

INFURIATING, SO INFURIATING

MARISHA AZIZ

He's convinced that she's the single most infuriating person on this planet. He had a whole list compiled and stored away in his brain; it seemed to float across his mind's eye every time he saw her, which, unfortunately, was almost every day. She'd always wave a little in his direction and shoot a small smile at him, and that would be the first irksome thing. Her smile was so cryptic, it was as if she had some great big secret stored inside her heart, and a dark one at that, because there always seemed to be a tinge of sadness on the corner of her lips. He couldn't figure out what in the world could possibly cause such a seemingly infinite sadness in her, because people use smiles to hide the worst sort of pain, don't they?

He'd be fine if it were just the sad little smile, though. He can deal with depressed people. What he can't deal with is a person who seems sad one minute and is singing along whole-heartedly to some stupid song on her phone the next. It was bad enough that she could hit every note with perfection. Did she have to rub it in for those with poorly-coordinated vocal cords? Normal people were satisfied with humming, but not her; oh no. She just had to properly enunciate every lyric, making it seem like the music was washing over her and healing whatever scars she had gotten from life. Worse still was the fact that her singing had the same effect on others, and even him, to some extent. It gave him this peculiar sense of tranquillity; like she had woven some invisible cocoon around him with her music that kept out all his



troubles and worries, but as soon as she stopped, the protective cocoon would collapse and all the stress and complications would engulf him once more. This pissed him off greatly. He didn't need her or her voice to sort out his own hectic life, did he?

Things would still be bearable, if it

weren't for the way she read books. She always had some novel or other stuffed in that backpack of hers. He didn't mind reading in general, but he just wished she would read like *normal* people did. But of course she couldn't get through a single page without grinning along to every witty comment, gasping at every dramatic point, or occasionally narrowing her eyes at the book, probably annoyed at one of the characters. What a drama queen.

Once, he couldn't resist pointing this out to her. "They can't see you," he said before he could stop himself, "The characters, I mean. What's the point of smiling at everything they say?"

She had blinked at him for a moment, before answering in a tone that suggested that this was the most obvious fact in the world: "They can see me in my mind. Some of us have imagination, you know."

He had been so outraged over the accusation of not having any imagination that he couldn't even come up with a smart reply.

He tried his best to ignore all of this, but for some inexplicable reason, he couldn't. She seemed to scream for attention without making a sound. She wouldn't emit high-pitched giggles along with the rest of her friends or flaunt herself around in ridiculous clothing. She sat in the corner, immersed in her own little world, yet he always felt drawn to her and her irksome qualities. It was getting quite confusing, really. He seemed to both hate and crave all her little quirks. It was becoming a habit of his to ponder over all of these details about her, every living moment.

Is it normal to be so infatuated by someone who infuriates you so easily? He isn't sure. He's thinking about seeing a therapist soon.



Insomnia

RAIYAAN MAHBUB

I wish I had
Insomnia
So I would never
Have to Sleep.
So I could stay awake
With the night,
Maybe dance with
The breeze.

