

# What Hurts Doesn't Always Scream

Rawane Ighmar

Presented by

*My poetic Side* 

## Dedication

*To those who learned how to smile before they learned how to rest.*

*To the ones who feel too much but speak too little.*

*To anyone who looks fine from the outside*

*while carrying storms in silence.*

*This book is for you*

*if you've ever doubted your worth,*

*measured your life in quiet sacrifices,*

*or stayed awake wondering why existing feels so heavy.*

*You are not weak for feeling this deeply.*

*You are not alone for feeling this way.*

*These words are pieces of me,*

*but if they found their way to you,*

*then they were always meant to be shared*

## Acknowledgement

This book exists because I reached a point where holding everything inside became unbearable. I wrote it in moments of exhaustion, in silence, when pretending to be okay felt more violent than telling the truth. These poems come from a place where I learned to live with heaviness, to normalize pain, to carry fear, sadness, and longing without asking for relief. I do not glorify what hurt me, but I cannot deny that it carved my voice and forced honesty out of me when nothing else could. Writing was not healing?it was surviving. If these words feel uncomfortable, it is because they were never meant to be gentle. They are evidence of endurance, of presence, of a self that stayed even when disappearing felt like the easier choice.

## About the author

I write because silence was never gentle with me. I am someone who feels too much and speaks too little, someone who learned early how to endure rather than explain. My poems come from fear, sadness, love, insecurity, and the constant effort of staying present when disappearing feels tempting. Writing was never a dream?it was a necessity, a way to survive thoughts that had nowhere else to go. I don?t write to offer comfort or answers; I write to be honest. These poems are fragments of my inner life, unfinished and unfiltered, proof that I was here, that I felt deeply, and that I chose words instead of vanishing.

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## A RIFT IN TIME

Once, her hands held me,  
Soft as whispers, firm as roots;  
They planted me in the soil of her love,  
And I grew, tender beneath her shade.  
She was the sun, my guiding light,  
Her stories my lullabies, her laughter my warmth.  
But now the air between us chills,  
Heavy with words unsaid,  
With silences that scrape like shards of glass.  
Her gaze no longer seeks my own,  
Her words no longer cradle,  
But cut.  
What did I do to lose the woman I once adored?  
Did the years erode her love,  
Or did my growing shadow push hers away?  
She speaks now with a tongue unfamiliar,  
Bitter, sharp, coiled in thorns,  
Piercing the heart she once mended.  
Her embrace feels foreign,  
Like wearing a coat two sizes too small,  
Restrictive, suffocating?  
And I wonder,  
Is it me who changed? Or her?  
I sit and search for the woman she was,  
But find only echoes,  
Faint and distorted in the cavern of memory.  
The hands that once planted me now uproot,  
Shaking the earth, leaving me bare,  
Exposed to the winds of her discontent.  
I started hating her,  
Not for who she was,  
But for who she became.  
For the cracks she carved into my heart,

For the way she turned her back  
On the little girl who still waits for her love.  
But hate is a heavy stone,  
And I carry it uneasily,  
Each step pressing it deeper into my chest.  
I long to throw it, to forget it, to forgive,  
Yet her shadow looms,  
Dark and impenetrable.  
How do I mourn someone still alive?  
How do I grieve the loss of her kindness,  
Her warmth, her place in my world?  
The grandmother I knew  
Is a ghost haunting her own skin,  
And I am left to wrestle with her absence  
In her presence.  
Still, I whisper to the echoes,  
Hoping she might hear:  
"Come back to me.  
Even if just for a moment,  
Let me feel your love once more  
Before the hate takes all I have left to give."

## the love of my life

### The Love of My Life

In your presence, the chaos fades,  
Like dawn unveiling night's charades.  
A sanctuary, a tender flame,  
Your soul is pure, untarnished by blame.  
You are a river, calm yet strong,  
Flowing gently, carrying me along.  
No hurt resides in your embrace,  
Only love's soft and eternal grace.  
The world has shown its darker hue,  
But never once have I feared with you.  
Your words are balm, your touch divine,  
In your heart, I find the sacred shrine.  
Some love with words, some with deeds,  
You've given both, fulfilling my needs.  
No dagger hides behind your smile,  
No storm conceals a cruel guile.  
You are the lighthouse in my sea,  
Guiding my soul to eternity.  
No chains of doubt, no weight of pain,  
In your arms, I've learned to breathe again.  
You are the melody my heart would sing,  
A timeless song on an endless string.  
The wind that lifts my weary wings,  
The hope each new tomorrow brings.  
How could a heart, so kind, so true,  
Be anything but my destined view?  
The stars above may one day fall,  
Yet my love for you outshines them all.  
Your goodness roots me, your strength inspires,  
A love that burns with eternal fires.  
You've taught me trust, you've shown me peace,  
With you, my world finds sweet release.

If life should test us, as it does all,  
I'll rise for you, I'll never fall.  
Through joy, through pain, through endless strife,  
You are my solace, the love of my life.  
Forevermore, this vow I make,  
No storm could ever this love unmake.  
For you are my partner, my heart, my guide,  
My love, my light, my eternal pride.

## The Quiet Between Us

The air is thick, heavy with the weight of words unsaid,  
A canyon carved by silence where once laughter tread.  
I call your name, but it fades into the hollow,  
Echoes swallowed by the stillness, leaving me to wallow.  
Your eyes are locked, yet they turn away,  
A fortress I can't breach, no matter what I say.  
Did my words bruise? Did my touch betray?  
I trace the steps of yesterday, hoping for a clue, a ray.  
The fear gnaws slowly, a shadow in my chest,  
It whispers of endings, of love laid to rest.  
What crime did I commit, what sin have I sown,  
To stand here now, aching, utterly alone?  
I replay moments, every glance and tone,  
Searching for the shard that cut through bone.  
But the silence is louder than any cry,  
And in it, I hear the question: Will we die?  
Yet even in this quiet, I hold tight,  
To the memory of us bathed in softer light.  
I beg your silence to yield, to break,  
For the sake of the bond we cannot fake.  
So I wait, trembling, hoping you'll see,  
That no sound, no word, could undo what we could be.  
But in this pause, this fragile, bitter refrain,  
I am left to wonder if love will rise again.

## You Asked For Space

You asked for space,

And I gave it.

Even though it felt like carving pieces of myself

And handing them to the void,

I gave it all to you.

But now I'm sitting here,

Crying, shaking,

Wondering if the space you wanted

Was just an escape

From me.

Is it because of me?

Or did you find someone better,

Someone who didn't need to be asked to leave,

Someone who fit perfectly

In the gaps where I fell apart?

I trace back every word I said,

Every touch, every fight, every silence,

Trying to understand.

What did I do wrong?

Was I too much for you?

Or maybe not enough

For myself?

You asked for space,

And I gave you the world.

But now I sit here in the emptiness,

Choking on the echoes of what we used to be.

Did you love me?

Or was I just holding your place

Until you found the person you were really looking for?

