

(MORBID) CURIOSITY KILLED THE CAT

CONTENT WARNING : DEATH
- 2022-2023 - MATILDA WIEGAND -

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PREFACE:

PRE-PREFACE

The preface of a book is arguably one of the most essential aspects. When I compiled these poems, I knew just how I wanted to design the cover, what to put on the blurb, which wonderful people I wanted to dedicate it to, which memorable quotes to include (and why one of them had to be by Kafka), what fonts to incorporate - you name it, I had most likely thought about it. Yet now I have a million confused thoughts, buzzing like flies, taking up the preface portion of my mind. They will now spill out from my head, into a disorganised slop of sorts onto the page.

PREFACE:

Growing up with two very literature-obsessed parents, the joy of reading was an inevitable one for me (quite naturally). I adore words in every form; spoken, written, signed, sung, whispered, SHOUTED, drawn, scripted, sobbed, danced; to me, the fact that everything in the universe has a voice of some sort is possibly the most beautiful thing about life itself. Nothing is truly silent, which means nothing is ever powerless. Words teach us how to express ourselves, and how to project our love onto others - they are, to me, the most crucial part of what it means to be alive.

Words also play an integral part in death. Think obituaries, sentiments, inscriptions. Death is what this collection mainly seeks to explore, hence the title. Though it's a blatant cliché for a teenager to write poems concerning death, I believe it's what makes this collection honest. There are many other themes that are separate from death that I cover with my poetry - but most of them contain an element of death within them. As I went through the contents of this book, and categorised the poems according to their overarching themes, I found 7 predominant motifs: confession, yearning, loss, hurt, decay, journeys, and resolutions. Within each of these categories, there are deaths of some sort:

confession = death of deceit
yearning = death of dignity
loss = death of another
hurt = death of pride
decay = literal death
journeys = death of the past
resolutions = death of problems

But, more optimistically, with each of these comes a birth, too.

confession = birth of honesty
yearning = birth of desire
loss = birth of grievance
hurt = birth of rage
decay = birth of new life
journeys = birth of future
resolution = birth of acceptance.

Isn't that beautiful? How words can just be turned around, into antonymic phrases, only to mean the same thing?

That, to me, is beauty in its purest form. Undiluted, honest beauty.

DEDICATIONS:

Many people and things inspired these poems. I will now list said people and things:

PEOPLE:

- My lovely family for always instilling a love of literature in my life. Specifically my mum for teaching me how to read and write (the two basic foundations I needed to make this book), for always reading to me, for constantly buying and recommending me books, and for telling me to have a book on the go no matter what. I love you very much.
- My wonderful secondary school English teacher, Ms Anna Collins. Her incredible analytical perspective on English as a subject, and her profound enjoyment of literature as something to adore has deeply impacted my writing style and how I view any and all literary works. I cannot thank her enough for her motivation during my time being taught by her, and I miss her and her lessons dearly.
- My current fantastic literature teachers, Kate Buckley and Tom Prentki. Their feedback and attentiveness to my work is always extremely helpful and correct, guiding me to become a better writer in general, and furthering my love for a broader spectrum of genres.

- My dear literary-oriented pals: Milo Griffiths, Koda Pinto, Ted Newman, Piers Jackson, and Clara Morgan. Milo and Ted's portrayals of adolescence from two different voices; Pier's religiously-connotative language; and Koda's metaphorical stream-of-consciousness writing style are all intensely beautiful things that I have had the absolute pleasure of reading. Clara's incredibly helpful and kind feedback has been a colossal help to me too - as I very much admire her own writing style. Her assurance of keeping my own poetic voice whilst still being able to alter my work has assisted me with not only receiving feedback, but utilising it in order to improve my work with the original voice behind it. Between each aforementioned person, we have shared poems and reviewed one another's'. This has helped me to appreciate the good parts in my work based on their feedback, to explore new perspectives I would never have written from myself, and to expand my academic register in general.

THINGS:

- The big tree in the swamp up the road from me. It helped me gather my thoughts whilst I sat watching it, and is the inspiration for the setting of **seed in the marsh** and **bury it**.
- The 17:06 train to Southampton and the 17:37 train to Salisbury. The sole inspirations for the majority of the journey-related poems.

=====

"Decadent work is always morbid, but its attraction to death is through art. What they refused was the condemnation of that monster."

- Asti Hustvedt

=====

CONFESSION

“Concealment makes the soul a swamp. Confession is how you drain it”

- Charles M. Blow

a waste of time (my first posted poem)

my biggest fear is time.

i sit on the side of my bed,

eyes locked in position, straightforward; a competition with the clock.

its regimented black hands, marching rhythmically,

their steady movements, unnervingly equal each time.

an unbreakable cycle.

every second that passes is a wasted one.

wasted. irretrievable. fills me with regret.

every thought i have only makes this worse; wastes more.

i can do nothing to prevent this.

it terrifies me.

91023 thorax

i must capture my feelings quickly -

as soon as they come to mind.

they are fireflies

bashing against the inside of a lion's maw.

they could squeeze through molar gaps at any moment.

incite discomfort - too sweet, too sour

rot the teeth and escape through the cleanly-cut cavities.

