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Sorrow in Every Room

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SORROW IN EVERY ROOM

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An Honors Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for Honors

In

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2020

“Sorrow in Every Room”

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prologue: a warning

you unhappy thing,
I'm sorry.

there were no knights in this story—
(at least not in our chapters)

you had to slay the beasts
with your once
clean hands to avoid
getting snapped
between teeth instead.
but more often than not,
you lost yourself to their
hunger, soul crushing jaws snap
not just bones as they gnaw,
chew,
devour,
break you.

so cynical thing—
(once pristine porcelain,
now shattered and stained)
how could the blame
have ever been yours?

fairytale are actually steeped
in something much darker.
reality is
romeo and juliet died
and when one day
your prince truly does come,
he'll take his last breath too soon,
far before the close of this tale.

you'll live a long time denying
how grief moves inside you.
for a while you will be
hollow thing
with such a dark stain on your soul
you'll swear

pain is all you've ever known.

reckless one,
ready to crack into something
more wild and unhinged—
catch yourself before it shapes you
into something so unrecognizable
you lose you.

the truth is
that people will tell you
how to feel,
how to cry,
how to deal with the rage
that's boiling inside.
you're bitter
but hold your head up high—

they will tell you
what you should think,
who you should love,
even the way you should mourn—
silently and quickly.
you'll have to perfect
all those pretty little lies.
deceive them,
fragile thing.

build yourself a throne
of pure gold,
gaze into the now
familiar and
unmistakable void.
you've become used to
the stench of rot.
square your jaw,
harden those kind eyes.
do not allow them to forever
extinguish that dimming light
inside you. it should never
go out with a whimper.

the overwhelming

It starts like the bile that crawls up my throat
and ends with the overwhelming—
feeling.
the itch under my skin
that I get at night
when I'm alone
with myself
and my thoughts.

I should force myself into bed,
but I torment myself instead.
face pressed against the cool
surface of the mirror,
I'm thinking about
disappearing
or shrinking.
where's my *drink me*
that will shrink me,
small enough to be
mistaken as an ant.
would I be squashed then?
flattened by the sole of a shoe?

I killed a spider tonight,
imagine my fright
when one crawled across
the pages of the book
I was reading, forced me
right back into my body.

I was angry when I killed it,
stared at the stain it left
on chapter 13
for longer than
necessary.
I had to acknowledge afterwards
that I was in my living room again
and it was almost 3 am
and I have to exist tomorrow.

The feeling starts like the bile
that crawls up my throat
and becomes the way I cried
in the bathroom when I decided
I still didn't want me.
it ends with the overwhelming—
feeling.

I wished for once it would just be
numbing
but now,
the feeling I get
heads straight into something like
my mind screaming on these
sleepless nights
and the urge that I get
to tear at my insides
because all I've got is
nerve endings on fire.

I just want to feel—
alive again.

Two Hearts

To think of you is to *tear*.
Most have no idea.
They do not know why
I dig my nails
into my flesh,
to rip away bits and bits
until I see the beating organ.

I'm still alive.

They don't know why I tear,
peel,
scratch
at my flesh.
I can't come to terms
with the facts.

I'm still here.

But I'm tormented
when I think of you
and how no amount of
tearing could do,
there'd still be no beating organ
to see.

You're decaying flesh.

But not me,
and I just can't comprehend—
I remember the light I'd see
in your eyes.
There's no way there's nothing left inside.

To think of you,
I have to *tear*.
I can't understand why

You're not here.

I always knew in my heart
I would feel it—
if you were to go
I would know.
I just never knew
I'd feel it,
not only in my bones,
but every fiber of my soul.

post traumatic

sleep doesn't touch the wicked.
this must be the reason
that it's almost midnight
and I swear
I didn't drink that much
but my skin is crawling
and no matter how much
I shake, scratch, scream
in the confines of my mind,
it won't stop.

I wish I cried more at night.
instead, I just stare
into the dark of the hallway,
into the void of feeling in my soul,
and I wait for something—
for anything.

I listen to soft, sad songs
that seem like a piece of me
if I wasn't missing so many.
they resemble that empty, hollow
feeling that I get when I'm cold
and entirely alone,
so exhausted because life
is tiring
and my body—

I could itch the feeling out,
leave crimson under my fingernails,
but it's in my heart
and I can't get past
the breasts,
and now it's Sunday
and I've prayed to God—
no,
I've begged God
to have mercy on my ~~fucking pitiful~~ soul
because I've rotted it.

