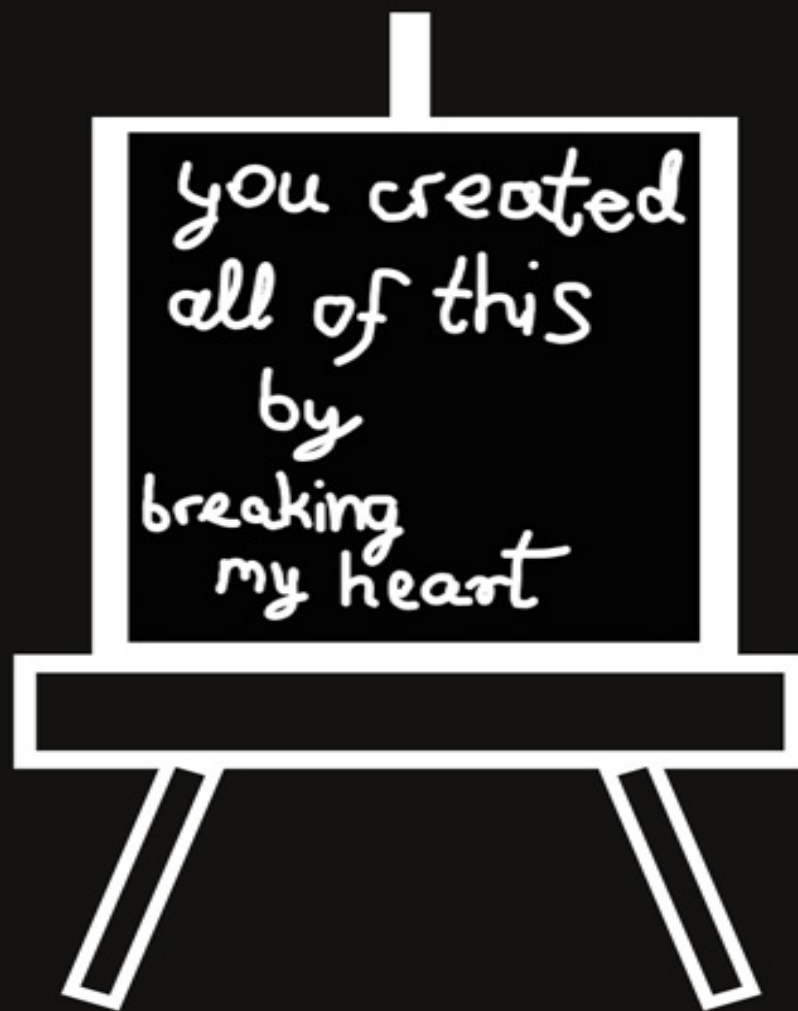


Natalie Fastovski

Thank you for inspiring
the villains in my art



short prose, poetry and weird art

a special thanks to:

Eda Aydogan

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my editors

my former teachers

and everyone who inspired the villains in my art.

Content

short prose

thank you

for

inspiring

the villains

in my art

you

created

all of this

by

breaking my heart

poetry

Don't assume any of this is about me,
but if you read something in this book that makes you
wonder whether I'm writing about you:
I probably am.

SHORT PROSE

thank you

They will always be a part of you, but you will never *be* them.

You will never be them, but they will always be a part of you.

There is a war in your head because there was a war that they caused. You weren't there, but you know. Everyone knows. You are supposed to be someone, to hate someone, to celebrate something because of what they did and what they went through.

Is this you?

You are alive because of them.

"Look at this pose, the way you sit on this chair with your legs crossed and your arm on the table. Look at your posture; you look just like *her*."

The old man points at a black and white picture covered in dust. There is a woman sitting on a chair and staring at something the viewer can't see. Her hair is perfectly braided, she is wearing a long dress and gloves.

You are the villain in someone else's story. Someone, somewhere has looked at this very picture, pointed at it and said, "Those are the people who killed us."

Your world is separated into villains and superheroes, you live in a fairy tale and everyone else does, too. There are only two teams. If you aren't one of *them*, you are the bad guy.

Who are you?

You don't even know everything these people, "your" people, did. How would you know? You weren't there. You weren't alive. You never told them what to do. You didn't

have any influence on what has happened, but you are one of them.

One day, you are just yourself, but you need nothing more than facts to realise that sometimes, you are the one you despise, that you are the one you hate with a passion, just in a later generation and with a different hair colour. They live inside you and the fact that they died when you weren't even alive doesn't change anything. They'll still live on inside you, the wars they caused can't be uncaused, the words they said can't be unsaid.

Who are you if you are not them?

"Do you know why you are sitting in this very chair right now? You should thank them all for it."

But isn't there more? Don't you know yourself better?

"Now look at you. You are just what you were taught: you judge people based on what happens between their bedsheets without knowing them, without knowing their story, without knowing what they feel and without knowing what they went through. You support the values you were taught to support, you hit a dead end when you try to explain your view of the world with logic. 'That's just the way it is' is not an explanation. You raise your kids differently because you say your mother did it wrong, you let them swear, you buy them all the new and fashionable and sparkly little things they so desperately want because your mother didn't. Your mother will always be your mother or at least the one who gave birth to you, but you will always be yourself and the result of the environment that has shaped you."

He doesn't know what to respond or maybe he pretends he didn't hear anything. He just takes the picture of this woman and his bony hands shake as he puts it back into the little box and then onto the shelf that he so regularly examines - sometimes it makes him cry, sometimes it doesn't. Today, it doesn't.

He is probably still tired from the war and everyone knows he needs to rest.

Maybe he will understand one day.

He is alive, because he made it, not because of them.

You will never be them, but they will always be a part of you.

They will always be a part of you, but you will never *be* them – and you should thank yourself for being alive today.

for

Four people who keep up with your immorality their entire lives take you to church twice a year, because you believe in God.

I think I know why you believe in God; you think he's going to save you from yourself, save you from the consequences of being an asshole. Today you said I deserve to die young, tomorrow you'll be in church, praying for those who don't have faith in the divine, praying for atheists like me. The priest is going to talk about sinners, about murderers, about those people who we need to forgive and you will respectfully nod, take your wife's hand and the hand of the person next to you, your kids are far away from you (and I know why, but I bet you don't). You don't know who that guy is, but you take his hand because that's what the priest said you should do and it would be really rude not to; the priest is probably the only person who can give you orders. Well, the priest and sometimes, every now and then, your wife. She would probably look at you in the same way she looks at you when you don't say hello to that co-worker. He smells really bad all the time (just like his son and his brother), no matter if he comes into your restaurant after a very long day of work or if it's the first place he goes in the morning. He does a "really bad job", he's "awfully slow", he's "fat and probably eats all the food when no one is looking". You told your wife he should take a second chair when he sits down during his break, but then again, she gave you that look.

What's worse: an angry wife who doesn't cook your favourite food in the evening or keeping that comment to