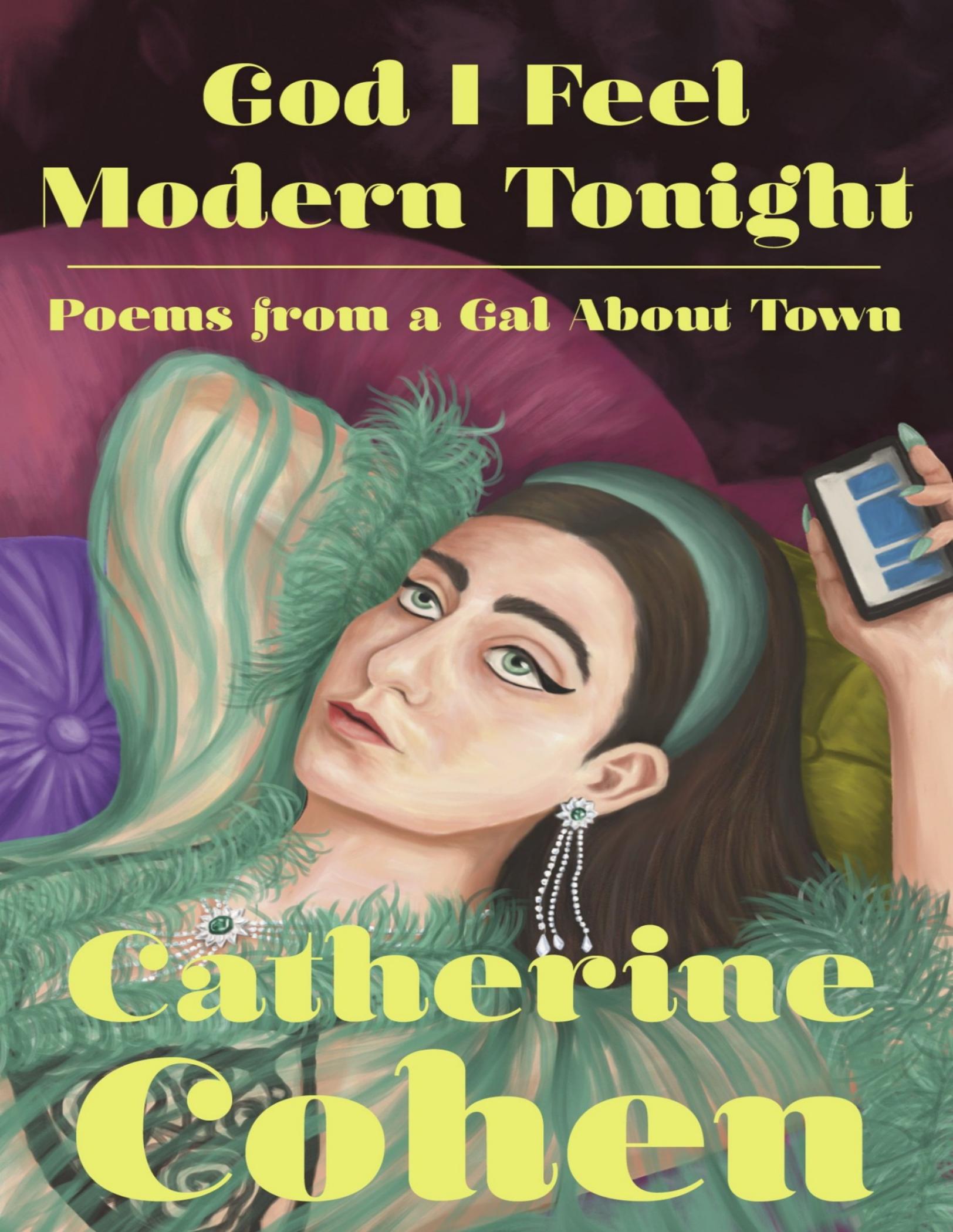


# God I Feel Modern Tonight

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Poems from a Gal About Town



Catherine  
Cohen

# God I Feel Modern Tonight

poems from a gal about town



Catherine Cohen



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THIS IS A BORZOI BOOK

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**poem I wrote after I found out that alcohol is actually just sugar**

I live in America and  
there's only one good show on TV  
I wake up early to watch the sunrise  
anything can be political if you tweet about it  
I can't imagine having children  
I haven't even had sex with a doctor  
sometimes I sigh so loud in public  
that a stranger on the street will ask if I'm okay  
I'm okay my work isn't good but it's online  
and that's what counts

**poem I wrote after I woke up at 6 a.m. as a joke**

my beaded bag & I got stuck on the C train  
& spoke to a guy who said he has the best  
sound system in lower manhattan  
in the future everyone will be 25 minutes late  
to their 45 minute therapy session  
in the future restaurants won't make you wait  
for the whole party to arrive before they seat you  
I can't wait to check my phone  
I can't wait to hear my daughter's first podcast  
I ask my therapist why should I want to grow  
she says I will suffer less  
what is she trying to prove?  
an italian waiter once told me the  
only thing that matters is the sound of the rain  
did he even *want* to fuck me?

