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## The True Artist of Fairfax County

Diane Hardin

Accents away  
On the east coast of the country  
He makes music  
In a small dorm room he shares with a gay Mexican gangster  
Named Juan  
Who smells like the attic of a Middle Eastern grandmother.  
It's here that my artist works on tones, pitch, flow  
Digital sounds weaving together  
Fluctuations making love to my ears  
Across computer speakers  
And I know him  
Though I've only seen him, hugged him once in Provo, Utah  
In the parking lot of broken down brown brick college apartments  
When we stared at the mountainside to find the hidden B-Y-U  
And he pointed out the pizza under my pointer's fingernail  
And I told him I hated people touching my neck.  
Now we talk online a few hours a day  
And sometimes leave each other voicemails—he'll hang up if I answer—  
He hates phones.  
We always speak, of course, of music—  
We watched Bright Eyes' "Easy/Lucky/Free"  
On YouTube and practiced writing backwards for hours like Conor Oberst  
Before realizing the camera's trick.  
We discuss the loves of his life who all have had water names—  
Claire Fischer, Rachel Sealig, Yvan Karp, and Kate Welly

And my boyfriend,  
Who he insists looks like Adam Savage with sunglasses,  
Sending me the Mythbusters' link to the picture the instant I mention him and  
Correcting me to stubbornly call him Andy though that's not his name.  
He calls me "Diary" or types out my Guster song.  
He shares his joy on handwritten notes on folded papers that come  
Priority Mail  
With little pictures and lyrics written and doodled  
Each title and artist of the CD contained in the package  
And listed on the paper has its reason for being there  
He knows me and he knows music.  
I play the CD with black marked drawings  
Again and again  
And again  
Because music is lyrics is poetry is mine  
He gives and creates not to make money  
But to share  
This beauty and I sing along because he chose each piece for me to love  
And he wants me to care.  
Something chose us  
To learn from each other—  
I don't question this, but embrace  
The true artist of Fairfax County.