

“I still have a lot to figure out, but the one thing I know is, wherever you are, that’s where I belong. I’ll never belong anywhere like I belong with you.”

– Emily Henry, *People We Meet on Vacation*

“I love him so much. I love him more than I did yesterday, and I already know tomorrow I’ll love him even more, because every piece of him he gives me is another to fall in love with.”

– Emily Henry, *People We Meet on Vacation*

“I didn’t fall in love with you... I flew.”

– Colleen Hoover, *Ugly Love*

“And hopefully I have changed, you know, have, it’s because of you.”

– Sally Rooney, *Normal People*

“He brought her goodness like a gift and now it belongs to her.”

– Sally Rooney, *Normal People*

“Marianne, he said, I’m not a religious person but I do sometimes think God made you for me.”

– Sally Rooney, *Normal People*

“They’ve done a lot of good for each other. Really, she thinks, really. People can really change one another.”

– Sally Rooney, *Normal People*

“He brought her goodness like a gift and now it belongs to her.”

– Sally Rooney, *Normal People*

“You can stop swimming now, Lily. We finally reached the shore.”

– Colleen Hoover, *It Ends with Us*

“I don’t think I knew I was lonely until I met you.”

– Emily Henry, *People We Meet on Vacation*

“Tomorrow we will love each other a little more, and the next day, and the next day. And even on those days when one or both of us is having a hard time, we’ll be here, where we are completely known, completely accepted, by the person whose every side we love wholeheartedly. I’m here with all the versions of him I’ve met over twelve years of vacations, and even if the point of life isn’t just being happy, right now, I am. Down to the bones.”

– Emily Henry, *People We Meet On Vacation*

“He tells her that she’s beautiful. She has never heard that before, though she has sometimes privately suspected it of herself, but it feels different to hear it from another person.”

– Sally Rooney, *Normal People*

PROBLEMATIZING THE ROMANCE GENRE

“You are my wife. I’m supposed to be the one who protects you from the monsters. I’m not supposed to be one.”

– Colleen Hoover, *It Ends with Us*

“I’m terrified to lose him for good, so I sell myself short and take what I can from him, even though I know I deserve better.”

– Colleen Hoover, *Ugly Love*

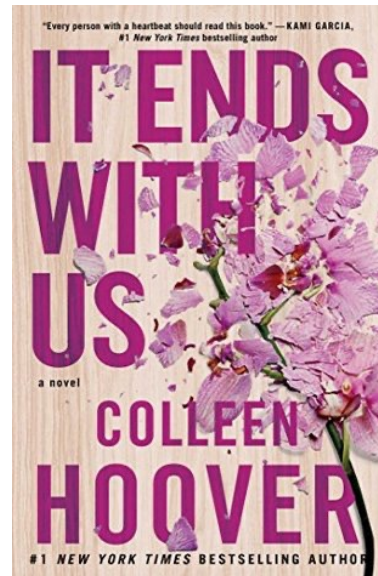
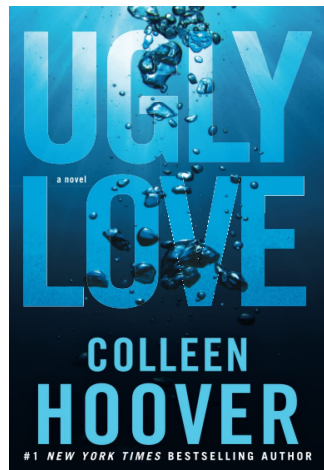
“Don’t ask about my past,” he says firmly. “And never expect a future.” I absolutely don’t like either of those rules. They both make me want to change my mind about this arrangement and turn and run away, but instead, I’m nodding. I’m nodding because I’ll take what I can get. I’m not Tate when I’m near Miles. I’m liquid, and liquid doesn’t know how to be firm or stand up for itself. Liquid flows. That’s all I want to do with Miles.”

– Colleen Hoover, *Ugly Love*

Everything is Miles.

That’s how it is when a person develops an attraction toward someone. He’s nowhere, then suddenly he’s everywhere, whether you want him to be or not.”

