

**Prom**  
**a participatory monologue**

**by Katie Pearl**

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***Lone Prom Girl is wearing a pretty white dress with pink roses scattered all over it and high heeled gold shoes.***

***Disco Ball.***

***Madonna "Crazy for You" is playing.***

***She steps up to the microphone.***

LONE PROM GIRL

You know, there's something downright cruel about sending girls out into prom this way. I just had to say that. That's, what I said, that's a quote from *Our Town*, the play, I checked it out from the library. That's where I intern. Except I changed the word "marriage" to "prom" because we are at a prom and I wanted it to be relevant.

So thank you for asking me to make this speech. And I just want to say that:

Prom is a place of possibility.

Of saying "goodbye" to something. School. And saying: "hello!" to what comes next. To life.

I like being in possibility. It's the best place, I think. Because anything can happen there.

Like sitting in front of your gmail screen, waiting for the next email to pop up. Before it comes, it could be anything. Someone confessing that they love you. An offer for a job or maybe a surprise vacation. Or maybe a trip to a place in the world you've never been. Maybe someone is going to write to you and say "katie, I'm picking you to ask you to do a very special thing. Out of all the people in the world I am asking you. I found you and you didn't even know I was looking."

But once the email actually arrives it kind of shuts those options down.

It's probably just an update from a listserve you signed up for, or a coupon from bed bath and beyond.

No, OK, it's fine. It's fine. To pretend, I mean. No- Ok.

I do have a secret, actually.

My secret is that my date is not really in the bathroom.

My secret is that I don't. have a date.

And I didn't lose my corsage. I just. never got one.

And it's actually not ok to say my dress is my corsage.

That's actually not really as good.

I know that it's OK  
to be alone in life.  
At least that's what I've been told by  
my sister.

Like the performance artist, Kristina Wong? Do you know her? She's a crazy  
performance artist, and she went to Florida and had a whole marriage ceremony on the  
beach where she got married to herself.

But I'm not a crazy performance artist.  
I'm just scared me.

And just because I'm a lesbian-leaning bisexual doesn't mean I don't long for a partner,  
just like everyone else in the world.

A partner, a lover, you know like a life partner, someone to share my life with.  
Someone who loves me  
And who I love  
Or at least am not easily bored by.

Why?  
Why can't that be me?

Like the two of you guys—you got dressed on video chat so you could match what you  
were wearing.

Or the two of you guys. You have hairstyles that look totally the same. That's really  
cool.

I want that. With someone.

But if I do find that, how do I do it then? How do I make it work? How do you stay  
together with someone for a long time like that. Not like getting dressed on video chat  
together, but—like life partner together? I see the old couples at restaurants. And they  
are sitting across from each other, and they don't really talk. They just eat their food.  
And I have no idea what that's like for them. Are they content? Are they really  
disappointed in each other? Do they feel like the possibilities of their lives have  
collapsed into this one boring reality of eating soup at Cracker Barrel with someone  
they're no longer intrigued by, and do they mind that?

You can make your hairstyles look the same, but will that actually last? Will it maintain?

I'm not prepared.  
The whole world's wrong, that's what the matter.

*To someone in the audience:*

Would you mind slow dancing with me, for a second? You can read, while we do. Here, is the book Double Date by Rosemary du Jardin. In the book, two identical twins are going to the prom, but Mike chooses Penny, who gets sick, and Pam, who really likes Mike, wears Penny's dress instead of her own, and Mike thinks it's her. They have "peplums" on their dresses. I believe a peplum is a little stiff part that sticks up in the middle, like over your sternum. I could be wrong. Here, we can listen to that chapter. While I dance with (what's your name?). With [name].

*Ask the dancing partner questions:*

Are you single? Let's pretend you are single. Ok.

If you had to choose between being with someone who engaged you intellectually, or someone who matched you spiritually, or someone you have great sexual chemistry with, or someone who was really good at making you feel loved, and you had to pick, which would you choose?

*[share answer]*

Ok, so let's say you're with that person. What percentage of the time do you wish you were with someone else?

*[share answer]*

Ok, and are you together for 3 years, 7 years, 15 years or forever?

*[share answer]*

Ok and let's say you are with that person and then you meet someone who feels like your soul mate. Do you have an affair, or do you turn down the opportunity to be with that person because you believe in the commitment you've made and you think greater satisfaction will come that way?

*[share answer]*

What if I asked you to go on a real date with me. Would you take me up on it? Or politely decline? How would you do decline? Or—what do you think we would do on our date?

The song is over. Thank you *[to dance partner]*. Thank you *[to reader]*. Thank you *[to the audience]*.

Happy Prom everyone! Happy, Happy Prom!