\

or they could tire themselves out

by bashing against this calcium prison

until they fall dormant.

sleep -

the nemesis of memory.

desperation writes with me always.

if i am not typing or scrawling,

if i give myself any time to think

it is not a poem.

it is, instead, artificial.

wait for it.

it will happen.

don't yet pluck my wings

and extinguish my candle.

projection

it's funny how a man

has to shout

to bring upon

the silence

he seeks.

truly

the thinner i am

the closer i am to my essence,

to my soul.

i am more vulnerable.

you can see lies through my sheet of skin,

see my heart lurch with every beat.

the thinner i get

the harder it becomes for me to lie,

as my lungs strain against chest

with each and every breath.

you can see my honesty

and decrease my deceit.

ask me your question

do not hear my answer.

observe it.

ego

Silence! I'm trying to practise!

Don't you know how imperative tonight is?

Tonight.

The night I unfurl.

Blossoming, one may call it, if I were a flower.

But, of course, I am not.

If I were to be, in any case, I'd be the magnificent Rafflesia!

Ever-drawing in those around me with my magnetic affability.

My charm, my beauty, my charisma.

But, oh! Get too close and the repugnant, defensive odour shall secrete!

Even closer, and you would be consumed by it. Swallowed without mercy.

The alteration of your perception of the divine, quickly evident in your eyes.

Yet, of course, I am not a flower.

Shall I tell you what I am?

Listen! Come closer. Closer!

I am. I. am.

And tonight, I shall prove that I am!

These perfected mannerisms, my artillery at the ready.

This practised façade is poisonous.

They know not of the deceit that awaits them.

Tonight.

I am ready.

I am.

YEARNING

“And you glow: of course you do”



lunar

the tides of its light consume me,

engulf me

empower me

entrap me.

i am eaten whole by its angelic curse.

the inducer of restlessness.

i can not sleep.

my pupils dilate to receive it,

they welcome it,

yearn for it.

a passing cloud bars me from obtaining it.

i will not sleep.

i am saturated in darkness once again

deprived of my desire.

the dissonance of black and blank

slice through me with ease

a monochromatic torment.

i have not slept.

my body aches for it,
straining with urgency to obtain something that i had never wanted
until i had it no longer.
my head is hanging out the window,
the wind battering me into conformity.
this beam is taunting me,
pushing me,
hiding itself from me, a shield from my obsession.
what is sleep?

i am pacing. fidgeting. uneasy with the balance and lack of it tonight.
the clouds have taken from me what deserved to be mine,
and i resent them wholeheartedly
and will
until the end of time.

i will never sleep again.

gentle

i have made a mess of every interaction with you.

the constituents of our friendship have been wrongly measured,

contents sloshed in the bowl,

ingredients not quite right.

i love you more than anything

and i cannot get it right.

i created this guard,

the cling film of our cookery.

i don't mean to be rude to you,

but if i continue to be nice, i will fall in love so hard

that the recipe will spill out of the tin,

onto the floor,

and it will be all wrong.

it will no longer be sweet,

gentle,

a sugary dessert.

it will be raw egg on the floor,

un-mixed flour,

un-beaten butter -

a mess.

i lay at night under my warm quilt

yet my arms are cold.

they long for you to be here alongside me.

even to hold your hand would be the greatest honour you could bestow.

and it's vile how badly i need it from you - and you alone.

i need the intimacy this friendship can not provide.

i want to care for you.

to lay with you,

to hug you,

to talk for hours and hours upon end.

i want to find out everything there is to you.

i want to soothe your anxiety.

to be there for you,

to hold you.

i want to watch you blink,

i want to feel your arm around me.

i cannot just look at your back for the rest of our lives,

longing for more,

taking what i can in secret.

i do not want the mixture to spoil.

you are the perfect baker.

you smooth down the frills of your apron,

tie it tight around your waist,

fold in ingredients, leave for an hour.

i am a good baker alone,

but in front of you i am the beginner.

i am clumsy,

and falsely confident,

and terrified

of losing you.

a half-human yearning

under my sets of stripes,

calcium, clean, contained,

is a semblance of a heart:

a magnet.

it attracts, in the way poles do.

it forms bonds, in lieu of electrons.

it makes me crave connection,

draws me to your field,

without a conscious cog turning.

you and i, we are opposites.

the metal on my surface is dull, rusty,

yours; shiny, clean, polished.

perfected.

yet the urge to bind to you,

inseparably,

is greater than i can bear.

i fear, with my magnetic heart, that i would taint you.

rust your iron. cover it orange-red with bloodied-rust

from the metal pump,

under the calcium cage.

i fear it the more that i am drawn to you.

i fear it so much.

i fear.

waitress

a table had strawberries

they'd brought their own

and it made me feel

so very alone.

though i smell his scent

though it's not too late

i wish he'd care

for a strawberry date.

crush

the stitching on the lavender bag is crafted

with the care i conduct unto him.

i am petals of light purple, dried, ground with a pestle and mortar,

a collection of fragrant fantasies.

in life, when there was a chance, i stood steadily in the ground.

i would wait until midday on a monday to be smelled briefly

by the man who'd walk past me

to get his lunch, to talk to his friends.

