THIS IS HARD TO WRITE.

What does that say?

I’m dreading putting my soul on paper.

I’m dreading irrelevancy.

I’m dreading that you’ll hear me but you won’t

Hear

Me

Do you want to hear about my childhood?

‘Cause I, for sure, really fuckin don’t-

If I write one more angry poem about my mother

I might explode

It’s well after midnight and I’m searching for the aspects of my personality worth the ink in my pen

WHO AM I?

I’m kristine, this is probably the first time you’re hearing my voice

I’m a white girl

I’m broke as shit

I’m bi but I only feel the need to use a word to describe the universal love blooming in my body because other people feel the need to hear one

I would play punk songs on my guitar if the nerves didn’t get the better of me every time someone looked in my direction

I didn’t write a song, but I wrote this -

WHO AM I?

I’m Kristine, but i only half-know what that means

I am from strained vocal cords, late rent payments, broken dishes on tile floors

I am from Suffolk County, Long Island

But not the white picket fences, not the mortgages

I’m the in and out like the roaches in the apartment buildings I’d skinned my knees behind

I’m the back and forth, the love and the hate, neurotransmitters haywire from the days I let the chemicals take me away

I’m the insecurities - words my dad spat about the girls, the girls, the girls, the girls who weren’t thin enough, happy enough, good enough for his ugly eyes to undress inside his head

words my dad spat, made me and my cellulite exchange my love for the beaches and the waves, exchange a 2-piece for a 1-piece, exchange the 1-piece for sweat in my summertimes spent in full-length jeans

I am from a mother who did not speak my father’s English when they made me

Back in her USSR

I am from the hard mountains she grew up in

I am from the snow that covered them, snow cold as she is, cold as i am.

I am from that druggie dad who never grew up

He didn’t let her teach me the language

But I still heard the sound my body made when she bounced me off the walls

When he bounced her off the walls

I am from absent love.

I am from shame.

I am from baby bruises

I am from the anxieties that never leave me
I am from not identifying for fear of commitment

For fear of misunderstanding

For fear of not knowing how

I am from a life of not knowing

The who, how, or why

I've spent 19 years here trying to find a reason that doesn't exist

And maybe I'm doing just fine

But WHO AM I?

I’m Kristine but I only half-know what that means

Someone else named the two of me walking around in one body

Feeling everything and nothing

Manic, depressive

Loud and silent

Living and dying

Breathing out and breathing in

WHO AM I?

I’m Kristine

I only half-know

Anything