

STUCK IN THE LIBRARY

SPRING 2019 LITERARY EDITION



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“YOU CAN’T USE UP CREATIVITY. THE MORE
YOU USE, THE MORE YOU HAVE.”
-MAYA ANGELOU



Getting Lost in the Zoom || Akmal Salimov

PROMPT 1

DISTANCE

PROMPT 2

GETTING LOST

PROMPT 3

SILENCE

PROMPT I

DISTANCE



STAINED PAGES

Hafsa Fatima

Your name still appears in dinner conversations
My family still talks about you
Right after, "Can you pass the salad"
And in between, "How's college dear"
And I'm the only one on the table
That swallows immediately
Food unchewed
My fingers wrapped around the end of the fork
Become a little whiter
But no one wastes time to break silence
It seems as if conversation flies at an even faster rate
As if you're an enzyme
And the activation energy is dinner conversations
And like an enzyme, the end product of you is in the same quantity as the beginning product
You're unfazed
Unconscious of us sitting at 5:45 PM talking about you
Unaware
You're probably sitting reading
One of those long books
That I only realized you finish
Once you write it on a piece of yellow paper
Fold it twice
And put it on my palm
"This one's a good one"
You used to joke about dinner conversations
About how they were forced
Ingenuine
Lacking sincerity like the rest of this generation
You'd only pipe in if god, politics, or philosophy was mentioned
Shoulders leaning in towards the food
Eyes moving at a rate of a thousand miles per second
Trying to argue
For the sake of arguing
Talking over everyone
Until my mother would shake her head
And laugh
At the way you came to eat not food
But thoughts and ideas
She would look at me
And say
"This one—

AFTER (LIFE)

Javeri Riveros

I reminisce of you
and the waves on which you embarked. Due
for a journey where I could not follow, far and askew.

Coerced by a vile vessel of sickness, you fled
although I did not know, or comprehend.
A young child stands to wonder, “Why did you have to go, then?”
I then recall, we possess a fickle heart that pumps, blood red
that is forever at the whims of time, misled.

I forever hold a memento in my pocket that reads:
“Hasta el viaje más largo empieza por un paso, amigo.”
I learn that one day, I too will make that journey, contigo.

When it is all said and done
your being is memorialized in the sun.

You return home, embodying the aura of this realm.
Earthly judgement will call for its rounds
and your soul, weighed at the helm,
whether it be a feather or a mound.

What song will your heart sing?
Will it drone meekly or pump a passionate ring?

Hope for the latter, making for an ever-summer
where those you leave on the shore
will look to the horizon whilst cast in the sky’s colors
Hoping to see the ones they adore, once more.

As I do.

NOTES ON BEING LOST BUT WANTING TO GET OUT

Jada Gordon

I want to journey through you
Journey past you
Journey with you
Without the reckoning
Bound to fall on my head
Like a thick head of hair
I can't seem to detangle
I guess I'll smile brightly
Knowing someday I'll have the keys
The everlasting wit
To withstand the weakness
And hold my broken hand in yours

These wires
These lacerations
Now lay like cursive upon my skin
Make up my heart
While repressed memories are the stuffing
This journey mourns what turned my blood cold
What I clung onto
Wandering romances
Bloodthirsty ambition
Our heads tilted back
Roaring in hilarious ecstasy
Faster, slower, and deeper into the city again

PURE MOTTOS

Hripsime Tumanyan

Let's take the staircase out,
Let's get rid of the roof,
Create a second floor,
At least we will have gas in the next year.
It will bring a bit of a sunnier new year.
Let's not sell the car anymore,
Antic and Orange,
Can we save it for VINTAGE?
Let's put lattice on those windows,
Let's change the old tableware,
Toaster, Blender, Mixer, and so on as well,
Wouldn't it be better if we had a second entry?
Let's paint those walls
With the color of my mood
Lately, my posters are fading so soon
I don't want walls white or somewhat naked,
Neither curtains gauzy, and, wrecked,
Nor do I like moist or high voice,
Plus, those windows brought too much noise,
I want the European ones,
The ones which no one had,
Yes-Yes, in white,
Let's organize this all,
In a beautiful way,
And, also one more thing,
Let's close the water,
Stop lying to each other,
Come, let's change,
In the ways that I've listed.

LOSING RHYTHM

Zaidie Mendoza

The daylight is fading

And I have a s

i

n

k

i

n

g

Feeling in my chest

What am I to do?

Because it's not monsters I fear

It's you

When your presence lurks at the back of my brain

Reminding me that our hearts used to beat as one

Yet now yours beats to your own drum

while I hazardously try to beat along.

UNMEASURED DISTANCE

p writings

The distance between you and I is a sky. A sky filled with tribulations of time. Time is measured with numbers. Emotions can't be measured with time. Emotions can only very briefly be measured with life. Life going in so many directions that even a compass will not be able to tell where North, East, South, and West are. Even a clock can't tell you how far and long you've traveled. This distance can't be measured by numbers. This distance is not physical. This distance is soul detaching from soul. This distance is mind detaching from mind. This distance allowing the bodies to subsequently follow in different directions.



Afternoon Haze || Joseph Austin

BRITTLE

Joseph Austin

The path forward is so surreal
This road ahead, it is distorted
And the road is gray and brittle
Made from the bones that it has claimed

Lifeless shapes still walk the path
Dark husks that all have lost their names
They traverse along a path of bones
Walking forward, an act that has been trained

The air is dry with particles of dust
Shards of those fallen are caught within my eyes
I cough and feel my lungs tear apart
The road is forked but I can't be one who cries

The shapes all walk
As they have walked for years
Eyes all forward, necks locked in place
Sharing pain and stress and fears
The destination is the same
And all pretend to hide the pain
But laugh together in their misery

Darkened shapes with crooked smiles
Tremble as they walk the path

Time is lost but all the while
Each bend produces its own wrath
The twists and turns are caked with blood
Leading those into a crooked spiral
And turn and turn the road still does
As such the shapes face each new trial

The bones go deep the closer we reach,
Some consumed but none turn back
Void of choice and void of speech
Fear facing failure and regret
We walk until our feet are bloody
Trained to walk, do not forget
The path of bones is not the only path
However, it is still the most direct

The road seems flat but still goes deep
Turned gravel by the countless souls that walk
Every now and then a shape will fall asleep
Out of sight and out of mind so none will talk

The quiet husks don't make a sound
Because sometimes we can see the end
But the road of bones goes up and down
And the destination is gone again

THE UNAMERICAN CARD

Mila P.H

Daunted by the law,
We were tricked and cheated.
Depleted by the lawless.

