

# Reflections

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Presented by

*My poetic side* 

## Dedication

*Lovingly dedicated to Montana Walle and Antonia Taylor, who have been the two most supportive people in the world throughout my teenage years and into my adult ones, and my only true constants.*

*Also lovingly dedicated to Pavel Malisev, who through his kindness and music, has allowed me to find peace within myself and the drive to make a life for myself.*

## summary

my love is violence

seven am

my fathers lesson

you

life

i miss my father

## my love is violence

My love is violence.  
Unrecognisable if unaccompanied by pain.  
I take it with blood,  
The way that others take it with sugar.  
I don't know any other way.  
Licked from a razor blade,  
Or drip-fed by IV,  
I can't imagine it  
Absorbed through a hug  
Or delivered wrapped neatly in a bow.

I was taught to moan for more,  
When older men wrapped their hands around my throat  
And squeezed 'til I turned blue.  
I was taught to find pleasure in fading breath,  
Tenderness in tears.  
To crave a knife at my throat,  
Or a gun to my temple.  
Because what is love  
If not brutality?

## seven am

It sometimes feels like my nights aren't real,  
Dedicated as they are to scrolling unchanging social media feeds and refreshing Instagram stories,  
Once the clock strikes ten pm.

Before I know it,  
It's four in the morning.  
My eyes are red and burning,  
My brain is a hazy sludge and my awareness fell asleep hours ago,  
But the empty pit in my stomach tells me I can't sleep yet,  
Though it can't explain why.

Then it's dawn.  
The kookaburra outside my window cackles at my expense.  
Facebook looks the same,  
My fingers are numb,  
The world is waking but I've yet to sleep.

Seven am.  
I am reminded that  
There is nothing new under the sun.

## my fathers lesson

Men have taught me my entire life  
That I am inherently of no value.  
That it is my body which determines my worth  
And if it is of no use to them  
Then neither am I.

When I speak of this  
Everyone assumes it is poor partners who taught me this.  
And while yes,  
The abuse I faced as a child at the hands of much older boyfriends  
Reinforced this idea,  
It was my father who taught me it first.

It was my father who told me  
Men will not have me if I do not give my body  
(But do not give too much,  
Because everyone will fuck a slut  
But nobody will marry her).  
It was my father who taught me I was of no value,  
When he would hit me as punishment for crimes I did not commit,  
And the blame would somehow be on me.  
My father gave me this lesson  
By belittling and humiliating me in front of friends and family.  
I learned that being a woman  
Makes me less  
When he would look down his nose at the women around me.

In truth,  
It was my father who set me up for the atrocities committed against me  
That my teenage self would allow.  
He blames me for my victimhood,  
Tells me it is my fault for allowing it,  
But is the one who taught me to allow it.

He taught me to allow it  
When he would hit me and scream at me  
And told me defending myself was disrespect.  
He taught me to allow it  
Because I am a woman  
And women are less.

Unlearning this has been the most difficult part of adulthood.  
Teaching myself that my femininity,  
Or lack thereof,  
Does not make me less.  
That I do not deserve abuse for my humanity and mistakes  
Simply because my womanhood paints me an easy target.  
To hold myself with strength,  
To not seek forgiveness for taking my own side.  
To not accept screaming and violence as part of my life and relationships.

These lessons are the most difficult I have learned.  
Still am learning.  
And I only wish my father had taught me these ones instead.

## you

Sometimes I wish I could pretend you don't exist.  
That I could go through my day without finding bits of you,  
In everyone I meet,  
In every song I hear,  
In everything I do.  
Relax in my bath at night,  
Breathe deep and think of me.  
Instead my thoughts stray to you.  
Always,  
Unwaveringly,  
You.



**life**

To look upon yourself with kindness  
When adoration of another takes root in your heart  
Seems an impossibility.

Incessantly picking yourself apart  
And comparing yourself to those before you  
Is seemingly an unavoidable fate.  
The consequences of allowing yourself to fall.  
The bed you must lie in.

Her hair is light,  
Mine is too dark.  
His body is hard planes,  
My stomach is soft and round.  
Their eyes are green like moss,  
And mine are brown like dirt.

In life I have found that these feelings,  
This injustice to ourselves,  
It is something that will always creep in when we build relationships.  
Something that will always creep in regardless.  
It is humanity.

Breathe deep.  
Close your eyes.  
Feel the way hair brushes your skin,  
Grass tickles the soles of your feet.  
Feel your lungs expand with oxygen,  
Your heart pump blood to your limbs.  
If you cannot find a way to be kind to yourself,  
Rejoice in this,  
In being human,  
In life.

## **i miss my father**

When you ask who I miss most in the world,  
I will tell you it is my father,  
And you will blink and ask,  
"Isn't he still alive?"  
And I will shrug and tell you yes,  
Because it's simply too much to explain.

I miss my dad who would let me paint his nails and put what little hair he had in bows.  
I miss my father who would take my hand and buy me caramello koalas at the iga every morning.  
I miss the man who tied my helmet strap and put me on the back of his bike to take me to school,  
And who I'd then run to say goodbye to on the other side of the road,  
Screaming "I love you" into the wind.

I miss my dad who felt like peace.  
I miss my father who made me feel safe enveloped in his arms.  
I miss the man who didn't blame me for my victimhood,  
Who didn't tell me I am a slut and that if my rapist could hit me why shouldn't he,  
Who didn't lie to punish me for punishments sake  
And didn't make me wish he were dead so when I slit my own throat, maybe we could find peace  
together in the afterlife.

So when I tell you it is my dad who I miss most in this world,  
Understand I am aware his shell still walks,  
That blood still pumps his body,  
That if I reached out he might reach back.

But I cannot reach out.  
Because my dad doesn't exist anymore.  
It's just a man wearing his face.