
FORTIFIED CASTLES

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Talonbooks



I WANT TO ENJOY LIFE

My story is truly personal. I live in my condo with my yellow Lab. I've been divorced for five years. I bought a new umbrella for the beach. I want to play with my kids without any anxiety.

I love my wife and my job. I bought insurance for my bungalow after the last storm. I regularly enjoy local hiking trails. I eat pretty well. I've been checking out local meetups on a website.

I took up gardening after I retired last year. I've been with my boyfriend for five years now. I'm trying all the local restaurants. I installed a new bolt lock on my front gate. I'm pretty thankful.



I WANT TO BREAK THINGS

A closed door is music to me. My apartment is
in my name. I tense my face against the screen.
My backyard is my sanctuary. My dentist sends
me postcard reminders. I built this fence myself.

Blueprinting unconscious desire is the key. A vintage
flag hangs outside my front door. It should be a
space that makes sense. My kitchen sampler makes
a software joke. Any pieces can be screwed together.

I nail plywood over the hole. My teeth scatter their
molecules across the curb. I curb any unsettling
advances. My eyes pour a hard acid. I stare into my
bedroom window. I wait for myself by the mailbox.



I FEEL OUT OF CONTROL

When my mood changes, it's a prescription urging my relapse. I've been tearing up the old carpet because my family's loose threads lose it over counselling. Finding my balance is a real problem.

I need some advice because I can't control my dad's death. The room smells bad and sways. I feel so crummy and undressed. I pasted a prohibition-era wallpaper in the bedroom to match the false panels.

My meds drain the room. I walk until my legs cave. I find starvation satisfying. I want to carve endless parallel lines into the laminate. My mom freaked out when I got Oedipal. I hung up a painting of a house.

I LIKE TO STAY INDOORS

Summer is especially miserable when I'm holed up in my apartment sick. Either I can play with my Lego or my PlayStation. Photography works better than words to document my empty street.

Either I can sleep with my mommy or in my own bed. In all the pictures, I'm wearing a cast. I'm making a diorama out of things I bought at the dollar store based on the DVDs I enjoy watching.

Outside, the sun is pink neon. I cast shows with characters who lie on the beach in the sunshine. I carefully place the furniture in my dollhouse. In my dreams, the shops shut down too early.

I CAN'T MAKE SENSE OF IT

My culture's values aren't mine. Minutes ago,
I spanned an entire spectrum. Now, I imagine
the universe without God. I won't paint with
primary colours. I'll build a frame for anything.

Wisdom disappears where you least expect it. I
walk paper into art somehow. I'll invent a scale
to measure fracture. It's a lot of plan with zero
navigation. The sky looks bigger when yellow.

I wish I could reset my birth to differentiate my
tastes. I'd like to go where the sun only sets. I
prefer improvisation in a small field. In my dream,
a small boat tossed about in a sequence of frames.

I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THEM

I write in exercise books in longhand in a way that equals fashion. In most of the pictures, I glare into the camera. All my friends prove themselves at the park, where I craft an army-type curriculum.

Everyone at my school wears one, but not on my property. I wore my cool vintage kimono print. I made a game of making copies. My landscaping proved valuable, even without the added gutters.

On further inspection, wider space needs a narrow cage. I facebooked the whole event. I have a new wide-angle lens. I sewed a pair of leather jackboots. Each word I remove proves an affecting guide.

I DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER

Is love etched onto microchips? Do flowers buzz when the heart beats? I need an answer. I have a ruler. I drew a picture of our house and our yard and our garden. I never considered it Buddhism.

I pull it together in thin silicon. Counter-examples leave certain the attraction between atoms. My correctness facilitates me. Spelling right is too hard. The lab is no place to get romantically involved.

I will leave the booklet blank. Redrawing any lost connections will take months. Answers are not examples. I built a koi pond. The sun sits on the back of my neck. Which circuits stay imperceptible?

I'M OBSESSED WITH IT

The song in the ad upset me so much I cried for days. All day long, I just want to fucking get out of here and watch some movies. I shut the windows then the drapes then opened my eyes.

I pull strips of copper wire from my face. This film is one I won't finish. Who cares how it works? I pick up Windex for the picture window. I wash the grain and crackle from my exchanges.

Really, I'm just embracing culture. I spool my nerve into a shopping cart. I watch two cars unfold in the street outside. I've been quietly humming the fabric of our lives for days now.

I WANT TO DISAPPEAR

I'd snap my fingers, but no one I like is here. I'd go into the wild if I were small. My shirt is a size too big. I never want to leave my laughter lying around the house. I emptied the fridge into the trash.

There's space in my heart for development. I want to vanish and reappear as flowers in my neighbour's front yard. I layer the room in velvet curtains and venetian blinds, clapping my cold hands over and over and over.

Fashion is a kind of magic. I feel at home in vacant lots. I unravel tarp after tarp around the block. I sprawl across the bed. I think about the weather three or four times a week. I fold my hands together.

I TRY SO HARD TO BE NICE

I want common sense to only go as far as I can. Confrontation over indiscriminant breeding gets heated when I do what any animal would. I buy drinks for the neighbourhood. I accept apologies.

I change into people. When I need cash, I can't get the same level of praise even if I am much nicer. I beg for sanity. I hate to eat animals. The boundary I draw goes around the block's garbage.