## Is It Because Of Me

Is it because of me?  
Or because you found someone better?  
Someone who laughs a little louder,  
Who shines a little brighter  
In the spaces I used to call home.  
I'm sitting here,  
Tracing every step back to where I might have fallen.  
What did I say?  
What did I do wrong?  
Was I too much,  
Or not enough?  
The silence presses harder than your words ever did,  
And I can't help but wonder:  
Did you love me,  
Or just the idea of who I tried to be?  
And now there's a hole where certainty used to live,  
A question that keeps clawing at my chest:  
Is it because of me?  
Or is it because of you?

## The Weight Of Nothing

How strange it feels to be a hollow shell,  
Yet brimming with chaos, an unending swell.  
A paradox of silence and a deafening cry,  
Both tethered to the earth, yet yearning to fly.  
I feel nothing, an abyss so vast,  
Yet shadows of memories from a haunting past  
Creep in like whispers, cold and unkind,  
Entwining themselves with the threads of my mind.  
Empty, I say, but it's more than that?  
A weightless void, an invisible spat.  
Heavy as lead, it anchors my soul,  
An unrelenting burden I cannot control.  
I gasp for air, but the air feels thick,  
The minutes crawl by, the seconds stick.  
Each breath I take feels borrowed, strained,  
A futile attempt at masking the pain.  
And what of life? This uncertain path?  
A maze of choices, a veiled aftermath.  
I see no light, no flame to ignite,  
Just an endless fog swallowing the night.  
I ache for purpose, for meaning to bind,  
But I'm lost in the labyrinth of my mind.  
Each turn I take feels like a mistake,  
Each step forward, my soul starts to break.  
I feel too much, a tidal wave's roar,  
Yet I am numb to my innermost core.  
The laughter, the joy, the fleeting reprieve?  
They vanish like smoke; I'm left to grieve.  
Tell me, how do you mend a heart that's whole  
But fractured within, unseen to the soul?  
How do you move when the weight of despair  
Sinks you deeper and deeper into nowhere?  
I scream in silence, I cry without tears,

A war within waged by invisible spears.  
I want to fight, to rise, to mend,  
But I don't even know where to begin or end.  
So here I stand, on the precipice of thought,  
Both feeling everything and feeling naught.  
A storm within, yet eerily still,  
A battle of chaos versus will.  
Perhaps one day, this fog will fade,  
And light will seep through the cracks I've made.  
Until then, I'll carry this weight, this strife,  
And stumble my way through the void of life.

## At Least I Deserved a Better Goodbye

How do you leave when the world still spins,  
When the weight of your absence sinks deep within?  
The walls remember the sound of your voice,  
But I was left standing with no choice.  
You walked away as if I was a name  
Written in sand, erased by the rain.  
Did you not feel the trembling ground,  
The crack in my chest, the deafening sound?  
At least I deserved a parting glance,  
A moment of truth, a final chance.  
To ask the questions buried inside,  
To face the storm, not run and hide.  
Did it hurt you to see me break?  
Or was my love too much to take?  
I gave you my heart, my soul, my fire,  
But you left me with ash, with cold desire.  
The days unravel like threads of pain,  
Each one whispers your name in vain.  
The echoes taunt, the shadows remain,  
A goodbye should not feel this profane.  
I held on tight when the winds grew fierce,  
I healed the wounds when the world would pierce.  
But you dropped my hand with a careless ease,  
As if love was a passing breeze.  
Was it love, or was it a lie?  
Did you see my tears when you said goodbye?  
Your silence lingers like a ghostly scream,  
Haunting my nights, stealing my dreams.  
I deserved a word, a look, a tear,  
A gesture to prove I was once dear.  
But you turned your back, and I stood there frozen,  
Left in the ruins of a love unspoken.  
I search for meaning in the lines of your face,

In the fractured memories I can't erase.  
Did I ask too much when I begged for why?  
At least I deserved a better goodbye.  
Now the years will pass, and I will endure,  
But the scars will remain, jagged and pure.  
For nothing cuts deeper than love's last lie,  
When at least, I deserved a better goodbye.

## When I miss You To Death

When I miss you, it's not just a thought?  
It's a storm in my chest, a battle I fought.  
The air feels too heavy, the nights stretch too long,  
Every silence screams louder, "Where have you gone?"  
I can't find my footing; I stumble, I fall,  
Your absence surrounds me, a suffocating wall.  
The stars lose their shimmer, the sun dims its glow,  
Without you beside me, I just don't know.  
Each heartbeat a whisper, calling your name,  
Each breath that I take feels hollow, the same.  
I chase your reflection in mirrors of air,  
Grasping at shadows that vanish, unfair.  
Do you feel it, my love, this unbearable ache?  
This void that no memory or dream could remake?  
I'm a ship lost at sea, no compass, no shore,  
Adrift in your absence, I long for you more.  
So come back, my light, my reason to be,  
Without you, I'm less than the half left of me.  
For missing you isn't a season or phase,  
It's a lifetime of longing, through nights and through days.

## The First Night

The clock ticks louder when silence takes the throne,  
A tyrant of stillness, ruling my hollowed home.  
Shadows stretch long, like memories that cling,  
Every corner whispers, and the echoes sting.  
The air is thick, dense with words unsaid,  
A battlefield of questions, all left for dead.  
What was the moment, the thread that unraveled?  
When did we shift from paths entwined to gravel?  
Tears come unbidden, sharp as the moonlight's glare,  
Tracing their rivers down cheeks laid bare.  
The walls bear witness, stoic, unmoved,  
As sobs fill the void your absence has proved.  
The bed feels larger, an ocean of despair,  
Sheets untouched, no warmth to share.  
Pillows like anchors drag me to the deep,  
But dreams won't come?only wakefulness I keep.  
My thoughts scream louder than any spoken plea,  
Each "why" a wound, each "how" a plea.  
Was it the weight of love, too heavy to hold?  
Or the fear of fires burning uncontrolled?  
I stare at the ceiling, seeking solace in stars,  
But find only silence, a mirror of my scars.  
In the loudness of nothing, my soul lays bare,  
And I wonder?did you leave, or were you never there?  
The night stretches on, unyielding and cruel,  
A harsh reminder that the heart has no rule.  
And as dawn creeps in, painting skies anew,  
I ask the void: How do I unbecome you?

## I Love You

My love,

I don't know if I can ever truly find the words to capture what you mean to me, but I need to try, because you deserve to know just how deeply I love you.

When I look at you, I don't just see beauty?though you are breathtaking in ways that steal the air from my lungs?I see my world, my safe haven, and my greatest treasure. You are the light that brightens my darkest days and the warmth that fills every empty corner of my heart. With you, life feels more vivid, more meaningful, more alive.

Your smile is my favorite sunrise, and your voice is my favorite melody. Every moment I spend with you feels like a dream I never want to wake up from. You make me want to be better, to reach higher, and to love deeper, because you deserve nothing less than everything I have to give.

I love the way your laugh sounds like joy itself. I love the way you care so deeply, the way you see the beauty in the smallest things, and the way you look at me like I'm someone worth loving. I'm humbled by your kindness, your strength, and the way you make loving you so effortless.