I don't even want it,
the humanity that makes me feel—
nothing,
I'm suffocating,
and I can't stop it
because I feel this pull
of darkness,
it appeals to my numbness.
perhaps the creaks I hear
coming from the floorboards
are demons that could kill me.
wouldn't that be a frightful way to die?
like in the movies,

the women are always beautiful,
they're so feminine—
are their scars like mine?

wouldn't that be a frightful way to die,
hand clutching an open window,
you just have to jump,
and that splat,
the landing,
would it damage my soul
more than I've already damned it?

because I prayed to God to make it stop
and it never did.

all curves that can only be
starved off so much but will always seem
so prominent. shirts can't cover up the size,
they barely conceal.
I feel like a disgrace.
I want to destroy
what I've been given.

I used to throw out the remainder of my lunch
when my brain got to thinking too much.
I had been sixteen the first time
I had tried to crush my bones,
it ended up hurting
my soul
but it's now Sunday

and I think if I close my eyes
I'll sleep.

maybe I'll dream or maybe
my mind isn't done screaming.

splintered

I'm practiced in the art
of numbing myself.
sometimes, I shrink
so far into my skin
that I'm unresponsive.
not aware of the body
that I leave defenseless
even though I inhabit it.

I'm no stranger to shattering.
I'm well acquainted
with the way it feels
all consuming. In the mirror,
I look dimmed. It's hard
to recognize myself through
hazy eyes. I focus on
the purple leaking
under them.

There's this gaping hole
inside me. It demands light
and tries to pull it all in
through my eyes.
It never manages
to suck in enough so
I lose my disguise.
too consumed and tormented,
I forget to hold
my walls up high,
the ones built of concrete
crumble and I don't know
who I am. a small, sad
version of what used to bite
is all that's left.

Even when I try
so hard to preserve that
angry, defensive,
protects me—
maybe sometimes

I snap my teeth
just to see who
will flinch. those who
have said *I love you*
brought a hatchet
to watch me pick up
what they broke apart
so when I recognize it,
the way she seems ready
to break me, I numb myself
completely, unwilling to let
someone else destroy all
I've built again.

spark

I don't lie to you
when you ask if
I do this all
for the sake
of some kind of thrill
because maybe
you've always been right
and I've done nothing but
try to hide

I'm constantly kept up
at night.
right before the sun rises
I'll fall asleep and miss
the way orangey pink
could light up the sky.
we used to watch the
sun rise together
but that was before
I closed myself off to things
that made me feel like singing.

I'm sorry I don't hesitate
when it comes calling.

It isn't a pretty sound,
not the sweetness of a major chord
or even the melancholy of the minor.
it's brakes screeching to stop,
that feeling of what could happen,
ears ringing,
what if your reflexes just weren't
quick enough?
it's static loud,
deafening roar,
maybe all of this means
nothing after all.

aren't we all just waiting
until our hearts stop—

beating,
maybe that's all I'm doing.

Beating myself up,
beating you up,
because my face heats,
my teeth bite into my tongue,
you're simply asking—
I think you just want to know
why—

I already feel like I'm dying
I know I aim for my words
to slice through all those good intentions
in a manner that screams,
bleeds,
haven't you had enough?
I'm simply just
withering away.
I am not unfamiliar with decay.

Does it make you question
why you bother
with gasoline
that yearns so badly
to ignite?
I want to go up
in flames.
I find their crackle calming,
it's enticing—
the way they sway,
will I be the same way
after the initial spark?

I'm waiting for that calming
crackle,
the moment when I
stop
on my descent
from spiraling out of
control
because the screams of the brakes
scared me so bad,
I flinched

and stepped hard on the gas again
instead.

interlude: when it's quiet

It was like someone whispered

turn the lights off

and it compels you enough to move,
feet careful across the floor
until you reach the switch,
fingertip momentarily tense against it,
then,

dark.

You could get back into your bed
but the sheets won't be a comfort.
You've been awake anyway,
eyes wide,
staring at the wall

but now you can see the shapes,
the way the claws drag
against the wall's skin,
paper fraying in their wake.
You could tear.

too dark, too loud

Who's screaming?

It's you?

But it's not.

The floorboards creak.
You hum a tune
as you dance around the room.
Perhaps this is comfort,
perhaps it is not.

The silence comes back in a deafening roar
once you've hesitated,
heels pressed back into the floor.

you need the dark

too,

It croons as the crescendo of silence balloons,
your ears ring,
body screams for it to stop,
the shapes reach out for you—
violent as they move—
claws ready to leave frayed pieces
in their wake
once they've got you.

Moonlight shines through the window
and the claws drag shadows through the bright.
You hum a tune
as you try to imagine yourself in that light.

The claws retract

then stretch out

and still,

you lean towards them.

Unwanted Bones

I couldn't cut through the stems.
It felt impossible but I wanted you

to have something beautiful.
Sunflowers always felt fitting

for us. You were the brightness
in my life, your aura stretched out

into my gloom and I think my adoration
for you made my skin glow more than I

was used to. I never wanted to leave you.
But the stems were impossible to cut through.

