

This is the story, as I understand it:

See what happened was one day Art discovered my brain by happenstance and decided it was the perfect plot on which to build a cozy home, so Art did just that—built a house in my brain—and kept adding additions and expanding until Art became such a permanent fixture that it's almost impossible to remember those days before she moved in. I was entirely helpless in this matter, I swear.

The architecture of this brainhouse is impressive and simple and mysterious and perfect. I'm always discovering new corridors, porches, balconies, cubbyholes. When the rest of the brain asks a question, Art says "yes" and constructs an addition to the brainhouse to make room for the question. Art says "yes" when other voices say "no" or "too late" or "you're being stupid." Because of this, Art's brainhouse is the largest of my brainhomes.

Art's brainhouse made for some magical childhood years and some lonely teenage years and some confusing years after the teenage years. Just because Art says "yes" doesn't mean that she gives me answers for the voices on the outside. I ask Art "How to I justify this?" and she replies "yes." I ask her "What can I do to make people understand?" and she replies "yes."

Art is the head of the brainhousehold and I am her gardener, the one who lights the lamps at night, the one who opens the drapes, who washes the fence, who does the shopping, who invites guests for dinner. My main job is to invite people to visit Art's brainhouse. I invite as many people as I can. It's a big brainhouse and she has room for everyone.

Some people would have to evict Art from their brainhouse. I don't have to. I'm lucky because of this. She reminds me of this when I forget.

When I don't feel brave, she reminds me that there are many ways to be brave. She tells me I don't have to apologize for feeling things more strongly than I'm supposed to. She tells me to work hard. She mandates that I treat myself kindly. She mandates that I treat others even more kindly.

She's tricky. She taught me that I should never apologize, except for when I really should. She believes that I can do many things, even things I haven't thought of yet. Her language often sounds backwards to my untrained ear.

Sometimes she is a terrible neighbor. Sometimes *I* am a terrible neighbor.

I can work as hard as possible but there will always be things I don't know anything about and Art says this is *good!* And when I think I know everything, she proves me wrong and laughs at me.

She tells me that she can't do it all. She tells me that I believe in her too much. She often believes in me more than she'll allow me to believe in her.

But.

Art chose me, I didn't choose her. She proves herself time and again. I am helpless but she is not.

Still.

Art will work in service to me as long as I work in service to the world. This is our agreement.

And our other agreement is this: when I don't believe in myself, when the other voices are too loud, I can go back inside to my brainhouse, and Art will be there offering me a place at her table and a listening ear and a "yes" and another "yes" and another "yes" and when I think she's run out she will always find one more.

Art says "yes" to me and so I will say "yes" to everyone else and honestly, that's the sum of it.

*We then had to make installation pieces that were representative of our manifestos. Here's mine:*



James Kennedy

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