There's something about the way our souls seem to understand each other?like we were always meant to find one another. And now that I have you, I can't imagine a life without you. I don't want to just be in love with you today or tomorrow; I want to love you forever. I want to be your partner in every adventure, your comfort in every storm, and the one who stands beside you through all that life brings.

You are my everything, my heart, my home. I am so deeply, irrevocably in love with you, and I will spend every day trying to show you just how much you mean to me. Thank you for being you, for being mine, and for making this world so beautiful just by being in it.

## The Shift

A child once born, cradled by shadows,  
Not by arms, but echoes of sorrows.  
Years stretched long, their touch a phantom,  
Eyes seeking warmth in a house so random.  
A mother there, yet never near,  
Her gaze was cold, her love unclear.  
The child grew silent, the world grew loud,  
A heart wrapped tight in a weathered shroud.  
And then, like dawn, she began to change,  
Her voice grew soft, her love less strange.  
Her hands now reached for the hands she'd missed,  
Her lips formed words of love once dismissed.  
But the child, grown, a fortress built,  
Layered high with years of guilt.  
"Why now?" the heart silently cried,  
"Where were you when my soul first died?"  
The mother wept, her heart unspoken,  
A lifetime's worth of bonds lay broken.  
But time, relentless, grants no return,  
For scars still throb, and memories burn.  
Yet in the ashes, something stirred,  
A fragile hope, a whispered word.  
Love, though late, still holds its flame,  
Though trust may waver, and wounds remain.  
So child and mother, bound by pain,  
Try to rebuild what the years had slain.  
A journey fraught, both loss and gain,  
For love reborn is never in vain.

## The First Daughter's Soliloquy

Beneath the gaze of a moonless sky,  
I am the first breath that cracked the dawn,  
A daughter born with trembling cries,  
But to her mother, a burden drawn.  
She looks at me with shadows in her eyes,  
A storm of silence, a flood of disdain.  
In her heart, no place for lullabies,  
Just echoes of her stinging refrain.  
"Unworthy, unwelcome," her whispers bleed,  
Her love, a phantom I'll never find.  
The air grows thick with unmet need,  
A mother's warmth left far behind.  
The house is cold, but my father stays,  
A sentinel through my endless night.  
His words, a balm to my aching haze,  
His arms, a fortress of fragile light.  
"Child, you are the stars, the fireflies,  
The song that broke my silences.  
In you, the universe dreams and lies,  
And you are more than her brokenness."  
But still, the world twists the knife,  
I see it in their knowing stares.  
The first daughter's cursed life?  
To bloom alone, tangled in despair.  
Yet somewhere deep, a voice persists,  
A defiance beneath my battered skin:  
"Love will grow where hatred insists,  
And the first daughter will rise again."  
One day, I'll carry no chains of her ire,  
No ashes from her venomous pyre.  
I'll weave from wounds a tapestry bright,  
And in the mirror, find my own light.

## A Blade's Whisper

I swore to the stars, their distant, soft glow,  
To the moon that cradled my chaos below,  
No more would I carve my pain into skin,  
No more would I let the darkness win.  
  
I wore my vow like armor, steel-tight,  
Each day a battle, each night a fight.  
The scars, they faded, faint echoes of screams,  
I thought I was free, mending at the seams.  
But then came a night, cruel and unkind,  
With shadows that whispered, invading my mind.  
No warning, no mercy, just a surge of despair,  
An emptiness vast, too heavy to bear.  
  
I sat with the silence, it taunted, it teased,  
A gnawing ache that refused to be eased.  
My hands shook as I reached for the blade,  
A fragile truce with myself betrayed.  
It wasn't the blood, or the sting, or the mark,  
But the desperate need to ignite the dark.  
To feel something real, though fleeting, though small,  
When the void screamed louder than I could call.  
The tears burned my cheeks; I knew I had failed,  
My fortress of will had been utterly derailed.  
Yet beneath the defeat, a faint ember remained,  
A whisper: You've fought before through the pain.  
I bandaged the wound, both body and soul,  
Gathered the pieces to once more feel whole.  
The battle's not over; it never will be,  
But in the ashes, there's still hope for me.  
For promises broken can be remade,  
And healing's a journey that's never betrayed.  
So I rise, though weary, though scarred, though torn,  
For even the night must surrender to dawn.

## Ashes of the Mind

I wake to the weight of nothing,  
a hollow sun rising in a sky of ash.

The world moves, yet I stay still,  
a ghost tethered to the shell of a body.

My mind, a battlefield long abandoned,  
is littered with echoes of forgotten wars.

The voices have quieted, but the silence screams,  
a deafening hum of despair.

Everything is grey?  
the walls, the streets, the faces,  
even my thoughts,  
bleeding into the void like smoke.

I feel nothing, not even the pain,  
just the absence of color,  
of meaning,  
of me.

Some days, the idea of ending  
feels like a lullaby,  
a promise of stillness  
where chaos once lived.

But even that hope? if you call it hope?  
slips through my fingers like sand.

Too tired to fight,  
too afraid to let go.

I sit with the weight of it all,  
the crushing, endless grey,  
praying for a spark,  
though I no longer believe in light.

And so I exist,  
not living, not dying,  
just fading,  
slowly,  
into nothing.

## The Years I Gave Away

I lost the days where skies burned bright,  
And traded them for endless night.  
A captive in my tangled mind,  
The world moved on?I stayed behind.  
Where others laughed, I heard no sound,  
A ghost among the living, bound.  
Each dream I had fell through my hands,  
Like fragile castles built on sands.  
The mirror whispered cruel truths loud,  
I hid beneath a shadowed shroud.  
No dances, songs, or fleeting youth,  
Just endless battles fought with truth.  
I waited long for dawn to break,  
For light to mend what pain would take.  
But years poured out, like silent rain,  
And left me hollow, carved by pain.  
Now standing here, an empty face,  
I mourn the time I can't replace.  
No fire to fight, no road to roam,  
My teenage years?forever gone.

## The Weight of What Could Have Been

She lays in the quiet, the ceiling her sky,  
Where echoes of dreams drift silently by.  
Each star she once chased, now dimmed in its glow,  
A map of ambitions she'll never quite know.  
The pages she left unwritten, unread,  
The words of her wisdom unspoken, unsaid.  
Books on the shelf, untouched by her hand,  
A fortress of knowledge, a castle of sand.  
Her thoughts, like a storm, unravel the past,  
The moments she squandered, the shadows they cast.  
Each "what if" a dagger, each "could have" a chain,  
Binding her soul in the grip of her pain.  
But guilt is a thief, a cunning deceit,  
It preys on the heart to make hope retreat.  
She wonders, though faintly, if time might forgive,  
If dormant potential still whispers to live.  
For seeds can still flourish when given the rain,  
And dreams, though delayed, can bloom once again.  
Perhaps in her sorrow, she'll find what is true:  
That paths may diverge, but the journey renews.