## **poem I wrote after I crummed**

(crum: to cry and cum at same time)

my beaded bag & I are going to CityMD  
because I'm convinced I'm dying again  
everyone who works here looks like they run a casino  
but I still believe them  
this morning at 2 p.m. I got a cold brew  
and felt like falling in love  
boys love to run down stairs fast  
men love to date powerful women for 3–8 weeks  
I love when someone is “surprise married”  
that's when someone tells me they're married  
and I'm like but you're my age  
and they're like yeah  
and I'm like that's surprising to me...

**poem I wrote after I went to Tuscany to journal about my toxic guitar teacher**

going swimming is an amazing way  
to stop being on your phone  
I woke up early as a cry for help but  
there's no oranges in this sunrise  
I was promised oranges  
I was promised the upper west side  
I woke up so early  
and the lonely polo horses won't even come say hi  
I can't believe I had sex in these woods  
sex! the biggest, baddest thing you can do, baby!  
sex with its slime and guts  
and romance if you're drunk  
it's nothing like swimming you know  
when it's done

## **poem I wrote after I told you I was empathetic**

I go to the CVS on 14th & 8th  
and you've asked me not to contact you anymore  
one time you were having a smoothie like it was 1998  
and there was nothing I could do about it  
your jawline is so perfect that I cannot stop  
telling you to kill me even though you said please stop  
asking me to kill you  
a leaf just fell outside my window  
remember when I tripped on the dance floor  
and that guy who always talked about Ibiza  
called me a fat whore?

I should have said I'm a leaf  
I'm a leaf like I was in a play  
like I was in something bigger than my body  
I can't tell if my therapist is cool or just has short bangs

**poem I wrote after I decided that all I need to do to be in a good mood  
is spend six hours alone in my apartment every day**

when someone hates me I'm obsessed  
I'm cosplaying as my ex  
by watching a movie  
in the middle of the day  
my career goal is to raise a gorgeous  
brooklyn-based toddler  
whose friend will one day cast them  
in an academy award-winning film as a joke  
I also want to be the first woman  
in ill-fitting pants to be in an episode  
of Succession  
I want to show up with a camel toe  
and have everyone be like  
wait...

**poem I wrote after I looked at your jawline and it ruined my life**

at this point if my pussy doesn't feel weird  
that's when I start to worry  
some of my closest friends have  
chosen to go to weddings  
instead of hanging around the city  
listening to me complain about someone  
I kissed in 2012  
when someone is married I do take that personally  
when someone is tall I love that shit  
there's a german word for wanting  
to burn down everything you own  
but I guess I could just sublet my place

**poem I wrote after I masturbated while wearing airpods**

I just found out dog isn't short for something  
it's actually just called a dog, which is fine with me  
I'm in the kitchen alone, which is romantic in a way  
anything can be romantic if you sigh a lot  
one time I told this guy I loved him  
and he said "I don't know what love is"  
anyway he just got engaged

**poem I wrote after I went to the gym with someone I had sex with**

sometimes being an adult means washing your hair  
sometimes the only way to know  
if someone is definitely straight  
is if they instagram a building  
sometimes I feel like  
if I look at my phone  
I will die  
or even worse, not die

it's insane when you ask someone to give you space  
and then they do

**poem I wrote after I sent three guys the same nude**

my dad is jewish & my mom is catholic  
so I was confirmed catholic  
but now the only holy trinity in my life  
is yeast infection, diarrhea, period blood  
do you like this?

**poem I wrote after I didn't drink for six days and thought about starting a cult**

I have a disease where I never want  
to get out of the uber  
because then it means I have to be somewhere  
for years I've been suffering from a serious addiction  
to Adam Driver and Jason Schwartzman even  
I think my crush hasn't texted me  
because I'm out of town  
but then again I never told him I was going out of town  
what if I used my brain for good  
instead of thinking about boys with swoopy hair all day?

