

AUNT CHLOE

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SweetHeart

She existed in my phone. I held her in the palm of my hands. A few photos, a few sentences, a song—just a glimpse of who she was. Dating sites never seem

to fulfill their purpose, yet I was holding her. She called me sweetheart. Ironic. Now, I hope she forgets my name was anything but.

It was always raining, and the temperature never went past fifty-five. We could hear the cars on the street below and watch the flickering light of the wax burner

dance up and down the walls. What were we talking about? Dreams? Witches? There was always rice in the pantry. The bedroom door would never close

without a slam and she thought pajama pants weren't just for sleeping. I knew her mom's sign and laughed at her childhood stories I was never there to witness.

We didn't say goodbye, we said peace. We journeyed all over Atlanta, Old San Juan, and Ikea, hand in hand. Each turn causing us to bump shoulders 'cause I

never really could walk in a straight line.

We never got to name the cats and houseplants we never adopted. We couldn't hear over the pain that dimmed the lights and smothered the joy that dared to

swell. She said we met in another life. Suppose we said goodbye before. We cried a lot less once we stopped asking for reassurance and I love yous. I think about

what could've been if we could've survived in the creases of each other's arms. But maybe some things are better when they're exactly an arm's reach.

She wanted to shrink back into my phone. Back into a space where she could just barely reach me. A faint squeeze of the palm. A little pressure on the pads of my fingers.

I hope somebody else is holding her now, I hope the weight they feel is comforting. I hope they don't drop her. She's a lot to hold in the palm of your hand.

Sydnee Breaker, a senior studying English at Spelman College, is an idealist with a natural curiosity for human experience. As a writer she focuses on creating expressive and descriptive accounts of her personal life.