

Awake

By.MJB

I'll Need My Inhaler

Love me gently,
Love me gently,
Love me gently.

I cannot run,
I cannot keep up.
My bones ache.
My body is a prison,
My dreams are all nightmares,

So please, I beg,
Love me slowly,
Love me gently.

You were good to me,
But if the sky turned orange,
I think you would tell me it looked more yellow.

Why don't you hold me?
Why don't you sit by me under blankets with heads on pillows and talk?
You could hear "I love you" a thousand times,
and you would still wonder why it wasn't a thousand and one.

Just be.
Just sit with me.
Love me slowly.
Love me gently.

You were good to me,
but you could not satiate this need I have
for a kind hand on my soul,
after this Earth has electrocuted my nervous system
time and time again.

My Deepest Darkest Secrets Or Something

I always think it's funny
that we still wait for the stoplight to change in the witching hour,
when no one is around to follow the corresponding green to our own red.

As the harvest turned to snow,
I learned.
I learned-
that girlfriends who feel sad
should *not* waste their boyfriend's time (with their weakness and frivolity).
Instead- they should simply *try harder* to feel happiness.
Genius!
Someone should really tell my therapist to retire.
I even stopped taking my medication.
Count my ribs-
I get an extra set every day!

And now- two years later-
when I am sad,
I sit in a gas station parking lot eating *Swiss Rolls*,
and ignoring texts (wishing that someone would text me).

I'm glad he left me.
I probably would have continued to destroy myself
until he loved me.

The chance to love
must come with an equal
-or perhaps a greater-
opportunity
for heartbreak.

(Trigger warning for my own life):
Sometimes I think back
to the pricking feeling against the gentle skin on my wrists.
I would leave myself
to watch from above my own head,
gazing thoughtlessly
as the melded wall of flesh split in two,
and released an endless red.
Moments later-
air would shock my lungs,
pulse would return to my chest,
and I would return to my eyes,
wondering why.

Many years later, I look back
(with all the wisdom of a woman who still can't drink)
and I see my desperation for what it really was.
Proof that I was *alive*.

Most poets share the same sick secret.
We *like* the heartbreak.
In fact-
we live for an ache to weasel its way into our chest
so that we may pour it onto a page.

I sometimes ponder whether
I am deranged,
or broken,
or perhaps just an idiot with a tendency for emotional self-harm.

But then again-
don't we all search for proof
that we are capable of love?

I have not felt the ache in so very long
-nor have I felt the pleasure.

I fear my blood may be standing still.
I fear my nerves may be shutting down.

What happens when someone loves you enough
to find out how much there is to resent in you?

I fear that my body and brain have finally had enough
of that equal or greater opportunity
for empty parking lots,
and extra ribs,
and splitting walls of red,
and harvest,
and snow.

Meander Through My Life

He likes my tiny tea set- it made him giggle.
I got to show him the rest of my collection.
He picked up a cup to have a tea party with me.

He browsed my albums, taking special care to notice the jazz artists,
and the most recent vinyl on the turntable.
His fingers gently climbed through the crate.
He likes Louis Armstrong, but I prefer Nat King Cole.
It's no matter, I have both in my library.

He smells of cologne.
and musky soap.
and cigarettes.
and something familiar that I can't quite place.

"Too bad you didn't meet me sooner,"
he muses, "I could have lent you my drill to mount those shelves."

I recall the several minutes I spent standing on a chair,
pressing my weight into a cheap screwdriver
to puncture the drywall.

He browses through my home, my life, my person
with such care and gentility.

And this evening I was cleaning up from his visit the prior night,
and I found his glass of water still half full on the counter,
and I think somewhere in me,
I was waiting for him to come back and finish it.

We'd Make The Worst Adult Films

"Why are you laughing?"

"I'm just happy..."

"I'm happy, too."

"Why are *you* laughing?"

"Because you are!!"

"I think I like you."

"I think I *really* like you."

"I should not like you this much so soon."

"No regrets."

"No regrets."

And suddenly, I felt the ache again.

Suddenly, I was alive.