“Here is your card,” the lawyer said.
“Carry it with you all the time,
This card identifies you.”

Designed in red, white, and blue
With the Star Spangled Banner and Jefferson
Memorial
Imprinted behind my picture.
The most unamerican American card.

And they said to me, “This is the land of liberty!”
But as you’ll see,
you’ll too agree,
this is the land of the phony and unfree.

And you cannot go
And if you do,
don’t plan on coming back.
You’ll lose what you know,
your family, your home
And then you’ll be faced
With the counterattack.

My picture is faded. It’s black and white,
but boldly and bright like a corner-deli sign, it
proudly says
United States of America.

*This card, it says to me, “You are not from here.”
It spits and hisses, “You are an illegal immigrant. No,
you are an illegal alien.”*

Not even human.

“You are not from here.”

This card, they said it will protect me.
So, I keep it close
even when it spits and spews
and bruises me.

The days, the months and years go by
and those with the American card all yell and cry,
“Go back to your own country!”
and they, the people like me, are grabbed and thrown
across the border,
all alone and left to start over.

This Unamerican card,
with a life expectancy of two years,
this time, has been approved.
And I swear, each time,
I *always* pay my due.
Until one day they say:
“No more”,
and I will expire too.

IS IT OKAY?

Stephanie Calderon Vasquez

“It’s okay,” I said
Mom said, “it’s okay”
Dad said, “no way”
I don’t know what to do anymore
It’s nice and dark in here
The safe smell of detergent
Through the slits in the door, some rays of lights come in
Making me believe that there is some hope when I come out
Coming out?
That’s a thing?
But I like it here
No one knows...
It’s okay, I tell myself
This isn’t who I am
Maybe I can change
Yeah.
I’ll change.
Be the son that Dad wants
I’ll be him
But...
I’m not
I can’t
I’m sorry
A shadow blocks out the little light that comes in
“Who’s there?” I whisper
No answer.
The hole slowly opens
“Who’s there?” I say more forcefully
No answer.
I start to climb out.
Fear.
Excitement.
What’s out there?
“Hope. Acceptance.” A voice says
I’ll be okay.

TEN YEARS

Mrittika Deb

Your hair is so long—
You remind me of Rapunzel!
Who is Rapunzel?

How long have you been here?
Ten years is a long time not to know her.
But I do know, I know others.

Rapunzel is a girl with beautiful long hair.
I know Binodini, I know Chitrangada
I know Labanya, I know Bhumisuta!

Is this enough? Am I enough?
Rapunzel is a character from a fairy tale.
Ten years is a long time not to know Rapunzel.

But I do know, I know others.
Does knowing your world matter more than knowing mine?
Ten years is an awfully long time!

MORE THAN MILES

Majda Kajoshaj

when you think of distance
you think of how far apart
when you think of distance
you feel a deep ache inside your heart
when you think of distance
you notice a cold change in others
but distance is not only in miles

it is
in *time*
in *reality*
in *disconnection*
more than physical detachment
to something you once cherished
and this feeling never fades
with distance, that something
has now perished

however, it makes you realize
that distance is not only in miles
it is
in *silence*
in *loneliness*
in *me*
and even in *you*.

LITTLE DID HE KNOW

Noor Ahmad

Her soul is wilder than
Your thoughts

The sun hides behind the clouds
For her smile is brighter

She keeps her dark sorrows
Consumed in a black hole

She is stronger than her fears
More loving than her haters

She knows that she is fire
But little did he know



Beauty || Moshe Shalom

DISTANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Charlene Catalano

I tried keeping my distance from them but it was of no use. The poison from their words still found its way to my heart and injured me. It soon seeped into my brain, influencing the decisions I made. I felt manipulated and hurt, but this piece isn't about them. It's about you. Throughout all of this drama, you were there for me. Even though we were miles apart, you were a phone call away. I'm a mess yet you've never judged me for it. Whenever I'm around you, I can't help but smile. For you were and still are a ray of light in an ocean of grey clouds. I'm grateful to have met you and I cherish each and every moment that we have spent together. There were times when I thought that I would lose you and that shook me to the core. Yet you still stood by me. You have helped me to navigate through fields of pain and suffering. As I distanced myself from the negativity which surrounded me, I grew closer to you. At this point, you might be wondering who this piece is referring to. Honestly, this work isn't about one person in particular. It refers to my family and friends. The people who have continued to support me throughout the highs and lows of my life. While I have your attention, I would like to say that I am thankful for you as the reader. Thank you for taking the time out of your day to read my piece. It's funny how life works. Though we may not know each other due to circumstances like distance, we are all connected.

PROPHECY

Kali Norris

You leave, and the sun rises in the west.
Crashes into the sea. Makes it hiss and steam.
You leave, and I don't burn out, no,
I burn and burn and burn.

Pyromania can take a seat.
I have had my fill of swallowing fire -
risen like the crimson dawn,
traveled from icy depths to the burning world - for this.
This is the terror they call glory, the last winter.

This is not a creation myth.
This is rapture, this is
the end that was foretold,
and if you're going to put up a stake,
I swear to god I'm going to rule it.

FOR TARA, WHO LEFT FOR 10 DAYS

HT Dinowitz

The apple has to be turning brown. Not crisp, not new, or she won't eat it. "I'm no Eve," I can hear her say. She neither says such things, nor thinks them, but I hear them nonetheless. "I need no perfect fruit. Give me a fruit that has seen the world and I will eat it." There is no sin staining her generations to come. To me, she is god herself. Creator of her own flesh. Ever morphing, ever changing. Yet she still floats down the river with the rest of us. And though the river sweeps us along in its frothy haze, she floats on with the clarity granted by the forbidden fruit. "Yet I am no Eve," she keeps insisting. And I believe her. The fruit is bruised, her eyes are wide, and she speaks with a mouth that no god controls.

ROADS OF LIFE

Anna Matskin

The roads ahead
The road of peace
Is it in the distance?
The road to love
Is it far?
The road to the Garden of Eden
Could it be found here?
Here on Earth?
Is there a way to stop the distance
Between rich and poor?
Love, is it far?
...May the distance lessen and
May peace and love ensue forth...