i wilt from tuesday onwards, until the cycle repeats.

he is the sunlight - my source of survival;

it rains every single day between.

my stem is yellowing,

i wish you would stay for longer.

if only i could reach you and hold you in the way you cup me to inhale my scent.

but, alas, i have leaves as appendages.

i am far less dexterous than you.

i can feel myself shrinking,

he didn't visit last monday.

but wait! i see him approaching now!

he sees the state i am in - quite desperate without him.

one last sniff he takes, compacting my fragrance greedily within him - i stare deep, deep into his soul as he rids me of my own.

he is unaware, of course, for i am just a flower,

but i now understand why he sees me so little.

snot wells up in his nose - allergies get the best of him,

and he walks on.

and i watch the back of him with an aching heart,

and wilting leaves,

as he approaches a healthier, pinker flower.

i offer myself up to the pestle and mortar,

dry, numb, blooms browning,

and submit to the bodily crushing

that my crush had once inflicted

upon my poor nectar and wilted leaves.

red is the colour

red is the colour of her hair,

her clothes,

her very nature.

she is the colour of passion

and fae-like beauty.

if she was a season, she would be autumn in New England.

stunning, sigh-worthy,

so alive

that she is simply a walking heart,

beating with joy, every step that she takes.

her journal is red,

her pen is red.

and my cheeks match

as i stare at her.

yet this does not make me hers.

“someday”, i hope.

some day.

flake

on days like these,

where i am comfortable in the knowledge that He was happy

for a short while,

i feel that i have given a section of myself

up to the altar of Him.

i would offer Him my heart -

no, too stereotypical.

He deserves my lungs,

so He can breathe a thousand breaths

on my behalf.

i would unstitch my skin,

relieve the Self of the Suit,

and lay it on the table.

fold it, smooth it down.

leaving skin flakes on my palms.

for Him, sacrifices would be made.

for Him, vitality of myself would be removed,

and stuffed, gently, but messily, into the cavities,

the absences

of His own.

moth

lightbulb swings under concealed lampshade

a secret heartbeat - can you feel it mirror your own?

your palms sweat, your wings beat against the sun,

an Icarus of sorts.

we will take flight

and will burn so beautifully

when we reach our end

with feathers intertwined.

moth now becomes inkwell,

body turns to sand and sand turns to glass.

you are smithed gently, forged with fondness.

i pluck a wing from you; quill.

dip it in light,

put it to paper.

write.

i bask in your warmth as you glow,

bright.

so bright.

coin purse palpitations

Hope,

you give

me hope

it hits

in chest

coin one

coin two

red pump

red pump

red purse?

coin three

the more

hope you

instill.

the rich

er i

will be.

i will

take do

nations.

love me

love me

Love,

Me.

seed in the marsh [shortened]

fools such as myself bury our seeds of longing.

we cover them thickly in soil,

and pray they lay to rest; coffin-like.

we loom over, sobbing onto what we cannot obtain.

we pray it will not sprout green stems anew.

LOSS

"I felt like I had died too, but they had just forgotten to bury me"

- Unknown

imagination

“your imagination will leave you as you age” she’d said.

i remember so clearly the day she said that.

the tempting truth had laid trapped on her tongue.

the stars in her eyes; faded and finished as she let it escape.

“then age i will not” i’d replied.

my body will stay

in this ageless cage,

not dissimilar to how the truth had laid

dormant on her tongue.

a sacrifice to protect my purity.

my mind will be left free to roam -

free to seep through the crevices of my subconscious.

it will be kept preserved, safe and intact,

like the memory of the child who constructed it.

if i couldn't explore

the depths of my mind,

i would not want to live.

i would exist only in a coffin of childhood.

a realm of innocence,

where the only limits are *my* own influences,

in *my* own land.

so, age i will not.

please. let me dream.

ice-pop/brain freeze

Ice-pop, you are my childhood,

Covered in flimsy, tacky plastic

With a snowman logo, ready to ship.

You feel like summer when I was 7,

Summer when my brother earned wasp stings

From the edible curse you surrounded him with.

Ice-pop, your synthetic sweetness,

Artificially calibrated happiness

Tastes a little too clean;

A deceptive detergent, masked as nostalgia.

Did you taste this bad when I was younger?

You feel like spring when I was 13,

Consumed too early in the year, too eager, all too

Tempted by the half-promise you were bound to deliver.

Ice-pop, you are sickening.

The bleach-cola taste holds my tongue in a vice,

Cleaning me from the inside out,

Until I am as pure as 7 again.

You are too sweet and I can stomach you no longer.

You are associated with Now.

I trudge to the bin,

Expelling you from my mouth,

Not allowed to return,

Not to clean me any longer.

You are me, this winter.

Perception of seasons and time distorted

Unrecognisably. The blizzard of reminiscence renders me blind.