**poem I wrote after you told me your ex is “actually really cool”**

no one talks about this but in 2013  
I inserted a tampon in the back seat of a car  
on my way to a nickelback concert  
I said I'd go to the concert  
because my friend Ted asked me to  
turns out I'm addicted to male attention  
even when it's platonic  
I don't like nickelback  
I only like songs that sound like surfing  
but then the lyrics are like “I wanna die”  
I wish I were smart instead of on my phone

**poem I wrote after you went down on me and then called me “dude”**

whenever someone looks at me on the subway  
I'm like okay they want to have raw dog sex with me  
I think me ordering a coffee “to stay” at a café  
could be the entire plot of a romcom  
I've been trying  
to come up with ideas for my screenplay  
so I googled “things that happen to people”  
and the first thing that came up  
was a website called “list of bad things”  
and the first thing on the list was  
“your home is broken into and you are raped”  
and I think that is definitely two bad things  
I don't know I didn't make the website  
I'm so confident and scared and certain  
that seeing a tree through a window  
is my religion. I hate feeling bad  
I don't even like walking downhill  
when someone hates me it hurts  
my feelings of course

**poem I wrote after I ruined the bathroom at Au Bon Pain**

I haven't listened to a new song since college  
& I'm not going to start now  
the only kind of films I like are where a woman in a wig  
tries to produce a male heir for her stoic husband  
the only kind of music I like  
is where a man with a long beard  
whispers near a tree  
oh no the handsome guy is trying to do comedy  
oh no the polyamorous couple is taking a cooking class  
the older I get the more I find  
instagram to be an amazing place to watch  
your camp friend's fiancé wakeboard

**poem I wrote after I realized no one talks about that time the lululemon employee murdered her coworker in the store**

I don't want to be your girlfriend  
I just want to be a student of english literature  
wandering home late drunk in autumn  
and anyways I'm an awful roommate  
I don't recycle don't repeat that  
the other day  
I was dry-swallowing my birth control pill  
as I citi biked up the williamsburg bridge  
and I was like okay...  
I guess I am the voice of my generation

**poem I wrote after I decided something was going on with the moon**

a guy on the street  
said I looked like I was studying  
audio engineering in school  
he told me he liked my outfit  
he told me to have a cool day  
I am googling how long a stroke lasts

**poem I wrote after you ordered fried shrimp at the diner and I was like  
“gross” but really I was like “dang that sounds good”**

I'm always horny  
& looking for somewhere to charge my phone  
The Paris Review came in the mail today  
and I performed reading it  
I can't write if no one is watching  
I can't stop checking my pussy for weird bumps  
one time I went to the doctor  
and when she told me I'd gained 15 lbs  
I was like that's a lot and she was just like yeah...

## **modern love poem**

I should think more about the government  
but I just want you to tell me  
that fucking me  
is the end of the world

**poem I wrote last night when I couldn't go to sleep because there are no sheets on my bed because I perioded on my other sheets and cannot be bothered to put new ones on**

I'm sorry I friended your fiancé on facebook  
I just meant to look at his profile pictures  
I was on my phone  
I haven't spoken to you in at least seven years  
but you can't get engaged to your personal trainer  
and not have me stalk him

**poem I wrote after I did the dishes in my apartment and was like...  
okay I'm in a play**

my favorite sex position is  
I'm splayed out on a canopy bed  
silk sheets, it is raining  
& my lover has just popped out  
(braving the storm vibes)  
to grab 2 kit kats  
& a black cherry seltzer  
people are addicted to being how they are

the first time I got fingered  
was on a lawn chair  
by a guy who said his favorite band  
was Jason Mraz

\*~life isn't about the breaths you take but the moments that take your  
breath away~\*

## **poem I wrote after experiencing an amazing hangover**

scientists are still trying to figure out  
what childhood event  
caused me to be attracted to men  
who wear baseball hats that are barely  
on top of their head  
one time my ex-boyfriend broke up with me and  
when we got back together  
we made out next to a fountain and he said  
“you’ve gotten better at that” and I said “at kissing?”  
and he said “yeah”  
and I laughed and felt very bad

bodies are hard and mine is soft and often in the way  
you can tell me you like it a million times  
some days I will believe you  
and some days I will not I think the worst thing  
is when you think someone is your friend  
and then they tell you  
they love jogging

**poem I wrote after I told you about my joie de vivre**

I'm sorry I never saw your play  
theatre is yelling at people to leave rooms and/or  
begging people to stay in rooms  
New York is cool because you get to wait in line  
to walk over a puddle

**poem I wrote after I got scolded at the whole foods for stealing a meatball from the salad bar**

I used to get mad at my ex-boyfriend  
whenever it took him too long  
to plug in my iphone charger  
turns out if you listen to Lovefool by the Cardigans  
for three days on repeat  
you will actually get my personality  
I just overheard a guy in my uber pool admit to having  
“low-key misogyny issues”  
over the phone. at least  
I can make myself cum with my hand  
Lifehack!