The Rabbit Hole || Gabryjela Foltynski

YOU, ME, AND ICE CREAM: THE LETTER I CAN'T SEND

Raisa Alexis Santos

Dear You,

I was almost “your girl” and you were almost “my guy” and we swept through most of Downtown Brooklyn and the Lower East Side, two up-and-coming intellectual writers, watching the whole world pass by, all while eating ice cream. It wouldn’t matter the time or weather—it would still be negative ten degrees or we’d be rushing to catch the ferry, we’d always find time for our favorite treat.

I hate that since I’ve met you, I’ve turned to poetics because I was never one for waxing on; it can be likened to adding more and more artificial layers to fruit. And even if I were to shift back into prose, the writing style we’re both used to, it would still be some kind of story, but this one wouldn’t have a happy ending.

If it were, I’d make this out to be a fictional tale, where the girl meets the guy of her dreams, and the line blurs between “romantically” and “platonically.” It would be hard to deny that there wasn’t even the tiniest bit of something, especially when you held my hand so tightly as you rested your head against mine, and we withstood the delays of the subway at half past midnight. That memory, and every hug of ours, brought out the chemist in me, as I compared it to the enzyme lock and key model, when our bodies fit together so perfectly.

In the end, we’d always end up sharing a bowl of ice cream, no what genre our story was. You were in love with science fiction and dystopias, so I’ll throw in a few aliens and maybe even an apocalypse; the world ending in the midst of dessert would make everything that happened between us, good or bad, seem bittersweet.

But since this is real, I can’t leave out the days I was left on read, or the weeks I was ignored, wondering, waiting, if we were still friends. Even now I don’t know if this “thing” our cacophonous harmony, is on pause or at the end.

And it’s the lack of knowing that bothers me most. We still have so much left to do. I showed you the part of me that belonged at Flatbush, and you promised to find me more authentic Greek food. You were going to go to Comic Con with me, the Marko to my Prince Robot, two characters in our favorite sci-fi graphic novel, though their friendship resulted in tragic death. In the short time I knew you, you said I became your closest friend. One of my biggest regrets was not telling you the feeling was mutual, but there was honestly so much between us that went unsaid.

If only I could go back in time to fix this all—would you want to keep on trying, again and again? I told you I’m obsessed with time travel, and would do anything for my dearest family and friends.

But the truth is, I’ll miss you, dude. I can’t be highfalutin or beating around the bush. The writer in me will refrain from being overly verbose, since I spent most of my time excessively rhyming, even though I’m definitely no poet. I just wrote this, to tell you, in a letter I can never ever send to you, that I cared for you in that weird in-between limbo of friend and more than a friend, even though I see now that whatever we had is definitely at an end. I just hope, if I ever get around to building that time machine that can solve anything and everything, that you’ll save me a scoop of pistachio or vanilla oreo ice cream...

Wishing you all the best,

LESSONS FOR WHEN YOU REALIZE YOU MEANT NOTHING TO THEM

Shannon Addonizio

It will happen slowly
Then quickly
Then lightning fast
Overnight something will change
The surface will break
Something will crack
And you will run
Off that cliff
Arms stretched, no parachute
You

Will

Leave

And

You

Will

Miss them
When you hear their name
You will miss them
When you drive down those old streets
You will miss them
And when you hear through the
grapevine
The way that they talk about you
Their voices covered in thorns where flowers once
bloomed
You will cry
But you will quickly wipe your tears

Say that it doesn't matter
That things are better now
You are better now
And you do not want them to take that away from
you
Take you back to fake smiles
Car rides
Adventures
Blasting music
Everybody was in on the joke but you...

When you realize that you would have never
When you realize that you would have never
Been good enough for them
You find peace
It is a peace covered in glass shards
That you choke down in hopes of
Shredding their names out of your throat
When you realize that you
Meant nothing to them
You will take that first painful step
Over the hot coals and
You

Will

Start

To

Move on



*Lost, But Found ||
Ryan Serrano*

Bahiah Saleh

She lives on a hill, in a little boxed house.

She sees all that's down below, recognizes the pain and suffering.

The houses down below appear promising.

However, she understands things are not always as they appear.

They are all caught up in their own ways, not knowing that a house exists on the hill.

So she tries to head down to them and see what they have to offer.

But when you are so accustomed to having your head in the clouds, the ground feels rather suffocating.

An outsider, they don't care much for her ways.

So she climbs back up to her little boxed house on the hill.

Choosing comfort over conformity.



A.C.

Asif Ali

Her light blue eyes always did twinkle every time she showed off her million-dollar smile.

Her chubby cheeks inhabited deep dimples; deep enough for one to get sucked right into her heavenly world.

Her dirty blonde hair rested on her broad shoulders, strong enough to hold the weight of the entire universe.

She'd wear a desperate housewives t-shirt, or anything for that matter, that hugged her curves seamlessly.

Sitting next to her in Social Studies class felt almost unreal.

A foot away from her in Science class was the real deal.

Our elbows touching in Computer class; well, I didn't know what to feel.

I was a sturdy 4-foot kid, but this angelic creature made me seem even smaller as she towered over me with a good 3 ½ inches.

I remember being jealous when all the other boys talked to her because in my mind, it was only a matter of time before she was already mine.

She was a thief that stole my heart and the #2 Ticonderoga pencil I lent her for Art class.

At the time I didn't know what love was, but I had a hunch.

Love was my stomach turning every time we shared our snacks during lunch.

Yep, it was that simple.

She made school bearable and for the first time as a kid I didn't want summer to arrive.

The truth was, being around her made me feel alive.

She stepped one foot into my world while in hers I took a dive.

So, by the time the next school year came along, you can imagine how I was feeling seeing the seat she occupied in ELA class, empty.

I fell in love with her beauty, but all she left behind was her soul.

No, she didn't die, but a part of me did.

She left me and took along everything I had felt.

Because this was a new, unfamiliar pain, never had I dealt.

Like hot chocolate, it was my heart's turn to melt.

Before I knew it, she was long gone, slipping from my fingertips with each mile as she got closer to her new home, moving out of my heart.

ASTRAY

elma cekic

miles, i can count them
5,280 steps in one.
my feet, are not tired
for you,

i had been to the

sun

drip,

drip,

d

r

she is crying,
helpless.

i

p

what she loved has been lost.

years run past, we are running
out of time!
until breathing becomes breaths

and silence is permanently
riding down our throats.
every inch of you is

grazing earth ever so swiftly, further and further until no
more.

or are you?
next time we breathe again,
enjoy it.

for i am still catching my breath.

running.

miles, i lost count.
five thousand two hundred & eighty times two.
distance, we are no longer counting
for i have bloomed away from you.

