

# ***A Life in Progress***

**Anxious**

How do you sit without being worried

How do you sit without constantly wondering if they all hate you

It's too much to ask about love when the foundation of your bones is self-hatred

My brain is exhausted with words

Contentment lies in the sky

Whether it's the color of a blue-purple bruise from the thrust of an angry deity's fist

A silver mist more attuned to the sea than the sky

Or a banal flash of shimmering blue and gold

Whether it's clouds shifting in the wind

Or the hole in the ozone expanding and contracting

Beneath it all the omnipresent atmosphere encircles us in arms that promise to be here

Until we recoil from its warmth

**Attachment**

When I was young you said you weren't here to be my best friend  
So why are you surprised I can't treat you now like the ones I have

When you told me that a mom isn't supposed to be liked I took it to heart  
Now I can't tell you anything hard

I'm sorry for holding you away at an arm's length  
I know silence is not a way to gain emotional strength

I love you so much  
But I can't say those words when I can highlight your manipulation in our conversations

You've told me from the age of thirteen  
That I'm taking up too much space with my body

You say it's fine  
Because you've been needing to lose ten pounds for awhile

Then you show me love with a jar of M&Ms  
Through fistfuls of guilt I eat them

So much of my life has been spent trying to make decisions to give you peace  
I'm realizing now that nothing I do will make you completely at ease

What I choose can't be accepted only when you agree  
At this point you can react however you want and I'll do whatever I need

It's time to find emotional regulation on your own  
I can't keep shielding you from my own emotions

## **Disorder**

I'm a good person who does bad things

I wonder when I'm just a bad person

How do you keep the past from haunting you for life

I want to exorcise my ghosts but they blow the candles out every time

I lose control like wind in a vortex

I'll cut you open with your own knife then say sorry as you bleach your blood from the carpet

I subtract when I should add and divide by multiplying

I can't remember the last time I was decisively happy

My contradictions aren't charming

I have the best of intentions but the worst of inaction

Once upon a time I wished I was a different person so I blew out the stars but all that did was waste my breath and grow my resentment

So now it's just me and my demons enclosed in a dark room competing to see how long the candle stays lit

In the dimming glow it's hard to tell who's who because in reality it's just me

There's nothing to set free

I'm a good person who's done bad things

But there's nothing holding me back but me

**Secure**

I'm circling around  
For a place to be found

When I draw a line  
Will it hold with time

I'm overthinking  
My path with steps of uncertainty

Climbing the peaks of my insecurity  
Still leaves me in a valley

How am I supposed to feel  
When I believed half the world and told myself that what I feel isn't real

Then the world decided pride was worth embracing  
So now they're celebrating which leaves me with complicated feelings

My shame leaves my brain corrupted  
My shame is just joy interrupted<sup>1</sup>

Walled in  
With stones and concrete

No one told me it would be like this  
That the world could want me while I don't want to exist

What I need  
Is to forget my anxiety

Claim my identity  
Allow myself to be

Ambiguity sucks  
What's it like to not give a fuck

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<sup>1</sup> Alok Vaid-Menon said this in an interview with Demi Lovato, and it inspired this whole poem.

What's it like to pull walls down  
To say my thoughts instead of letting them drown

I let the words come out  
I hope I start feeling proud

I can't keep trying to destroy the proof  
I can't keep running from what I know is true

I'll give this time  
I'll try drawing a line

## **Future**

I don't want to sit and ruminate in a mind soaked and sodden with saltwater

I want vibrant splashes of color on a forgotten canvas faded to a dull yellow with disuse

I want incongruous combinations of rosemary laced with chili flakes, or the tasteless crunch of celery paired with the plush satin of bitter rose petals

I want electropop reverberating off the walls of a room too small to contain the exponentially louder repetitions of an already repetitive chorus accented with clicks of sharp stilettos and hesitantly hopeful laughter

And afterwards, I'll remember the glare of strobe lights reflecting off glasses of colorful liquor, and the briny bite of a shared martini sipped between gagged-filled giggles as the sweaty scent of unbridled dancing permeates everything

If the scent of rain fills the air, as humid mist and raindrops falling from cracks in the ceiling cloud my memory, I won't despair

I'll savor the fresh and salty taste and welcome another chance to dance in the rain