

# Ride – after Nicole Blackman

Allie Marini

the golden palominos  
dead inside

The Golden Palominos

“Ride”

*Dead Inside*

10/1996

Restless

i.

*Welcome to the land of pointless & destructive*

this is not the love story you think it should be. this is only tangentially a love story at all. the love in this story isn't between two people. it's a love story between five entities: a man & the bottles he hides inside of; a girl & the grief she can't quite peel from her skin, & the marriage they both made with their demon disguised as each other. the marriage is at alternate times a ghost, a thorn, a devil, a bomb, a pillow, or broken glass. sometimes the marriage is a broken door. jaw. arm. ankle. this is a love story like Romeo & Juliet & by that I mean: the major players die at the end & those left behind can't understand how nobody saw it coming. no one sees their own complicity. no one really mourns because this is how not-quite-love-stories end:

obliteration.

ii.

*Who do you call for help when all your friends are dead?*

this is not the love story you want it to be, either. this is a love story, yes—but here the love is different: this is a love story about the powder keg love that exists in the friendships of teenage girls at college, alone in the world for the first time together. it is about the loves they discover: virginities lost, Major British Romantic Poets, squares of LSD on Friday nights dancing in the sultry Sarasota heat, David Bowie, Modernism & Madness, Trainspotting, 72-hour Baker Act psych ward hold, goth clubs, pill bottles, Andy Warhol, red wine & clove cigarettes twisting oily curls of smoke into the midnight moon, Lou Reed, doomed artists, Siouxsie & the Banshees eyeliner, The 27 Club, loss. the girl whose shoulder you cry on when another girl dies is the same girl whose death you will grieve alone, years later. one by one you bury them, each leaving you guardian of memories only you are alive to remember.

keep them all like secrets.

iii.

*Things only feel true when someone's abusing you  
You are sometimes startled, you are never surprised*

this is the only love story I've written & edited & revised & written over & over so many times that you'd think by now I'd have gotten the ending right. this, too, is not the love story you want it to be. but it's written in my native tongue & every time I transliterate the text, I'm convinced the ending will reveal itself in an altogether different way than the last time I wrestled with the landing lines. this is a love story about a girl who isn't a girl anymore but lives forever in her girlhood traumas, cutting the same scar open over & over again to see how long it takes for her scar tissue to stop bleeding entirely. every bloodletting expected, somehow. I want so badly to be surprised, I can nearly taste it on the tip of my tongue.

a burn as sweet as hot candy.

iv.

*If you love something, chances are you can't afford it*

Finally, the love story you want to hear.

but not the way you wanted to hear it.