## Wasted Seasons

I lost my youth in the folds of a scream,  
A silent echo trapped in a dream.  
The world spun on; its colors bled,  
While I was tangled in my own dread.  
A thousand sunsets passed my eyes,  
But I could not feel the painted skies.  
Friends laughed loud in fleeting time,  
Yet I was locked in my own crime.  
A crime of the mind?an endless fight,  
A ceaseless war with no end in sight.  
The days were stolen, the nights too long,  
A muted voice in an unwritten song.  
I watched the summers wilt away,  
Their golden warmth turned cold and grey.  
Autumn came, and the leaves would fall,  
But I felt no seasons, no life at all.  
The mirror mocked with its hollow stare,  
Reflecting someone who wasn't there.  
A face too young for lines so deep,  
A soul too tired for restful sleep.  
I tried to climb, to reach the light,  
But the walls grew higher every night.  
The voices whispered, sharp and low,  
"You're wasting your life, you'll never grow."  
Each moment bled into the next,  
A faded page in a broken text.  
The chapters lost, the story erased,  
A life unlived, a time misplaced.  
I missed the laughter, the reckless days,  
The endless dreams in endless ways.  
Instead, I sat in shadows' hold,  
As hope grew faint and love turned cold.  
Now here I stand, a hollow frame,

No spark of joy, no sense of flame.  
My teenage years? a phantom tide,  
That slipped away while I just cried.  
There is no solace, no lesson learned,  
Just ashes of the years I burned.  
I stand alone, beneath this sky,  
A ghost who never learned to fly.

## The Cruelty of Nostalgia

Beneath the amber glow of memory's light,  
Lies a shadow, sharp as the dead of night.  
Nostalgia, thief of my fragile peace,  
Whispers of joy, yet grants no release.  
It paints the past in hues of gold,  
With tales of warmth the heart once told.  
But as I reach, the colors fade,  
Replaced by the ache of a life mislaid.  
Its hands are soft, yet they grasp so tight,  
Binding me to a ghostly sight?  
A world untouched by time's cruel march,  
A mirage beneath a crumbling arch.  
It calls me home, though home's long gone,  
A fleeting echo, a phantom song.  
Each smile it brings is laced with pain,  
A bittersweet kiss that drives me insane.  
Oh, how it lies, this cruel embrace,  
A gentle mask on a ruthless face.  
For in its grip, I am never free,  
Trapped in the prison of what used to be.  
So here I stand, a soul undone,  
Chasing shadows of a fading sun.  
Nostalgia, curse with a velvet sheen,  
The cruelest torment I've ever seen.

## The Tyrant of Time

Nostalgia, a tyrant cloaked in silk,  
Threads of memory spun with guilt.  
It comes not gently, but with claws,  
Scraping at time, defying its laws.  
It drags me through hallways of shattered yesterdays,  
Where laughter lingers in fractured ways.  
Faces appear like ghosts in the mist,  
Each smile a dagger, a moment I've missed.  
What cruelty to mourn what's already lost,  
To relive a warmth that time has embossed.  
The arms that held me, the words once spoken,  
Now haunt like promises cruelly broken.  
It turns the heart into a battlefield,  
Where joy and sorrow refuse to yield.  
A war of echoes, a ceaseless fight,  
Between the day and the endless night.  
Why must it taunt, this bittersweet thief,  
Offering beauty, then sowing grief?  
Its gift is poison, a double-edged blade,  
A fleeting solace that starts to fade.  
I beg for release, for the mercy of peace,  
For time to move on, for the pain to cease.  
But nostalgia, relentless, will never depart,  
For it lives in the marrow, it beats in the heart.  
It is not memory?it is a wound.  
A haunting refrain, an unyielding tune.  
A cruel god that I never chose,  
Binding me forever to what I can't let go.

## The Year That Killed Me

This year,  
a funeral hymn choked in my throat,  
an endless requiem for a life undone,  
its echoes carved across my ribs,  
etching grief into every breath.

This year,  
broke me into shards too jagged to hold,  
too sharp to discard,  
each piece slicing through the fabric of who I was,  
until I was only edges?  
a ghost of myself in the mirror's gaze.

It killed me,  
not with sudden violence,  
but with slow, deliberate suffocation:  
each second a stone,  
each hour a weight,  
each day an executioner with no face.

Ruined?  
my voice turned to ash,  
my dreams collapsed into the grave of my chest,  
every hope a casualty,  
every light devoured by the black.

I cried rivers that swallowed me whole,  
oceans that left no shore in sight,  
the salt of my tears the only thing  
that reminded me I was still alive?  
if only to suffer.

I carried too much,  
felt too much,  
bled too much.

The world piled itself upon me,  
the sun burning my skin,  
the moon ignoring my pleas,

the stars falling silent in my despair.

This year,

was not a story?

it was a slaughter,

a testament to survival I did not ask for,

a storm with no calm,

a fire that did not purify but consumed.

And here I stand,

a silhouette of what was,

hollow, broken,

swallowed by the black,

waiting for nothing,

because nothing is all that remains.

## Replaced

There was a time when our hearts beat as one,  
Now the silence lingers, heavier than the sun.  
I used to be your comfort, your familiar face,  
But now I'm a memory you can't quite replace.  
Once, my name was the song on your lips,  
Now it slips through the cracks, an echo that dips.  
You've found someone new, someone to fill the void,  
And I, in my quiet, am quietly destroyed.  
I watch from a distance, a shadow, a ghost,  
Once loved, now just a face you cherish the most.  
How does it feel, to no longer need me?  
How does it feel, to let go so easily?  
I try to hold on, but I'm slipping away,  
Fading in moments that never would stay.  
You've moved on, and I, I am replaced,  
A soul left behind, a heart out of place.  
Yet somewhere beneath the hurt and the pride,  
I see the pieces of us that still collide.  
Though you've found another, your heart may still roam,  
I'll always remain the place you once called home.

## A City That Was, A City That Is

I chased the echoes of a place once mine,  
where old streets whispered of borrowed time.

I longed for the past in hurried steps,  
believing its arms would offer rest.

But time is a thief, its hands unkind,  
turning warmth to cold, leaving ghosts behind.

Familiar walls now feel so tight,  
memories dimmed by present light.

I begged the seasons to take me back,  
to the city where my soul unpacked.

Where the air felt soft, the nights stood still,  
where every breath was my own will.

Yet here I stand, in walls once known,  
a stranger to the place I called home.

The sky looks down with distant eyes,  
a world that speaks in foreign sighs.

Each holiday is a fleeting dream,  
a moment caught in golden beams.

But dreams dissolve, and time moves fast,  
dragging me back to a loveless past.

I scream in silence, beg in vain,  
but walls don't break, they just remain.

No path leads back, no doors unlock,  
I am a prisoner of the clock.

The place I love is out of reach,  
a fading ghost, a distant beach.

And so I stay where sorrow grows,  
where hope is just a word that goes.