MY DARK KNIGHT

Wyatt Nox

Good morning—

To these stinging rays of sunlight
Reminding my eyelids that
The worries of yesterday exist here too.
And that my tepid days
Are just an excuse of facing them.
So please blind someone else
Because I'm not ready
To stand in this hopeful world
Just yet.

But I've also known moments
When the silent screams in my head
Somehow lull me to sleep,
Telling me this place is safe
And that my shadows are
Hiding somewhere in the darkness as well.
For my microcosm of awaiting dreams,
It is about time we say—

Good night.

TIL DEATH DO US PART

Mic Braun

faltering in the weight of your absence, I wish
i could bleed happier words.
i become a pigeon ensnared in barbed wire, i am trapped in the liminal space
between the words of your false promises.
between the memories.
you hide in the shrouds of the dead youth.
salty tears sliding down mountains in memoriam... that's how i thrive.
prayers on my knees, sinking to the floor in bloody hallelujahs.
puddles i can sleep in facedown, no worry of death overtaking me.
no worry of anything overtaking me any longer, i am free and
i accept it all.
they come and they go and
they go and they drop.
your words were laced with addictive substances and i can't bear this
withdrawal.
explain your anger for the pain that it is
don't put your hands down others' pants just to rip out their soul,
don't you know it is up in their chest anyway?

or is it in their head, is it anything like your head, does it control your body and make it
slave to its desires, does the pain snap the wires, aren't you sick and tired?

from the face of the earth, from distances where my vision has no reach, look
her in the mouth, in the entrance to her torture chamber.
on the throne of her bowed upper lip leave your goodbye.

HOW FAR AWAY THE STARS ARE

Yuliya Vayner

When I grow up
I want to be an astronaut.
The planet mobile that hangs in my room, I
made myself. From glue and Styrofoam
and all the caked dry paints my brother buried
under the drawer piled high with law school prep books.
And when my hands do careful work like this, there is just gas inside my chest
like air held prisoner inside an unused can of bitter aerosol,
shaken in starstruck observation,
running a trial to become first—
to break the sound barrier.

When I grow up
I want to be an astronaut—
but Papa says I have no con-sep-shual-ization
of what I'm feeling. No equation for
the weight
the pressure and Mama says
that there is too much math involved
in wandering the stars.

When I grow up
I want to be an astronaut but
Mr. Fields says that the stars are far away as light years,
too far for me to even comprehend the distance
between the tail of the big Dipper and the head.
My guidance counselor says I will have to broaden my horizons
so that opportunities open up
like black holes.



WANDER, SEARCH, FIND

Ching Wah Wong

You used to be a little lively,
But now feel that you wander the world alone.
You may sit in silence and wish
That you were a pile of bones.

You think your talents are strange
And that your mind is dull.
You think your face is plain
And not beautiful.
Your existence is fading from the world, you feel.
You suffer and it's frustrating. How do you heal?

Your worries grow large.
You constantly doubt your abilities.
But realize your adversities are
The foundation for great possibilities.

You stumble and roam like a ghost throughout the night
Thinking you'll be lost for eternity.
But then the night sky pulls up the sun with all its might-
And there it is: serenity.

Day comes after night.
Dark becomes light.
Everything in nature comes in pairs,
Even great joy follows despair.

Make the most of your days,
We only have so much time.
Someday in life
You will reach your prime,
And you'll discover that your sorrow has paid off
When you no longer have to stay afloat on that log.
You'll look back on your perilous journey
And be thankful because it had made you sturdy.

One day the shadows and the grief and the strife
Will be tucked away in the corner.
After wandering around your entire life
Your darkest nights will be over.
Accept any happiness that comes your way,
And live to seize another day.

BEYOND THE CLOUDS

Saelly Alvarez

I dream
A dreamer with goals to exist
Somewhere wanting it all often gets lost
In shrouded darkness
Praying to cease the constant downfalls
With a sheet of taintable mist

I dream
Of an escape from the grainy air
Clutching my aura, as the voices inside my head
Constantly cry for help
Grasping for a way out
I scream to become free but the hold of the darkness pulls
Me back into its tainted sea.

I am now
Lost, scared, wanting to scream but no noise
Comes out of my mouth
Visions of despair, loneliness, betrayal are what I see.
I see the past, the abuse, blood,
Around me, the confusion, the screaming

The sea goes red, the visions in my head
Am I dreaming, am I alive, am I dead
Or am I just lost.
Scared, hopeless, the darkness.

It's all I see
Darkness.

THINGS I REMEMBER

Cindy Moo

Where did my keys go?
I search my pocket
And find some m&m's
The color of the dusk and tragic spells
Forbidding the rising sun from beaming
Well then.
I pop them into my mouth.
Yuck!
Lint.
I pull the grey mass from my teeth.

I walk out.
The breeze is nice!
What a beautiful day it is.
Lonely mountains in the distance
An enemy could be lingering around the corner.

Let's check who's there,
Peeking from the haunted realms behind the bush
I'll stay right here to face them all.
Hm just a car,
 a tree,
 a bike.

I hear a squirrel in song
Don't run away!
A flower.
Come back little one.

"Dad! We've been looking all over for you!"
Oh, that's sad. Who is Dad?
They run toward me and embrace me.
How wonderful to be hugged!

I still get lost inside my mind
Since the day she left
Home
And I survived

ATYPICALLY LOST

Diana A Harman

I'm thinking
abstracting the thoughts
The mania
the pain inside
my absent minded skull
A voice screaming in the distance
As it gets louder
and louder
The feelings of despair
continuously trap me
I am a bug getting squashed by something bigger than
No independence
no likes
no love
The feelings
I could never accomplish
What is wrong with me?
As I cross examine myself
for the 15th time
Again and again
The thought
The tape playing on repeat
You may think it's invisible
But to me it's realer than real
My head feels heavy
as if I dunked it
You will never feel
So I try to hurt
to numb the pain
to somewhat of a normal pattern
You will never feel
You will never live
You will always
Just be
Atypical

DEPERSONALIZATION

Kathleen Conlon

I stood in the waiting room of my psychiatrist's office, moving from side to side as if there were a song playing that only I could hear. Eventually, my name would be called, and I'd have to mosey on down to the end of the hall. You ever feel as if you're a contestant on a game show?

"Come on down."

Instead of "The Price is Right" it's more like, "Is This Medicine Right?" Whenever it comes time to tell him what's been going on, my thoughts take me off-track. Sometimes, my head just feels empty; blank. How do you explain something that is almost wordless? A few umm's and uhh's later, and I'm back on my old medication. Nice to see you again too, Lithium.