It might have been easier to use the shears
to cut through my finger bone. The green

thickness too tough, yet I get sliced easily
if paper cuts. Sunflowers certainly get

more sun than I do calcium. I wouldn't
even have to use much force.

Later that night, yellow covered my floor.
You said you weren't feeling well but I

had ripped the petals from the flower and they
told me you didn't love me anymore.

dead boys

I longed to try out your voice
for even just a day.

be commanding—
loud and booming,

or gentle,
hushed in the calmest way.

hear the husk,
deep velvet tone

come from my own mouth.
have the arms that held me

countless times be my own.
trace the blue of your veins,

know what calloused feels like
against silk.

I could've wrapped you up
against me instead.

held you against my chest,
hummed against your hair,

not feel the way my curved
felt against your slender

and solid.
my plush, soft flesh

against hardened muscle.
admire the way your honey eyes

seemed endless
in a mirror.

stand still long enough

to count each star

from the constellation
scattered across my own skin.

I could've continued
to adore you,

continued to show you
I can love too.

we can love and
aren't we enough?

I long to forget
how it sounded—

hearing you suffocate.
we shouldn't have had to hurt.

I would've traded with you.
a heart for a heart.

a body for a body.
don't you know

I'm so sorry.

My so easily sun-kissed

You were drenched in the sun,
bare feet pressed into dewy grass,
with your body stretched towards the dawn.
That was the way I always found you
when the day had barely begun.
As the world began to melt,
floral fragrance seemed to be entirely
for you,
because no one else would be awake
this early to enjoy such a blissfully chilled morning.

You'd tell me soon everything would be in bloom
and I believed you because that was around the time
I fell in love with you.
Unaware that we would just lead
to a broken hearted me
because you swore,
you'd never leave me.

I knew you couldn't hurt me
because I watched your hands
caress the softest of petals
and I knew in my heart
that you were just as delicate.
If anything,
I thought I could crush you.
It hadn't occurred to me that
the world could too.

You loved to open the windows
to let in the tender breeze
and during that time the wind seemed
to sweep away everything bitter in me.

Mornings no longer seemed to be a chore.
For some reason, the coffee I always took black,
it didn't seem as bitter anymore.
Not with you seated across from me,
hands wrapped around your own mug of tea.
I could smell the fragrance of it from where I was,

soft citrus, blending with cinnamon.
The world seemed brighter even when spring had only
just begun,
seemingly so much more vibrant than it had ever been
before.

This time I felt more alive,
because you never seemed to want to be inside,
and the air around you,
I felt the need to take in lungfuls.
When you smiled,
I think a few flowers bloomed.
There was nothing I could do,
as I watched helplessly,
fondness encompassing me.
The sun seemed to kiss my skin when you did.
I could hold the rays I felt when I ran my fingers
through the strands of your ginger hair.

My bones knew then
that losing you
would be the death of me.

Perhaps the monster is me

Perhaps the monster under my bed
looks like me.
With the way they're pressed back
into the far-off corner
muscles tense,
ready to attack those
who lift the blankets away
and take a peek
at the huddled mass on the hardwood floor.

Perhaps the monster sounds like me too.
Voice hoarse from having stayed silent
for so long
but those snarls are so defensive,
the primal growls, they hiss—
and those hands
they retract just the tiniest bit
hesitating on their journey to touch
but doesn't my monster look like
they're trying to shrink.

With the way their skin is too big for the body,
the fur tangled and spotty—
perhaps the monster under my bed
is just as scared as I am.

Eyes always quickly darting
from hand to floor
to no more
in a manner that mimics
my nervous habit.
They swipe their claws towards reaching hands
but never do they harm.
Fangs bared in a warning—
come any closer and I'll bite,
I'll tear you to shreds—
but they never actually do.

The closer the hands get to my monster
the more I see me there.

In the way the monster flinches
the barely noticeable kind
but I see it and that glint in their eyes,
they want to leave
a tired plea
their body trapped in the space
under my bed
and I think maybe
I could take a hatchet to the frame
burn the mattress
maybe I'll just burn the whole place
to the ground
so then maybe
my monster will be free—

Perhaps the monster really is me.

Daffodil

Someone has left me again
and it makes me so angry
that I punch the walls I've built
with my own hands
only to find that
I'm just angry with myself in the end.