## Silent in the Crowd

The halls still echo with their laughter,  
footsteps dancing in the light.  
They weave their stories ever after,  
while I dissolve into the night.  
They hold their dreams like burning torches,  
hands entwined, hearts set ablaze.  
I sit alone on empty porches,  
watching life slip past in haze.  
Their voices bloom in golden mornings,  
soft with love, with joy untamed.  
My world is silent, cold with warnings?  
a hollow shell, a life unnamed.  
They chase the stars in reckless wonder,  
write their names upon the sky.  
I watch, I yearn, I sink down under,  
asking fate a wordless "why?"  
They have their homes, their arms to fall in,  
memories carved in time's embrace.  
But I am trapped, the walls are callin',  
a nameless ghost, a fading face.  
I reach for echoes, find them empty,  
trace my past, but nothing stays.  
Regret weighs heavy, days feel plenty,  
yet I am lost in endless maze.  
Life has no color, no tomorrow,  
no hand to hold, no voice to hear.  
Just silent screams and drowning sorrow,  
just brittle bones consumed by fear.  
Oh, how I wish I'd lived that story,  
held the sun inside my chest,  
but here I sit, no love, no glory,  
just shadows where my heart once rests.

## And No One Noticed The Drowning

There is a certain kind of silence that seeps into your bones,  
not the kind that comes when the world sleeps,  
but the kind that lingers when everyone is awake and alive and laughing,  
when the streets are loud and the lights are on  
and the doors are open?  
yet somehow,  
you're still standing outside in the dark,  
watching a life that could have been yours  
if only you weren't so far behind,  
if only you weren't always the shadow,  
the afterthought,  
the person whose name never settles on anyone's tongue unless they need something,  
unless they're bored,  
unless they're reaching for someone they can forget just as quickly.  
And there are moments,  
quiet, sharp, unbearable moments,  
when I catch my reflection  
not just in mirrors, but in windows, in puddles, in glass I didn't mean to look into?  
and I see not a person, not a self,  
but a collection of failures disguised as flesh,  
a body weighed down by all the things it never became,  
by the people who never stayed,  
by the memories that never formed because I never really lived,  
I only existed,  
floating from day to day like smoke that refuses to disappear,  
even though the fire's long gone.  
I hate the way I feel things too deeply and yet not at all?  
how my chest is filled with so much rage, so much regret,  
it feels like I'm constantly on the edge of bursting open,  
of shattering into a thousand unrecognizable pieces,  
and still, when I try to scream,  
nothing comes out?  
only the echo of a voice I lost a long time ago

when I stopped believing anyone would ever truly listen,  
truly care,  
truly see me.

And I keep trying,  
I swear to whatever's left of this ruined thing I call a soul?  
I keep trying to be better,  
to smile when it hurts,  
to speak when the weight in my throat feels like drowning,  
to pretend I'm okay when the only thing I'm sure of is  
that I'm not,  
and maybe I never have been?

but no one ever looks closely enough to see the bruises on my spirit,  
the ones that don't fade,  
the ones that are shaped like loneliness,  
like shame,  
like the unrelenting fear that maybe the world would spin just the same  
if I simply stopped being here.

I hate how much I hate myself?  
how every time I walk into a room,  
I feel like I'm apologizing for existing,  
like I'm dragging this useless weight of a body  
through spaces that were never meant for me,  
through conversations where I don't belong,  
through friendships that are paper-thin,  
always one unanswered message away from vanishing?  
and God,

how do I mourn things I never had?  
How do I carry grief for a life I never even touched?  
I don't know how to forgive myself  
for all the years I've wasted,  
all the laughter I didn't share,  
all the times I sat quietly in the corners of rooms,  
watching joy pass me by like a train I couldn't afford to board.

And now it feels too late?  
too late to become someone better,  
someone whole,

someone worthy of love that doesn't have an expiration date.  
And there are nights when my hands shake  
with the quiet fury of trying to resist the pull of harm,  
of not knowing what else to do with all this pain that has no language,  
with this sadness that has no shape,  
no form?  
just a constant pressure beneath my ribs  
where hope used to live.  
And even now,  
writing this,  
it feels like I'm speaking into a void that doesn't echo?  
a voice with no receiver,  
a letter to no one?  
because I've never been the one people choose,  
never been the one they reach for when the world goes dark,  
and even in the deepest corners of my own heart,  
I wonder if I'd miss myself  
if I were gone.

## Elegy For a Name No One Remembers

I have forgotten the shape of joy.  
It used to fit inside my chest?  
light, delicate,  
like a flame in the hollow of a bird's bone.  
Now it's gone.  
Now, my ribs are just scaffolding  
for a house no one built.  
Every morning feels like theft?  
a stolen breath,  
a borrowed heartbeat  
in a body that drags itself  
through the rituals of the living.  
I wake not to live,  
but to endure.  
To participate in existence  
like a ghost applauding a play  
he's already seen too many times.  
People say, "Time heals."  
But time is not a healer.  
Time is a butcher.  
It slices slow and surgically?  
cuts memory from muscle,  
love from meaning,  
you from yourself.  
And you thank it,  
because you've forgotten  
what it means  
to be whole.  
There are days I walk through the world  
like a museum exhibit:  
"Here lies the girl who tried."  
I smile with precision,  
nod on cue,

speak in rehearsed fragments

so no one sees

how loud the silence is

inside me.

My thoughts have become tombstones?

names of dreams

I buried before they grew teeth.

Every hope I ever nurtured

was stillborn.

Every version of myself

I tried to save

hung itself in the basement

of my ambition.

Now, I write eulogies

in notebooks no one reads,

ink made from what's left of me.

I have mastered the art

of disappearing while staying visible?

a ghost with a heartbeat,

a scream without sound.

And the worst part?

No one notices.

No one ever notices.

They say,

"Seize the day."

But what if the day is barbed wire?

What if your hands are too bloodied

from yesterday

to hold anything new?

What if you did seize it?

once, bravely, recklessly?

and it bit back

and left you afraid to touch again?

Sometimes I stare at my reflection

and wonder

if I am real,

or just a fever dream

of someone lonelier than me.

There is no thunder in my sadness?

only fog.

Only the slow, choking weight

of minutes that don't matter,

of voices that don't ask,

of mirrors that don't lie.

I don't want rescue.

I want recognition.

To be seen?not through,

but into.

To be understood

without having to translate

my agony

into palatable metaphors.

I am tired of making my pain poetic

just so it feels like it's worth something.

Let it be ugly.

Let it bleed.

Let it rot in the open

until someone says:

"I see you. I know this hurt. I've lived here too."

Until then,

I am a fading note

in a song the world stopped singing.

And all I ask

is that when I vanish,

someone

remembers

I was once trying

so very, very hard

to stay.

## Maybe, Just Maybe...

Maybe... just maybe?  
If I wasn't so scared of beginning,  
I'd already be somewhere.  
Somewhere louder,  
Somewhere kinder,  
Somewhere I don't need to shrink to fit.  
Maybe if I didn't spend so long  
Pretending the silence was safety,  
I'd know what it means  
To be heard.  
To be understood without explaining  
Every broken piece of me like a crime scene.  
Maybe I'd stand in the sun  
Without feeling like a lie.  
Maybe I'd take up space  
And not apologize for it.  
Not whisper my name  
Like it's a warning.  
Maybe if my ribs didn't wrap  
So tightly around my fear,  
My breath wouldn't come out  
As a question.  
Wouldn't feel borrowed.  
Wouldn't feel like I have to earn  
Every second of stillness.  
Because I keep thinking?  
If I had been born brave,  
Wouldn't I be shining by now?  
Wouldn't I be laughing in rooms  
Instead of memorizing exits?  
Wouldn't I be loved,  
Or at least let in?  
But here I am?