As I walked towards the pharmacy, my mind became entangled with stress, fear, overwhelming pressure, and this feeling that I've completely lost myself. The glaring of the streetlights, coupled with the honking of horns, caused me to get disoriented. The irritability, a side effect of mania, made my skin crawl. It took everything not to burst into tears. Finally, I reached my destination, scribbled my signature, then looked at the prescriptions, hoping this time, they'll actually help.

While waiting at the bus stop, I thought back to how the 99 cent store behind me used to be The Wiz. Flipping through the CDs was always exciting. There was nothing like peeling off the plastic cover, followed by opening up the sleeve to read all the lyrics. Memories of my childhood flooded my mind. Suddenly, the focus on my mental health took a backseat and I became engrossed in nostalgia.

Life was simpler then. Summers were spent cooling off by the fire hydrant, going to the pizzeria to get Gino's Italian Ices, attending block parties that weren't complete without dancing to "The Electric Slide" or "The Cotton Eyed Joe," and playing pretend with an old rotary phone could keep us entertained for hours. When the streetlights came on, you knew it was time to go home, but we were allowed to chill so long as we stayed on the stoop. I loved skateboarding, smelling the bread cook at Moretti's, and heading to Utica Park with a Big Burst or quarter drink. Sleepovers usually consisted of staying up all night, telling ghost stories, eating ice cream, and pretending we were the witches in the movie "The Craft." Light as a feather, stiff as a board. We believed we might be able to levitate if we tried hard enough.

While standing there, completely engaged in thought, I realized the bus wasn't showing up and that my Mom had called me. Talk about zoning out. Apparently, I time traveled back to the 90's! Had twenty minutes really passed by? No way. It was evident that walking home would be much faster than relying on public transportation, so I decided to start making my way down the avenue. Luckily, my Mom met me halfway. As we were talking, my mind was clouded by my pain once more. Taking a trip down memory lane was a bittersweet reprieve, but reality always bursts that bubble.

Tears welled up in my eyes.

"I don't know what's going on with me. I don't feel like myself...I feel so alone...so lost."

SPRACHGEFUHL

Peter Paul and Hindy

Getting lost in your eyes

And found in your ears

I hear you, I see you - I am you

And you are me

And we are all together

Cucucachoo



*Looking Through the Lens ||
Sharon John*

A TOUR OF MY GIRLFRIEND

Megan Torres

I'm standing in a darkness of green, distraught.
A maze ahead.
Decisions. Decisions.
The air is thick with confusion.
This choice will split me in two,
So I turn to my other half.

The sweetness fills my nostrils,
that darned shampoo.
Her hugs extra special after her showers.
Fine, fragrant, sometimes tangled

h
a
i
r

When it scrunches up after I make a stupid joke,
or when I tickle her pudgy, soft, most comfy,
perfectly imperfect belly,
my heart is full.
Her incredibly cute, highly stealable

o e
n s

Blocky eye enhancers frame her
chiseled face.
The prescriptions seldom hide her narrow,
but somehow still immense
windows to her soul.
They overflow with lust, compassion,
and suffocate me with kindness and hope.
Her assurance and tranquility radiate like
a ray of sunlight through the living room curtains.

Some would say, even her humble self,
that they are black,
like her leather sofa.
Yet to me, they hold a nuance,
way more significant than just that.
Oh, milk chocolate spheres, swallow me whole.
Devour me as M&Ms are by eager young children.
I could fall down and through a portal to safety in her

y e
E s

The full, soft guards at the gate of her mouth
Mesmerize me,
Every time I stop for a kiss, her
l i p s

If her lips are the sprinkles,
Then her dimples are the cherry on top.
Defects? Not in my eyes
It makes it all worth it.

S e
m i l

Thorns and vines in my path, but she?
She is the blade.
The edge that slices obstacles with ease.
When I stumble upon a labyrinth,
When I'm stuck between two doors,
When I choose the road not taken,
She teleports me back.
I'm not lost,
I am **t r a n s c e n d e n t .**

SHE'S ALREADY IN YOU

Anosha Arshad

Pause for a moment there.
Are your emotions still intact?
Feeling everything,
and nothing.
Winds of darkness tearing us apart,
and strips of light healing us temporarily.
What is the darkness that dwells in each and every blue veined heart?

Madness.
Is there a method to madness?

Lyrics of xans and ecstasy allow your unorganized thoughts to indulge.
You're fine, love.
You're only drowning in misery.

And Madness?
She's beautiful.
Denying variations of existentialism, you allow her to eat you.
Abolishing all reasons of your significance.
She picks at you with her long dirty fingernails, which are decorated with dirt.

And when she tastes you, there's a swarm of refreshment.
Something so lovely, like lavender, you taste so lovely.
She smells like flesh and lavender.

Let it consume you.
Let it consume you.
Let her consume you.
Take you.
Taste you.

And here lie the ramblings of a mad woman.
Mad, mad, mad.
We're all mad,
for being embedded in amber and being unable to escape.

THE LOST AND FOUND

Malory Jenens

The lost and found
A magical place where everything is lost
Nothing found

Something was found
And yet, still lost
A stranger stumbled upon me
And just put me away
Into the lost and found

I'm lost
Not found
I'm lost
But someone found me

I look around and see all the other lost things
Things I've lost
Things others have lost
Others who are lost

I don't want to be alone
But here surrounded by all these lost things
I'm so alone
I'm empty

The shadows follow the emptiness
Distinct sounds that remind me
Of where I am
And who I was

Smells take me back
To when I was someone
So distinct
Everyone knew my name

The thing about being here
It's quiet when mouths close
Warm when arms reach out
Safe

Loud when brains think
Cold when eyes pass judgement
Danger

It's dangerous here
And I need to go
I don't know where I belong
And if I'm not found soon
I'm afraid to turn into one of the lost objects
Eventually becoming nothing of worth
Just a memory

Then



Serenity || Ryan Serrano

SHADOWS DIE TWICE

Avery Lieberman

I wake up to a voice that requests my help.
My liege, my lord, my love is in danger.
I must protect him.
I am weak.
I feel trapped in this empty well with nothing but the distant
sounds of warfare to stir me from my slumber.
If only I had the strength to move up and out of this awful
place.
Alas, I have disconnected from my commander, and within
this well I shall remain.
My lord shall die and this war will end.
Perhaps that is for the best.

Those who are dead should stay dead.

