

## Saint Valentine of Rome.

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All Cretans lie like rugs. Socrates was mortal. The sentence on the other side of this heart is false. Not that it's an entire sentence:

*Get real. No way. See ya.*

And the—what flavor? Chalk, insipid, pastel, steam pumped out of the Necco wafer factory in Kendall Square, perfume plaster-grey and irritant, not even sweet. Bone-crumpling.

*Awe / some. Clue / less. Soul / mate.*

Whereas to me (not that you asked) the plunging V should be no pink but rich night-purple, real color of black roses, dusky wine taste of no one's mouth. Contralto and in no uncertain terms. A molten pool of magenta wax, I would give anything to lie in the face of your factuality, serve as deuterium to your fizzy San Pellegrino, Pluto to your Mercury, rect to your punct, kingroup to your tetrapod, drag you down completely, crush your certainty like tin in a vacuum, fuck you up good and proper.

“He drowned in his armour in the Loire.” Best be careful with that stuff, it's made of lead. You're a long way from home. You're on your own.

*Don't ask. You bet. Got love?*

Grief or rage, purer while still subclinical. Gay vampire porn and nothing left to—

## Saint Columba of Sens.

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When you write a check, you join your letters up. A cautious, grown-up way your father taught you, careful, to be responsible, pay out earned money. Turn starwise away.

Altair now al-Qaeda, Aldeberan al-Jazeera. Mythology replaced with product branding, the eternal bumped for ephemera. And I keep waiting to go macro instead of micro, to feel interested in cruel aches of oppressed others, uninfected by this crushed and decimated internal. But I don't.

You didn't know me in '97, weeping in Covent Garden in a cheap black cotton Indian print dress with primroses, too thin and caught cold on the Eurostar to Paris the next day, *Che gelida manina*. Do you listen to the shrieking renunciation of garret women, men in tenor purgatory, strangled and ekphratic; or can you really be enspelled while domestic, at no personal cost or risk to your set of wetware, placid in the buttery, peddling prolix encyclopaedias.

I contest you. Wax my legs in front of the fireplace, burnt shins, wondering over the vial of blue azulene oil. They claim it retards growth and could I swallow it and forget you ever wrote me—

Faience, Firenze, Fiesole. Novelty deserts me, you write and write, quiet and victorious, while I twirl my hair and pet the cat, half in tears, now who's hypergraphic, now who's the succubus.

Champagne can give you a really vicious drunk; that's why it's called *brut*, meaning ugly, as in, *now don't you get ugly with me young lady*.

If you don't have the wherewithall to crawl back and say goodbye properly, why am I wasting my finest mourning. If you are not bohemian, not gypsy, not clear-fettered. Not scorched earth.

If you cannot see me.