Day 27: Object Constancy

In Theory: Object constancy, in object relations and attachment theory, is the capacity to maintain a stable sense of another person even when they are absent or temporarily disappointing. In early development, this refers to the ability to hold onto the sense of another even when that person is not immediately available. When this capacity is less developed, love may feel reversible under stress, absence may feel like loss of connection, and moments of frustration can eclipse earlier experiences of care. When developed, this stability allows earlier experiences of connection to remain accessible even when current feeling shifts. This psychic bridge anchors the internal world, ensuring that the bond survives the inevitable gaps in physical presence or emotional attunement without the threat of abandonment.

In Experience: During conflict, what feels good in a relationship can become hard to identify. Then, the connection can feel as though it has disappeared rather than been interrupted. What was previously present becomes difficult to locate. The search for what was good can feel like looking for something that was never there. The connection that disappears in conflict does not always return.

In Thought: The experience of connection includes what can be held in its absence. When feeling recedes, what was internalized is what remains.

In Print: Johnson, S. *Hold Me Tight* (2008)

In Attention: Notice someone close who has recently been disappointing.