



Dear Reader, I Don't Trust You

If you were a sushi chef, I'd never want you serving me blowfish. If you tried convincing me you were a respectable dominatrix, I'd have trouble believing

you'd stop if I cried out the safe word. And don't get me started on dark alleys. For all I know, you're the creepy thing lurking in shadows, all claws and fangs,

hungry to suck the life from my throat. I wouldn't even trust you to have my back in a bar fight. I've such a bad habit for bluntness that you'd probably break

spine

a bottle over my skull yourself if given half the chance and an empty beer. Sorry. It's nothing personal. As a writer, I've been told I needed to earn your trust

before I should give you mine, but I'm far too self-destructive for that. I'd rather sabotage our relationship from the start with a snarky title, than put in all that work.

The effort it would take to get you to like me could be better spent trying to write the word *spine*, in fire, on my own back, so I didn't need to rely on you to have mine.

Then, when I self-immolate into one burning poem, sift through the ash and you'll find my heart, shrunken, yet still intact—that perfect metaphor you always wanted from me.

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Eric Morago is in the MFA poetry program at California State University Long Beach, and is an active member of Los Angeles and Orange County's performance poetry and spoken word community. He has taken first place in various poetry slams, and has been published in an anthology of Orange County poets entitled *Carving in Bone*.