I know that people can't change. I don't like to kick yapping dogs. I don't like to think about the world because it gets me in trouble. I beg my family for money. I lock the door behind me.



I CAN DEAL WITH CRITICISM

Really, I need to be quarantined. Any honest critique lashes me back. I tack up blankets in the doorway. I find flash cards useful to help study punchlines. I need glasses to read signs.

Usually, my first reaction is to play along. My sick parents and I often make light of medicine. I prefer hide-and-seek. I draw a series of isolated boxes. I'll go through it again on the blackboard.

I prefer a discourse to a talk. My dyslexia seals me with a deft stroke. I wish to slice the tops of trees with a sharp edge. I walk through the dark room. I chose my only warpath through this field.



I CAN'T BELIEVE I DID IT

It makes me sad, too. I gave my husband an Xbox for his birthday. I grilled steak for my friends. When I was small, an auto injury left my limbs a neighbourhood. I fell over twice.

Three months ago, I queried an agent. It was great to get a letter asking me to the dance. My brain falls off like wet cake. I feel sick to my stomach. I block off the street from any cars.

I hit my goal during *Monday Night Football*. My heart pounded my street into hamburger. In one future, I live in a wind tunnel. I hardened, mailing invitations to my upcoming wedding.

I KNOW WHAT I HAVE TO DO

I know it must be rough, but there isn't time to sit here and mope. The best part is the mystery, but I'm not jumping the gun to hold it. You can do a lot of sobering stuff when the tide comes in.

I will focus on breathing, but I know the sun will rise. I wonder what role inquiry plays in pooling kitchenettes. I stop at the door because of a greater solvency. I could only skip to the end.

You can dry your eyes into an ocean, but it might change your behaviour. I clarify each culture as it metabolizes. My dull ache condenses into a novel. I prepare each meal as if I have a full magazine.

I'M THROUGH WITH YOU

My number is being called. The lack doorway shelter is a problem, as are the spikes. I enjoy origami, but I can't foreclose on the thought it requires. I communicate from bottom up.

This whole book is reams and reams of falling apart. The lack of consideration is part of the attraction. By moving the chair to the back of the room, I can keep business away from me.

I mark along the shelving with chalk to divide it in two. The garbage is full of bottles that don't know romance. I'm obsessed with a raw complexity that unfolds from my exchange.



I FELL APART LAST NIGHT

As your team played, my blindness turned to obviousness. As the storm hit, city planning fell apart. My historical way to look at things is appropriate. I hold a hot spoon to my mouth.

The eggs stick to the pan and break. Caught by urban radiance, I grip my collapsing abdomen. Your victory makes our race clear. I painstakingly my everyday into a detailed balsa-wood model.

I cried and cried myself into another league. Hard type scores my arms. I timelined what I thought was clear. I put a Nutri-Grain bar in my pocket. My floodlights burned out and left the park empty.



I WILL KEEP MY PROMISE

For the sake of the community, I won't question my family's love. I want you to hear what I say even if the gunshots are louder than my voice. Still, lying in this field, morning light can't talk to you.

I work for an organization that preserves violent rights and traditions. I keep my iPhone on speaker. I draw up contracts to sign. I outline future plans and assemble teams to generate control spectra.

Can experience be won by force? I won you on the last day remaining. I made you fruitful. I keep talking and talking. I outline clear instructions. I take steps. I mail my hair in sequenced envelopes.





I'M SPINNING MY WHEELS

I leave new places as I find them. I man up and stringently organize. I map to a grid and name to traditional conventions. My goals are an aircraft flown through a building that leaves no one dead.

I back up my hard drive hourly. The burners fire out repeated procedure and solution. I blow away eraser bits. I draw up an elaborate plan for the city. I convene the leftovers into a mosaic of yesteryear.

I'd like a million times before I'd leave once. I'd like to flip a switch that makes us important. My heart is not at the shore on lookout and instead works hard to save its job. I work to restore order.



I WANTED TO TELL YOU

I love your book and I need more copies to hand out. I have a small pendant with your picture. I realize all my wrong assumptions about you. I speak to you like I am on trial. I hold your hand.

You are easy to populate with data. I cover you with a greater spread. I dump a bottle of water on our bed and in pour the insects. I pull my eyes out with your fingers. I overlay myself in red.

I want to reserve a table for dinner every day. I want to take a day trip to the mountains so you will promise to stop me. I want to set precedent after precedent. I want to discard your manuscript.



I JUST WANT TO ESCAPE

When the morning starts with a crisis, I turn to my social network. I'm caught in a series of Kodak moments and it makes me feel so lucky. I tear up when colour swells into my recombining diary.

My lungs hurt during the moment of silence. The odds favour me leaving by Sunday. I remember each matte finish with a border. Theatres bolt their seats to the floor. I reason out connections.

The place I want to live is labelled and documented. I chase sprinklers in the sun. I get hopeful when the day ends. I subtract everyone from the street. In the future, maybe you will love me in a real way.

Hi!

Thanks for reading this sample from my book.
If you like it, you might want to read the rest?
You could borrow it from your local library,
order from an independent bookstore,
or order directly from Talonbooks
(<https://talonbooks.com/books/fortified-castles>).
Check out my website at ryanfitzpatrick.ca.

Warmly,

ryan