Making a home out of avoidance,  
Furnishing my mind  
With excuses and empty rooms.  
I tell myself  
I like being alone.  
That solitude is sacred.  
But God?  
Is it sacred,  
Or just the only place  
I've never had to be rejected?  
Maybe if I wasn't afraid to be seen?  
Really seen?  
I'd stop disappearing in crowds.  
Stop holding conversations  
Like I'm waiting to mess them up.  
Stop apologizing  
For existing in other people's air.  
Maybe I'd have real friends,  
Not just "maybes" and "almosts."  
Not just people I watch  
Live the lives I dream of  
While I pretend I'm above needing it.  
Maybe if I didn't hate myself  
Just a little,  
Every day?  
I wouldn't flinch when someone compliments me.  
Wouldn't sabotage the good  
Before it gets the chance to leave.  
Wouldn't call loneliness "freedom"  
Because I don't know what love feels like.  
Maybe...  
If I weren't depressed,  
Anxious,  
Insecure,  
So tired of fighting ghosts  
No one else can see?

I'd be something better.  
Something brighter.  
Something that makes people say,  
"God, look at her glow."  
But instead...  
I stay home.  
I scroll.  
I sleep too much and eat too little.  
I romanticize healing  
But run from the work it takes.  
I wear dark clothes and heavy thoughts.  
I cry at songs  
That sound like they remember me.  
I miss people I never met,  
Places I've never been.  
I dream of versions of me  
That didn't break so easily.  
Maybe... just maybe...  
If I could take one step forward?  
Without fear snapping at my ankles,  
Without shame pulling me back?  
I'd find a life that feels like mine.  
Maybe if I didn't freeze every time  
Someone asks, "Are you okay?"  
I'd actually say what I mean.  
Not "I'm fine."  
Not "I'm just tired."  
But "No. I'm lost. I'm drowning. Please help."  
But I don't.  
I never do.  
Because being vulnerable  
Feels like bleeding in public?  
And I'm not sure anyone would notice.  
Maybe if I hadn't learned so young  
That the world doesn't wait for the soft,  
I wouldn't have turned my softness

Into silence.

But I still hope.

God, I still hope.

Hope that there's a door

Somewhere out there

That doesn't lock behind me.

Hope that there's a version of me

That laughs without flinching,

That speaks without trembling,

That shines without shame.

Maybe... just maybe...

I'm not hopeless?

Just held back.

Not broken?

Just buried.

Not meant to fade?

Just waiting for the courage

To become.

## On Writing or the Art of Survival

There are lives that perish quietly, not in the violence of catastrophe, but in the slow suffocation of emptiness. I know this, for mine was almost such a life. I had nothing no companions, no homeland of the soul, no warmth of family, no tenderness of friends, no belonging in this city I loathed. What remained was only the raw residue of existence: my thoughts, my wounds, my solitude.

And yet, in that desert of nothingness, two instruments remained: a notebook and a pen. What strange cruelty, that a life stripped bare would still leave these two relics behind. What stranger mercy, that they were enough to save me.

At first, I believed writing to be an ornament, a pastime. I thought poetry was beautiful because it decorated pain with elegance. But I soon learned that poetry is no decoration. Poetry is dissection. It is the knife that slices open the chest, forces one to witness the silent machinery of suffering. It does not console it confronts. It holds before you the grotesque fact of your own survival, and demands: "How much can you endure? How much can you transmute?"

When I wrote, I bled. Not metaphorically no, metaphor is too weak a word. The pen was a vein, the page a wound, and the ink was the proof that I had not been erased. My existence was validated by the words I carved into silence. What I could not bear in life, I could at least bear in language.

And then came the revelation: when I returned to those old words, I did not recognize the one who had written them. I looked at my own handwriting and whispered, *Oh damn. I did that. I survived that.* In that moment, I understood something terrifying and divine: the self who suffers is not the same self who survives. Writing is the bridge between them. Writing is the resurrection of a self that should have perished.

Thus, writing did not simply "save" me. It transformed me. It turned despair into creation, solitude into testimony, pain into permanence. When all else abandoned me, writing remained faithful. When the world closed its doors, the page opened itself to me, endlessly patient, endlessly receiving.

Yes, poetry is patient. Yes, writing is strong. Stronger than family, stronger than friendship, stronger even than love, for all these can betray. The pen does not betray. The page does not abandon. They demand nothing but truth, and in exchange, they grant immortality.

To those who say art is luxury, I answer: no. Art is necessity. It is as necessary as air, for when the lungs collapse under grief, it is words that breathe. Writing is not about "expressing oneself." Writing is about surviving oneself.

Therefore I say this: I would not exist without writing. I would not have endured this city I hated, this loneliness that gnawed, this silence that sought to bury me. Writing was my rebellion against nonexistence, my refusal to be erased.

And if I stand here now, still breathing, it is not because of the world. It is not because of people. It is because of the notebook and the pen because of the sacred act of writing, which took a dying soul and taught it how to speak.

## Mirror Reflection

When I stand before the mirror,  
the world falls silent.  
It doesn't show me skin, or lips, or hair?  
it drags me into the prisons of my eyes.  
There, behind the trembling surface of their shine,  
I see the graves of nights I never spoke about.  
I see the unspilled blood of tears  
that dried before they could fall.  
Every glance becomes a story,  
every shadow in my gaze a scar.  
When I watch myself,  
the reflection whispers of storms?  
the kind that never left a trace on the outside,  
but tore apart every corner within.  
There are words I swallowed whole,  
they float in the dark water of my stare;  
there are screams that curled back into silence,  
lodged deep behind my pupils,  
waiting, waiting?  
never free.  
No one knows.  
No one will ever know  
how many nights I was shattered  
but smiled at the daylight anyway.  
No one will ever read  
the heavy scripture carved across the surface of my soul,  
except me?  
when I dare to meet my own reflection.  
And so I look,  
and my eyes confess what my mouth cannot.  
They show me the ruins I carry,  
the wars I lost alone,  
the weight of sorrow

that has learned to masquerade as ordinary.

Every tear I ever buried

lives still in the shimmer of my stare?

a reminder that pain does not vanish,

it only hides,

behind a fragile shine of brown, of black, of hazel,

behind the veil of light that blinds others.

The mirror is cruel?

it makes me face myself,

it strips away my disguise,

it hands me back the pain I thought I left behind.

Yet the mirror is merciless?

it does not let me escape.

It binds me to the ruins I carry,

forcing me to drown again and again

in the weight of what I cannot undo.

There is no release in its glass,

only the reminder that my eyes are graves,

that the storms inside me

were never meant to pass.

And so I look, and I see

pain?

a language only my reflection understands.