**poem I wrote after we enjoyed crying about how we can't be together**

no one's ever been sad to leave Los Angeles  
and I refuse to learn how to parallel park  
one time I lied & said I wasn't going to date anymore &  
went to a definitely cool roof party &  
had seven beers & ran around asking everyone  
"who is that tall person and what is his deal?"  
you can't love someone else  
until you love yourself JK

**poem I wrote after calling someone a “darling of the scene”**

I'm sorry I bailed  
on the yoga booty ballet class we signed up for  
I did not sleep well last night  
and am still reeling from the time  
I slept with someone who didn't know  
who Greta Gerwig is

**poem I wrote after seeing that guy from project runway at the whole  
foods AGAIN**

I'm sorry I didn't text you back  
about borrowing my adult-size tutu  
for your sketch comedy show  
I was on the L train trying to remember  
how I knew the guy sitting  
across from me turns out  
it was from sex

**poem I wrote after I read an article on why it is so hard to go up stairs**

I just made eye contact with a stranger  
while I burped  
so loud for so long  
while crossing the street like Frogger  
the only video game I ever played was called  
Mary Kate and Ashley: Magical Mystery Mall  
it was fun to play because I could be thin  
and blonde for a while  
it would be nice to be thinner but  
I have all the working parts  
I don't want to get hit by a car at all

**poem I wrote after I called myself the taylor swift of comedy**

I am listening to a spotify playlist called “indie brunch”  
while browsing the wikipedia page for “murder”  
one time I drank so much I woke up in the hospital  
and I still had to go to spanish class

**poem I wrote after a stranger on youtube said he wouldn't fuck me  
with someone else's cock**

I just turned 25 yesterday  
so now I am ¼ done with my life  
I can't decide if I should get a \$20 cheeseburger  
or save up to buy a microwave  
I would eat anything for more twitter followers  
I went to the opening day of whole foods williamsburg  
they let me throw the first pitch  
I slung an organic leek into the soft paw  
of a gray-haired tween  
it is amazing that things  
are not constantly falling on our heads  
especially in Brooklyn, New York,  
where everyone in the world lives

## **poem I wrote after I ordered a waffle as a side dish**

I think about the girls my boyfriend kissed  
before he knew I existed more  
than I think about my friends and family and  
I can't do a cartwheel  
yesterday at rehearsal I told everyone  
I could do the splits  
and then ripped my urban outfitters pants in half  
it was funny in a TV way but no one laughed

you say it is okay to be anxious  
you say love is like a long worm

I think  
I have a yeast infection

**poem I wrote after I asked my personal trainer if he believed in god**

last night I went to a concert  
and a girl younger than me  
was wearing a t-shirt that said  
“suck my ass” and I felt old  
I know I’m not actually old  
but it’s fun to be like  
haha I’m old  
whenever I think someone looks cool I realize  
they are just thin  
jealousy is cool because it is like swallowing a house  
that you just set on fire

**poem I wrote after my therapist told me to have a drink**

one time I misplaced a block  
of cheddar cheese in my apartment  
I wrote a facebook status about it  
and it almost got a hundred likes  
I found the block of cheese  
45 minutes later on my bookshelf  
I would read more if it were easier to hold a book up  
while lying down they are too heavy

**poem I wrote after I told you I was free bleeding at the improv show**

I'm watching that catfish show on MTV  
the host just told all the girls with eyeliner  
that the person they have been sexting is fat  
and now everyone is sad  
one time I thought I was in love  
because I was sad all the time  
what if I wrote a poem about what love was lol

**poem I wrote after you helped me assemble my new couch and then  
broke up with me on it**

the body is elastic  
and I don't think it's embarrassing  
that you bought a hat.  
the body is elastic  
and I like to run when that  
brian eno song plays  
if it's cold out  
and I see the shape  
of your name  
on my phone.  
the body is elastic  
and love is boring but sex  
is more of it and  
your friend just  
got one of those dogs that can't breathe  
but they keep making them  
even though it's like  
a genetic thing?  
anyways the point is I still love you  
because I don't know what you're thinking  
and because we refuse to talk about it  
I remain in a good mood  
because the performance hasn't  
ended and I'm an incredible actress  
because I think so  
and feel so much all the time  
and when I tire of this

there will be more of it  
you're not the first  
to give me a book  
they haven't read

## **love poem for my british lover**

in a past life I was a tycoon smoking  
a cigar and you were my wife. I'm sorry  
I never took you to Paris. But tonight  
at the casino you promise me we'll stay  
till 4 a.m. There's an old man  
in the corner sipping noodle soup  
and you ask me what I love  
about that. Back in New York  
I eat and sleep fine. I'm sad  
about many different colored things  
I turn into a paste. If I'm honest  
I felt more in love that time  
the Orthodox Jew I was dating  
ran away from me when we saw his friend  
in line to see the Gatsby remake at the Garden Theater.  
Do you know a bunch of people  
paid hundreds of dollars to watch a man  
read the entirety of the Great Gatsby  
out loud onstage?  
Do you know I've never been  
laughed out of a room for saying my favorite book  
is Catcher in the Rye?  
Do you know why I keep telling everyone  
we're getting married in Paris  
as a joke  
in the spring?

