

I'm currently petless and relationshipless.

I live alone on the island and unintentionally became a nun.

My rental home on the island is green like yours, only that my green paint is inside. I love my current house very much, but it's a bit sad that the landlord doesn't allow pets. They don't allow the feeding of stray animals, either. I sometimes feel that my life is missing something. That was why I got too excited about the animals in your place and your "ecosystem."

I miss my sister's cats in Bangkok. There was one cat that I developed some codependency with during covid. She likes to be carried like a baby and always cries for attention. I like that she's dominant and vocal about what she wants (I'm mostly submissive in relationships), and I feel a sense of achievement if she marks my body as her territory. She has the softest fur and always smells like morning sunlight. It's too bad that I'm allergic to cats and always have to be on pills when we hang out. On the island, I relied on visits from wild animals and other people's pets to fulfill my inner peace. I tried plant-keeping, but it didn't work out. I need a relationship that has better communication. I want to feel that the other person demands me. Plants are too passive-aggressive and would just die on me if I forgot about them.

I've tried begging the landlord to let me adopt a cat. I told him that I just broke up with my partner (even though the breakup was already a few months old and I was actually happy to be out of that relationship). I told him that I was really sad, and just wanted to see a cute being walking around in the house. I also offered to pay more house deposit (but not the rent), however, he didn't change his mind.

I thought about what it means to see cute beings. In a recent conversation with my friend, she said she feels shallow for always falling for pretty people. But I think it's ok. Seeing beautiful things make us happy, so why not? Pets are cute, that's why we want to share our lives with them.

- Aracha Cholitgul (Ossy)

Currently, I am letting go of the relationships I found in my pets and this house.

I live alone, though not really. There is a family of crows that lives in the tree outside, and a rotation of neighborhood cats who like to visit. Inside, there is a hamster and two tanks filled with guppies and fancy shrimp that call this green house their home too. We moved here because the previous building manager suggested flushing the guppies and shrimp and getting rid of the hamster. It was a no pet building, so we did break the rules... but everyone else was hiding a secret cat or bunny...

I wish you could've made the trip from Bangkok to Vancouver! It would have been fun and you could've met my hamster, Taro. He also has the softest fur, but smells like wood chips and cotton candy. You would've had to take your allergy pills everyday though, because the cats come by so often („• ~ •„)

I meant to move to Toronto, and now I've been here for almost a year, not being able to leave Taro. It's not his fault, the airlines won't let a hamster onboard, and he's too happy and healthy to die anytime soon. I've had it set in my mind to move later this year, so I kind of hoped Taro would die before I leave because I'm selfish and don't like the idea of abandoning him in his old age. I often joke that he's the reason the gallery exists.

But Taro is very independent, the opposite of your sister's cat. I need him more than he needs me. Having had my moving timeline set by Taro's life has given me plenty of space to try and be more independent like him. I only moved out of my mom's in 2021, and have been living alone in this house since August 2022. Hamsters need to live alone, they need their own space in order to flourish. Taro is secure in himself and his daily routines, while I'm the annoying roommate who barges into his space demanding attention. I can't help it, his cuteness is almost like a portal to me. In an instant, I'm teleported away from all my worries to warmth and security. I would argue that it's quite far from shallow and more like a necessity. Maybe cuteness draws out the first lines in the feeling of needing and being needed. Like when a mother sees her chubby baby, or when a puppy rolls over for belly rubs.

Right now, Taro is being a brat and putting his food stash in his litter again. Three of the guppies have ganged up on a single shrimp. The crow family brought their baby to the front yard to let it practice flying. Kittenhead, the cat that lives upstairs, just jumped through the window to say hi.

- Qian Cheng