## Cartography of Confusion

when the rooms inside me rearrange themselves  
without my leave ?  
a chair in the kitchen becomes an ocean,  
a doorway folds into a question ?  
I learn again how to be lost in my own house.  
I keep a map of feelings in my pocket ?  
folded so many times the creases look like rivers.  
Sometimes the map is blank:  
no labels, no legend, only the faint print  
of footsteps I can't place.  
I move through the day like a borrowed voice,  
sounding correct but hollow,  
as if someone stitched curtains over my ribs.  
Air arrives at my mouth and I forget the word for breathing.  
My hands are small islands that won't hold onto anything.  
Everything is too loud and also mute ?  
traffic that muffles a heartbeat, a calendar that yells in numbers,  
the refrigerator humming the tune of every decision I didn't make.  
There is a pressure behind my eyes like an incoming storm,  
and I check the sky for reasons it hasn't given me.  
I want to be honest about what I am ?  
not brave, not broken enough to show a clean fracture,  
only a soft, persistent bruising under the skin.  
I tell myself I should name it: anxiety, grief, fatigue ?  
but names sound like labels on jars I do not trust.  
At night the ceiling becomes an auditorium of questions.  
I sit under them, small and surprised,  
feeling the weight of possibility and failure mixed together,  
as if the future is a stranger who keeps touching my shoulder,  
testing whether I will turn and recognize them.  
Sometimes I rage at my own indecision ?  
I want the tempest and the anchor at once,  
to hurl myself toward change and to be held still by certainty.

I am tired of choosing nothing because choosing feels like a verdict.  
It is easier to drift between options than to be judged by one.  
And yet there are brief, scandalous lights ?  
a laugh that fractures the blue of the day,  
a hand that finds mine in a grocery aisle, ordinary as bread,  
a lyric that sneaks into my chest and makes me remember I can swell.  
They come like birds that do not stay:  
small, unapologetic, unsettling in their insistence.  
I want to be kinder to this unsteady person I wake up as:  
to learn the slow art of saying, "I don't know,"  
without it feeling like failure.  
To allow confusion to be a room I enter without redecorating,  
to sit with my uncertainty like rain on the window ?  
watching, not fixing.  
If feelings were weather, mine would be fog ?  
dense enough to hide my hands but not so dark I cannot walk.  
I will take small steps: one cup of tea, one song, one plain sentence.  
I will name one safe place and return to it like a child to a blanket.  
I will let my chest be a low, steady clock counting unremarkable minutes.  
There is no shame in being a slowly learning heart.  
There is no disgrace in trembling before the road.  
The world has not trimmed its expectations to my breaking points,  
but neither has it removed the quiet corners that hold me.  
So I will keep gathering those corners like handfuls of saltlight,  
and hold them until they warm my hands enough to move.

## Without Repair

Is there a fix for a soul split open,  
for the silence that swallows every scream?  
I carry the weight of hours that never heal,  
their shadows pressed into my skin like scars.

The world tells me to endure,  
but endurance feels like drowning slowly,  
a ritual of breathing water instead of air.

I have searched for an answer  
in broken mirrors,  
in nights where the ceiling would not let me sleep,  
in words that came out trembling,  
half-alive, half-afraid to be heard.

I asked the walls,  
I asked the cold,  
but their replies were emptier than my chest.

Is there a fix for this endless ache?  
or is pain the language my body was born to speak?  
I am tired of translating it into smiles,  
of disguising my fractures with borrowed laughter.

People want the surface to shine,  
but they never kneel to see the cracks beneath.

I wonder if the cure is forgetting,  
or if forgetting is only another wound.

I wonder if the cure is time,  
but time has teeth,  
and I am already bruised from its bite.

I wonder if the cure is love,  
but even love has left fingerprints of absence  
on my ribs where it promised to stay.

So I ask again,  
in the hollow voice that echoes my name:  
Is there a fix for being human,  
for waking up with sorrow stitched into the veins,

for carrying a heart that beats against itself,  
like an enemy locked inside my chest?

If there is,

I have not found it.

If there is,

it hides in a place no one will tell me.

And until then,

I remain?

a question without an answer,

a body learning how to survive

without repair

## The Warden

I will build a house of bone and air,  
with walls of thunder, and a silent stair.

I will count the atoms of the dust,  
and learn to treat the food as rust.

I have drawn a line, a fragile thread,  
between the living and the well-fed.

I pour the milk, a ghostly white,  
down the drain in the dead of night.

The butter's gold, the bread's soft breath,  
are soldiers I have sentenced to a secret death.

They say a cage of iron is a sorry thing,  
but mine is built by a hopeful, trembling spring.

It is the number that I did not write,  
the turning from the warmth of light.

It is the victory in a hollow chest,  
the carving out of all but "not."

I am the sculptor and the marble, cold,  
a story that is never to be told.

For in the mirror, a stranger grows,  
with haunted eyes and sharpened nose.

She is the strong one, the one in control,  
who has traded her body to save her own soul.

But the soul is hungry, a different kind,  
for a single, kind word, a peace of mind.

The world outside is a blur of feast,  
while I am guardian of the very least

a single grape, a tear of salt,  
a life held tight, without a fault.

And the greatest sadness, sharp and true,  
is that the prison's warden... is me, and only I hold the key.

So I grow smaller, a fading sketch,  
upon a cliff, a lonely stretch.

A monument to will, so stark and plain,

a beautiful, devastating, self-made pain.

## The Same Year, Again

Spring arrives like an obligation.

The world wakes up

and expects me to do the same.

Flowers open without permission,

green spreads everywhere

like I didn't ask to be reminded

that growth is possible.

People call it renewal.

I call it pressure.

Because nothing inside me blooms,

and the sun keeps noticing.

Summer is exhaustion dressed as light.

Days last too long,

heat presses down on my chest

until breathing feels like effort.

Everyone is outside, alive, loud,

and I learn how lonely happiness can be

when you're watching it from the shade.

Sweat, laughter, bare skin?

proof that I don't belong

to this season.

Autumn doesn't save me.

It just understands me.

Leaves fall because they're tired,

not because it's poetic.

The air turns sharp,

and finally something admits

that staying is impossible.

I walk through streets full of endings,

watch the trees undress themselves

without shame.

Letting go looks easy

when you don't have a choice.

Winter is where I disappear.  
Cold erases color,  
silence grows teeth.  
The sky lowers itself  
until it feels like a ceiling.  
I stop expecting warmth.  
I stop expecting anything.  
Even time moves carefully here,  
as if afraid to disturb what's already broken.  
And when spring comes back?  
because it always does?  
I don't celebrate.  
I just wonder  
how many times a heart  
can survive the same year  
without ever changing.