**every good song is named “dreams”**

I wanted something to happen to me. My mouth  
was so dry and running about some drummer  
I spoke to for six minutes at a theater  
on 54th street three weeks ago.

We were walking down Atlantic Avenue and  
some kind of street zamboni was blowing litter  
at my shins, whirring loud enough that when it stopped  
I realized I was screaming

**poem I wrote after you told me “I don’t think you’re as amazing as you think you are”**

That summer I was so close to the city  
there was no easy way to get in the water  
I bruised my shins falling out of the canoe  
I’d pulled to the center of the world

I’d have to muck through the slip  
at the bottom of the pond  
to let myself take time off  
Nothing as a respite from nothing. How young

I felt so serious spelling out I Love You.  
(and putting a period at the end)  
so you would know I really meant it  
I only meant it because I was lonely  
but I don’t see at all why that wouldn’t count

## **Life is in the spaces between sex with you**

at the bodega on Nostrand  
I can see the reflection  
of the shop behind me as  
I look out the window

through aisles of potato chips,  
variations on Cholula  
over the radio a man croons  
“Jazz Club: if you found us, you’re in”

when it happens, poems are  
poem-ier. songs are song-ier. heartbreak,  
when it comes, and it will come,  
is always new

## **oh god**

it rained for six days straight in new york city  
and I started telling everyone I want a boyfriend  
the rain made me think I wanted a boyfriend  
so what if I do  
I accept I can't change you, I accept you're in rome,  
I accept I've romanticized  
your knowledge of music theory—  
for all my talk of songs I'm much better at calculus,  
geometry, noticing the way  
you pull your sleeves up in the park.  
all my fantasies revolve around a screen door,  
red wine, the dirty projectors, stew in the summer,  
rain as an excuse to do everything in excess,  
sex that makes you hungry  
for stew in the summer. I am  
not the one who noticed  
I only reveal what I really want in song—  
a man in flannel with one hand  
on the steering wheel  
telling me something I won't remember  
because it isn't memorable

## **it's worse than I thought**

street signs don't know about you  
the woman from belgium putting her hair up  
in a ponytail doesn't know about you  
the new starbucks on 15th and 9th sells pizza  
sorry, flatbreads, beanies, tumblers?  
there's an espresso station, a full-service bar,  
gender-neutral bathrooms with slanted  
fuck-me sinks that don't  
know about you  
and everyone in this starbucks  
is acting like my being in this starbucks  
isn't the craziest thing in the world,  
acting like today has anything to do  
with not being the day you leave  
I call you, wine-drunk and humid  
glowing night-bright and wanting  
you to respect my time  
telling myself I'm telling not begging  
I'm a communicator, I'm mature,  
I'm buying kettle chips and wheat beer  
with a credit card  
there's nothing wrong with feeling on fire  
if it's embarrassing it's probably good

## Italy

I've been neglecting my poetry group  
but that's just the start of it.

Sheila Heti says her depression was a wall  
that kept her from seeing the world.

I dreamt my ex had a "face disease"

This vacation is the longest day of my life and  
even here the water smells like Arkansas,  
the catfish think in Italian

I wonder if Joe Bolton  
ever wished he hadn't said

I love you  
as he wondered how it was  
we came to live in cities.

I got nervous and ordered  
the cow stomach at dinner

Solitude

A sofa bed

The catfish & their Italian thoughts

It's not fun being by yourself  
& it's not fun being with someone else  
that's not an original thought  
which just makes it true

**The night we met you kissed me in a closet and I slapped you and told  
you to ruin my life**

all I do is eat and drink and fuck  
and think about fucking you  
and fucking you is remembering  
the version of me that got off  
just at the thought that I could  
in front of another person  
this isn't romantic  
this is some kind of sick  
cosmic experiment  
to take me away from my work  
I'm not a fan  
of anything  
I don't care about rope or sand or  
winged beasts  
my god I could die  
and will  
if you look at me  
while you hang up the curtains  
you pulled off the rod  
the last time  
you looked at me