All I'd wanted was a shard of your cold comfort,

Yet all I received

Was your cruelty.

grief

something bit me.

and that something was grief.

it punctured my organs,

with its white, dagger-teeth.

it sliced through with ease,

and it began to start

tearing a shadow

engulfing my heart.

night after night, i wished i could die.

to fly away, to forget.

for grief has attacked me; left me empty,

my body rotted, my eyes wet.

wound

i am placed on the workbench.

he rattles the music-box key in my lock.

wounds me as he winds me up.

scratches my pale paint.

i am told i am ready to dance and sing now.

as good girls do.

melodies spout out of my closed metal mouth.

i would ask you to stop forcing this upon me

but the glue that you used

on my cold lips

tells me i shan't talk to him,

the Mender

with such mannerless manners.

so i stayed sealed.

and i kept spinning.

i wasn't patched up all that well after all.

leech

You are a leech.

A being of dark.

Pulsating.

Throbbing.

Feeding on my sanguineous sin.

You open me up to drear,

Milk-white face in the bus-stop glass,

Smudges of past fingerprints grab at me,

Wanting more, more, more.

Your shadow fist plunges

Down my throat

Stuck.

Fingers draw the self from me.

Leave me dumb,

Pale,

Incapable.

I would say it is not fair -

If I was able to talk to you.

But you have taken all there was on offer -

And more.

Narcissistic negotiator - all on your terms.

Now I am the leech.

The digit-sized vampire.

Desperate to regain what was robbed.

No matter how hard I try otherwise,

I always turn into you.

station

an air of grief is felt

when the train leaves the station

and i am left waiting on my own.

everyone is getting ahead.

i remain stationary at the station.

that was the first and last time

i will see the majority of those people.

doesn't this unsettle you too?

ancestor

she is in the rocking chair,

tree-bark hands hold my water-palms

as tight as she can

with whatever strength

she can spare;

i splash.

i gaze at her,

and wonder

what experiences she has lived through,

what troubles she has encountered,

what memories she can still recall,

with pure fondness.

only joy.

to tell a tree's age,

you have to cut it;

count the rings inside.

you have to harm her to gain her wisdom.

but with her here beside me,
i become her leaves,
i shroud her with a parting, protective hug,
and keep safe
her memories.

she will be gone in the morning,
her summer greens faded to autumn browns,
and i will reminisce fondly,
on times such as these,
where i held her hand,
and felt the wind exit her branches,
peacefully,
for the last time.

the walk home

the ground is frozen.

it crunches with every step.

cries of crows overhead deter.

whistles on the wind weave through leaves

as i make my way

to your home.

the ground is cold as a corpse

it crunches, bones underfoot.

laments of undead beneath echo.

fifty-five final breaths haunt plants of life,

their envy, beyond this world, palpable.

as i make my way

to your grave.

no epitaph. inscription absent.

it is not fair.

you wanted to be cremated.

now your name

and two meaningless dates

are the only things known of you.

the words you would have wanted

float before my eyes.

they are much too personal to write.

i knew you.

the church did not.

you were selfish for leaving

and slithering off when the time was right.

you are not forgiven.

i spit at where your head would be.

it does not penetrate the solid ground.

i kicked your stone slab; it is nothing more than that.

foot aching, i left.

listening to the words you never said,

interweave with the weather.

hearing the murder of crows

sing dismally.

trudge, no happier across the skin-thin leaves

and bone layered carpet.

it is always unresolved.

and i am never satisfied.

HURT

"He only loves me when there's a means he means to end"

Mitski Miyawaki - 'Jobless Monday'

tongue 1

to lick is to undergo a trial

to eat is to commit.

all tongues are wary of the teeth;

so cruelly they are bit.

forked tongue flickers alluringly,

serpentine; full of deceit,

for snakes are taught the art of lick,

yet not the art of eat.

pig snout scratches at the mud,

porcine, the mouth of greed,

for boars are never of the tongue,

they're only of the feed.

bury it – [shortened]

i want thin, barbed, grey hands;
the Hands that once touched his hair
that caused a startle,
to grip him
with purpose,
intent,
to suspend him above the hill
and to fling him.

no apologies this time.
no caution.

he is not a seed in the marsh –
he is bindweed.
choking every ounce of people
out of themselves
until they are only him;
then he doesn't want them anymore
out of self-loathing
discards for better plants.
cleverer people.
prettier things.

loving in secret

tastes like heavy freedom.

secrets in love

taste like cold metal in my mouth.

a broken padlock; it cuts my tongue

i will not share my words again.

mirror

he purchased me

the mirror.

scrubbed at my cool glass

sur

face.

used the green side.

no time for yellow.

so what if it scratched me?

once he moves past the cuts

and cleans me up

to his standard,

he looks in horror at my face.

his face.

our face.

every person he changes

changes into him

and he hates his reflection

more than i do.

he drops me.

shatters. shards.

turns to the antique shop.

looks for another mirror.

he won't learn.

he never will.

he will drop us once again.

irreparable

bones aching

shoulders weary

oil me

repair me.

take out your toolbox.

you're a man, right?

then fix it for me.

fix me.

adam's eden

loosen up, lighten up, live more.

let it go, take a joke, drop it.

you are bitter and underripe, Eve.

tone it down, slow the pace, watch your tongue,

bottle it. shut it. silence.

you are too sugary. too ripe now, Eve.

bruises emerge from a delicate brush,

i sink my teeth into your fragile flesh.

you are rotting on my tongue

turn to pulp in my mouth

you make me choke

you make me sick.

cyanide resides in your core,

your vengeful toxicity juices my tongue,

i secrete your secret poison –

salivating,

as my muscles undergo punctures.

eating the fruit forbidden,

made me know you all too soon.

fresh water hits my tongue,

wrestling the knowledge of you off.

and i am almost rid of you,

almost rid of you.

the failed mediator, the Woman,

the traitor.

hen

hen was guided to the coop.

she sat upon yellow comfort

and birthed us, consecutively.

one, two, three, four.

they told her “what a beautiful mother!”

