

A Life Unraveled

The Puzzle Pieces of Me

The puzzle pieces of me used to create a Sun-tinted valley
The hills flowed in peaceful rhythm
A garden grew brilliant flowers, each one bright in its own way
There was a little brook that twinkled the perfect melody for a nap
The sky drifted through a constant cycle, slowly shifting
From blue in the morning the color of his eyes
To a deep navy at night that reminded me of the first day of school
When it rained, it was relaxing, the ideal music to read a book and drink peppermint tea to
The puzzle pieces fit perfectly, creating one melodious image that felt like home

The puzzle pieces that make up the me I am today are different
They're rough around the edges, and there's a wall around the garden now
The pictures are peeled off of a few, but I'm not sure what existed there before
There's no longer any music, just eerily silent images with no life
And a sense of something lurking in the dark
A few pieces might be missing, too
Like the ones that made up the napping brook and the bright mornings
I'm not sure when they were taken, but I wish I could have them with me now
Maybe I threw them out when they ceased to feel safe

They told me therapy would help glue my puzzle back together
Maybe find new pieces to fit the holes where the missing ones once were
The sun would shine less dull, illuminating some of the dark corners
And a new napping spot would be found, one where I could truly rest
Therapy would help break down the fences around the best parts
Let in new neighbors, and even some old friends
The narrative would look different but would once again be a complete picture
I tried. I gave it a shot, pulled out everything I had hidden beneath the boulders
But eventually, I failed in putting back the puzzle pieces of me.

Reminders

Stay.

Please stay.

Wait

...

DON'T GO!

If you leave me alone and empty, don't bother coming back!

If you don't want me in an imperfect state, then I don't need you anyways!

...

Please come back.

I need you.

I don't know how to complete relationships,

Not the right way,

Not the way that makes the old couples outside the ice cream parlor say

"I was like them once,

They look so happy and free."

No, my relationships are a splatter paint portrait

Every last one.

I claw my way through the wrapping paper to get in

And I drag myself back out the frame when it's over.

My mom.

My friends.

My boyfriends.

The random girl sitting next to me in class,

None of them stay

Because I make it so much easier to leave.

When the golden glow of the sunrise wears off,

My flaws are finally in the spotlight of the morning heat,

The scars I had covered now revealed,

The damage seen as valleys and mountains on my forehead.

Left behind is worse
Than simply being left alone.
Heaven robs me of the people I love
But sometimes they choose to walk out instead,
Leaving the door firmly shut behind them.
Who can we trust, then?
Who do we know will be able to stay?
I'm destined to be forever
Cautiously optimistic
And consistently disappointed.

Failure's a demon
That haunts my mind often,
Awake or dreaming,
Curious of what I could have become
If the monsters had stayed under the bed,
Always looking for a way out,
Stuck wondering if I could measure up
To his past attempts
Or the ideal she dreamed of
Or the biblical persona I'm told to worship,
All things I'm supposed to live up to but never fully achieve.

My relationships always fall to the floor,
Shattered and slung out across the hardwood of a memory.
I leave them there to remind me,
To step on every so often
So that the cuts in my feet remind me:
Don't try again; you're better alone.

But maybe it's me.

Maybe I'm the one who doesn't know how

To stay

Beautiful

Where does beauty come from?

Could it be the similarities drawn between my hair and a scarf of shiny golden silk,

Or the number of followers steadily ticking its way towards more friends I can claim as my own,

Or the tally mark of compliments I receive on my favorite sweatshirt

As I make one more pass through the aisles of Walmart,

Just hoping someone else might notice I am worth their gaze?

Is my beauty found in the black segmented number that appears

When I step off the icy tile and onto the bathroom scale?

Or maybe it's in the twisted game I play to see if I'm dizzily hungry enough to earn a snack?

Who set these bars so high for me?

Who determined that my worth was found not in my intelligence or kindness

But in the way I decorate my body and the stares I receive in a string bikini?

Maybe I'm the issue, feeding into the stigma that follows me like a stench I can't wash off;

Maybe it's the lies I heard at a young age and have since reiterated to myself

Over and over with so little grace,

Making sure that I know my worth and beauty are tied up in the same bundle of happiness,

Neither one attainable but both worth the painful struggle of just barely making it to tomorrow.

If only I could tell myself a new story,

One with a girl made beautiful by the pearls found *inside* her rough exterior

Followed around by the decadent aroma of honeysuckle on a shiny Easter morning,

A hopeless child who discovered a second chance at a life undeserving

And remains stronger than the lies attempting to define her.

That warrior would be powerful both inside and out,

Full of love and compassion, even for those who show her little,

And so stunning in all the ways which count

That no one could help but stare at her beauty.