**There's no such thing as overreacting, it's called reacting, darling!**

a doctor told me my ass  
is scientifically weak  
and that's why my hip hurts  
oh that's why my hip hurts  
that's why I'm calling you  
to ask if you miss me  
which is the best way  
to know you don't.  
god I feel modern tonight  
god I feel present  
I just watched a nine-minute video  
where a girl named Nicole  
that I've never met  
tells me how to make a messy bun  
with just a clip  
you tell me there's no halves with me  
you tell me there's pearls in my gut  
I tell you there's a play about us  
you ask what it's really about.  
my friend cuts my hair  
my friend brings me flowers to put  
in a vase my friend made me  
this bay window makes me  
happy to be sad  
James says there's a difference  
between humor and satire  
and that it's technically not a bay window

if it doesn't extend to the floor

## **the void**

last night I told ian I loved him  
and then he made me squirt  
four times just like  
in the movies  
I'm on a plane to london  
to meet aaron at a fuck hotel  
I don't feel bad  
about sending scotty  
the nudes I take  
pills to feel  
less like a protagonist  
drink orange wine to  
feel more like one  
I live in new york so I know  
about joan didion  
she says the void is like a snake  
you can't kill  
so you better keep your eye on it  
but when you bite my neck  
it feels so  
good

**poem I wrote after I downloaded The Sims at age 28 during quarantine**

In Paris we couldn't figure out how to get  
to the Arc de Triomphe so we went to Sephora  
we had pink wine by the water  
and you told me you didn't think  
anyone ever died from getting fingered too hard  
that night I got McDonald's  
and watched 13 Reasons Why alone  
on my laptop in Paris  
I never told anyone that  
a few weeks ago I broke a glass in my apartment and  
I was too lazy to clean it up so  
I kind of just pushed it into a corner  
and now every few days I step on a tiny piece of glass  
it doesn't hurt it's just part of my new lifestyle  
can you die from being in a bad mood?

**poem I wrote after I had a dream Jessica Simpson took me “under her wing”**

I cut my boyfriend’s hair on Instagram Live  
and all I got was a sense of community  
and this rush of adrenaline  
Spotify tells me I can work from home with Vivaldi  
what’s it called when you dread the end  
of something before it starts?  
we’re out of toilet paper and I just ordered  
a bejeweled headband online  
it’s coming Friday is it sexy  
how much I hate being alone?

I ask my boyfriend if he wants to marry me  
we’ve been drinking a new milk made from peas  
I tell him I would say no if he asked  
he says that’s okay it’s a big decision

I miss the food from Starbucks  
I miss the shuttle at LAX  
I miss crying in Italy outside  
listening to Norman Fucking Rockwell on repeat  
counting down the hours  
till you’d pick me up at Gatwick  
not as a surprise, because I asked you to  
which upset you  
because you were going to,  
whether or not I asked

**poem I wrote after I listened to my Spotify top songs of 2019 and it undid all the work I did in therapy last year**

doctors really broke the mold  
when they invented antidepressants  
that make you feel worse  
a pill that makes it harder to cum?  
honey, where do I sign?!

I tried unlearning jealousy in 2015  
I tried barre class  
next year I'm going to buy something  
and feel better for 12 minutes

## **poem I wrote after my lover quoted Zoolander towards me**

If you don't have crippling anxiety you aren't modern  
you're a pioneer woman  
churning butter in your bonnet,  
having 12 kids near a wagon et al.  
sometimes I feel so sharp but my body is so soft  
is there an app for that?  
I miss the simple things:  
emailing someone named Jen,  
crying about different types of love on the plane,  
saying "my career is my boyfriend" over and over again  
until blood comes out of all my holes,  
figure skating.  
I just want to go to an institution  
where they charge you \$12  
to add the meat chicken  
and tell you I once had a therapist tell me  
you can't gain weight  
if you don't put food in your mouth

## **poem I wrote after I opened a canned wine upon receiving your email**

we go for a jog and I ask if you think we're dead  
like a stoner  
I don't like weed  
because it makes me think I don't have legs  
but I keep trying it every two years  
before a massive panic attack  
my favorite diet is not eating sugar  
but liquor doesn't count  
I'm going to do sober January  
which means I don't drink  
for the first four days of January and then I forget  
I love the idea of playing chess  
I love the egg bites at Starbucks  
I had a dream I fucked Eminem "reverse cowgirl" style  
on a beach in another country  
If I die I want to be surrounded by everyone I love  
and as I breathe my last breath  
I'll ask everyone if my hair looks better  
half up  
or full down

