

## The Truth About Bad Friends

I put my phone down in shock.

And my world is shook.

Balance is lost to the tension in the air.

My friend is in critical condition.

I just saw him last month

and we laughed and told each other stories of our lives.

Because that is what they were.

Just stories.

Facebook, just IRL.

Glamorized and airbrushed so we didn't show the unvarnished truth.

The truth is my friend is an alcoholic.

The truth is he is in the hospital due to a fall in his home...

and a .3 alcohol level.

The truth is I didn't know.

The truth is I should have.

Truth hurts, and the guilt lingers.

Retroactively.

Our previous conversation feels sour on my tongue's memory.

The niceties we exchanged,

the courtesy we gave

to each other's space.

Careful not to overstep our place.

But what is our place?

When is the time not to play nice?

My friend lies in his hospital bed,

Broken spine

Head injury and utterly confused.

About to lose

His wife.

His kids.

His house.

Everything that he loved to talk about

when nothing bothered him.

And he doesn't realize that.

YET.

Now should be the time to talk without barriers.

And yet I don't.

I cower.

I ask how he is doing.

His answers flow in and outside of the truth.

Truth that waits patiently for him,

like coal waits to become a diamond.

Pressure and time affect us all

And I apply neither.

Too afraid to make waves.

Afraid that those waves will swallow us whole.

When HE is the only one that is drowning.

And my concern,

My skirting the issues,

My trying to be nice,

just adds weight to sink him further

Away from security of friends and family.

Away from the hope of love.

Away from the truth

that awaits us all.

The truth is...

If I don't care enough of my friend to really talk to him

He will die.

And my cold comfort is not helping.

I will live

with the knowledge

that I didn't fight enough to help HIM live

because I was being polite.

I sit by his hospital room bed

and do the math in my head between fear and honesty

and open my mouth to speak.

## Juridical Friends

Juridical Person - [ *joo-rid-i-kuhl pur-suh n* ] any organization that is not a single natural person but is authorized by law with duties and rights and is recognized as a legal person and as having a distinct identity.

My best friends are juridical persons.

Both online and Off.

What fun we have together!

Me with my expendable cash

They with their amazing bargains  
and questionable goals.

My sweater drips of blood and irony  
on the backs of child labor.

My shopping cart filled to the brim  
with unlivable wages

that choke unseen victims

while I cherish my purchase

with an Amazonian smile.

Content that I am on the right side of this

Checkout.

But may not be always.

I listen to my friends

Whisper with intent

**JUST DO IT™**

And I Do.

**DON'T  
LEAVE  
HOME  
WITHOUT IT!™**

And I would never.

**Think different™**

And I buy the same.

## HAVE IT YOUR WAY™

For I have forgotten any other.

While I listen to their pleas  
I am deaf to the screams surrounding me

As I scroll down my shopping list of atrocities:

The oppression I fostered when I

Google sandwich recipes.

The lands I have raped

(while soothing a headache)

The hate I have legislated

(while enjoying a chicken nugget)

All with a click or a simple transgression.

My friends condemn me  
to a lifetime of convenience  
at the expense of my expenses.

While They roam free of  
Liability.

Trust.

Justice.

Remorse.

And I reach for my wallet and Ask  
*How much more do you need from me?*  
And They reply **ALL!**

And I SUBMIT.

And wait two days.

## My Fear

I have few fears that scare me as much as

A 2x3 piece of paper with tape.

The paper sticks to a wall outside my father's door

to a room he will never leave.

The permanence of marker intermingled with the transient tape holds his name,

for now.

Block letters meticulously etched scream out from the paper

As if they are praying for more time, more space.

More permanence.

But there is none,

there is only tape.

Tape that is a constant reminder that someone else is waiting for this room,

To gasp, struggle, and suffer like the person before them.

To crane their neck up enough to see the tape with their name that hangs like a waiting obit.

Someone is always next in line for a door with a paper and tape.

Even me.

The frailty of life has a depth and a width.

And its measurements are 2x3

And tape.

There is always tape.

## WORD SEARCH

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To mine my mind  
and help me find  
the WORDS I need  
to Breathe life into  
the

endless

white.