

## January

Matthew Aksamit

Sometimes when I look at you, I want to cry.

You have these doe eyes –

I loved them the moment I saw them.

They light up when you talk about

systems processing and

funny reddit memes and

I smile and nod along because you are a beaming mess,

sunshine interwoven between my fingers and

in my hair and

on my skin and

in my bones.

Hidden away in the crevices of organs are

cells that would surely wither without your presence.

~

I tell you I hate my hands and you ask me why.

I wanted piano hands, I explain.

Got guitar hands instead, and after I say this you

gently take my palm in yours.

~

Nobody has ever looked at me the way you do, with such

tenderness – it makes me want to weep.

You and your piano fingertips touch me in places where I have never felt hands.

You trace the inside of my skull

the way a child would pick sprouting flowers amongst rubble in a battlefield.

You either do not notice, or if you do,

you do not care.

(The flowers are lovely, you tell me).

~

When I tell you I love you I follow it up with

but you don't have to say it back.

It's a reflex and I don't expect it but

there you are, holding me,

mumbling I love you too against my lips,

and I am flooded in the divinity of your skin.

~

Looking up at the sticky notes on my ceiling while you

Lay asleep in my arms I see:

YOU ARE SAFE AND LOVED!

YOU WILL BE OKAY!

THIS ISN'T FOREVER!

What can I say, it turns out love doesn't cure chemical imbalances,

but it does make them more bearable.

~

I watch as you lie there,  
curled up until a cat hops on the bed.  
You begin to move, sleepy and in a morning fog.  
We are both under the blanket when our eyes meet.

*Hey*, you whisper.

*Hey*, I whisper back.

Our smiles melt into a kiss as I hold your hands beneath the covers.  
It is January, and the room is warm with love.