**poem I wrote after I asked my friend if her new boyfriend cares about me**

I'm wearing jeans to punish myself unfortunately  
I just walked into the other room  
to make you pause your video game  
so I could tell you that I think  
if I read more I'll be in a better mood  
today we filmed ourselves having sex and then got upset  
because I thought I looked too big  
and you thought you looked too small  
then we went to watch the sunset  
which is a nice thing to do  
my big plan is to lose weight  
by only eating cucumbers  
cucumbers for meals only  
my therapist says it's so important right now  
to be gentle  
lately it's so fucking impossible to talk to her  
which is the thing  
I am paying to do  
the river is low enough that I can go walk around it  
and skip rocks  
which is a nice thing to do  
even as I finish this poem  
I'm mad at myself for not having started  
another one yet

**poem I wrote after another exquisite morning on my phone**

why is a bagel with butter so good? it should go viral  
dieting is about eating as many eggs as you can  
until you cry because you miss life before all the eggs  
I love eating but I love drinking too please  
don't put me in a box  
should I intermittently fast or intuitively eat  
or just continue to think about  
food when I'm eating and  
when I'm not eating for the rest  
of my years  
on earth  
I'm beginning to suspect  
I'm not going to drop the 12 lbs  
I've been trying to lose  
for the past fourteen years but who knows  
one time in college my boyfriend  
said he needed time to ruminate  
and I was like what does that mean  
and he explained it to me in the dining hall  
now I get to have sex with you whenever I want  
and when I'm out of town  
I watch porn on my phone  
and they say women can't have it all?????????grow up

## **poem I wrote after I asked you if cereal can expire**

there's a pandemic and I think my arms are fat  
I used to worry I had vaginismus  
but it turns out I just wasn't attracted to my ex  
I put the wrong kind of gas  
in the car and hate being alone  
everything I do is on my computer,  
which already feels like a word from the past  
my children will type before they can walk  
when I say children I feel like a painting,  
like a Victorian woman  
sent to be by the sea with her ailments,  
which isn't not what's happening  
upstate we have near constant sex and eat string cheese  
I tell my therapist the rules  
of Love Island and we unearth  
that I feel like an islander trapped in the villa  
wondering how things will be different  
back on the outside  
there is no world now but I still feel like  
there must be some fabulous party  
going on somewhere  
everyone wearing shawls without me  
smoking cigarettes with those long things  
what are those? I miss feeling alive  
by which I mean crying about my perfect life  
and boys who don't know how to dress themselves,  
who tell me they wish my bathroom

was farther from my bed  
so they could look at my ass  
for longer when I walk away  
I keep asking you if you think we are dead up here  
the sky is brilliant and the playground is empty  
parts of your house are warmer than others  
and we sleep in the cold spots, holding each other close

**poem I wrote after the new taylor swift album came out thank god**

I haven't seen the sun in four days  
and my dad just said he was proud of me  
for finishing the leftovers  
mailing letters is a great way  
to feel like you're from before  
when no one could google you & see  
that you did a capella in college  
one time I wanted so bad  
to fall in love that I did it  
what's it called when you have a sixth sense  
that your ex is engaged?

**poem I wrote after I had the strangest urge to confide in dear friends  
beneath starlight**

I just took a pregnancy test to feel alive  
and all I got was piss on my hands  
I don't think I'd take my daughter  
to get her nails done  
if I were a mother  
she can do that with her friends  
if she wants  
I'd like to have kids at 35  
so I can start wearing graceful linen sacks  
and calling everyone "darling"  
I'd like to wear lipstick  
and lean on a built-in bookcase  
and tell you I like Helen Frankenthaler  
and did you know that's her painting  
on the Renata Adler novel I told you to read  
the one I never finished  
because I needed to have sex  
with someone who lived on  
the Upper West Side  
can you grab some ice?  
I like ice in my wine

**poem I wrote after I texted my therapist that I'm not pregnant**

all this hair grows out of the mole on my face  
and I've got an ulcer from being alive  
I'm so smart and beautiful  
and terrible and horny  
someone who called me a cunt online  
just liked my tweet about feminism  
but if I think about you laughing at six flags  
I still feel so in love with the whole world  
and that day we waited so long  
to sit in the front car  
that by the time it was our turn  
it was night and dark and raining  
but we still got on the ride

**poem I wrote after I tried to write a tweet about sparkling water**

I've got a disease where I haven't watched  
an entire feature film since the aughts  
do you like how I said "aughts"?  
you don't see that every day!  
I've never been to a sex party  
but one time I made fun of this girl  
for bringing deviled eggs to an event  
and then I ate six of them.  
humiliation, satisfaction,  
a long walk home in spring.  
I love sex and I love before it—  
the double vodka soda leg touch  
Is it possible to miss everything at once?

