

“I like you”

by Marenn Lafontaine Ortiz

I like you, those are the words that brought me to this position. Laying down on my bed, waiting for you to text me back. Reading our old messages and realizing how cruel I sounded. As much as I'd like to apologize for them, I'm scared you'd think it was strange of me to be re-reading week old messages. So I keep it to myself, feeding the pot that's been brewing inside of me ever since I could walk.

I like you, I say to myself as I imagine our lives together, hand in hand as the wind carries us towards old age. Yet reality isn't far behind as I look at your hand in mine and realize how ugly they look together. Your delicate fingers squished by my undesirable ones, all chipped and nub, not the nails any girl should have. Yet you've managed to have the most beautiful hands I've ever seen, long nails and untouched cuticles, the dream of every nail artist.

I like you, I know I do, yet I feel so insecure whenever you look at me like that. A soft smile playing on your lips, yet I can't help but see how your lip quivers slightly as you speak to me. Are you scared of me, or are you just scared to be seen next to me? The monster under every child's bed brought to reality.

I like you, yet I can't handle standing next to you as we pass by a mirror, scared it'll show you what I truly look like, all of my flaws and insecurities that you seem to avoid and point out at the same time. Telling me I'm pretty but saying I have looked hideous in the past. It's hard to think

you've ever thought of me as ugly, not because it was unlikely but because I thought you would have never admitted it. One thing is thinking you find me hideous, another is finding out I wasn't too far off.

I like you, and I know you like me too, but I've never hated myself more than when I'm with you. I try to compensate for my own flaws by pointing out your own in my head. Just to make me feel any sort of understanding as to how someone like you would ever want me back. I can't help but feel as if I'll lose you because of the times my hateful thoughts slip through my teeth and into your ears. I know you don't deserve it, I'm a horrible person for this, and as much happiness as you bring to my life I can't help but feel as if you bring just as much hate—not because your hateful, but because you make me hateful.

I like you isn't how I truly feel, it's a cover for the implications that come with "I love you." These words are much harder to take back than their rival—three words so difficult to spit out. But even if it's rash and unfair to place this onto you, I think it's time to move my hatred to the side and finally tell you that...I love you.