clay;  
To be shattered without remorse  
By the wrath of War,  
Beneath hooves of  
Smoldering enslaved solidier horses,  
And buried deep,  
Entangled with the bleached bones  
Of their enemies,  
To be forgotten  
In shimmering snow banks  
And lush monsoon rains,  
Under the rise and fall  
Of grasslands and empires,  
Until the whisper of history  
Tugs gently at one human's curiosity,  
To dig down to the darkness  
Where my dormant life force

*Gabrielle Faust*

Still gently hums.  
I am clay.

❧ SEDUCTIVE ❧

Applesauce.  
It's one of those words  
That sounds so seductive,  
So sensual,  
Like purgatory,  
Or mandible.  
So long as it stays  
Devoid of meaning,  
Rolling around in your  
Mouth like wine,  
Or marbles.

 WATCHFUL 

He knows and so he waits,  
Patient omniscient sentinel  
Silently plucking the secrets  
Clustered amongst the shadows,  
The vines where the rats scurry  
To and fro from their nests,  
Just beyond the windowpane of black.  
Tonight they are not  
What cause his ears to twitch,  
As he listens carefully,  
To each hollow moan of the wind  
For deviations in the natural  
Rhythm of the rain.  
Watchful, he sits motionless,  
An unmovable, white gargoyle,  
Warning the unearthly creatures  
Who wind through the mists,  
To stay at bay.

 SUCCUBUS 

She will draw from him  
His dreams with  
Barbed hooks and fishing line,  
The darkest desires  
Bred of evolution,  
Winding about his soul,  
Serpentine and slick,  
Fragrant with the musk  
Of metaphysical reckonings,  
Profound in their ability  
To cull, to satiate, to quiet,  
To kill the quest for  
Premonitions of a future,  
Beyond the secular culmination  
Of her temporal promises.  
Only then shall she flay her skins,  
Twisting the smoldering remnants,  
To hide her leathery wings  
Beneath the tattered gauze  
Of the blind and singing angel  
He craves in that  
Singularly defining bliss  
Of his little death,

*Gabrielle Faust*

The moment in which  
Reality quakes,  
Splitting at the seams,  
As she digs deep,  
Slicing through his calloused shell  
To harvest the mortal nectar  
Needed to make her  
Aria sing.

 DARK KISS 

A subtle manipulation of the senses,  
Elegantly refined black blessing  
Rippling across deeply ingrained  
Misconceptions of reality that  
Blossom crimson with thorns,  
All too easily in this absence of light,  
Where swank-styled demonic hounds  
Might beat one down with the  
Trappings of twisted contracts,  
They carefully side-step your shadow,  
Falling silent and humbled in the darkness  
That follows liquid like a veil of dying stars,  
Spreading ink tainting the past,  
Clinging to your clothing  
Like inchworm webbing,  
Slowly strangling an ancient oak;  
Graceful like a harrowing secret,  
Your form whispers  
Onto the bar stool beside me,  
Tentacles of intrigue tugging  
Silently at my soul like a creeping  
Rose vine cracking a plaster face  
Of ancient hieroglyphics;

*Gabrielle Faust*

I watch history crumble to dust below  
The snaking dance of  
Cigarette smoke between us,  
Until our eyes meet  
In the silver reality we now share,  
Your lips curling,  
A dark and timeless kiss  
Of dreams...

 COMMITTED 

One third of a lifetime  
Equates to an exponential  
Amount, an equivocal  
Jaded mass of advice  
Handed out like wedding  
Party favors at the end  
Of each fading day.  
Words of wisdom  
Whined through the  
Plastic mouth receiver  
By one who had no  
Clue as to how to  
Truly be thankful  
For their blessings.  
I stutter and become  
Recalcitrant,  
Silently desiring to  
Quiet the pathetic  
Excuses behind the  
Inability to live in  
The moment or  
Transcend the situational  
Circumstance in order

To fully embrace the  
Entirety of existence.  
As it is now,  
In this moment,  
This second,  
This lifetime,  
Without regard to  
Deferential implications  
Of possible failure.  
I am committed to  
The prospect that there  
Are no guarantees,  
No absolute certainties,  
But only the culmination  
Of years of blood, sweat,  
And tears,  
But she who preaches  
Cannot abstain from  
The unavoidable questioning  
That has come to be  
Customary and banal  
And predictable;  
She who is not committed  
To even the salt she shakes  
Over her steak,  
Feels justified in handing  
Out words of horrifically  
Imperfect wisdom  
To the those whom she  
Feels are less perfect than

Even herself.  
Her words ring hollow  
And land lifeless upon  
The cement patio  
Beside our table,  
Broken, withered husks  
Of idealism  
And optimism  
That died before  
Actualization could  
Breathe inspiration  
Into them.  
It saddens me.  
I turn mute and deaf,  
Staring out over the river  
At the sunset,  
My appetite washing away  
With the darkening current below.

