

Ten years ago today
This picture was taken
of this girl
With a smile
like she knew she would make it someday
Or maybe she didn't
But it didn't matter
Because what this girl knew
was her own heart full of laughter

and that was enough.

Seventeen
Now this girl holds this picture in her hands
And wonders what happened to the joy that she had
As she looks in the mirror and sees the same eyes
That girl had in the picture
Before thousands of tears had been cried

He began a good work
And he would carry it out
That's what everyone tells her
But her mind tries to shout that it's not true
There's nothing good about how far she's fallen
All she feels is shame for this path that she's chosen to walk in

"She is brave"
"She has grown"
"She will succeed in all she does"
She will hold her head up and smile
while that voice will swell inside
that says,

"No."

No one else sees just how broken she is
When they ask where it started, she doesn't know where to begin
It doesn't make sense why she lies awake every night
Her voice can't explain it, so she sits and she writes
Hoping that maybe someone might finally understand
How this vine tightens around her
As this fear clamps its hand over her mouth

This girl is choking
Suffocating
Drowning in these lies
Dizzy from the hatred of these voices inside
Her heart tries to grasp at some promise of light
But her hands are too tired
and she falls back into her own mind...

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Thirteen years old
This girl holds a razor in her hand
She searches her mind and stares down at her skin
“Just this one time, I promise,”
she thinks to herself
This one thing to finish this searching she’s felt for so long
An answer she already knows she won’t find
In this mark that she’s certain that no one will see
and she’s right.

She lies in her bed with a bandage on her leg
as she stares at the ceiling
and all she can say is,
“I don’t want to be this person anymore.”

She never even knew what she was searching for.

This girl is lost.

Another year
And then another
Locked inside a glass cage
She breaks it
then bleeds
and then wishes she had just stayed
inside.

She panics
Her pulse races
Her thoughts race even faster
In these moments that pass
But always seem like they last
forever

So much noise

Her head spins with these voices still crying
And they pull her back under
and she runs
and she hides
again.

For a while she tries to outrun all the lies
To ignore all the noise that still echoes inside
But the things you ignore always seem to catch up
at your weakest

And she thinks,

if only this girl could
just
breathe.

She can't find an escape from this darkness inside
It gnaws at her stomach and fills up her mind
She tries to starve it to death
but it only grows stronger
This girl can't survive this darkness much longer

She kneels in the bathroom feeling the shaking in her hands
And thinks of the people who know but still don't understand
Because how could they?
They can't see the wreckage in her mind
These mountains of words that stay piled up inside
And if they did,
it would break them
and there are too many pieces
So she remains in these chains
In this cell of her weakness

and stays silent.

She drifts off again
as the familiar dark cloud starts to come
She watches it coming, but is too tired to run
She hears the thunder through the fog and closes her eyes
as it consumes her.

this girl is broken.

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The day comes to an end
with the sound of the rain
as the last rays of sunlight
find their way to her face
to remind her
that it still can be found.

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She opens her eyes
and hears the sound of her breathing
She's never felt less alive
but her heart is still beating
She is damaged

but not dead
It takes all of her strength
to get up from her bed
But she stands to her feet once again

Then her eyes find that picture
of that girl with the smile
And she starts to think back
through all those years and all the miles she's come through...

This girl doesn't know how much longer she can fight,
But for that girl in the picture,
she decides

she still has to try.

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Eighteen today
She is battered,
but somehow still breathing
She still can't decide if her life is worth saving...

But for today,
Just one more day,

This girl will hold on.

Maybe this girl's life can still be worth changing.

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Eighteen years ago today,
they held this girl in their arms.

They looked into her eyes
and then smiled
and said

she was enough.