

## Diatomaceous

Cucumber

**CW:** animal death, angst, codependence

A diatom I am. Sturdy and steady and straight-lined — my walls a silicate shell of safety.

A diatom I am. In the oceans I bloom, my life a secluded, internal existence, not one for symbiosis, not one for cooperation, not one for coexistence — I bloom. I bloom into a shimmering, sparkling flower, taking in their poison and turning it into their life-giving oxygen, but I am not kind.

A diatom I am. I live my life in my silicone walls, my *frustule*, harder than cellulose — harder than lignin. I live in these four walls, four glass walls, me on display for the world, me on sparkling display for the world.

I can not expand, but I must not live alone — a diatom I am, and I must split myself in twain, for the continued survival of me and mine, simple special reproduction-recreation of the self. I can not expand. I thus must share these four walls with another one of mine — my reflected self, reflected in the mirror of these walls.

I can not communicate. I can not speak, I can not writhe. With my twin in these four walls I live, and I wish to be one again, but I can not speak, and I can not write. I have no voice, and I am not luminous.

One day we must split again — and we will, and we will not have room for one more, not in these sturdy, steady, straight-lined walls. We must split again, and we will do so by the hand of another, by the hand of intercoupling, by the hand of marriage, by the hand of decoupling, by the hand of our sex.

A diatom I am. My shell contains only me now. My twin is gone, and I long to be suffocating together yet again.

My shell will fall down to the floor, and it will shimmer there, as sand, litter for the greater ones, and perhaps then, the silicone me who I was the reflection of will gaze and be glad. I am not afraid of death.

A diatom I am.

I suffocate alone.