



## Fragments

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I sit alone in my room. Rain pounds outside and music flows through the air, coming from my record player. Candlelight flickers on the walls, adding to the tranquil ambiance that surrounds me. I move from my desk to lay down on my bed. A flash of lightning runs through my room, followed by a crash of thunder. I used to think thunder was something not from this world-- God being mad or some angels or lesser gods bowling. But I'm no longer a child and I don't believe these superstitions anymore. In fact I think the way the Earth can produce something so magical is something so beautiful.

I look outside my window from the haven of tranquility I've created and see trees bending and chaos storming. Another flash sends light intermingling, and it illuminates posters and various decor I've set on my walls. Fake vines weave around my ceiling and bed; coming to a stop just before my real plants start. I'm sure they'd love to be out in this rain, but I don't have the energy to get up and move them. Plus I'm too scared of them breaking; can you imagine? Something I've spent so much time and patience on broken by the beauty of this world. I guess they'd be like me then. Sighing, I fall into my comforter and blankets, becoming engulfed in warmth and love. The past couple of weeks have been rough. The numerous plates and cups that line my bedside table are enough to show the mental carnage going on in my head.

*"You need to clean those up now"*, I hear my mother's voice echo in my head. Meh. I'll do it later. I tune back into the mix of music and rain pounding on my window. Storms usually give me more energy, but I guess this time is different. A mix of a purr and meow comes from under my bed. I reach down as Lyra's head peeps out, looking at me, *"Awh come here"*. *She's gotten so big*. I once again think of childhood and small things. A flash outside and Lyra jumps off my bed, running to the door. I guess I've gotta get up now. I sigh and roll out from under the covers, eyeing the oddly clean floor, so different from my state of mind. *I guess since I'm already up I'll take my dishes down*. Mom's not home so I'm free from whatever snarky thing she'd say. Collecting all the dishes and going downstairs is all a blur; Lyra is already long gone. She's probably hiding under the couch.

Once again everything falls into a blur and when I come back to reality for a second, an impulse runs through my mind. “*Go outside. Get your strength back.*” In the blink of an eye I’m running outside and into the pouring rain. The rain falls as fast as I do. *Focus focus focus dont cry dont cry dont cry.* God. I should have at least brought my earbuds or phone or something with music. Looking up into the sky my tears mix with rain and I don’t bother wiping them. That’s the good thing about water, being the element of emotions, it doesn’t care about yours. *I guess that sounds wrong. Water cares about your emotions but not in the way adults do. It cares in the way I do. It will sit with you as you cry and hold you, not ushering anything but pure comfort and empathy.* Blurs. That’s all I see. Blurs. Blurs of water and tears and emotions and everything. I sit in a space where everything and nothing exists. I think back to what made me come out here. “Get your strength back?” What is that supposed to mean? Whatever it’s supposed to, I follow it anyway. I lay down, close my eyes, and let the water flow and flow and blur and blur until it becomes all I am.

A flash of light and suddenly I open my eyes. *The shower? How did i get here? Especially since it’s not even my own shower...* Slowly adjusting my eyes I see light filling the room. This is the shower I like the most, especially at this time of day. Is that weird to say? I guess not, it is just an opinion after all. Something that brings me comfort shouldn’t be hated on. Water is still falling, just this time from the showerhead. Light and water mix in the air, sending invisible sparks through the steam. This time the water is warmer and my muscles relax. *Wait if i’m here, are they? i don’t want to leave the shower though. Seeing them all would be really nice but im just so tired.* Everything feels so easy here. The way the light flickers reminds me of the candles in my room. *Light and Water. infinity and emotions.* I close my eyes and suddenly all my thoughts slow. Tears once again form and once again everything blurs and blurs and blurs. I open my eyes and see the way the water droplets light up in the air and on my body, and an indescribable feeling bubbles up in me. The scars that lay on me internally and externally light up too. I close my eyes and let my thoughts run like the water, this time filled with the glow from the sunlight. *Is it weird to say i feel most me like this? Lost in the water and light, where I am nothing but my soul? i wish i was strong enough to be this forever.* Suddenly there’s a knock at the door and a wave crashing over me.

I fall back, letting the weight swallow me down. The water here is filled with power and strength. I don’t bother to look around me and figure out where

I am. There is nothing but water and ocean around me, and I don't need anyone or anything else with me. Another wave hits me and I let go and follow the pattern of the waves, synching myself with the tide. I resign myself as one but knowing that I am not alone. *I'm never truly alone am i? In some way i am always surrounded by something-- some energy of some kind.* The water moves in a pattern, once led by storms now flowing on its own. Relaxing into this pattern, suddenly my emotions are no longer as big; or maybe they're bigger? Everything exists all at once here, a comforting tide of feelings all clashing-or joining?- together. I can't tell where I start and where the ocean starts. *Maybe i am everything i've ever learned or felt or seen or heard. What's that one quote? "We are all pieces of everyone we've met."* *Maybe getting caught up in emotions is something unapologetically human.* Then again, *maybe I am only water.* I fully close my eyes now, an unnamed emotion engulfing me. Calmer tears fill my eyes and once more I let them fall, the salt water mixing with them. It feels now as if I've cried this entire ocean. *All this crying and still no music to go with it.* Dang. Slowly opening my eyes, the sky opens itself up to me and rain falls and falls. The water hits my eyes but I cannot feel it. I cannot feel any of the rain hitting my body. I start to look down, but a wave comes and hits me in the face, closing my eyes for me once more.

This time, I don't immediately open my eyes. I let myself feel the energy of where I am, not necessarily trying to figure out where I am, but letting myself exist without shame. Breaching the surface of the water, I see images flash before my eyes. Memories fill my eyes and I breathe liquid gold now. One moment I am in my ex-best friends pool, the next in a pool I've only seen in dreams, followed by being pushed into a pool by someone that doesn't like me very much; jumping into a pool I loved once upon a time; entering one I never have before (that I didn't realize I'd become so fond of); laying on the concrete of my first house as rain pours onto me; running into school with friends trying to get away from the rain; laughing as a partner kisses me in front of my car as the downpour drenches us; memories flood and flood my brain eventually overflowing and spilling pure emotion - one still unnamed. It flows all around me and my heart fills and beats with love and compassion and understanding and empathy leading to the realization that;

*I am alive.*



“Astra?” A knock sounds at the door and she sits up from her bed. Her mom slowly opens the door, sighing. “Dinner’s ready. I know you’re probably not that hungry since you just woke up, but whenever you’re hungry there’s food waiting for you.” Astra just nods and thanks her, her voice barely above a whisper. Looking around her room, the evening light fills her room with an amber glow, dancing around the posters and leaving shadows gracing the corners. She lets herself fall back into the bed, the sheets warm from her body heat. The silence of her room is a stark contrast to the sound of water and memories that just now was rushing through her head. Putting herself back together, she sits up and walks across the room. Her clean floor and newly cleaned dresser now reflect her mind. For the first time in a lifetime, she’s no longer just the fragments of a shattered mind.