 SWEET 

Whisper me something  
Soft and low,  
Wind rustling through  
Cedar berries,  
Sifting sweetly to the ground,  
As we tread lightly upon  
What Nature dares not  
Disturb beneath  
Cloven hoof delicacy,  
Or embittered truth,  
So silent now,  
Between the hours  
When both the  
Nocturnal and  
Waking worlds  
Take a moment  
To be still and rest,  
To pause to absorb  
The resonance of  
Tranquility rippling  
Through the universe,  
Crawling and collecting  
The remnants of howls,

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

Of screams and begs for mercy,  
Of sirens and silent sobs of regret,  
Shed by Life,  
Like glistening scales of skin,  
In its desperate fight  
For continuance,  
But if you whisper,  
Here in my ear,  
Your prayers and  
Your patient adoration,  
Perhaps the world  
Will pass us by  
And allow us  
Safe passage  
Through the darkness  
And into another dawn.

❧ PSYCHE ❧

Do omens lessen in influence  
With the passing of time?  
As the wind whittles away  
The driftwood base  
Upon which we have been propped  
For centuries,  
Do our lives merely become  
Affluent apathetic modern art  
Installation pieces in  
Someone else's empty  
Living room loft space,  
That will one day  
Become passé,  
And turn into  
Overly critiqued examples  
Of esoteric indecision?  
The mirror never looked into?  
The coat never worn?  
The album never listened to,  
Though the cover is  
Dog-eared and worn  
By another's hands  
Before discarded to

The secondhand dollar bin?  
Are we, more or less,  
Only the sum total  
Of our immediate existential  
Modern equivalents,  
The philosophical meltdown,  
Breakdown, between what  
Is truly important and  
The superficial accoutrements  
That keep us clinging to  
A soulfully insubstantial sustenance?  
Who are we to  
Determine the importance  
Of visions?  
To dismiss in clinical  
Outtakes the sanctity of  
Another's nightmares?  
Another's jubilation?  
When dreams become  
Merely entertainment,  
Has the psyche  
Exhausted its  
Purpose?

❧ SYMPHONY ❧

The horizontal rays of summer heat  
Beat down upon the luxurious entanglement  
Of nameless, hidden coat of vines coaxing  
The orange trumpet flowers that dangle  
From weeping green stems into a crystalline  
Perfection of southern antiquity,  
Which I watch with a mired fascination  
Through the wisps of smoke that drifts  
From between my fingers as ice clinks  
Sweetly against glass like sparrows chirping  
In a softer, calmer, cooler spring breeze,  
And I find myself wanting to be the  
Space between those melting cubes,  
The brief break between one swiftly  
Sliding moment of relaxation and inspiration  
Of escapism and nameless oblivion,  
A note drawn long and soft upon strings  
Beneath your fingers that bends and weaves  
Into the sweetest of symphonies dreamed  
From your soul to pass through  
The vibrations of the wood caught  
Surely between your thighs,  
Notes that hold your soul fast and tight as

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The brigade of intellectual Archangels  
You are so beautifully beholden to,  
That I watch now from my perilous  
Molten perch of passionately penned poetry  
With a respect reserved only  
For the bravest of warriors,  
Of flesh and spirit,  
Body and soul,  
And all the greatest  
Notes a symphony  
May hold...

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Mermaid”*

*2010 • Ink on Bristol Board*

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*



 GRUDGE AGAINST THE GHOST 

Damn us and all of our projects  
That keep the worlds of gods and men  
Separated by the a sword's silver breadth,  
When all that counts is today and only today,  
The perfect time of day,  
When sins and virtues are all but equal,  
When all we recall our souls are  
Naught but ghostly pale recollections  
Of unfortunate reruns on some forgotten  
Wayward westbound station only  
Faintly recollected by the bent antenna  
Of our gold leaf misbegotten parentage,  
A parentage that meant well but,  
Seems to have only left us stranded  
In a desert of questions that  
Lack sustenance to secure our safe passage  
Through the wastelands of our middle years,  
When all we ever thought we knew  
Has now been called into question,  
When all we ever thought we were  
Has now been deconstructed and dissected  
In a stale barren New York City space  
Of concrete and anorexic socialites

