

Reasons I have cried this week:

was at a concert and the music was so loud and the bodies so plenty that it struck me to the core and I was mute for a moment and caught in it all, then shed one tear // was reading an article on the bus, sentimental clickbait, and welled up - one tipped over // was at the cinema with *** and I wanted to demonstrate my emotional acuity so I wept with abandon at the climax // was drunk // spent the morning throwing up (hangover) and as my face rested on the toilet the sheer exhaustion and rocking force of nausea brimmed up in me until a sad little teardrop slid out into the bowl, but otherwise my mood was mostly cheerful // gust of wind caught my face and eyes // onions // I asked ** how her job was going and she managed a few pleasantries before admitting it is terrible and she worries she will never belong in this world, never function like others do and immediately there was a shift in the air as she resisted the tears and I love her so much that I cried with her, silently // paused the film I was watching to repeat a character's line and was very moved by my own performance // *** made a joke and I laughed so hard I wept // decided to // **** asked me about ***** and I told her everything with no great unburdening — the details, the minutiae, no matter how cutting, no matter how awful, emerged from me effortlessly like a police report, and then I confessed my fear that this will make me more **** or maybe **** and was surprised by the stop in my throat — sudden, but the tears acted as ellipses, the monologue reined by them and I had to wait until the fit passed before I could continue // the sadness lingered // it felt essential that I do // **** asked if I am alright. Of course I am, but I cannot help but weep //

*not your concern

now please give a warm welcome to my positive attitude

The biological cause for tears is uncertain, and its chemical play on the body is equally a matter of hypothesis (empirical, but nonetheless inconclusive). However it is a well studied fact that tears play a significant social role and serve some quiet, secret purpose, in the same way a smile does. The study is perhaps more suited to sociology and psychology than biology, but I will tug some of these strands together for our endeavour. Readers are asked to forgive that I am offering provocation, not clarity.

On the topic of tears, certain variables must be taken into account. Namely:

- volume (sound)
- volume (liquid)
- length of episode
- age of subject

Age, first.

We consider it a given that children cry. Infants are in control of nothing, their bodies a disaster waiting to happen, and their only skill is in raising the alarm required for assistance. We take their tears as a given. We permit it, hateful as the sound might be, because human evolution would be unsustainable without our larvae soliciting the helpful hands that prop them up until they can fend for themselves. As a mode of communication it is lacking, and often malfunctions when they raise the alert but cannot be specific, so the episode continues. We call this *colic*.

We expect children to grow out of this habit, eventually. Crying as a call for attention endures, but we expect it as a direct consequence of injury, emotional or physical, and if the episode outlasts the immediate harm then we say things like *come nom, be a big girl and wipe your tears*.

And then at some point into adulthood we shift. The risk of physical injury diminishes, and frankly when is the last time you cried from physical pain? Have the car door slammed on your hand and you will flinch, jerk, inhale a hiss and say *fuck*. *FUCK*. and cradle your fingers. Icepack, deep breathing and time. You don't need help, why would you cry?

No, the harm we correct now is emotional.

Reader, I am sorry, I ask for your forgiveness. I did not trust you to be generous with me, I did not trust you to be willing to read unless I volunteered something of myself. Reader, I am sorry. The exercise of page 1 is what we call an *emotional exchange*, also known as *guilting*, and it is a barter you did not consent to.

Reader, are you bored?

////// here, a case study —————→

When my mother died I wept continuously. I could not speak for days. I was 13, small and unfinished. I did not have words for what was happening, I did not have words for the grief. Every attempt at speech was robbed of me. A sentence half-started before the stop in my throat and the —

Reader, I am sorry. I simply do not trust you.

Forgive me, please. You mustn't trust me either, I cannot help myself. I advise you to proceed with caution, question anything that seems genuine here. Ask yourself why I am giving you this. Truth does not come naturally to me, unless heavily censored. So ask yourself why I would tell you my agonies if not to gain something in return.

My mother is alive and well.

Yes, the harm is emotional.

When adults cry there is a slightly more slippery affair occurring. But the principle is hardwired into us that if something is beyond our abilities then the flare is deployed, bright light spun up through the air, slips down the face with its tartness. Tongue tip licks it up, slips back in mouth. There is something that simmers in all of us, and when it becomes too much it must emerge.

Yes.

When adults cry it is slightly more confusing.