## Softness Was Never Safe

I learned the weight of silence the day my name stopped echoing back to me,  
the day I realized even my own thoughts no longer answered with kindness.  
Morning still arrives like an obligation it never agreed to abandon,  
spilling light across the world with no concern for those who cannot carry it.  
I carried love carefully, as if tenderness were a fragile promise made of glass,  
believing that if I held it gently enough, the world might finally be gentle in return.  
But the world has a habit of mistaking softness for permission,  
and it took everything I offered without ever asking how much I had left.  
They say time heals, but time only taught me how to function while hollow,  
how to smile with my lips while my chest quietly learned the shape of collapse.  
I miss the version of myself who did not measure every breath for survival,  
who did not rehearse courage before getting out of bed each morning.  
Loneliness learned my routines, memorized my voice, and moved in without warning,  
filling the rooms of my life with an echo that never lets me forget myself.  
Some nights I wonder if I was created to feel everything too deeply,  
or if I was only meant to break beautifully so others could call it meaning.  
And if I disappear one day, do not name it tragedy or weakness or fate,  
call it exhaustion?  
a heart that loved relentlessly in a world that never learned how to hold it.

## Fragment from a Weathered Book Found Without a Name

Before language learned to stand upright,  
there was this  
a low enduring ache,  
circling the marrow of being  
without inquiry or relief.

I have misplaced my beginning.  
What remains is a residue of hours,  
clotted with memory,  
slow to dissolve in the mouth of time.

The soul if such a thing persists  
has grown thin from listening.

Too many silences were spoken into it,  
and now it answers only in weight.

There are thoughts that do not wish to be understood.  
They kneel in corners of the mind,  
murmuring in obsolete verbs,  
grieving things that never occurred  
yet were fully mourned.

I am unwell in existence.  
Not wounded  
worn.

As stone is worn by the devotion of water,  
so have days rehearsed their erasures upon me.

Hope is an abandoned theology.  
Its scriptures are illegible,  
its promises eaten by damp and age.

I touch them only to confirm  
they are no longer warm.

What survives is a discipline of endurance,  
monastic, joyless, exact.

I continue not because I believe,  
but because cessation would require  
a clarity I do not possess.

If this is a life,  
it is written in the margins  
ink thinned with ash,  
sentences trailing off  
where the hand could no longer decide  
whether to bless or to curse the page.

## A Short Treatise on Pain, Written After the Fact

Pain does not arrive as an event.

It insinuates.

It learns the architecture of a person  
and rearranges the rooms  
without ceremony.

At first, it speaks softly  
a correction, a lesson,  
a minor undoing.

One believes it temporary,  
as one believes winter courteous.

But pain is not an affliction;  
it is a craftsman.

It works slowly, with devotion,  
pressing its thumb into the wet clay of being  
until the original shape  
can no longer be recalled.

I have seen what it removes.

Tenderness thins.

Wonder evacuates.

The future loses its grammar  
and begins to stutter.

Cruelty is pain's chosen method.

Not the loud kind  
no spectacle, no fire  
but the intimate cruelty  
of repetition,  
of returning daily  
to the same vulnerable place  
until resistance forgets its own name.

Under its tutelage,  
the heart grows educated.

It learns suspicion.

It learns restraint.

It learns how to survive  
by becoming less itself.

There was once a self here  
that reached without calculation,  
that trusted weightless things  
light, voices, the nearness of others.

Pain corrected that error thoroughly.

Now what remains is altered matter:  
a quieter posture,  
a gaze trained downward,  
a soul that has traded innocence  
for accuracy.

If transformation is sacred,  
then pain is a brutal priest.

It baptizes with endurance,  
confirms with loss,  
and leaves the initiate changed  
not purified,  
but unmistakably reshaped.

And should anyone ask  
when this happened,  
I would not know how to answer.

Pain never marks a date.

It simply stays long enough  
that the person who suffered  
is no longer the one  
who remembers arriving whole.

## There Are Days Like This

There are days like this  
when even memory feels tired,  
when the past does not ache  
but simply sits,  
heavy and unfinished.

I walk through my own thoughts  
as through an abandoned house  
nothing broken,  
nothing welcoming.

Only dust where something once mattered.

I do not cry anymore.

That was an earlier language.

Now sadness speaks in delays,  
in unanswered messages,  
in the way my name sounds distant  
even when spoken kindly.

People assume healing is loud,  
that survival announces itself.

But some of us heal by shrinking,  
by asking less of the world,  
by lowering our voices  
until pain stops noticing us.

I am not dramatic.

I am exhausted in a precise way.

The kind that comes from hoping carefully  
and being wrong quietly.

If this life were a sentence,  
it would trail off  
not ending,  
just losing confidence in itself.

And tomorrow will come,  
as it always does,  
not to save me,

not to harm me,  
only to continue  
what I have already learned  
how to endure.

## Quiet Arithmetic

The world keeps laughing in clean, unbroken sounds,  
as if joy were a language everyone learned at birth.

Cafés are full. Hands are full.

People speak of weekends the way birds speak of sky  
without checking the weight of their wings.

I walk among them carrying numbers instead of dreams.

They cling to my pockets, whisper in my chest,  
count the steps between today and tomorrow.

Nothing dramatic, nothing worth a siren  
just the slow math of survival,  
the constant subtraction of comfort.

I smile when others do.

I nod at stories of ease, of plans made lightly,  
as if planning were not a luxury.

They do not hear the quiet in my head,  
the way every choice asks a price before it asks my desire,  
the way life has begun to feel like a receipt

I never remember agreeing to sign.

Hunger is not always an empty stomach.

Sometimes it is an empty margin for error.

A thin line between "almost enough" and "not quite,"  
between dignity and the word *please*  
caught painfully behind the teeth.

I want to ask.

God, I want to ask.

But shame has a firm grip on my tongue,  
teaches me silence like it is a virtue.

It tells me to be grateful, to be patient,  
to carry this weight quietly so no one notices  
how my hands are shaking.

At night, when the noise finally rests,  
I inventory my worries like fragile objects.  
Bills become shadows on the wall.

Prices learn my name.

Even sleep feels expensive

it asks for peace I cannot afford.

What hurts most is not the lack,

but the loneliness of pretending there is none.

Watching normal life happen inches from my face,

close enough to touch,

far enough to be impossible.

So I stay quiet.

I measure.

I endure.

I learn how to disappear politely

inside a crowd that calls this living.

And if sadness settles in me,

it is not loud, not poetic.

It is practical.

It knows the cost of everything

and the value of nothing it can safely ask for.

## Where You Still Live

I miss you in ways  
language was never taught to hold.  
In the pause before laughter,  
in the chair that remembers your weight,  
in the air that still expects your voice.  
You meant the world to me  
not the loud world,  
but the quiet one  
the kind made of steady hands,  
slow smiles,  
and a love that never asked to be proven.  
Death took your body,  
but it failed at taking *you*.  
You remain in the way I breathe  
when life becomes too much,  
in the way I look for safety  
and find only memory.  
Some days I speak to you  
without opening my mouth.  
I tell you how tired I am,  
how cruel time has been,  
how growing up feels like betrayal  
when you are not here to see it.  
I would give anything  
to hear my name again  
the way only you said it  
as if it mattered,  
as if I was already enough.  
Grief is not loud.  
It is love with nowhere to go.  
And mine still walks toward you,  
every day,  
even knowing

you now live only in heaven  
and in me.