LOST IN HER OWN UNIVERSE

Ana Khutsianidze

She created
Her own universe
In her head.
She lived in fantasies,
She drafted herself.
And if you asked her
What she was up to
She couldn't answer.
She was too busy
Being high up in the clouds.



Unearthly Hair || Adana Harris

PROMPT 3

SILENCE



BE STILL

ramsey

The dandelions wept at my feet,
With petals falling between the crevice of my toes.
The sweet aroma filling the air as the pollen makes its way
straight on through.
The warmth from the sun breathed softly on my skin
As my body was further caressed with dandelion kisses.
I suppurated at the beauty of the scene before me.
Everything was quiet, and still,
Save the subtle scent of the dandelion that spoke before the sun,
Leaving me to stand there in awe as I let the tears fall freely.
My tears now smelled of the sweet dandelion that washed the air.
Be still and know.
I felt it then.
In the quietness, most days I still feel it.
I am brought back to the moment in which the dandelions wept at my feet
Basking in the glory of the sun,
Forcing myself to silence my heart and just feel.

That was a good day.

SILENCE

Bethany Friedmann

Silence.

They say it grows louder every second
So you just plug your ears
And do your best to forget it.

Silence.

Sometimes we think it mends what we've already spoken
We believe it drowns out the cries
Of the hearts that we've broken.

Silence.

But no, it pounds against my eardrums
The beat of a new drum
That I can't take any longer.

Silence.

You think I don't know what you're saying
In your head when I'm not looking?
Well, I don't have to see or hear to know that
You're struggling.

Silence.

See, we're connected at the soul
And I can feel it in my bones
This wordlessness is purposeless
Because it hides nothing.

Silence.

How long must we scream?
The diadem of a dream that's long since gone under
Is all we have left to cry about
But you still don't see.

Silence.

The iron shards cut my throat
As they fly from my lungs and fade to notes
Of the most horrible melody I've ever heard
A melody that only you know.

Silence.

The remedy is as simple as a word
Just say the word and we can go on living
As if you never stopped telling me
When you were hurting.

LISTEN

Monia Begum

Can you hear it?
The sound of a heartbeat slowing down steadily
The sirens going on and off in the distance
And suddenly a shock of millions of bolts compressed to my chest
Cries in the dark and mumbled voices begin to fade
A gasp of breath
I think I'm alive!
But my eyes are still shut and my heart's not racing
I remember the things I thought I had forgotten
I start feeling a cold sensation
I'm freezing where I lay and I can't feel anything at all.
I heard someone say to me that they love me
I heard the voices come to me as if I was there in the very room

The last thing I heard was a beep that didn't stop.
Someone screamed of sadness and then I heard it.
Can you hear it?

Nothing.
I'm dead.

THE PATH FAR TRAVELED

Kendra Shiloh

How far should you run from your problems?
Should you chase them out to sea to drown,
then watch in awe as they wash up along shore?
Or perhaps gather lumber to start a fire
and burn your fears instead?
Maybe the answer lies at the top of a mountain;
a year-long trek simply for the breath of a god to knock it off?
Try traveling to the fields
search through millions of daffodils

Only to turn around and see your own footsteps
the broken sandcastles
the forest fires
the landslides
realizing the wreckage you created
is what you are running from.
When will it end?
When the landslides meet the fire
and burn the sand
only to be washed away by the ocean?

Perhaps we've been running in the wrong direction all along.



Sagar Lamichhane

YOUR HOME, NOT OURS

Lawra Gourgue

You make me feel out of place.
Even when I'm doing nothing, standing next to you, I am less.
I get judged for listening to your type of music,
Dressing like you,
I get told that I should just be me,
Authentic,
Unique,
But that is nearly impossible to do in a world that you own.
We are different,
In almost every aspect.
You live life to the fullest,
I do the same while trying to avoid bullets
That you present us with every now and then.
We dance in your shadows
We persevere and try our best to win the fight
But you constantly remind us that we don't have a chance... at least not for a while.

EMPTY GARDENS

Vicky Lee

she stared blankly at the
overgrown weeds
pebbled soil
twisted vines and
shriveled roots

another centimeter of moss
had grown on the shell shaped rocks
from yesterday

her fingers itched to
tend the milkweeds

she couldn't reach them
if she wanted to

her bones too soft to
turn her wheelchair away
from the dusty terracotta pots

and so she
soaked up the early dew
basked in the hazy warmth
yearned for the gentle wind

she settled her mind
no longer fussing about things and
let the grass grow taller

waiting for life
to flow through her veins again

ENDLESS VOICES

Ilana Iskhakova

Silence waters the thoughts that sprout from the darkest corners of my mind,
Questioning me,
Taunting me,
Worrying me.
It divides and duplicates—suddenly I am trapped in a house of mirrors.
My voice echoes, and frantically, I turn in each direction.
These voices are so loud—I'm suffocating!
Can they stop? They're frightening.
I realize that no one else can hear them.
I realize that they are paranoid.
I realize that they are mine.

DO YOU TRULY WISH FOR SILENCE?

Naveera Arif

Life is sound. Sound resonates around us, saturating the air and space in which we live, and the living beings surrounding us. Cities represent centers of life, inescapably loud at all hours of the day and night, never seeming to reach a point of peace. Even in places of silence, the shuffling of bodies, darting whispers, and movement of the objects around us remains. Within us, the beating of our hearts, the rushing of our blood, the loud thoughts screaming in our minds serve to remind us of our living, breathing bodies. We show proof of our life force through sound, our presence in reality.

Do you truly wish for silence? Like the dark, empty rooms of abandoned buildings, the silence is an abyss, devoid of life and devoid of sound, endless and deafening as to push one to madness. We have an inability to live without sound; it represents an omnipresent part of our lives whether that be the white noise of a café as we buy a cup of coffee, or the subtle and peaceful breathing of a deep slumber. Reaching true silence means reaching death.

A QUIET ROOM...

Shionodo

A quiet room
Is all the silence you need
All the things it contains
Kept there within the silence
Riding on the atmosphere
Until it hangs low
Like a heavy blanket
Weighed down on the shoulders of its occupants



Hyperfocal Distance || Minn Htun

PAIN OF HEART

Aviva Lee

There is a pain within my breast, near my Heart it lies.
'Tis this pain of parting, o're and o're again, which tries
To do me in when thou dost hear my begging thee to stay.
'Twill be the death of me soon, so soon I shall fade away.
But as thou hast yet little need for Love though True it be
Beneath the willow I shall rest at last, O beloved tree.
By the by, thou shalt return and see the stone they carved
Believe it when thou readest there, "For her Sweet, she starved."
'Twas not my body, but my Soul which could not be sustained
Till thy infrequent presence was renewed and then refrained.
Time's cruel pace no longer holds my Soul chained and captive now
This Silent Heart of mine, though once so pained, is well somehow.