**poem I wrote after I took a photo of my tits with a self-timer alone like an adult**

I don't want to turn 29  
but it's better than the alternative  
I'm tall for my age  
and love buying diet coke  
years ago I dated this guy in a blue sweater  
who was horny to get down on one knee  
but I needed to fuck someone  
in the bathroom of a divebar in Bushwick  
that I later referred to as "finger ass guy"  
I'm very interested in Victorian literature  
and why my left breast is so much  
bigger than my right  
whenever someone has a vase  
or something in their home  
I'm always like where did you get that?  
did you wake up one morning  
and walk to the open air market?  
did the cerulean catch your eye?  
did you pay in cash?  
errands are so glamorous  
before I've done them  
I'm so in love with the grocery store  
with asking you to grab the balsamic vinegar  
with watching you eat  
the stem of the strawberry  
like a party trick and we're  
the only ones invited

we've gone full cartoon-mode  
wearing the same outfit every day  
for the rest of our lives  
waking up and having coffee  
complaining and getting over it  
you're surprised when I tell you I pray  
but I like the idea of wanting something  
all the way  
into space

## **poem I wrote after I made you tell me I was sexy four times today**

I'm finding quarantine to be an amazing time  
to revert to the basest, most vile  
version of myself I've worked years  
to outgrow  
I'm reading a book about the guy  
who discovered the color "mauve"  
and googling vintage wallpaper  
don't tell me what day it is  
I've never been patient  
I don't know how to "let something go"  
people love encouraging self-care  
until it's inconvenient for them  
everyone on twitter is upset and that's the point  
one time I had a trainer who was like  
instead of having four drinks in one night  
you should have four drinks in one week  
and I was like yeah  
that's definitely an amazing idea

boys love getting haircuts  
boys love analogies  
boys love arguing and calling it philosophy  
this guy who wronged me just liked my comment  
on our mutual friend's Instagram I'm almost  
thirty

### **road trip poem #3**

in LA we got naked & swam in the ocean  
we ate cured meats & carrots  
& sat in the back of a red pickup truck  
like we were in a film where two old friends fight  
& wrestle their way into a hug  
heave-sobbing as the dust settles  
I want to be famous for being the first person  
who never feels bad again

## **road trip poem #9**

I just zoned out while a married person told me  
they know of an amazing banjo player I think  
I don't care about fruit or anything sweet  
that isn't chocolate lava cake served  
on a white tablecloth at a restaurant  
you get to go to because someone else  
is in town. one time in LA a wealthy man  
bought me a deconstructed cobb salad &  
told me I should never take a job for money  
I think he has a pied-à-terre  
I would love to be in a good mood in america

## road trip poem #12

sara says her art friends in philly  
aren't happy and they aren't even close  
I wonder if I should get a dishwasher  
yesterday we drove through south dakota,  
minnesota, wisconsin, we pulled over  
right where james wright  
saw those lonely horses  
& I tell you I'd been thinking about his  
hammock poem where he says  
he wasted his life because we saw the sun  
reflecting off that buffalo dung in yellowstone  
which was overrated then amazing  
how deep does the ground go by the way?  
that night we had sex under the stars  
and I peed in the wrong place after  
do you think they will know it was me?  
I do my best work  
when I'm hungover and mortified  
no one ever got any good ideas  
from feeling perfect

## **road trip poem #17**

I'm jealous of everyone  
and wouldn't change a thing  
every time we have sex I tell you  
it's one for the record books  
and you say something can't be special  
if everything is. boys love drumming on stuff  
boys love taking their shirt off with one hand  
oh my god experience  
whatever pleasure you can in this life  
for example I'm at mcdonald's right now

## road trip poem #20

I think a company that mailed me free  
sunglasses just unfollowed me on instagram  
we agree that watching the sun set  
is better than watching it rise  
after it's up you have to just like  
...do a whole day  
I've gone full-tilt suburban mom  
leaving my coffee on top of the car  
as we speed off  
unbuttoning my jeans as we drive  
wishing I was somewhere else for a second  
and then changing my mind

### **A Note About the Author**

CATHERINE COHEN, a native of Houston, Texas, is a comedy sensation who has a residency at Joe's Pub and hosts a weekly show at Club Cumming in NYC; she also cohosts the popular podcast about dating, boys, and sex, *Seek Treatment*. She has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Vogue*, and *The Village Voice*, and was named Best Newcomer at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2019. Her many film and TV credits include a role in Michael Showalter's *The Lovebirds* and Season 3 of *High Maintenance* on HBO. Follow her while you're young [@catccohen](#) on Instagram.



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