So I do
what I know best,
fold silently into myself,
my anger becomes my muse
as I craft and create
in hopes to make something to soothe

the painful,
wash out the ugly
I now have in me.
I do what I know so incredibly well,
I pull the mess out from inside of me

to stop the sting
because maybe then flowers will grow
from the cracks I put
into my own knuckles,
they'll spill over,
pour out of me

turn anger into beauty
and then,
just maybe then,
I'll allow myself to hold them

in the same hands that once held you.
flowers will have to do.

interlude: feeling (feels like being alive)

it starts like the bile
that crawls up your throat
and ends with the overwhelming—

feeling. the itch under the skin
that comes at night
when it's cold
and you're alone
with yourself
and the thought

*it should feel like an explosion of light—
an enlightenment,
ecstasy,
ease me,
release me*

the way your favorite songs seep under your skin,
how you can't help but grinning as you sing along,
uncaring if anyone will hear you or if you even
sing that well

but

the happiness you can hear in it,
the happiness you can feel from

the feeling you get from being spontaneous,
how it feels to drive at night
when the air is *oh so cool*
and your skin—

it feels just right.

you don't feel like a stranger in it
your lungs aren't screaming to collapse
and neither is the world

it feels like iced coffee in the morning,
watching the world wake up from sleep,

bare legs crisscrossed on clean sheet
and the way the sun feels warming your skin

it feels like the way he said your name—
the way you watched his eyes light up,
how it felt to spend your hours with him,
loving, tender,
he must be peace

but then he left.

and you won't forget the way fingertips brushed
oh so delicately against your skin,
you won't forget the way warm nights felt
with him,
you'll remember all he ever told you,
he wanted you happy,
wanted you to realize
how much more
is still out there,
it won't be the dull
or all-consuming ache
forever

he wanted to erase all the pain,
he would've wanted you
to try to do the same.

dearly|departed

they didn't make sure they buried the body,
so I rose from the dead, angry and out for revenge

because my heart was missing. I thought if I clawed
into their chests, took what I thought was mine,

it would make my insides mend. But I was wrong
and the longer I stayed, feet walking along

those paved roads I used to know so well,
the quicker my skin peeled,

my hair fell out,
my bones began to show,

the quicker I began to rot.

blooming

it's almost spring
and I think
I can still feel the way
he's crumbling.

how terrifying a thought that is.

this time it's different
because the eyes aren't on him
as much as they usually are.
and now,
his wrist feels
so much thinner
in my hold,
his gaze
has been downcast
because he knows
the worry that his eyes
will bring me
but I can see the fear anyway.

it's in the way his smile only lasts
so long
and seems a bit forced.
I can make him laugh,
but it seems that
he has to find the sound
from previous versions
of himself.
if I catch him off guard
to start a conversation,
it takes him a moment
to put on his act

and I've seen the fear.

I don't need him to
look me in the eyes
to know it's there
but when I catch them,

as they jump from
my nose
to my hands
that have been worrying about
in my lap the whole time,
eventually to my eyes—

I catch it.

the fear latches on to me too
as if it's a virus that spreads
from making eye contact
and now it
rises up in me
because why won't
he just look at me
and tell me
it'll pass again.

usually the spring kills the disease.
rips it from our minds
with the breeze
because we both know
of winter times
where that season
takes

and takes.

the cold bites and

kills.

so once I've caught the fear,
I tell him to hold on to it.
he can use that to drive himself
clear of any potential wreckage
he can use it
until this passes again.

I think if he looked at me
and I saw nothing.
if I detected a dullness
instead,

if there was no fear
no terror
no plea
in his eyes—
no indication that he knew
he wasn't alright,
then I'd be terrified.

so for now,
I can use this fear I feel
at the thought
of him going numb
to make sure
he'll never actually
be gone.

slow

moving slow helps

but other times,
the sorrow grips me

in what I recognize to be
my soul crushing itself,

my insides smothering
my essence.

sometimes I think I
stop breathing.

The pain feels lightning
quick, nerves snipped,

white hot, my insides must
melt.

moving slow helps drown
out what tends to

overwhelm my system.
small steps sometimes prove

to be effective.
occasionally I find peace

in my mind.
palms pressed tightly together,

eyes squeezed shut,
focus on even breathing,

don't let this drag out.

I just wish
you had figured that out as well.

That idea alone
is enough to keep me up at night.
Wandering through my home
like I'm the ghost.

more

I think I'm almost getting there,
to that place I've always wanted to be,
content with living life with me.

I no longer cringe at the eyes in the mirror,
even when they're tired or wild,
life can be tangling. I often get caught
in a daze in the middle.

This morning I woke up with a smile
that lasted throughout the day,
honey dripped from my fingertips,
I didn't try to wash it down my sink's drain.
I reveled in it.

I basked in the sun. for once,
everything glowed in a way
that reminded me of past days,
the ones that I loved, the ones I miss,
I think I finally found bliss,
not through ignorance
but through forgiveness.