THE INVASION

Gina Riveccio

Ten minutes ago, Silence kicked down the door with a deafening bang. Wearing his steel toed boots, he paraded around us, standing on each of our throats, and crushing us with a sinister smile.

Twelve minutes ago, Matthew Coavinses stood up to give his speech. Stone-faced in his crisp black suit, he commanded the entire room. He often gave lengthy, but compelling, speeches. He was Richard's right hand man, his best friend, his coworker of over 45 years—it made sense that he would be giving a speech, and, despite the circumstances, I'll admit I was a little excited to hear what he had to say. He tapped the microphone, cleared his throat, and uttered 8 simple words: "Richard Stevens was a traitor to this country."

It was easy to tell who had been a part of the deceit and who had been carefully left out. Those left out stood with their mouths agape or eyes wide. Those complicit stared at the floor, or the wall, or anywhere but the front of the room. The Director of the FBI was looking so intently at the ground I was surprised it didn't buckle under the pressure and confess to a murder it hadn't committed. The Secretary of Defense's stare could've bored a hole into the wall. I tried my best to compose myself. I had no idea Richard was a traitor. When President Paulsen was assassinated 6 months ago, there was an eerie feeling that it was done too well. That maybe it was an inside job. But the case quickly unraveled and *someone* had been put in jail. Now Coavinses, *President* Coavinses, was accusing the Director of the Secret Service of murder, and, based on the reactions of everyone in the room, it wasn't a lie and it certainly wasn't a secret.

There was no awkward coughing, smoothing down of skirts, or adjusting positions after Coavinses' speech. Nothing at all. After all, almost everyone in the room was a highly trained professional. Secret Service, FBI agents, military personnel, and, of course, family and friends—but most of them were decorated veterans as well. These people had trained for years to go undetected, to make no noise, to move in silence. But it wasn't our familiar silence that had crept in and settled over the room. This was different. This was Silence, and he *invaded*.

Coavinses got down from the podium and returned to his seat immediately after he spoke, as if he hadn't dropped a bomb on us. Although I suppose he only dropped a bomb on a few of us. Quite honestly, I would've been perfectly content in the silence if I weren't worried about how much longer I had to live. A secret like that, delivered by a man of his position, to a room of people like us, could only mean one thing. 99% of the people here already knew the truth. There were only a few of us who hadn't. It would be easy to cover up our deaths. I meant nothing in the grand scheme of things.

The door creaked open. Finally, noise. I let out a breath I didn't realize I was holding in. The funeral director peered into the room. "Excuse me, it is time to say your final goodbyes. It's 10:45 and Richard's burial is set to begin at 11:30. I'll give you a moment."

COMPLETE ABSENCE OF SOUND

Ben Shrem

The silence is a cloud,
Intangible, yet it holds something vital to a writer.
It's chilled, like the jagged tiles underfoot.
So electric, waiting for a thunder storm to begin.

Silence says a lot if you're listening,
This silence is a story every person has had the lack of hearing.
Its sound is the color of the desert night sky.

It's unsure glances or looking at an unfamiliar photograph.

Silence smells of dirt covered tombstones and leaf coated roads leading to branches of families and limbs of lovers.

It's taking a breath of a musty library that's been forgotten by the world,
Where termites feast and introverts travel to fictional lands in search of a better life.

Silence on my tongue tastes like looking at an empty fridge for the fifth time today.

Its parents are awkward moments and guilt.
It has no religion,
Because it's elevated above all.
Universal and immortal,
It was here long before us and will still be here far after we are gone.
Quiet is calm,
But silence is fatal.

THE WHISPERS OF THE NIGHT

Romel Martinez

I don't want to call it insomnia because I'm afraid of offending someone. As I toss and turn on my bed, I hear the silent whispers of the nocturnal conducting their persistent cadences in my ear. The name of this melody is called doubt. It's a song I'd rather not hear, preferring the silence of the night and the whirring of the fan, blowing against my bearded face. I prefer to tune my attentive ear to the creaking of the mattress and the electric humming of the decadent city in which I reside. My body tosses and turns, from left to right like a metronome. My unwilful wanderings reflecting the expanse of my past and my impending future. I see my future self; essentially a twenty-six-year-old observing a forty or fifty-year old man, perhaps a slightly self-confident man, acquainted with economic success. Perhaps this man is the head of his family or an obstinate professor who possesses numerous and distinguished degrees under his belt—lecturing his Literary class on the inner complexities of a Henry James novel. However, my present twenty-six-year-old self prefers to see his future counterpart as the master of his own literary career. I Imagine myself basking vicariously on a thriving literary career; novels, poems, plays, and short fiction celebrated by the mass of constant readers, all dedicated to my work. This ambitious thought only derails me into a realm of unrealized possibilities and a myriad of scenarios which ultimately distort my restive state. For my mind disturbs my body, restricting me from the sweet nectar of slumber. Then my mind veers towards Paige. The things she used to say to me. "Gordon, maybe you're taking life too seriously," she often told me, "the more you think of what's to come the more grim you get." I miss her now. Why did I neglect her? Why place a distance between us—barricading her with the ambition I cloaked myself with. Paige kept me rooted, anchored me to the simplicity of life. She made me realize how grateful I am for what I have now. And yet the whispers of the night charmed me for greater things, better things, which she was unable to fathom or desire. Perhaps I can't sleep because I miss her or miss what she signified in my life; the constant intimate companionship, the answer to my persistent misery and access to happiness. However, stifled as I was, however inclined I was towards my art, she spared me from the isolated world I submerged myself in. I often noted the uncertain timbre of her voice, whispery, high, reminding me of a child's voice, filled with compassion and innocence—concerned by my ambition. "I don't care for the future," she often pleaded, "I care about the now. I care for what's in front of me." Why did I neglect her? Why did I cast out a supportive woman who was the core of myself? Why did I allow my putrid silence to estrange her? And why do I ruminate about Paige now? I haven't seen nor spoken to her for months. Time gradually transformed her into a fading memory. Memory which has grown troublesome and disturbing by the whispers of the night.