Determined to determine the future  
Of those they cannot even begin to  
Absorb or intuit the true nature of,  
Until we are deconstructed,  
Warped and manipulated and stripped  
Of our true desires and dreams,  
Now distilled down into the  
Base bottom of a single drink  
All too soon drunk by the single  
Ghost that controls the concourse that  
Flows in this bar tonight,  
The pale figurine of circumstance,  
Reserved yet judgmental as only  
The hollow and insubstantial  
Can truly be...

❧ JUDGE AND JURY ❧

With each year the mangled remnants of  
What I once called a soul slowly becomes  
Ever so slightly more encapsulated,  
Removed and cold and walled up,  
Like an unfortunate member of medieval royalty,  
Convicted of an unproven crime of the mind,  
Their remains discovered by archeologists  
Centuries past the point of no return,  
Their ghosts repeating the same sad steps,  
Day in and day out,  
Scratched and dented imprints skipping  
On a rusted ruined reel of archaic film.  
The scene slips through me, around me,  
Feeding in and out of the fissures I  
Mistakenly forgot to fill in my haste  
To depart from the immediate, as well as  
The archaic, in order to somehow  
Develop a new identity that is one part  
Delusion and one part dream,  
One part deception and one part  
Artistically crafted fiction,  
Until I am merely another character,  
Sketched specifically for a particular special occasion

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

That will never truly belong anywhere else  
Except in the concept of an ideal of the immediate,  
For nothing ever performed in this here skin  
Has ever amounted to the shining grandeur  
Others accept or identify with though  
What it is that they think they crave  
Through their pre-ejaculatory demands  
Is unobtainable and impossible.  
But they will continue to be my judge and jury,  
Just as you chose to be tonight,  
Staring down at me from some distant height  
I can only imagine as terribly lonely,  
Dark and shrouded and stricken with self-doubt.  
And so I pull the scar tissue a bit tighter  
About this organ of misrepresented romanticism  
Thundering here in my center until I shake.  
Pull it tight and secure so I won't break.  
What good is light let in  
If there is nothing for it to nurture?

 RESTRICTIONS 

Get back in the box!  
Get back in the box!  
That invisible, ill-defined structure  
We ourselves have yet to truly mastered,  
That archipelago of inconsistent dogma  
Spoon-fed to us by a conservative aristocracy  
Of media professionals whose own intent  
Appears questionable at times,  
Yet, we simply can't help but cast  
Uneasy glances at one another  
When called upon to contradict the  
Unintelligible voices that boom down from  
The myopic digital skies in which a sun or moon  
Has yet to appear in a civilized length of time;  
None among us are strong enough of conviction  
To muster the courage we see now before us,  
Represented in this strange entity of lightning  
And terribly controversial habits of generating  
The highly contagious and radioactive infestations of  
Deceivingly innocuously entitled "ideas" at whim,  
As if they were somehow slightly, arrogantly entitled  
To the birthright of their genetic predisposition  
To strive for cultural, societal or poetic enlightenment!

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

How dare these oblivious fools tiptoe over the  
Paratrooper patrolled boundaries of marketing plans  
And image consultants, branding geniuses and stylists  
That we have spent billions of your tax dollars to  
Analyze in controlled, moderated groups until  
The perfect balance of artistic marketability is devised  
A master plan of mainstream genius we  
Need for you to abide by, submit to, mold your soul to  
As if it were the air you needed to breathe  
Never mind the sense of suffocation or dehydration  
That too shall pass.  
You'll be happier if you follow the rules  
Become predictable  
Do what you're told and what's expected of you.  
After all, isn't it better to be rich  
Than happy?

❧ FERAL ❧

He prowls close by,  
In the darkness between the  
Gently humming ancient  
Porch lights around which  
June bugs and moths find  
Their way to a euphoric  
And untimely end;  
I can hear his soft tread,  
Calloused cracked pads  
Padding stealthily across  
Sun-bleached gray asphalt,  
Sidestepping the caverns  
Created by humanity's  
Heavy tread and the incessant  
Shift of natural progress,  
The click of predatory nails  
On slowly cooling cement,  
Sharpening carefully on  
Beetle-burrowed hackberry bark,  
Precede a perfectly tuned purr  
Of cautionary curiosity  
Too low for most inattentive  
Mortals to care to hear;

I wait for him patiently,  
Like a silently lit lighthouse  
Standing watch over the ocean,  
A beacon none look for  
Except in times of trouble,  
To guide them home.