”look how many eggs!”

“she’s a natural!”

and fed her crumbs of untruth

that she pecked up so greedily.

she sat, watched us hatch,

waited for the cockerel

that never came.

she concealed her disappointment

behind beak of disguise

and feather shroud.

she terrified us, the Eggs.

made us aware of the Farmer

his grasp

the block

the axe.

she drilled it into our heads so much

it severed our frail necks;

we were headless.

one by one

she tainted us.

made us outcasted.

all four, runts.

and when presented with cockerel nature

from chick youngest,

she clucked in its face.

denied it.

we were poached.

scrambled.

fried and served up

to Humiliation – ha!

what a feast we were.

yolk dripped down their chins

as they stared at our bodies.

greedily

hungrily

hurtfully.

podium

silver medal

bite it

floss with the shame.

stand on the podium

tall

not tall enough.

never tall enough.

no one wants to be first place for losers.

“but you are”.

but i am.

gold in my peripheral

bile moves up my throat

swallow it down

down

further down.

i can not hit her.

cameras flash

seconds pass

feel like hours

agony

to be ignored

to be cast aside

after effort unbridled.

i get changed

i walk out.

cannot congratulate.

will not.

and i see him.

gaze so close to me

yet not at me.

around me.

at her.

control; it breaks.

blood drips

from my nose.

this wouldn't have happened

if you had just won.

everybody wants gold.

not afterthought-silver.

the second

i am on the second platform.

i crane my neck to

see the bright light,

so fluorescent,

peer down, unblinking onto the

bright white podium.

white like a tooth.

i see her.

pink shirt

blue jumper

checkered skirt

knee highs

sensible shoes

plaits

brown hair

polite

pretty

perfected.

she is holding a stack of books

and looks like me,

but younger,

more innocent.

attainable?

we're yet to know.

i am on the second platform.

i peer down.

i am the giant

at the top of the beanstalk -

she is barely visible through fantasy storms

and shadows.

the sight bites me

from below.

she isn't even standing; too weak.

thin, like she had always wanted

but once she had achieved

her end goal

she, herself, had ended.

collapsed, a black shirt hangs on her

as it would a clothes hanger.

she is not quite dead yet,

but soon,

she will slip, limp, off her pitiful podium.

slither and melt

without exerting energy.

i am on the second platform, inbetween.

meet me on the second platform.

i don't like the second platform.

you can be the worst, the third, bronze.

or the best, the first, gold.

silver is expected.

i want to be unexpected.

i, myself, am not sure which podium

i want to reach.

perhaps that is why

i am always second.

DECAY

"I felt a strange delight in causing my decay"

- Robert Browning

cloth

with my dry, cloth skin,
and cotton innards,
you would think i was a doll.

but

dolls do not do the things
that i have done.

dolls do not think
the way i think.

dolls are sweet, delicate.
i am a poorly stitched maggot,
segments filled with fluff
to the point where it chokes me and

dolls do not grow wings,
and buzz and

dolls do not get swatted at,
and die.

i am only thread and cotton,

buttons rotting.

nothing more.

nothing more.

[Untitled]

I lay in the undergrowth

Lace, silk, clean cloth leaves surround me.

I touch them.

I taint them.

They are spoiled.

I am rot.

I peek over the shrubbery

Lift up the sheet-layers to spy,

Feel my insulative fur cling to my skin.

How I wish I could scrape my bones;

Render me stealthier; healthier

Purer of heart.

The moss-coloured carpet exploits its mating dance,

White, yellows, blues, greens, browns

Litter her hair

Cover her up.

A layer for which I, the Fawn, can amble across

Once birthed from this suffocating womb.

River fungi are visible; just,
White, grouped together; purity out of paw's reach.
Forest furniture too tall, who sits on this throne?
Who dictates what gets to eat me
And what does not?

Hoof back on the bed
Scales camouflage - home.
It was too brave
Too bold
Too "too" to venture
Past where I am destined
To remain.

