

## Remainders of me

I do not know how to live.

I know how breathe—  
and walk and think—  
but I categorize each breath  
by sign, huff, or exhale

I am a battle strategy—  
More statistics than person

In truth, I do not know how to rest.

I know how to sleep—  
but my dreams are filled  
and my pupils shake behind their lids  
and I wake up as if it never happened

I am an insomniac who sleeps,  
Oh the irony, the terror

Full transparency, I do not know how to let go.

For I hold onto everything, everything ever  
I grip it and mold it  
clutching and tugging and clinging—  
until it withers away

I know if I unclasp my palm  
I wouldn't be able to identify  
The mutilated form of what lies there  
Still, I hold on

Honestly, I do not know how to be idle

Every conversation  
No matter how long  
No matter if it was a minute exchange

I need to keep and remember

I am gripping a sharpened dagger  
I hold on as it seeps father and farther into my skin  
slicing through thin, fragile arteries  
Because where would I set it down?

I am a warrior who lacks courage  
I will be striked down immediately

Possibly, I do not know how to be content

I was born with a thumping heart—  
A furrow in my brow—  
and it has never stopped,  
Never faded away with the years

I long to be the person I was yesterday  
She was more blissful, more carefree  
I await the person I will be tomorrow  
She will be more intelligent, more mature

...I do not know how to be me.

I have existed in this body for fifteen years  
I've been there for all of it  
The sorrows, the joy, the love, the hate—  
but I'm still unsure who looks back in reflections

I collect memories,  
Quiet conversations and loud exclamations  
I hoard and over-analyze my feelings,  
the tears forming on my lashes and the smile stretching across my lips

I do not know how to be.

I assign meaning to everything,  
The blood seeping from my skin  
Must be weaved into my life—  
Poetically, beautifully, *meaningfully*

I am a child thrust into war,  
Just learning what death is,  
Just realizing there will be a time  
I will close my eyes and never open them

I do not know how to cope with the fact  
I am finite,  
That someday I will no longer exist  
I am designed to be forgotten

Because I do not know how to *just* live

I am a number on a chart—  
a fighter with no armor—  
a archer without sight—  
A girl with no freedom.

I don't forget  
I don't let go  
I am trapped within my mind  
And, God, it aches

It singses my fingertips  
Crushes me underneath its pressure  
but still I step into the fire—  
Still I add more weight

I suffer and suffer and suffer  
and suffer and suffer—  
and once I've exhausted myself  
I will finally wonder

How do people live?

## Reminders of God

Dear God,  
When I die  
As you say I must

Let my body  
decay into the earth  
Let it feed the soil  
with my remnants  
Allow it to blossom flowers  
in my place

Let it feed the buzzards  
With my insides  
Allow them to fly home  
Bellies full and hearts content

Please God,  
If I am to succumb  
to the darkness  
Make it fill every  
corner of the world with  
light.

## Remnants of the Earth

We are the hummingbirds  
fighting over bird feeders  
We are the acorns  
keeping squirrels breathers

We are the sand  
forever changing upon the beach  
We are the morning mist  
settling into dew every and each

We are the waves  
crashing into rocks  
We are the pebbles  
Children roll around their palms

How could you say you don't belong?  
You did not come into the Earth  
You came from it  
The Earth forged you

You were created to belong.

How could I say you meant nothing?  
You are everything, everywhere  
And so am I  
We are the Earth spinning

It is us who never stand alone,  
For we are always together

As long as the Earth shall live  
So will we.

Of the Sun, Death, and Mothers

Death knocked on my door,  
Said He just wanted to talk  
I made tea  
and we laid on the kitchen floor—  
Frozen cold tile on my back

*“Have you loved anyone your whole life?”*  
The question catches me by surprise  
but I nod—  
Slowly, at first—  
speeding up as the question  
Finally resonates

*“Who?”*

“My—my mom”  
I stutter over my words,  
but the answer came clearly  
Like an instinct

“She’s my everything”  
I continue—  
Unprompted—  
Feeling a strange need to

*“What will you do when she’s gone?”*  
Death asks  
and I struggle to swallow  
Flexing my hands

“I will light a candle”  
I answer  
My hands digging into the floor  
Pushing myself to sit against a cabinet

*“Why?”*

“Because it will be cold and dark”

I say,  
“The sun will be gone,  
and with it—  
The warmth”

*“Where is the sun?”*

“With my mom.”  
I answer,  
and Death stares  
for many moments

*“Do you love your mother?”*

“Yes,”  
The word is said  
As easily as breathing,  
The echoes of it carrying out

“I love her so much it hurts”  
I add, because it's a special kind of love  
The kind where I've never existed without it,  
The kind I've never been without

*“You're leaving soon?”*  
Death asks  
and I am worried for a moment  
Until I see His back towards me,  
His front facing the boxes stacked in the corner

“Yeah, college,”  
I softly laugh  
A half smile twitching  
On my face

“I'm going to miss her,”  
I blurt out without thinking  
My eyes trained on  
the sharpie sitting on the box

*“Will she be gone?”*

Death asks,  
And I can't help but laugh  
The idea I have any control over that  
When He floats not five feet away  
Still...

“No,”

I start

“But I will be,”

I sigh out,

“I'm the one leaving.”

*“But you're not gone?”*

Death asks again,  
Making me grab my cup  
Twirl it around—  
If just to have something to do

“It won't be the same.”

*“Why?”*

“I've never lived without her,”

I shrug as I say it

Fist clenched around the cup handle,

“I don't know how to do it.”

*“Won't you learn?”*

“I'll try, but—

The nights will be cold,

And the morning will not bring

Simmering rays of the sun—

Because it is back home.”

*“But you will try?”*

“I will try”

I say, the words



whispered out through my  
barely parted lips  
Death says nothing,  
Which is unusual  
But when I look to Him,  
He is floating towards the door

I follow on shaky feet  
stepping over the floorboard  
that I know will creak  
as an instinct

Death is outside,  
Figure dark on  
The freshly cut grass  
Of the front lawn

“Why are you here?”  
I ask,  
And it feels silly,  
For a moment,  
To ask Death anything

*“I feel the world’s sorrow,  
I feel every soul’s pain,  
And there was two distinct ones here—  
Full of emotions that usually come when I’m to arrive”*

Tears well in my eyes  
Burning my lashes—  
Singing my skin as they flow—  
Silent in their inferno

I nod again,  
Startling when the  
Door opens behind me,  
A voice following the sound

“What are you doing out here?”  
My mother asks,

Face twisting in concern,  
“Are you alright?”

I turn away from Death—  
Her eyes are red rimmed,  
Her nose red—  
And I’ll bet I look the same

“I’m just going to miss you.”

I collapse into her arms,  
Burrowing my face into her shoulder—  
Even though I have to bend down to do so—  
And it's been years since I’ve done that

“I won’t be gone,”  
She says,  
Running her finger over my eyebrow—  
Something she used to do  
Back when I was a child  
Back when I slept by her side

“I won’t be either,”  
I promise,  
And when I look back,  
Back to where I was just staring—

Death is gone.

All there is is me and my mom—  
Under the warmth of the sun  
Smiling identical, wide smiles  
And that, I think, is enough.