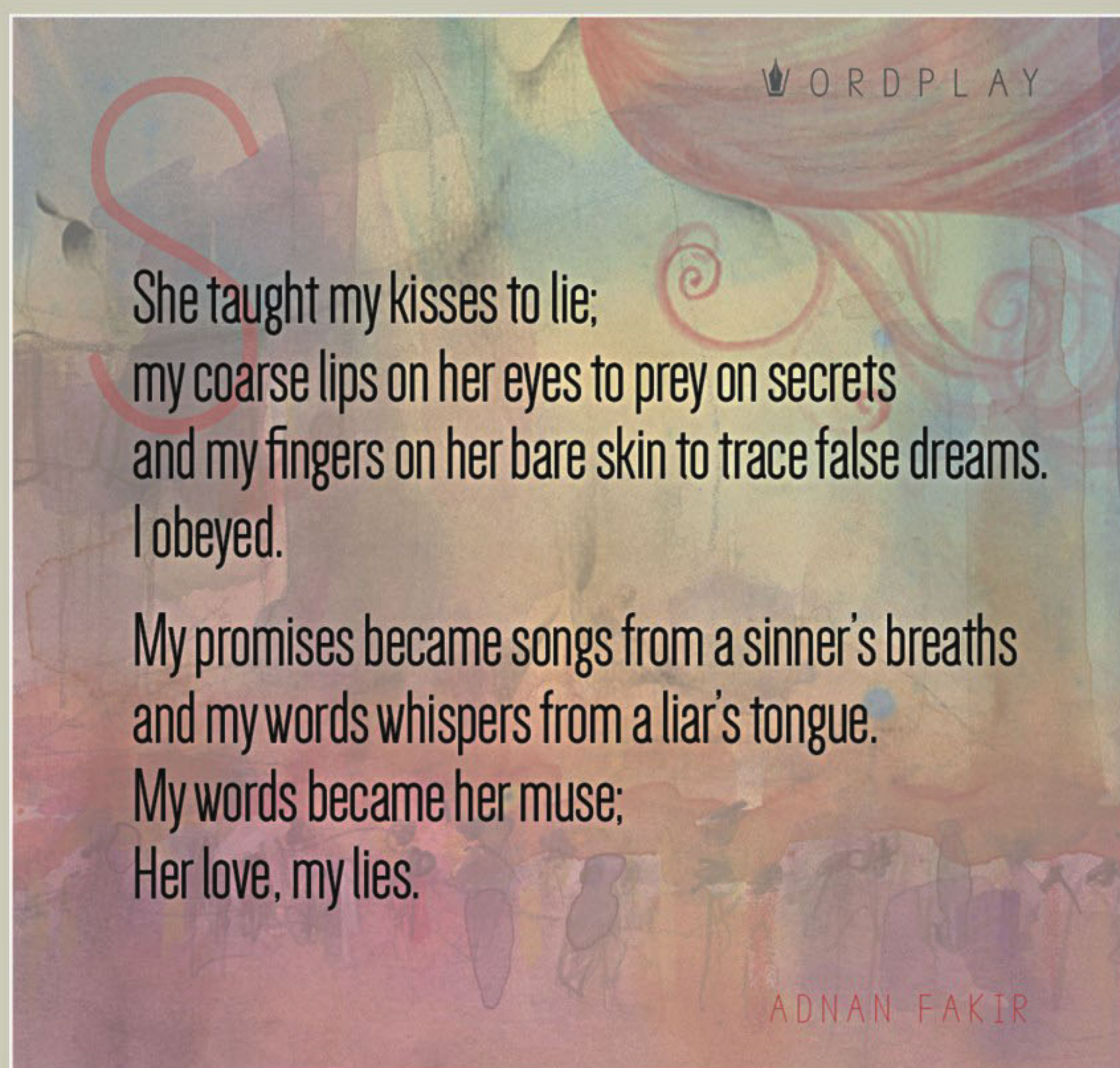
I wish I had
Insomnia
So that in the depths
Of night,
I'd be awake
While the world sheds
The heavy burden
Of light.

Maybe if I had
Insomnia
I'd get lost in
The Dark,
But I'd find myself
Spiritually
And set myself
Apart.

I'd bask in the silence,
Gaze upon the quiet streets
Maybe I'd run around
Emphatically
With none awake
To peep.

Maybe in the Devil's hour,
I'd call upon God.
Have a decent conversation with
him,
Might annoy him a lot.
I'd even tell him my secrets -
The ones that I'd never show,
That's why I'll never sleep at night,
So I can always grow.

The writer is 17 and the founder of
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She taught my kisses to lie;
my coarse lips on her eyes to prey on secrets
and my fingers on her bare skin to trace false dreams.
I obeyed.

My promises became songs from a sinner's breaths
and my words whispers from a liar's tongue.

My words became her muse;
Her love, my lies.

ADNAN FAKIR

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