

SUBJECT: Epic Email

My darling,

Can I just state the obvious first and get it over with? Now that I've held you, touched you, tasted you, felt your breath on my skin, enjoyed your climax inside me, I am even more sure that you are the love of my life. Being with you these two short weeks has been one of the best things I've ever experienced. All of it was just as it should have been, even things that might have derailed a couple not as secure in love as we are – how I got upset at dinner, the text message that made you so angry, the many times I boinked you on the head with the [umbrella] and stepped on your pretty Italian shoes, or when I got moody or you got blunt...it was all just as I wanted it. I wouldn't change a thing. It's not that I learned more about you (although I did), but I am so pleased by the ease of just being us, together, and how well that translated from us, apart.

I have so many memories of the trip, and here are some favorites: meeting your cherubs and your parents, how handsome you are – and how unaffected you seem by it, our picnic and walk on the trails, your strength holding me as we walked the cobblestone roads in the rain in Copenhagen, the way you shivered after we first made love, how nice it was to be in the same room with you while doing our own thing, you quietly challenging my beliefs about unluckiness (how I have wanted a partner to encourage me to see things differently and then allow me the chance to work things out on my own), snuggling on the sofa watching movies and eating junk, and of course the incredible connection we have during sex. How beautiful you make me feel as I'm giving myself to you.

And how can I forget all the new foods and beers and spirits I tasted (and spilt on your desk)?

I can't forget the moment when I, for the first time, was able to convey my true self to my mate about my sensitivities. I need time to work things out in my head and heart to be sure I am acting rationally – you know this about me. And you gave me permission to be who I am. What an incredible gift.

And I remember how, for lack of a better word, you were a bit shy towards me at first – maybe taken aback by my forwardness and my desire to be instantly next to you?

Yes, you make it easy to love you, that is true. But isn't there more to it? Just my being who I am makes it easier for you to be your sweet self and not have to try too hard to be easy to love. Does that make sense? And what a gentleman you are, so kind-hearted and thoughtful, but also upfront and bold and ambitious. Also fucking hilarious!

And now that I have all my senses filled with you, missing you has taken on an entirely new form of ache. While I'm fully aware that the time for us to be together full time is a long-time coming, I know that it will eventually need to be realized. I need to live with you, sleep next to you, be there for you as the partner that I know you deserve.

You would say "don't leave me," and that was hard to hear, but only because I wanted to say, "I won't ever leave you" – though I knew that I would have to. I feel the same way, but I have a life and responsibilities in Portland. We'll get there, I am sure of it, but in the meantime I will yearn for you now on a deeper level than ever before.

I will return to the States changed. And I know that my loved ones at home will see the change in my face and demeanor. I set out to explore ME as well as you during this trip to Denmark. I wanted to see you, and where you come from, and I've truly enjoyed observing

myself practicing the art of being in love with you. I had no idea that I was capable of feeling this kind of attentive love for a man. Loving you has changed my opinion of who I am and what I am capable of, and the kind of strength I have.

I have always been unwavering in my "absolutes," – and I still am, yet here I am rationally and clear-headedly dedicating myself to a man who I can't sleep with every night or even speak with on the phone, who's 5000 miles and 9 hours removed from me. Far from me, yet closer than anyone has ever been. It's a fucking beautiful thing. It makes me smile dreamily thinking about how blessed I am to have recognized what you were offering me – that I didn't turn away from the insane idea that we could make this work, almost effortlessly.

I still don't understand what happened inside you that made you love me like you do. I find your answers to my questions on this topic non-definitive and vague. I wonder what you saw or heard or thought about between the time in late May when I sent you that first email to the day we first had sex, what made you want to fuck me; and what did I say or do to make you fall in love with me? I just know that I was being myself, wholly and truly, and that means you love me for who I am. How wonderful to be loved by you!

Hold me close to your heart, lover.

Your girl,

Shelley