– Colleen Hoover, *Ugly Love*

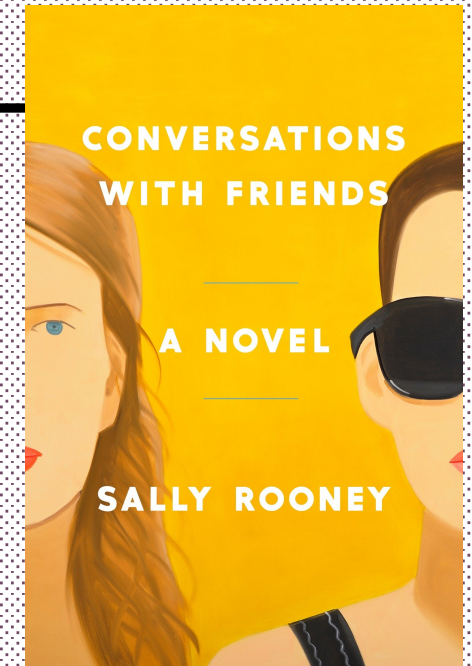
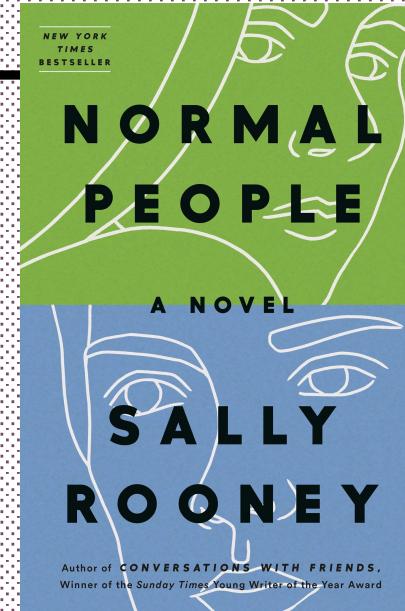


“I read once that the best thing that can happen to a woman is to get her heart broken. Before that, she has no real sense of herself. No real sense of pain, because only in love does she know what it’s like to find the one thing that gives her breath and then to lose it. After that, she knows she can survive. No matter what relationships come and go, she can count on herself to pull through, and although it hurts, the break is necessary”

– Colleen Hoover, *Ugly Love*

“There’s always been something inside her that men have wanted to dominate, and their desire for domination can look so much like attraction, even love. In school the boys had tried to break her with cruelty and disregard, and in college men had tried to do it with sex and popularity, all with the same aim of subjugating some force in her personality. It depressed her to think people were so predictable. Whether she was respected or despised, it didn’t make much difference in the end. Would every stage of her life continue to reveal itself as the same thing, again and again, the same remorseless contest for dominance?”

— Sally Rooney, *Normal People*



“I would lie down here and you could do anything you wanted to me. Do you know that?”

“My body felt completely disposable, like a placeholder for something more valuable. I fantasized about taking it apart and lining my limbs up side by side to compare them.”

— Sally Rooney, *Conversations with Friends*

“I felt I’d lost control of everything. All I could decide was whether or not to have sex with Nick; I couldn’t decide how to feel about it, or what it meant..I couldn’t decide what he would say, or how much it would hurt me..he has all the power and I have none”

ROMANCE AS FILLING A
PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL
VOID



CREATIVE PROJECT



Dear [redacted]

I am writing this letter to you in the absence of any intention of ever sending the letter to you. My friends tell me that sometimes there can be meaning deriv from writing something to someone and never sending it to them, just allowing your raw emotions to exist in the space they take up on the paper. So that is what I am doing right now. Some say that I have a large propensity to feel, and that I should celebrate that I have such an immense propensity to feel. But that large propensity to feel also leaves me in the state I am currently in; of missing someone longer than I feel I should, and finding my thoughts drifting towards memories of days passed in the sunlight alongside that same someone.

I don't want to come across as melodramatic. There is so much I could say to you, but I worry that all the sentiments I would inscribe may not be echoed, and that I will have painted you an entire technical mural only to receive a scrawled makeshift drawing etched in pencil from you.

I don't know that I have been in love before. I said the words, I really did think that I meant them. But I can say with full confidence that I was starting to fall in love with you.

The Meaning of Beauty
Eric Newton

if someone asked me to describe how i felt when i was with you, i would not make utterances about the cadence with which you drummed your fingers on the dashboard, or the ease with which our hands intertwined the night we met.

i would simply play "heroes" by david bowie, a melody reminiscent of that feeling of being so insurmountable that you bear no fear of death or whatever void follows our existence on this planet.

because right then i felt as if no tangible or intangible object was insurmountable because right then, i was looking at you, and you were looking at me and i knew shortly i would be a mess, for we were about to part for an indeterminate length of time

but that was seemingly kind of ok, because right then, i was with you, and for that i was content.



it was a happy dream, but then i woke up. i rolled over and opened my eyes, and just like a child watches a bubble slip into disappearance, i watched the bright image of us projected in my slumber disintegrate. i was left with a view of the white ceiling above my head and a diluted remembrance of the thought of having you.



Act of Passion
Georges Simenon

The needle on the record player scratches for just a second before the first few notes of Amore Mio Aiutami sound; I am reminded of you. I turn the page of the novel I purchased at a second hand store and a scene of two hands intertwining for the first time is depicted, and I am reminded of the night I met you.

I want to forget you; I want to close this brief but beautiful novel so as to quell the hurt I feel when I think of the possibility that I may never see you again, and the possibility that you will look into the eyes of another with a similar desire.

Memento Mori
Muriel Spark

I want to be able to look into someone's eyes and desire to know them the way I wanted to know everything about you. I want to gather my feelings into a vesicle that I can dump into an unsuspecting body of water, to metaphysically drown my sorrows.

But at the same time, I don't want the thought of you to leave my mind. At the same time, I touch the