

When There's Another You

Singer Tegan Quin on the joy of twinning



Tegan
(left) and
Sara
Quin

My twin sister, Sara, and I have always found comfort in mirroring each other. I've met twins who went out of their way to look different, but since childhood, we've embraced our similarities.

When we were 4, Sara and I asked our mom if we could cut our hair off. It was really long, practically down to our butts, and with our round faces, we looked like little cherubs. At the salon, I went first, and we did a whole series of photos of me with the short hair next to Sara with her long hair. There are so many gendered attachments to long hair, and we didn't like being feminine, so you could see the unbridled happiness in our eyes once our hair was short.

Not long after that, we wanted to get our ears pierced, and I went first then too. I was absolutely traumatized by the first earring and didn't want to go through with the other one. So Sara got only one piercing as well. She basically was like, "Well, if Tegan's going to have only one earring, then I'll have only one."

We've both always had a really alternative aesthetic, and looking back, I wonder if we made some choices together because there was a comfort in having another person taking that risk too. If there are *two* girls with one earring wearing baggy jeans and rainbow chain necklaces to school, maybe it's not as weird.

We've gone in drastically different directions only once, in our senior year of high school. Around that time our band had started to gain some momentum musically, and I was feeling confident. I cut my hair to near chin length. I did it on a complete whim, but I truly felt transformed. Sara kept her hair longer. So for five months or so, we had very different looks and hairstyles, and I remember feeling like an individual—it was so exciting.

On our 18th birthday, we went to the hair salon together, and Sara shaved her head and dyed her hair blond, and I cut mine off too. At the time, all our friends were going off to college, and we had chosen to do music and felt really united in our transformation. I think we needed a physical change, both of us, for the start of this new life. And since then we've been very aware that, for the band, our look had to stay in

sync as well as match the vibe of each album. Our image as a duo sometimes takes priority over what I personally desire. There are times when I want to shave my head again or grow my hair long, but that may not fit the look for the album cycle we're in.

Over the years I've realized that having an identical twin is like having a live 3-D model of yourself in terms of trying out clothes or makeup. Sometimes I'll buy something new and not like it on myself... and then I see Sara wearing it and looking good, which (CONTINUED ON PAGE 250)

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changes the way I feel about it. I use her as a mirror when an actual mirror wouldn't satisfy what I'm looking for. I think that's why we end up with similar haircuts and clothing. The reverse is also true: If one of us becomes too extreme or strays too far style-wise, we do antagonize each other. It's like, "Get in line!"

Our whole lives we've been treated as a unit. The other day someone came backstage and hugged me and said, "How are you guys?" and it was just me alone in the room. When someone says, "Sorry, I don't know if you're Tegan or Sara," it doesn't offend me, even though I think we look really different.

If you look at photos of us, it's hard to tell, but I'm actually a little taller than Sara. (Sometimes photographers will strategically place us so we look the same height.) Aesthetically, I've always been a bit more tomboyish, and Sara's more feminine and fine-featured.

Interestingly enough, I love the right side of my face, and Sara loves the left side of hers. So we always try to pose in a way that allows us to each put our best face forward. This has led us, of course, to all these theories that we're really, truly meant to be one person and we've been split in half—like that old Greek myth of Zeus cutting humans in two to punish them for trying to attack the gods. In that story the humans spend the rest of their lives searching for their other halves, their soul mates. That has resonated with us as identical twins. We always joke that we're incomplete as individuals because we were meant to be one person.

—AS TOLD TO LEIGH BELZ RAY

Tegan and Sara are currently on tour. The Con X: Covers, celebrating the 10th anniversary of the duo's album The Con, is out on October 13.