I wait and watch the shadows  
In anticipation of a glint of  
Azure eye or silken fur,  
That perhaps he might  
Seek the warmth of the  
Kind hand he is  
Subtly intrigued by,  
But all too unaccustomed to;  
His suspicion is palpable,  
A tremor of quickened pulse,  
And so I make no sudden move.  
As the hour grows late the milk  
I will leave upon the back step  
And retreat inside,  
For tonight the ghost  
Of fur and fang  
Is content to remain  
Illusive.

❧ WHAT NEVER WAS ❧

Some evenings sad songs  
Are simply easier to sing,  
Or so it seems between the hours  
Of ten and three when  
The creaking wheel of time  
All but ceases to scream,  
And everything that never was  
Is apparent will never be,  
To touch softly upon the idea  
Of dreams that should have seen  
A more joyous and tangible reality  
Than that which slipped  
Through my splayed fingers  
As I stood alone in this alley  
Watching your ghost leave  
And wondering if you were  
Only another part of what never was  
And what will never ever be,  
Your image disintegrating like  
Flakes of ash blown across the desert  
Until the burn is too excruciating  
To conjure the memory of  
An individual identity I allowed

Myself to contemplate similarities  
Too intricately reflective of my  
Own intellectually fractured personality,  
An identity that seems now to me,  
All that never was,  
Or will ever be.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Life Into Life”*

*2014 • Ballpoint Ink on Watercolor Paper*

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*



 RENEWAL 

We are the same,  
Just as the hours are each  
Carved in alloy and stone,  
Strictly bound by laws  
Far more ancient than  
Even the cosmos that  
Cradle our simple  
Existences can begin  
To fathom or equate  
To the dangerous lack  
Of substance the days  
Carry within their  
Sunken gullets,  
Dense with the bile  
Of regrets they  
Stubbornly refuse to swallow,  
In a universe where  
Few things are constant  
Except change,  
We, you and I,  
Remain the same,  
Ever evolving fluxing  
Cyclones of tumult

And loneliness we  
Struggle to find a  
Purpose for,  
A deeper meaning,  
Carrying it with us like  
A shield,  
Or some sickly  
Badge of honor  
We feel somehow  
Entitled to, but can't  
For the life of us  
Remember how or why  
We earned it,  
This piece of worn rusted tin,  
Lacking in luster,  
The insignia barely  
Distinguishable in the dusk,  
As we sit beside one another,  
Strangers again,  
Feeling far more in tune  
With the concrete  
Beneath us than the  
Sky above,  
Even as I whisper  
Into the nape of your neck  
My confession of love.

 SOLDIER 

Upon this road of  
Warped and mangled vines,  
No elemental interference  
Can distract or deter him  
From his determination  
To contribute to the colony,  
Unquestioningly hard wired,  
As if his synaptic impulses  
Had been soldered by  
The flame of Dante's inferno,  
Leaving him deaf, blind and mute  
To any other possibility  
Than that contained in the  
Expectations of a Queen  
He has never laid eyes upon  
And the weight of the  
Burden on his back,  
The one he  
Triumphantly bears,  
Though it must weigh  
Ten times his own mass,  
For this is all  
He has ever known,

This vine,  
These leaves,  
This one path worn down  
By the tiny impressions of  
Others who have traveled it  
Before him with the same  
Sightless joyous fortitude,  
Knowing without knowing,  
That he will retrace  
His steps again,  
Come tomorrow.

❧ TIDE ❧

It creeps back in  
Like a panther stalking the night,  
Steadily with one velveteen  
Paw placed silently in front  
Of the other while animal intuition  
Carefully calculates the raw physics  
Required to leap from its  
Hiding place to the back of its  
Next savory unwitting prey;  
I feel it moving,  
Restless and untamable,  
A spark of fiery currency  
Arcing though the meticulous  
Copper circuitry of my mind,  
Expanding molecules like  
An influx of pure oxygen,  
Until my heart feels full,  
My lungs clear and strong  
Enough to birth a Poseidon  
Wind to fill the sails of my  
Wooden warship home to land again,  
A land I have been lost within the  
Mists too long to see its shores;

Its life is my life and so too  
Will I live to fulfill my duties  
To my destiny with pride,  
And dignity;  
I am returning to me,  
Like a falcon gliding back  
To the perch of its master's  
Leather glove,  
To be molded and adored for  
A primal artistic purpose  
And deliver the message  
I have yet to fully  
Decipher.

