



If your brain was a place...

...what would it be? This has echoed in the foyer for a day. I don't know where to begin. She says, *I'm underwater and I'm wearing a fishbowl*. I put my sneakers back on the shoe rack. I think this question scares me. *You'd be the flower field from Howl's Moving Castle*. Am I really who I say I am, or is that just a shallow likeness of me that I want people to know? *Maybe you're a café in a redwood forest*. I rearrange the books on my coffee table. I wonder if I'm someone I like or if I'm just a mirrorball, hollow and prosaic. *I think you're really the beach at twilight*. Who does she see me as? Does she know I am a silent film, an empty book sleeve, a false god? I turn off the lamp and retreat to my room. The sun sets, the café closes, and Howl destroys the portal to the flower field.

Am I really who I say I am?

At midnight, the kitchen is the Last Safe Place. In my mind I'm somewhere powdery and idyllic, where my thoughts are quieted by the chill and my disquiet cannot be traced. Not here, where sheets of rainwater are seeping in and drowning my sense of self. The floor lamp glows a soft white and I wish I were sinking, down, down, down into the pillowing snow. For now, the wide window is open and the storm is cracking through the glass. The solstice is still lakes away.

Who does she see me as?

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