

## **the voice that echoes in the river**

sing me your song, oh reflection of mine-self that everyone insists i see  
even though she is a soul i cannot seem to recognize.

to gaze upon your forced smile and those eyes, doubtlessly full of misery and sorrow,  
strikes so much grief unto mine heart that i feel as if it might explode;

an erupting volcano fueled by unspeakable frustration and passion for everything,  
both simple and intricate-  
although the simplicity just makes it more unbearable.

scorching lava flows down mountains like aching tears  
drip drop, drip drop, drip drop, into the water  
to disappear, never to be seen again because who would want their pain to be known?

let my anguish become one with the river;  
let my woe paint me in their likeness  
as the brush is too heavy for me to create it myself.

my canvas is littered with fraud and shame and guilt and regret and fear,  
splattered with mud from the riverbank and algae from the river,  
and i feel as though i cannot remove it without wiping every single part of it away.

i stare [not taking a single breath] at that reflection in the mirror  
and i faintly hear your echoes in the river.

sounds of forgotten memories and tossed away dreams-  
exhilaration begins to well up in my broken heart-

please, i beg of you, sing louder! LOUDER!  
i want to dance to your music for as long as i live!  
let me cherish your truth and let me treasure your individuality  
for i have not been able to love since i lost them.

i wish i was able to extend my arm out to you, penetrating freezing water,  
to take your hand in my own. i wish i could yank you from their wretched  
claws and guide you to your realization that you, that i, am not worthless.

that i am not the lily pads floating in the ponds,  
nor am i the sand at the bottom of the ocean,  
and i am most definitely not my tears in the river.

so please,  
listen to me,  
sing! so that i may dive in to find you and follow the sound of your voice,  
to pull you from the abyss and bring you home!

do you hear me?  
do you hear me like i hear you?  
have you heard my calls or were they muffled in the depths of which you are hidden?  
i know you're paralyzed in the darkness, frozen to the spot,  
but please! lift up your hand! sing loud so i can uncover you,  
my jewel, my treasure that has been buried within insecurity and despair for years!

but

the numbness in my hand is overwhelming.  
and there are ripples in the river now-  
you've disappeared.

i beg of you,  
serenade me with your melodies, oh reflection of mine-self that is just beyond my reach.  
you may be just echoes in the river,  
but i will never stop listening.

## **i wish i would have known**

you were ice  
left alone in a half drunk red solo cup  
abandoned on a stained counter  
in a strangers' kitchen  
on a friday night.

except i knew exactly where to find you when i wanted you-  
my name was written on your wine colored body;  
and so when i craved your satisfying taste,  
i stumbled back to you.

but hours had gone by  
and i was so intoxicated  
i forgot that ice melts.

...

i knew you had an expiration date  
but instead of giving you my focus  
i buried your limits deep in the dirt;  
pushed your imminent departure deep within my soul  
because it hurt too damn much to address it.

i wasn't aware of how quickly time passed for you;  
i thought we were synchronous  
but i guess i was wrong.

i would have done things differently  
if i knew it was the last time.

i would have taken it slower;  
would have let your flavor linger on my tongue;  
would have savored every piece of you.

and what could have been  
if i had kept you closer to me?  
if i had put in more effort?  
would i have more breath taking moments  
followed by bittersweet memories?

i wish i could have known;  
i could have been ready.

instead,  
when the tepid poison kisses my lips,  
i do not drink.

feelings of  
shock and disgust, anger then sadness, guilt paired with regret,  
fill my mouth instead  
and it feels like i might choke on them

and when i try to remember the last time before i knew it was the last time  
i am in pain  
because i have already forgotten.

moments tend to be sudden  
and memories are easy to forget  
when you suppress significance.

i thought i had more time.

i thought i had more time.

## **it's only 3 am**

you decide to gaze upon it  
the picture you have yet to quit,  
before the longing can shift to regret  
your rose-kissed cheeks are already wet.  
the dormant pain begins to roar;  
what are you even doing this for?  
you can't handle a simple glance  
put it back, it's your last chance.  
but you and i both know it's too late  
as the clock strikes 2:58.

i promise it's okay to hurt, but this is self-inflicted;  
pain and guilt and misery, it's all just too addictive.  
that dagger that you carry weighs seven thousand pounds,  
if you keep this up you'll never leave your bounds.

i just don't understand,  
what are you doing to your hand??  
you're clenching your knife with your fist;  
nothing good can come from this.

you're breaking skin  
don't let them win  
the blood is dripping  
please stop gripping  
the floor's covered in wine  
the clock reads 2:59

you're full of woe  
but don't you know  
you could prevent  
all this torment  
just by letting go.

you know all of this and yet,  
you choose to remain in debt.  
i know it's agonizingly hard;  
you've been severely scarred.

listen to me, my dearest friend;  
you need to begin to mend.  
it hurts, it hurts, oh god i know;  
i see you're at a point so low.

cries escape your quivering lips;  
let it slip through your fingertips.  
know that there is comfort here;  
i hope the pain soon disappears.

and when you're okay to stand  
please go clean and wrap your hand.

i beg of you, just one last thing;  
throw away everything.

throw away your anger  
and throw away your guilt,  
throw away self-deprecation  
that you yourself have built.

and last but not least  
that picture you oppose.  
please take it off its pedestal,  
then in the trash it goes.

no more need to look upon them.  
why would you ever keep the stem  
when all the petals have already fallen away,  
that's not a very good bouquet.

you're on your way to being freed;  
3:00 am the clock does read.

i'm proud of you,  
you should be too.  
understand that this journey will take time,  
but it's a mountain you're ready to climb.  
these emotions can be so hard to feel,  
but if you pick at scabs they'll never fully heal.

## **unfortunately unbreakable**

you say i'm strong,  
but i hate it  
when you say that.

i know that i'm strong.

i've gone through tough times  
and come out even tougher.

i keep fighting.  
i don't back down.  
i never give up.  
i'm stubborn as hell.

you throw everything you have at me  
yet i'm still here.

you could break both my legs  
and i'd still find a way to stand back up.

the more pain i endure,  
the stronger i get.

but more pain i endure,  
the harder it is to keep going.

you say i'm strong but i hate it when you say that.  
i hate that i'm strong.  
it would be so much easier if i were weak.  
it would be so much easier to die if i were weak.



## **laminated**

i've hidden my flaws well  
and now all you see is perfection;  
but what a mistake that was.

in a rush to freeze me in this illusion  
you cover me in clear plastic.

i scream for help;  
my oxygen is almost out;  
i bang on the sides  
and i try to show you my pain  
but from your perspective  
all you see is art.