❧ BATTLE GROUND ❧

I want to bring myself to the foreground  
Of my own existence,  
To feel the weight of the firearms  
Selected by my commanding officer  
And the army that flanks me to either side,  
Resting heavily in my sweat stained palms,  
To smell the scent of blood and mud,  
The perfume of smoke and terror and fury,  
Feel the kind of adrenaline fueled by the  
Instantaneous realization of mortality  
Pounding in my temples until I think  
I might hemorrhage my devotion  
Into the cavern where my heart once beat,  
The ubiquity of a serialized monotony  
Seared away from my soul in the singular  
Moment of survival and the perfect  
Osmotic symbiotic pride in a devotion to  
A common enemy, a common goal  
To rise above the fray and survive  
Beyond the war instrumented by forces  
Greater than the sum of our parts  
Vaster than the scope of universal recognition  
That we are not tethered to a destiny

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

Preordained by our ancestors' flat footed footsteps  
Nor omnisciently orchestrated by the gods  
But free to cultivate a new world order as  
It pertains to the singular tense of "I"  
The ego, the vanity, the self,  
The oppressed oppressor,  
The hero and the victim awaiting rescue,  
Yes, I want to bring myself to the front lines  
Of this war that has waged on for  
A seemingly endless eternity of  
Inconsequential instances strung together  
Like miles of barbed wire slowly rusting  
In rain from a Wizard of OZ tornado sky  
A chattering maelstrom of ineffectual nonsense  
That threatens my homeland now  
The one plot of earth I have come to  
Suddenly understand as sacred and unconquerable  
In a way no fortress of man-made hands  
Could ever be.

❧ MAKE ME ❧

I have my hands inside you,  
Your blood and skin under my nails,  
Bitten back to the quick  
And slick with your blood,  
Your tears mixing with the rain  
That's been pouring on this  
Cracked tin roof for far too long  
To be nourishing any longer,  
This summer storm has turned torrential,  
Uprooting us and replacing the peace  
With the piercing wail of metallic  
Knights racing over asphalt towards  
One tragedy too many, but this one,  
Our little pile of carnage we'll keep secret,  
A personal testament to the wretched  
Strength of our commitment to each other,  
You propped against the wall,  
Stretched taut and covered in all the hues  
Naturally befitting the instance of birth,  
And the climax of death,  
While I watch and wait for the next  
Whispered prophecy to be clarified,  
As I wipe your innards from my forearms

With an old faded blue bandana,  
I cannot decide if I have made of you  
A masterpiece in my Frankenstein frenzy,  
Or mangled you with all of my passionate,  
Yet somehow ironically cliché interpretations  
Of visual poetic manifestos I know  
I am still too young to understand,  
But I know what I've made of you tonight  
Has unmade that perfectly wrapped  
Portion of myself I was beginning to tire of,  
Unraveling me on these scarred,  
Paint-splattered hardwood floors,  
With nothing but a cheap brush  
To defend myself as the sirens  
Grow closer.

