

CHRISTINE BARKLEY

## Third-Person Bio

“**I** AM A WRITER,” and I hate this part. I am a writer, so I am grateful for the requisite third-person: she is a writer, and she hates writing about herself.

This is her name. This is where she lives, and how. Here are a few facts that are true but safe, carefully chosen for mass appeal. This is how she wants to be seen.

This is an attempt to seem cleverer, cuter, more indifferent, less pretentious. This is a fabrication, a failure. This is an apology in advance. This is not the way to understand her, or any part of her, if there even is a way. She wants everyone to like her, and that desire is more than “a little OCD” because it is diagnosed OCD, and she doesn’t want anyone to know about that part—but oops, she fucked up again and told the truth. This is a small part of why she hates describing herself. This is one of the many parts of herself that she wishes she didn’t have to know.

She will buy almost anything if it’s made of velvet or if it catches the sunlight just right and if she sees a dog she will tell everyone to look and if she sees a river or a creek she will want to touch the moving water. She is not vain unless she sees a mirror or a window or unmoving water. She needs everyone to know that her hair color is natural because people ask about it all the time and somehow it makes her doubt herself.

She exists mostly offline, so good luck finding her website, social media handle, any real evidence. Unless you’re reading this on Twitter, of course, because she had to make a Twitter for professional reasons. She needs everyone to know about that part—she had to.

She is the most anxious when she has time to relax, when she feels loved, when everything is going well. She is the most anxious when there’s ice on the roads, smoke in the air, reminders on her phone. She is The Most Anxious, full stop. She knows that she would win an award for it if there was one and she wishes that there was so she could add it to her bio. She gets frustrated when she has to repeat herself and she has to repeat herself. She has to.

She used to run thirty miles a week until a genetic disorder took her feet and her knees and her back. She used to make pointillist and line art until it took her fingers and her wrists. She used to feel like she owned her body until it took her whole body. She's not bitter about it, though. She doesn't seem bitter about it, does she? Does she?

She has never had a cavity and that's probably just genetics (the only good genes she got, other than her hair color [which is natural]) because even though she brushes her teeth (and she needs everyone to know that she brushes her teeth), she hasn't flossed in years. She can't stand for more than fifteen minutes straight without collapsing and so she only washes her hair (yes, her hair color is natural) once a week and she finds this truth so embarrassing that it didn't even occur to her to tell her doctors until she realized that they might be able to do something to help (they couldn't). She's still not bitter about it.

She knows that this is tiresome and she is tired enough as it is and she wants to hurry up and get to the point, too. She knows that the light being cast isn't very flattering but that like some wounds, this is all even worse than it looks. She knows that this doesn't count as penance unless it hurts more than everything else and she hasn't found anything that does, and she has been trying for years, and if there's one good thing she can say about herself it is that she always keeps trying.

She is as sick as everyone else is of hearing about how sick she is, talking about how sick she is, being as sick as she is. She gets cold too easily and shivers so violently that it hurts more than almost anything, and it makes her teeth chatter so hard that if she tries to speak she bites her tongue and so she mostly does not speak. She thinks about this a lot even when it's not happening, and she thinks that it says something important about her, even when she can't.