They pile leaves over my
exposed ribs,
See life enter, leave, enter,
leave leaves for the last time.
Feel heaviness instilled
By Dry Rage herself - such beautiful indignance -
Into my bones
My clean, cold instruments.

cycle

every flavour is the same.

every song is the same.

every day is the same.

this web of monotony leaves me drained.

i am the fly; bound tightly in the tedium of today

of tomorrow. and tomorrow's tomorrow.

i am trapped in this fatal hammock,

(ironically antithetical to rest)

left only to be engulfed by the feeling of total emptiness,

in this bleak domain.

i cannot eat.

i cannot listen.

i cannot be.

without the lingering fear

that it will stay this way.

all food is now cardboard.

all songs are now cacophonies.

all days are now challenges.

if something doesn't happen soon, i will surely go insane.

am i?

some weeks

i become filth.

stagnant in my bed,

i itch my hair.

tear my skin

on bricks

outside my window

and by the front door

when i can move.

feel the dryness of your face.

lethargy plagues your eyes.

an empty feeling holds your heart -

not hugging; hostage.

but you couldn't care less.

cotton organs chafe

against sugar.

fairground carousel

heartbeat a horse.

candyfloss dry inside,

like an unloved diary

it is inkless.

teeth yellow

i'll brush them tomorrow

i had said.

and tomorrow came

and tomorrow's tomorrow.

until i was all tomorrowed out.

it feels as though

a straw has been tucked under my eyelid.

you stare at me as i stare back,

i do not blink as you drink them dry.

tears and i never got along anyway.

i try a lot of things

to make me feel

but i can only ache

only want to ache.

i study

i can't

i draw

i can't

i type

i can't

i clean

i can't

i eat

i can't

i starve

i can.

brain sits behind me

on shoulders, as if friends.

she caresses my nape

throttles me

cannot.

she settles for biting me

semantic incisors knife me.

i cannot feel it.

paper skin is trapping my ink

i will not let Me write.

my hair is not quite attached to my scalp.

a wig, out to expose my baldness.

i itch.

i move it.

it leaves me with oil on my hands.

sebum stains.

i seek a pain so profound
that i am sure to never find it.

i set out on the hunt
intent, urgent, contained.
how i wish, just this once, to find it.
to hold her star form,
to bite out of her
to take her into me.

i wait for Pain to make me start.
i am waiting,
for pain.

this poem can't seem to stop, i fear.

i should plunge my pen into my skin
see if i can access my literature
through blunt means.

it is heady.

i would quite like to access my brush

those fine fibres,

and dip it, mix the palette

ruin the canvas

break the easel.

lemon soap irritates it

every time i wash my hands.

a bath would be agony.

i leave blood on my nose

for the shark to find my lips

in this cold ocean.

but she was offered a better meal.

she does not want me to feel.

JOURNEY

"All journeys have secret destinations of which the traveller is unaware"

- Martin Buber

cave

we march onwards

into it.

the remains of others

litter it.

the opening reveals itself to us,

a soft opening.

deceptively soft.

we walk along the dampened path,

it twitches, spasms

with every step we take.

for us, small adventurers,

this had looked promising.

but

the only thing this fate promised

was your crocodile maw

and ocean-acid below.

stalactite teeth scrape us;

stalagmite twins crush us duly.

and we, small adventurers,

are squeezed through cartilage crevices,

down to the acid,

where we promise

to dissolve.

sister

born

eighteen months apart,

you were “a gift to your sister”.

you are my best friend in the world.

though you aren't a sister anymore,

(though you still let me call you sister),

you are my brother now.

and brother forevermore.

live

together,

only a few steps apart,

our rooms opposite,

in distance and design.

you tell me of your day,

show me your songs,

lyrics that you write.

and i, more than anyone,

am so proud

of the man you're becoming.

die

someday, not now.

‘whoever dies first;

fucks up the other one’s funeral’.

we laugh about this as we sit together.

i hope yours never comes,

and that we can share our precious days,

together,

not as sisters,

but as siblings

until both of our times come.

empty road

it is six o'clock on a spring evening.

i don my loudest boots and lightest jacket,

to hear my steps and to be sure i am walking.

i hold his hand, we walk for ten minutes,

his yellow coat a stark contrast to the drear of the day,

he is our sun, her Son, the perfect one.

a finger to my lips, instigate the silence,

make it into a game so he can play along,

as we walk we breathe; full, cleansing breaths.

we renew as She does.

the light drizzle is a wet cloth sanitising a wound,

shrugging Spring's warm plaster around the two of us.

he has enjoyed this walk, yet now;

he trips, he stumbles, and grazes his hand.

the silence is broken by a piercing scream - it tears me in two.

i watch the birds leave trees from his cry of pain.

"be brave" "we're almost home" "it's okay, darling",
tears and snot colour outside the lines,
they form their own light rain, stream down his face.

i stroke his hand - a small cut all that remained,
Spring's plaster was not protective enough,
i apply one from the green box, and fix him myself.

he should never hurt.

i kicked at the ground, knocking stones aside,
it made him giggle, but i did it out of upset
that the Child had gotten hurt under my careless care.

RESOLUTIONS

"I was holding my head nice and high again"

- Franz Kafka

dissection

I ask but one thing of you

Before the brute grace of death encompasses me;

I ask of you to dissect me

As you would your favourite novel,

To burn me

As your father would a cigar,

To desecrate me

As you would in a burst of rage.

To deduce me

As you would a crime-scene.

I ask but one thing of you.

Pick me to ribbons,

Tear the fabric apart to adorn

A new girl's dress.

I ask but one thing.

I ask but one.

