

**Love letter to Virginia Beach.** by JSA Lowe

You wouldn't believe my body misses yours, have no idea I still want you. The times in a day you come back to me in pieces, sparagmos: silky hair, a thin arm curled around my waist, that flicker of worry in glacial eyes. We would have married but I wasn't allowed in your bedroom.

We tell ourselves stories about what we can't do. The dark mother keeps her daughter locked up away from the dangers. Dolls in an apotropaic row. My own mom likes to agree with me brightly when it contradicts what she just said, it can make you crazy if you think about it, so. I don't.

When I get a virus, my joints ache from old soft-tissue injuries I didn't know I had. Age is like that too, child scars reappear, unseaming flesh after decades, it can be lethal. They can be. Openings into which you fall, can get lost for days. There aren't enough. Did you try.

I don't mind, it's why I got my PhD in villainy. Just keep waiting for one more man out of three to die off, for my freedoms. Is it like that for you? Are you expectant murder of a death? There's

a virgin piña colada joke in here somewhere, there's us with watery well drinks paralytic watching everyone else move. There's me attempting to stroke your hair and flopping, fall guy in the making, your NPC that takes damage. There's another femme in the bathroom

who shouts exuberantly *bitch I saw you dancing*, there's my one spare isolated song—