

Written in conjunction with Nina Spierer

**It's easy.**

Skip one meal first.

Start with something small.

Choose something noncommittal, like lunch.

Something soft, it'll come up easier.

Then become a distraction.

Build up your strength, soon it will be a reflex.

Over dinner, change the subject.

After dinner, excuse yourself politely.

Be confrontational.

Be quick about it.

Be indignant.

Make sure you wash your hands.

Storm off without finishing.

Scrub under your fingernails.

Say you are upset.

Keep a pack of gum around.

Say you'll meet her after.

**Say you've eaten today.**

I don't think I'm ugly.

I love my body, I recite my scars from memory.

I don't believe in perfection.

The way skin bends beneath a collar bone is  
beautiful.

I don't want to be thin.

**I want to be weightless.**

I imagine the whirring in my stomach  
is the sound of cars passing.

I imagine there's another way of gaining control,  
but I don't know what it is.

There is no greater moment of clarity.

**No feeling more full than being empty.**

This is the hunger speaking.  
You have better things to do than survive.  
It's 3 pm and you haven't eaten yet today.  
Keep going.  
This is progress.

**Keep going.**

Each hour is an accomplishment.  
Each day I am more powerful.

**I need this.**

I am balanced.

I'm getting stronger.

Though my body gets weaker.

**I kill myself slowly  
if it means I can feel alive.**

I push out imperfection  
before it can consume me.  
Inside my body, I have absolute control.  
Put one foot in front of the other.  
Put your fingers down your throat.  
Do it.

**Do it until there's nothing left.**

Until you're gulping air.  
Until the tiles start to blur  
and your vision goes static  
and everything looks white  
and you don't know which way us up.  
I need water.  
I need gravity to work right.  
Remind yourself:  
This is the price I am willing to pay.  
**I don't expect you to understand.**

Don't ask me how I'm doing  
if you don't want the answer.

Did you eat today?

When was the last time you threw up?  
Have you lost weight?  
You look so good.  
You're so lucky.

**Don't ask me why I do this.  
This is just how I live.**

This is not about perfection.  
This is about control.  
This is about discipline.  
I am trying.  
I am trying.

**I am hungry.**

I blacked out on a street corner again.  
I passed out waiting for the subway.  
A stranger grabbed me before I hit the tracks.

Last night I had a dream  
I was throwing up my heart.  
The veins looked like maps in my hands.

I imagine my shoulder blades  
jut out like angel wings.

The first time I threw up blood  
I felt I'd finally accomplished something.

The first time I ate less than 200 calories in a day  
felt like I'd finally conquered something.

This is how I live.  
This is how I live.

**I don't want this to be how I die.**

It seems so easy.  
Just eat.  
Stop throwing up.  
All you need is control.  
Mark off days on the calendar.  
Get dinner with a friend.  
The headaches start to fade.

**Every meal still tastes like a failure.**

I am hiding in a body I cannot break out of.

They call it nervosa but  
**nervous never felt so safe.**

I'm sinking.  
Falling into myself.  
**I don't want you to touch me.**

Food sits in my stomach like stones,  
Food sits on the table like a relic,  
**Weighing me down.**

I would never ask you –  
Don't ask me –

Did you eat today?  
I don't answer.

Every calorie played back to me.  
**Played back to me.**

**Played back.**  
Did you purge today?

I don't answer.  
Are you listening?

I need help.  
I need this.

**I need this.**  
Can you hear me?

**This is a cycle I'll live in until it kills me.**  
It's easy.