❧ REEMERGENCE No. 1 ❧

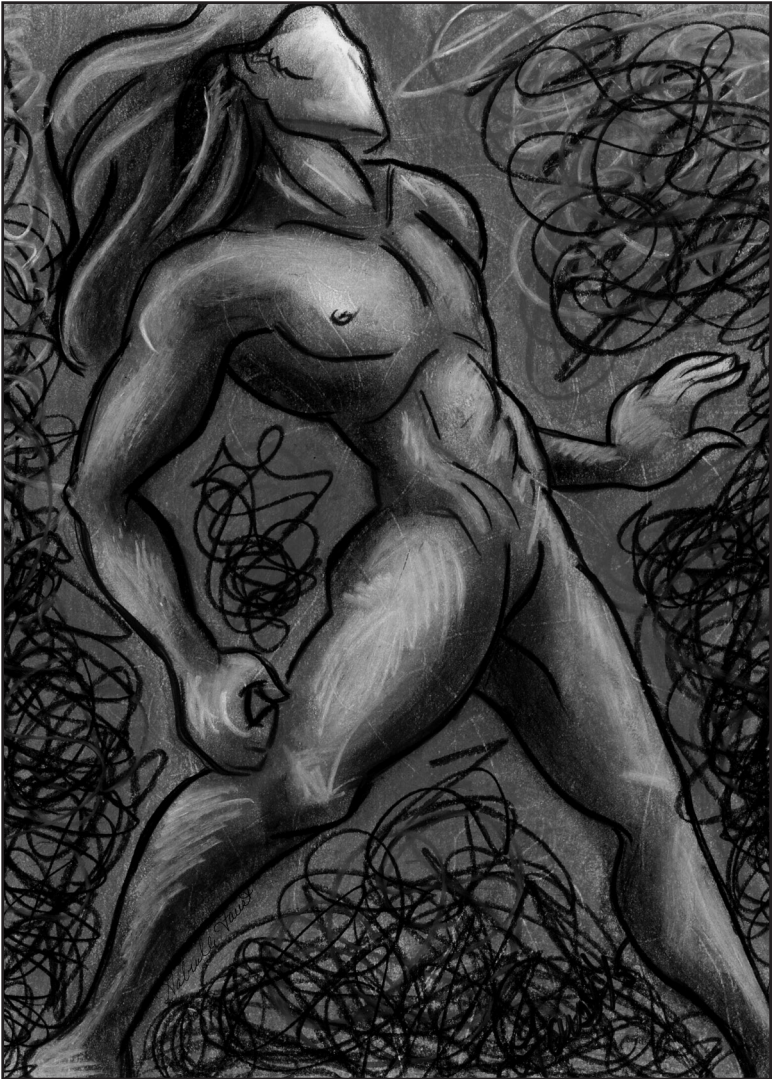
He's rediscovering his joy,  
As only a child of the sun and earth,  
Nebraska bear raw wilderness,  
Intuitively can grasp in unsung  
Songs of the intangible spirit,  
A path less traveled by others  
Is his samurai's strength,  
A cellist's bow in one hand,  
Robert Johnson's hell-hounds  
On his heels at the crossroads,  
Treading in a two-step with  
The devils of his past,  
The angels of his future,  
And the unknown tragic heroes  
Of this peculiar present tense  
Sense of existence where  
The word "artist" has all  
But lost its original connotation,  
The resonance that gave it  
Social consciousness and  
A cultural conscience in a  
Conscienceless world;  
He is redefining himself,

And his title to be a warrior-king  
Amongst a world of men,  
To become an inspiration  
To himself,  
As he has always been  
To this particular “poet”,  
Who attempts to begin  
Immortalizing the gradual disassembling,  
And painstakingly gentle reassembling,  
Of the intricately machined gold gears,  
Within the music box he clutches,  
As he sets out on his  
Metaphysical walkabout,  
Carefully upon this page,  
In a way that  
Will never do  
Justice to the joy.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Triumphant”*

2015 • *Conte Crayon on Paper*



 ONWARD 

One chilly winter southern night  
Beneath chaotic Christmas lights  
We smoked and studied Pleiades  
With talk of quests and open roads  
And northern weather boding snow  
The future seemed within our reach  
Survivors to our fractured cores  
We brandished battered battle swords  
Borrowed on the backs of stolen steeds  
We agreed the fight was far from done  
Our attempts at life unraveled sums  
Of what the world expects of dreams  
What might have broken lesser souls  
Are stories told when we are old  
As wild youth gather at our feet  
Until that time our inner fires  
Will light the roads like funeral pyres  
I'll bring the whiskey for the wake  
The end of year is growing near  
We've paid our dues and dried our tears  
It's time to lift a glass and sing  
To toast the demons that might have won

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

If we had not been the wiser ones  
Or at least the crazier ones, indeed

 DARKEST HOURS OF THE NIGHT 

What borrowed branches of winter  
Does this drift of broken bliss sit upon?  
With lofty expectations of mourning  
Surpassing the subtle inclinations of  
The subconscious desire for redemption,  
The brittle permanence of isolation  
That flakes away like bits of marble dust  
In a Grecian summer storm of ocean salt;  
I want for nothing but the taste of your lips,  
The warmth of the knowledge that  
In due time such dreams offered up  
The heavy omniscient harvest moon,  
Were not lost upon the currents of progress,  
But grasped firmly in the hunter hawk claws  
Of your heart and held dear if but for a time,  
Time long enough to become a solid part  
Of this physical plane in which you and I  
So often have difficulty even existing  
As part of the mortal human race;  
I defer to the ghosts the cats howl to  
In the darkest thinnest hours of night,  
If they continue to exist then so perhaps  
Shall my love long after I am gone.