I ask.

an ode to rain

crisp, clear comets streak past your house,

each one pure enough to wish upon,

and hit the corrugated tin roof.

the pluvio-paradiddle is your clock.

your metronome,

your rhythm.

they are the tears of a God,

whose woe replenishes soul and soil,

renews the streams,

revives the wildlife.

they bind to your worries; chemically so,

and seek the nearest drain.

gentle acidity digests panic,

soothes it -

cleans it as you would a newborn.

mops the muck away with a soft, wet cloth,

makes it all better.

all better now, sweetheart.

pale pink

there are generations of safety

held in the gentler shades.

mother before mother,

crowned with the palest hues

upon their arrival

into fertile rose-gardens.

after weeks of wearing green,

brown,

the occasional grey,

i feel like i have turned to leaves,

to bark,

to stone.

i feel very static,

and need to take comfort in the pale pink.

pink has been there since birth.

“it’s a girl!”, pink cards, pink toys,

number 1 candle, pink cake, pink frosting

pink bag

pink bows

pink dresses,

pink blush colouring my cheeks, my lips,

my eyes after i had cried so hard,

ugly sobs.

she has been there for me,

every step of the way.

do not shun pink.

accept her. she loves you

and is gentle to you and only

you

she wants to cradle you as she did,

seventeen years ago,

in blanketed form,

swaddled against your rosy body.

but today, the blanket makes me overheat:

i turn red.

too pink, now.

much too pink.

bullet train

leave the same impact that the bullet train does when it departs.

let there be a rumble signifying your approach.

an earthquake of delays

tickets

thoughts

days

journeys

luggage.

make the screeching of your brakes so loud

it perforates eardrums.

render them deaf with your arrival.

if you never stop making noise,

no one can forget you.

it's back

feel that!

do you feel it?

your heart, hit rhythmically.

feel it.

there is light within your lampshade

you shine

though the bulb is dim, priorly dormant

you shine.

you are excited.

your nose tickles

you can't help but smile

you have regained control

and it's all in your hands.

so much in your hands - maybe overwhelming.

maybe not.

dimples form

i remember that smile.

it is one

of success.

succeed.

cast

as the roses are thrown
at the wilted red curtains.

as the applause echoes
across the lonely room.

as we break a leg
and patch it back up.

as the backdrop is taken,
and the dream is no more.

as we return to reality
and cast a gaze to the sky

a thousand-thousands;
stars.

of which we all are
and will return to
stare, tranquilly, overhead.

they say
“it all comes down to one thing”.

fame.

we all want it

secretly.

we cannot all have it.

or there would be none left

for those who have earned it.

burn as bright as you can -

in protest

on opening night.

do not crash and fall.

maintain your light.

you are fame.

[Exit.]

POEM NOTES

{for the poems that I felt needed a bit of backstory or explanation.}

a waste of time

- This was my first poem that I ever wrote out of choice and emotion. I want it to be read as if it were sand falling through an hourglass, or to the pace of a ticking clock.

91023 thorax

- This poem was written in a panic very late at night, or very early in the morning. I had forgotten what I had wanted to write about, but, instead, was inspired by the feeling of forgetting the content that I felt I had to write something based off of that feeling. I'm a simple creature really.

truly

- 'truly' was a more recently written piece, where I wanted to incorporate themes of body dysmorphia into my idea of honesty. As I have had struggles with my body image (more so in the past than now), I thought it would be interesting to reanimate that feeling, and combine it with my idea of truth in order to create morbid imagery.

ego

- This poem is one of my favourites - I intend for it to be read in the same way a soliloquy or monologue would be read on stage. Because of its performative energy, theme of deceit, and striking arrogance, I think it makes the poem stand out against the introspective nature of the others.

lunar

- 'lunar' was based on a dramatisation of a real event. One night, I was looking out of my window to see a supermoon of some sort, and every time I thought I was getting closer to seeing it fully, it seemed to have either moved behind a cloud, or the gutter pipe was blocking it from my view. I went to bed quite annoyed as I had wanted to take photos of it. The next morning, I wrote that poem, but from the altered perspective of genuinely craving the sight of the moon in order to sleep, in a primal, animalistic way.

gentle

- Was written about someone who I once had very unrequited feelings for. Despite us being really good friends, I had found it hard to distinguish between the platonic and romantic interactions we had had. This particular poem focuses on how afraid I was of just losing their friendship in the pursuit of my own selfish want.

red is the colour

- It was important for me to include '*red is the colour*'. I did not want the yearning section to be an all-male area. I wanted to represent my bisexuality in my literature; for it's a very prominent part of my life. I tend to write poems about men more, as I write more when I'm angry. This poem is about a girl in one of my classes who I used to be very fond of.

flake

- '*flake*' shows just how absolute the desperation and sacrifices you would make for a person can be. It is a concerning, excessive amount.

moth

- '*moth*' was written about my wonderful, current partner. He does not have a huge appreciation for poetry in general, which is okay; instead he is very musically talented. In all honesty, I am largely scared of showing him my poetry, especially ones written about him. This poem is about how beautiful I think he is in his entirety.

coin purse palpitations

- Is also about my current partner. It follows an iambic rhythm for the first half, then a trochaic rhythm (creating the intended effect of an inverse heartbeat) for the second half. This poem is largely abstract, and is an experiment with my use of rhythm and metre; but the crux of it centres on how I love to be loved (a universal feeling, I am sure). It also focuses on the concept of choosing love or money - yet here, love IS money - there is no one option without the other, as they are one and the same. Being rich with love for someone is a fascinating feeling, that deserves to be documented.

