

poem about when i almost wore out my sony cd player, the shiny red one, on account of pressing the back button and the play button in rapid succession so michael stipe's voice crooned over the tinny speaker "everybody hurts sommmmetimes so holld onnn" and how in all my preteen-like preening, i could only afford cheap mascara so it surely dripped its dark marks onto the vaingloriously pink-striped laura ashley sheets but who cared anymore so i pressed play and play and cried my round brown hazel eyes out because someone finally got it, someone—can you imagine such gift—someone sang along with me and i was held.

by [Taylor Lewis Guthrie Hartman](#) in the [August 2024](#) issue

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the way my dad tells it, he fully knew what was happening in the room below. that he pressed his ear flat against his floorboard to hear, in time, with me. he sang along, i mean, didn't throw his hand. let me land within his smushed, inclined ear and—such gift—let me slide into that tremulous teenage daymare pressing back and play in rapid succession—let me fall into pain not alone but—can you imagine—*held*.