

Yesterday I Cried

yesterday i cried.
i left the last of my composure
at the dinner table
where we sat across from each other
over pork chops, cajun rice, mash potatoes and gravy,
american food cooked by chinese people
that knew little english, but knew what customer service was,
giving this new buffet a try,
and hoping you would do the same for me.
i don't know if it was something in the noodles
or something in my mind
that was nauseating,
like i was two seconds away from one my mama's ass whippings,
after the teacher slipped and spilled the beans
on how i was cutting up in class
as if jokes were more amusing than long division.
not much different than what i use to be,
i covered up what was serious with comedy,
laughed loudly after every punch line
setting up the mood to hear that you'll *take me back*
right after you became full and smiled as wide as an ocean,
but you told me *no*.

you told me *no*.

out-to-eat food never tasted so awful,
and i've never been more shipwrecked,
crushed and coiled.
this precious awaited moment that i could almost taste
morphed into longest painstaking minutes of my life,
and i couldn't find my keys fast enough to escape it,
frisking myself like a bouncer at a club,
searching for something that he'd could confiscate
for his own keepsake,
but then i realize they were on the floor
with my self-esteem.

i, a buddle of nerves and an unbalanced head
on the car ride home,
trying to stay in my lane,
not just on the road,
but not to overstep any boundaries in
trying to get you back before
i dropped you off,

but it seemed as though you had already left,
long before dinner.

with the car in park and the engine still running,
you hugged me like you would never see me again
and i released you like it wasn't the end.
and within a blink, you were gone, just like that.
immediately i became a fallen soldier,
dulled senses and numb.
i flipped off the radio
and gripped the steering wheel
like i should have gripped you
before you decided to throw in the towel.
driving through tears,
confusing no left turn signs with stops signs,
this path i normally know like the back of my hand,
but seem so foreign when you got
a boat load of regrets rushing through your head.
but at last, like a runaway slave
with lashes embedded in his back
who just stepped foot on northern land,
i reached the place we both use to call home.

yesterday i cried.
i found myself paralyzed in a dark room,
if she would have called me later that day,
i still wouldn't have been moved.
i was torn apart in the center of the floor,
fighting off flashbacks of what we use to be
and how it ended,
became paranoid by all my mistakes that i made
and the ones i haven't made yet.

yesterday i cried.
i was searching for solutions that did not exist
and bothering to ask God nothing
and that's when it hit me,
i was no longer this stone bridge
secure and built to never break.

yesterday i cried.
i saw a man i wasn't ready to see.

WeClutter

we are the eye contact that becomes uncomfortable.
we look away like we have low self-esteem because
we have low-esteem. we make you feel nervous,
even though we do not mean to. we are the fast name
introductions that bomb rush out of our mouths
while shaking hands. we are the other person's name
which we will forget as soon as we do not say it right.
we are the over-enunciated words, the squint they give
us back. this is the other side of english, chopped and
confused. we are the words that stick to the side of our
mouths, the burst of spit that lands on your face when
we are struggling to get one word out. we pray about it.
we pray about it. we pray about it. we are the hand
movements that are out of sync with what we are
saying. we are *you know what i am saying, you know what
i mean!* we do not know what to use first: tongue, teeth
or breath. we run out of breath trying to test it out. we
are the kings of repeating ourselves. we are the nods
you give us as if you understand us the second time
around. we know it is hard on you, but harder on us to
deal with it. of course we pray about it. we pray about it.
we pray about it more than ever when the stakes are high
and we need the foundation of words to serve us like the
sun serves daylight. so we are left to find our own little
way through the dismay, so we tell statements, not stories,
the fastest you have ever heard. we are the conversation
that runs short and the smile we have because we are glad
it is over. we are the biggest comedians, jokes we can only
make out; we have so much life within us yet none in front
of people. we pray about it day and night. we are the phone
conversations that are hard on your ears. we are feedback
we don't want to hear, the cringe of an echo, the dread of a
cold call, pull our hair out if we have to break down complex
information, shoot us before you make us publicly speak,
we can't get past the phone interview for a job. we have a
degree, but cannot verbally deliver. we are crossed fingers
in hopes that our words fell out right, but unfortunately our
facial expression remained neutral. we dash from confrontation,
we call it *no drama*. we absolutely get ourselves, but sometimes
we don't. we do not even know it's a speech issue, we think it's
just a small issue, something we haven't fixed yet. we are all over
the place, cannot contain the words so they won't spill out at the
same time. we even trip up asking God for help, but we still pray
about it. we pray about it. we pray about it this confusion
we cannot fix, this circus that lives in our mouths.

Teeth: Telling It Like It Is

i've come such a long way from being a crippled tongue. i use every vein in me to hang in conversations without making people feel so stressed. i swear sometimes it's like trying to snatch a cloud out of the sky. but you choose to act like my words are so distorted that you cannot bear it. i find it ironic, my darling, that my words went down your ears with ease when you wanted to get down my pants to make a fountain out of me so you can feel revived and replenished. i understand your cravings, we all have them—mine was in finding a companion, someone who could make herself at home in my heart. but now all of a sudden everything sounds like japanese to you. you made your favorite word *what*, ran me over with it, and made a mockery out of me, even when the words flowed out like a symphony—perfectly in unison. i think it is unfortunate that i am inclined to say more to you now than i did when we were in sync. perhaps we had nothing in common; i'll take that. in this moment, i am a frozen volcano, there is no more heat around here for you. for all of that, i want to leave something you can place in the back of your psyche—i own a heart and i would rather spend my time helping people than humiliating them when their imperfections are shining bright in my face. my darling, i recommend you try going for *kind* next time, i guarantee it will suit you better, and please remember this about me: even though my speech walks on one bad leg, it gets the job done.

Poets and Clutterers

the only difference

between poets

and clutterers:

poets take you on a journey—

clutterers take you through a maze.

Bells and Whistles

i thought you were going to be on board with me and this language of mine. i thought you were going to dive into this deep universe of limping letters and brave words that want to say a lot, but only say so much.

i know i am not the easiest person to listen to, but once you listen to me, your heart can hear the sound of a sincere man in every messy syllable—a man who loves like no other and brings depth even though his remarks leave him short.

i come with all kinds of bells and whistles, all sorts of uncharted land. i am a playground for the one who declares their devotion to me. if you listen closely, it blares in the way i say your name, in the way words get jammed up when i try to talk to you.

i thought you would notice the rarity you had in your possession, nurture it like a newborn child, then call my future yours. it was here for you to rejoice in, take flight, and go places only you and i can understand. i thought you were going to share this world of mine and give yourself into a language that is not broken, but beautiful.