

## Stick Fingers (Unblocking my ex on Instagram)

I shouldn't have pressed "unblock." She dyed her hair blonde and resembles a pin-up now. She discovered all the vintage clothing she was searching for. Stuck in it with me, she stopped searching. Now she's posting photos of lighthouses in North Carolina. Her posing with perfect homemade pasta. "Come visit" hashtags for the Italian friend who taught her how to make it while abroad. Once, when we started dating, she left out her diary and he happened to be the subject of the page. She wanted him to want her, but he was interested in a girl from Dallas. In her private thoughts to herself, she tried to understand why he didn't. Anytime she mentioned him, my face flushed. I shouldn't have read it. A well-framed shot of her applying lipstick in a mirror, inside the house we shared, leaves me wondering who took the picture. She's back in New Orleans. Haunting familiar haunts. Literal rose colored glasses. A repost of a photo I recognize because I was in it. Now cropped out. But inside the caption lied the horror. Uncle Dave died. I loved Uncle Dave. It has been five months since it happened. She's playing the ukulele now. Selfies in swimwear. Videos of her playing the ukulele. A POV pic from Horseshoe reservoir of a girl I've never seen. "Impossible to express how grateful I am to have found this fierce, brave—" I stop reading after that. Did I turn her? She'd warned early on she possessed a curiosity. Radiant at a music festival, being free in ways I never witnessed. A weird photo of her in the bow of a boat inside a dive bar on south Broadway where I realized she's in the best shape of her life. Cheese and crackers. Her best friend Karen. Karen's now husband Blake who I still talk to often. I was supposed to attend the wedding. I'll see them soon in Toronto where they will skirt around the truth of the death of their friend's relationship and prod the ashes with stick fingers. Plants hanging from the room that was once my office. The window I gazed out of, wondering why I was there. Why I followed her to begin with. Her fall Colorado Aspen photos that mirrored mine. Same mountain passes. Different sunny days. In New Orleans again with her sister. At her favorite Mediterranean spot. The born-again Christian sister. The years of addiction. The heroin baby. The hotel bathtub. Holding her brother's newborn. His blank-faced wife who I never got. The child they were raising that was only his. The dull understanding that if they did not have their own then the other could never be truly loved by her. The last one, a poorly framed photo of an alligator. It appeared to be laughing.