❧ MONSOON SEASON ❧

It rained for three months,  
Coating the world I knew in a dull glossy sheen,  
The kind hard to find in high def cameras  
That production companies  
Spend millions on,  
Yet there it was,  
Cool and soothing,  
Each drop the patter of feet  
On asphalt on their way  
To the subdued repressed dreams  
They had been sleeping upon,  
All winter long.

And then it happened:  
Summer emerged,  
Like a Viking warrior throwing off  
Their brooding bloodied mantle.  
And into the light we were cast,  
Ants beneath a magnifying glass.

Was I the ant or the 8-year-old “scientist”?

Sometimes I wish we were young again.

*Gabrielle Faust*

When everything was new,  
When discovery was still a possibility,  
And the edges of everything  
Was not tempered by the soot of the past.  
When rain was pure poetry,  
And summer wasn't belabored  
Beneath political confusion and fear.

But if I and you were still new,  
The world would not be?  
The seasons will become more chaotic,  
Society will continue to  
Circumvent the real source of their issues.  
And so what is left?  
But ourselves?  
Our wants and needs and dreams.

But the rain.  
I miss the rain,  
Now that monsoon season has ended,  
The floods subsided,  
And casualties relegated to "old news".  
I miss the rain,  
The patter of ethereal ghost feet  
Upon the asphalt outside.

Perhaps this summer won't burn  
Like those the summers before...

 **HARD TIMES** 

Let me splay back the multitude of sins  
I've committed in this lifetime in order  
To appropriately portion out the sections  
Of misery I've encountered;  
Those long-winded hard-bitten rusted nails  
Of truth driven through drive-through windows,  
Through palms outstretched for nothing more  
Than a fix to get them through  
The next full moon, and here  
I am in my shift and robe begging the universe  
For the sort of pardon it reserves for  
Those of a less abrasive ilk;  
Here I am seeking redemption,  
A second chance,  
To rediscover the inequities of the soul,  
The soft reverb of an untuned heart,  
And the maker of this shackle binding  
My soul with widowing knots;  
If the truth will set you free,  
Where is my freedom?

 RAMPAGE 

Broken memories of rampage,  
Bulls through broken China shops and  
The waste that was left in their haste;  
Let me emphasize time and place and setting,  
Marked only by the passing of the  
Monolithic monumental remembrances of those  
Transcendental icons of worship where  
The division of soul and flesh parted for  
A moment long enough to give  
Credibility to the elite higher concepts  
Of physical enlightenment;  
Those moments when we'd like  
To be removed from the grit and grime  
Of everyday life,  
For within its lovely undergarments  
I only seem to find  
The fortune cookie reminders  
That fate is in the hands of a few  
Underpaid graphic designers,  
With a sick sense of humor.

❧ THE SOURCE ❧

She had been away from the source too long,  
Unplugged and drug away from her lifeline,  
Howling and screaming,  
Then crying,  
Then bloody,  
Then silent;  
Those claustrophobic trenches,  
She had longed to forget,  
Collapsed in upon her;  
Shell upon shell, mortar upon mortar,  
Limb upon limb,  
Until she felt herself slip under  
And into the silence;  
She had been deprived too long,  
Of the source from whence  
Her true life had begun,  
That scorched earth,  
Blue sky,  
And hard mineral, polluted water  
She choked down,  
Day after day,  
Until she realized it was the source  
Slowly killing her all the while.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“The Snail King”*

*2015 • Conte Crayon on Paper*



 I AM A GHOST 

I'll place the knife at my throat  
And bend forward,  
Allowing my life force to flow  
Into the lines of your palms;  
Let me give you this insight,  
This brief moment of incumbent recognizant insight  
Into the underlying folds,  
The underbelly of  
Why can't I be your goddess;  
For all of my sacrifices,  
And my bloodletting,  
I could not be graceful enough,  
In the flesh,  
With all of my mortal wounds,  
To please this god;  
I try to with gestures  
Too modest and too bold,  
For all that I am is beyond the physical,  
And beyond the realm of  
Interdependency and inter-development;  
For we are symbiotic in our pain.  
We are entities in this age,  
All bound by our psychic frequency

That is nothing but our ability to connect  
Through tragedy and thus,  
Becoming only an iconic  
Representation of the masks we mocked  
In our youth;  
Before we are born,  
We are ghosts,  
Of our present,  
Our past,  
The future;  
And to this I say,  
I do not exist.