seed in the marsh [shortened]

- Was also about the person mentioned multiple times before in other poems. True to the category it was placed in, this poem is about an awful lot of yearning. I also severely cut this poem down to maintain anonymity for that person, out of respect, otherwise that would be insanely embarrassing for the both of us.

imagination

- This poem was not about an experience that I had. It's from the perspective of my younger brother - I am the person saying that he would lose his imagination as he aged. I then, ironically, imagined what he must have felt when I told him that, years and years before, and created this poem to portray his viewpoint that I'd imagined. A whole lot of imagining going on from the girl who had claimed he would lose it. What a hypocrite I am!

ice-pop/brain freeze

- Initially, this poem was just based on this box of horrible ice-pops that I had. When I say 'horrible', I genuinely mean HORRIBLE. They tasted like cleaning products, and were disgusting. I had one of them which was supposed to taste like cola, but was in fact the worst thing I have ever eaten. I then decided to write a poem about the experience, as whenever I feel an emotion to its extreme, I have the urge to document it, and I added more meaning to the experience by tying it into the idea that everything is better, simpler, and purer in childhood, yet that seems to fade as you age.

wound

- 'wound', in retrospect, sounds very concerning from an outsider's point of view. The way this poem came into existence was from when myself and two friends called and used a random word generator and a five minute timer to write impromptu poems. 'wound' was one I was particularly proud of out of that session. This poem is about patriarchal forces silencing women, and expecting them to be perfect and polite whilst not having autonomy or free will of any sort. The patriarchal figure alluded to is an exaggerated stereotype, as is the jewellery-box ballerina. Additionally, I cast the female character as an object, and the male character as the supposed mender of the object - yet he obviously does not care enough to be kind. A parallel to "irreparable" can be seen later in the collection.

leech

- The inspiration for leech came from when I caught a glimpse of myself in the dirtied bus station glass, and I looked half dead. I wondered what would leave someone looking that drained, and 'leech' was one of the first things that came to mind. I then tied it to common themes seen in 'bury it' and 'mirror' for dramatic effect.

ancestor

- Was yet another product of the random word generator and five minute poetry session that I was proud of. Whilst it's not based on anyone that I know that has passed, I thought it would be interesting to explore the perspective of being present for a peaceful death.

tongue 1

- The fun part about this poem is that there was never a sequel to it. I just decided to keep the 1 in the title so it could maintain its originality. I aim to write a second part to it at some point, but, for the time being, I believe it can't be added to.

bury it [shortened]

- This poem was a sequel to '*seed in the marsh*', about the same person, only once I had found out something hurtful of how they were talking about me behind my back. Again, as I've priorly mentioned, whenever I feel an emotion to an extreme, I feel compelled to document it, so '*bury it*' is a documentation of humiliation and rage at its highest. I ensured to shorten this poem in order to maintain anonymity, as the original version had many more personal references in it that would identify the person.

irreparable

- '*irreparable*' gives a voice to a very miniscule, pathetic section of my mind. We are very influenced by gender stereotypes, no matter how hard we try to break those constructs down. I hugely oppose stereotyping based on gender - yet, from birth, it's undeniable that we have ideals pushed onto our view of what society 'should be'. '*irreparable*' voices the patriarchal ideal of men being the 'fixers' and 'do-ers'. Whilst this poem does contain parallels to '*wound*', this poem focuses more on giving in to the small, gender-stereotyped voice in your head, rather than wanting to resist it as the narrator in '*wound*' does. These two sides tend to war.

am i?

- This poem was one of the hardest to share. Although, to me, it doesn't fully feel like a completed work, I didn't want to alter it. It would lose its meaning otherwise.

END NOTES

The predominant use of lowercase lettering is a stylised choice throughout the majority of this collection. Whilst I do know (and thoroughly love) basic grammar, I felt it was more authentic to copy the poems straight from the sources and locations that I had initially composed them on. Altering the poem too much would change the voice of what I had originally wanted to convey, so, to maintain authenticity, I decided to keep the use of lowercase lettering for most of this project. Natural capitalisation was kept for certain poems that needed a more authoritative, direct, and confident voice, whereas the lowercase lettering maintains an adolescent innocence about it.

Similar to how the lowercase lettering was a stylistic choice, another choice was the capitalisation of nouns. Though, at times, it may seem out of place, the use of the capitalisation was to convey religious connotations, and to add spiritual aspects and weight to otherwise mundane and everyday scenarios.

Whilst some of these poems may have been written about certain people, I did my best to edit them to maintain anonymity, unless the person the poem was about was comfortable with me sharing explicit information identifying them. (For example, the subject of the poem **sister** knows it is about them, and let me directly quote from them. However, the subject of the poems **crush**, **seed in the marsh**, **bury it**, and **gentle** does not know it is about them, so language concerning their specifics has been reduced as much as possible, in order to ensure privacy).

Thank you so incredibly much for taking the time to read this collection. I hope it resonated with you where you needed it to.

“And I long to say a last goodbye to everything up here, to go down into my burrow
never to return again, and let things take their course”

- Franz Kafka

