

For everyone who tried on the slipper before Cinderella

after [Anis Mojgani](#) and [Audre Lorde](#)

For those making tea in the soft light of Saturday morning
in the peaceful kitchen

in the cool house

For those with shrunken hearts still trying to love

For those with large hearts trying to forget

For those with terrors they cannot name

upset stomachs and too tight pants

For those who get cut off in traffic

For those who spend all day making an elaborate meal
that turns out mediocre

For those who could not leave

even when they knew they had to

For those who never win the lottery

or become famous

For those getting groceries on Friday nights

There is something you know

about living

that you guard with your life

your one fragile, wonderful life

wonder, as in, awe,

as in, *I had no idea I would be here now.*

For those who make plans and those who don't

For those driving across the country to a highway that knows them

For the routes we take in the dark, trusting

For the roads for the woods for the dead humming in prayer

For an old record and a strong sun

For teeth bared to the wind

a pulse in the chest

a body making love to itself

There is every reason to hate it here

There is a list of things making it bearable:

your friend's shoulder Texas barbecue a new book

a loud song a strong song a highway that knows you

sweet tea an orange cat a helping hand

an unforgettable dinner

a laugh that escapes you and deflates you

like a pink balloon left soft with room

for goodness to take hold

For those who have looked in the mirror and begged
For those with weak knees and an attitude
For those called “sensitive” or “too much”
For those not called enough
For the times you needed and went without
For the photo of you as a child
quietly icing cupcakes your hair a crackling thunderstorm

Love is coming.

It’s on its way.

Look—

Credit

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About this Poem

“The title of this poem is a line from a poem by Izzie Miller called ‘Praise for Love Stories with Happy Endings,’ used here with her consent. Izzie was a student in a teen poetry workshop I taught in summer 2022, a fantastic writer with a talent for observation. When I read this line in her poem, I was struck immediately by her appreciation for loss, loneliness, and failure. The assignment was to write a praise poem after the ones that appear in [JP Howard](#)’s book *Say/Mirror*. The task resulted in Izzie’s layered ode to the pursuit of love, even if one’s efforts were unsuccessful. When I read Izzie’s poem, I thought of my recent unsuccessful efforts at love. I’d never considered the unsuccessful actors in Cinderella’s story, but Izzie’s poem asked me to connect with them, to deeply consider their stories, too. In writing this poem, I also heard echoes of [Anis Mojgani](#)’s ‘Shake the Dust’ and [Audre Lorde](#)’s ‘Litany for Survival,’ poems to which I am gratefully indebted.”

—Ariana Brown

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Ariana Brown is a queer Black Mexican American poet.

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