*Gabrielle Faust*

*“Blanco”*

*2013 • Conte Crayon on Paper*

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Internationally renowned author Gabrielle Faust is best known for her vampire series *ETERNAL VIGILANCE*. Her previous work has also included three collections of poetry, *BEFORE ICARUS AFTER ACHILLES*, *CROSSROADS* and *THE BEGINNING OF NIGHTS*, the novella *REGRET*, the celebrated dark fantasy adventure novel *REVENGE*, and the vampire novel *THE LINEAGE*. She was also the chief editor and a contributor of the vampire anthology *HIGH STAKES*. Her work has appeared in the sites *SciFi Wire*, *Fatally Yours*, *Examiner*, *Doorways Magazine*, *Fear Zone*, *Gothic Beauty Magazine*, as well as various anthologies.

Faust was the Guest of Honor at the Queen of the Damned Vampire Ball in 2008. From 2009 to 2011 she was a Special Guest of the Endless Night Festival in New Orleans and was crowned “New Orleans Vampire Royalty” by the Vampire Lestat Fan Club at the Tru Blood & Gold vampire ball in 2010 alongside Charlaine Harris. In addition, Gabrielle Faust has been a featured guest at dozens of conventions across the United States.

Faust was the primary graphic designer for the 2011 World Horror Convention and was the co-crew chief for the International Housing Program for the SXSW Music Festival from 1994 to 2010. In 2011 Faust was awarded the Texas

*101 Ways to Fall Apart*

Social Media Award by the Austin American Statesman.  
More information about Gabrielle Faust can be found on her  
website [gabriellefaust.com](http://gabriellefaust.com).



*Photo by Murphy Hunter/D6Pix.*

*Gabrielle Faust*

**TITLES BY  
GABRIELLE FAUST**



*THE “ETERNAL VIGILANCE” VAMPIRE SERIES*

*Book 1: From Deep Within the Earth*

*Book 2: The Death of Illusions*

*Book 3: Bound in Blood*

*Book 4: Meditations on Darkness*

*Regret*

*Revenge*

*The Lineage*

*POETRY COLLECTIONS*

*Before Icarus, After Achilles*

*Crossroads*

*The Beginning of Nights*

*ANTHOLOGIES (Editor & Contributor)*

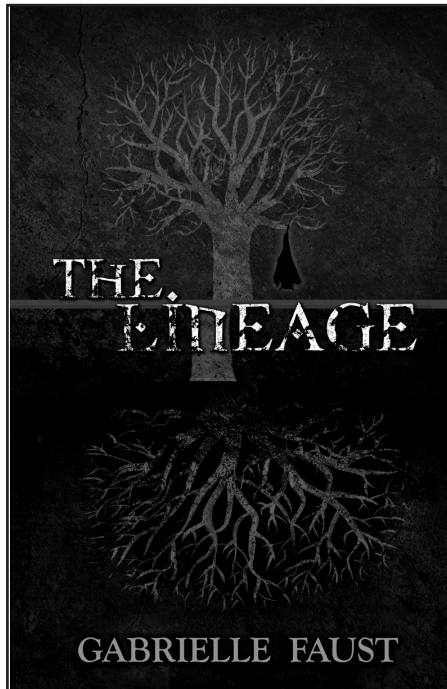
*High Stakes: A Vampire Anthology*

**WWW.GABRIELLEFAUST.COM**

TITLES BY NIGHTSHADE PUBLICATIONS



*Tristan Faust had led a rather ordinary life until he crossed paths with a vagabond tribe of nomadic vampires led by a mysterious man named Dorian. Twenty years later, Tristan has come to realize that all of Dorian's tales about the majesty of the vampiric life were lies as he is drug through the back streets of America in a bloody river of violence, night after night. In the midst of one of their brutal hunting parties, a member of their own is horrifically slain by an unseen force sending the tribe running for their lives. One after the other their family is ripped apart until Tristan is confronted with the truth of his own familial lineage, as well as the ulterior motives of his Maker...*



TITLES BY NIGHTSHADE PUBLICATIONS



*Television is killing us. A wave of violence is sweeping across the city, triggered by subliminal messages in local TV broadcasts. And those messages are more than suggestion—they are living demons corrupting the souls of unsuspecting viewers, driving them into insane rampages of cannibalism that no one can stop. A video journalist named Moses Mayborne sees the changes first-hand in his wife, and now he must rescue her and their child, or get swept up in the carnage.*





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