

The worst part is it wasn't bad.

If it had been bad, it wouldn't hurt. I could drown out the pain with anger and vindication and logic. I could remember the bad and bury the good and move on unscathed.

I wouldn't obsessively play "our" song because sometimes it makes me feel good, but most times it just reminds me that it's over and irreparable and makes me cry, but I keep playing it hoping that this will be one of the feel-good plays. I wouldn't need the ice packs you left in the freezer to minimize the puffiness around my eyes before work in the morning. I wouldn't have the constant clock ticking in my head, an endless metronome that counts down to when I can stop pretending that I'm ok and moving on and not endlessly thinking of you.

During the day I tell myself it's not over. I tell myself I'll call you on my lunch break. And on my lunch break I tell myself I'll call you after work. And all the while the clock keeps ticking.

And I deleted your number from my phone because if I kept calling and hanging up, you would stop answering blocked calls, and getting your voicemail instead of your voice when I know you're there would be unbearable. I spent days trying to decide whether the fact that technology allows you to never need to memorize anyone's phone number is a blessing or a curse. If not for that, your number would be permanently etched into my brain, programmed into the muscle memory of my fingertips. Instead, my fingers remember how to call you with speed dial, but there's no longer your number in that memory slot. And I finally decided that it's both. It is both a blessing and a curse because, although all I want to do is call just to hear you say "hello," it is best that I do not. It is best that I let your voice slowly fade from my memory. Even though that is the least desirable thing I can think of doing right now.

The weekends are the worst. The nine hours I spend on weekdays pretending I'll call you later are open and empty, waiting for me to fill them in. I fill them with denial, and "our song" and washing. I have washed everything I own at least ten times. I swear I have the cleanest apartment anyone has ever seen. I should probably phone the Guinness Book of Records, because I have no doubt I would make the cut. The only reason I don't is that the media shows up when people make it into the Guinness Book, and they would ask me what inspired me to clean so much, and I'd be forced to admit to the whole world that I'm unforgivably pathetic and that the only way I can keep from killing myself is by cleaning.

I said the worst thing was that it wasn't bad. I change my mind. While that is definitely horrendously bad, on second glance, it really is only second best to the very worst thing. The very worst thing absolutely has to be that this is all my fault. If it weren't, and if I could blame you, I might be able to slant this into something tolerable.

And don't misunderstand me. I blame you. If only you had done a better job of communicating your feelings. If only you had been around more often when I was available. Did you ever think about taking my schedule into consideration? But this part, the blaming you, it all happens at the crescendo of the denial. When lost in a mass of denial I can tell myself that it wasn't my fault at all and that this was inevitable and that it should have happened sooner. But even then, even when I'm in the throes of lying to myself, I know that I'm lying. Somewhere in the undercurrent I always know what really happened. I always know that this is something I did and you didn't want.

And I was wrong. That isn't the worst part. The worst part is that you left thinking that I didn't care. Or that I didn't care enough. But I did. I cared so much! And that's why I had to erase your number. That's why I couldn't stop calling you. Because I knew if I could just explain to you that I did care, that there were entire days that I didn't think of anything but you, then things would be ok. They probably would never go back to how they were. I might never see you again. But at least you would know that I'm not the careless jerk I acted like. And that you were loved. Sometimes overwhelmingly so. Every single day. And that I'm sorry for making you ever feel otherwise. And there's a small part of me, a ridiculous and hopeless part I know, but a part all the same that thinks if only I could somehow successfully convey this all to you, that maybe this would fix everything. That this would be enough to reverse the damage and make everything

better. But I know that, even if I somehow were able to find the words to tell you how I feel and properly apologize, that it would never go back to how it was. The wound is bigger than the band-aid can cover. So I deleted your number rather than putting myself through a new cycle of pain and you through the most awkward conversation in the universe.

My sister says that I'll get over this. That one day I'll wake up and you won't be the first thing on my mind. I've had heartbreak before, and I know it felt like a perpetual annihilation and that I healed. And I know that my sister thinks that what she says is true. That I will move on and find someone who fits me even better, but I swear she's wrong. There will never ever be another person in a million years that I will love even half as much.

But if I do, and I really don't think I can, I won't forget to actually be there.