DON'T LET ME LIVE IN SILENCE

Allina Khan

for all the men that think feminism is a joke
for all the men that let a woman's words go up in smoke

for all the women that hate on their own
you hold up patriarchy and then bitch and moan

for all the women that think equality exists
you weren't there when Malala Yousafzai was tryna to get this fixed

men at this job make me wanna quit
no one should have to live like this, shit

expected to be quiet or show some wit
wait it out, walk outside, ignore this shit

walk outside, get stared at like a piece of cake
night time—don't worry, just grab your mace

cross the street when I see a man's face
cross your fingers and try not to weep when you see the jury's face

no empathy, "Boys Will Be Boys," end of the case
"Grab Her By the Pussy," don't be a wussy

"No Means Yes,"
you turn every future caress into a painful mess

this is a reality
when you face the calamity

you'll realize that you've damned me.

CANDOR

Nawal B. Abdelqader

After nearly every experience
I am plagued with everything I should have said.
When the call becomes silent, distant
My tongue is tied, words resistant.

I start to believe it's a lack of courage
That maybe, deep down, I am terrified of rejection —
But sometimes, things are better left unsaid
And sometimes it's better to leave his message on read.

So I am quiet. He might tell me
“Where have you gone? You're being so silent!” and truly
It is not for pettiness; I am just lost in my head.
Neurons race across my brain, staticky, connecting, at a million miles
an hour they tread.

Jaden Smith once sang, “This love is not a game.
Can't you see I'm still all in?”
But in French we might call that “*L'esprit de l'escalier*”, staircase
wit
For all the things I should have told you in that moment but didn't.

And maybe one day it'll come rushing out
Like a flowing river in comparison to time
I would rather simply close up and tell you that everything is fine.
Even if it is not true, it is easy, easy to be so far away and yet so
close.

CLOWNING AROUND

Julia Andresakis

It was the first real day of spring, and the fountain was finally full of water, and everyone flocked to the park like migratory birds. Ryan approached an unassuming girl on a bench and pointed to the empty seat next to her, asking if could sit beside her. He could not speak because of an inflamed larynx, and maybe a thyroid problem too, though he didn't yet know for sure. She mistook this as him asking for money, a wordless stranger with an outstretched arm.

"All right," she said. "Prove that you deserve it."

The absence of a courteous, yes-or-no answer threw Ryan off for a single moment. He supposed he could walk away and find somewhere else to rest, but the place was swarming with life; nowhere else did he see an open space. He also considered sitting down despite the girl's request, but he had already asked, and he was still a gentleman, after all. Plus, Ryan did like to think he had a sense of humor.

His second instinct, right behind speaking, was to use his body to express something, to act as if he were, of all things, juggling three flaming torches. He looked and felt ridiculous, and he hoped that this was something the girl was willing to accept.

She fished through her backpack

"You're not too bad," she said, dropping a dollar-coin into his pail, on top of the sandwich he brought from home.

No, no, he wanted to say. You misunderstand. He tried to give back the coin, but she insisted it was for him, a modest price for amusing her.

And so when she left soon after, Ryan was still awkwardly grasping the stranger's money. In the midst of his confusion, a child tapped his leg and, when Ryan turned around, placed another dollar bill in the bucket. The kid's mother, Ryan saw, was smiling hopefully, looking back at her son, then to him, waiting for him to do something. Ryan crouched down and waved. The boy, excited for that same something, waved back.

He stood there, looking up at the silent man, as if to say, Come on, give me a show!

Ryan took a quick glance to survey the area and noticed a few others were watching. They all looked with curiosity or approval or disdain, eager to see how the encounter between the two would unfold. It was clear to Ryan, then, that they thought him to be a street performer. But he was not in a striped shirt, nor was he wearing a beret, nor was he wearing makeup the color of milk. Still, his innate showman felt a duty to meet his young admirer's expectations, and he ad-libbed a few tricks he had seen on television, or perhaps in a movie.

He pushed the sides of a box of his own creation; he was pulled by an imaginary rope; he shook the boy's hand and acted as though they were glued together until he pulled extra hard. The child laughed, which appeased the mother, who pitched in another dollar. The handful of others watching followed suit, throwing in a dollar, or five dollars, or even a twenty, and it was a futile effort for Ryan to tell them it was unnecessary, and that he wasn't a performer, and that they could hold onto their offerings.

He soon relented, sitting on a now-empty bench, his bucket of cash resting on his knees. He reasoned that there was no harm in letting them, and himself, believe that, for this time, he was an artist, an entertainer. He allowed them to pay him for his newly-found craft, figuring at least he could buy himself a decent lunch.

SILENCE.

Miss Malek

Dear _____,

Every time I spoke, you silenced me. Every time I yelled, you silenced me. Every time I screamed, you silenced me. Every time I cried, you silenced me. Every time I hurt, you silenced me.

You told me to shut up. You told me my opinions, my thoughts, didn't matter. You laughed at my emotions. Called me "dramatic." "Emotional." You told me it didn't concern me. "Go inside and mind your own business."

At an age when I was supposed to find myself and try to understand my emotions, you silenced me. I was supposed to turn to you for help, confide in you. You turned me away.

I started to keep it all within myself. I hid my tears, my scars, my pain. I tried to wear a mask,
But it got to be too much. I didn't understand my emotions. Happy, excited, upset, angry, frustrated, sad, depressed, numb.

You silenced me. I shut down. Broke. I listened to the yelling, screaming, cursing, the threats, but "it didn't concern me," so I remained silent. I laid still, listening. Dazed.

This silence, this numbness, caused more pain than dealing with my emotions and our problems. Each day felt like a year. I tried to sleep through it all. I tried to be quiet like I wasn't there. Yet I was. You were bothered by my "arrogance," "ill-manners," "uselessness."

I guess my silence was still too loud. I tried to end the silence but was afraid it would make too much noise after.
I started to embrace my silence from and towards you. I'm learning to be a free spirit. I'm learning to be happy and speak my heart.

You did your all to silence me. I thought it was to keep the peace. But it wasn't. It was to save you from your reality, from your responsibilities. You sacrificed me to take the fall for your failures.

It's okay. No. It's not. But I understand, and will always love you. But by the time you understand, all you'll get is my silence.

WHOSE SILENCE?

oriya abed

a people so silenced
so disregarded
they are believed not to exist.
only a part of the whole is recognized.
now tell me, is it because of the color of their skin?
or because of the associations made with their traditions?
silenced in their own home
to a point of being forgotten by the world.
silenced, however, by their own.
now tell me, who am i referring to?

SILENCE SPEAKS

Riana Kolari

And in the silence
I hear the sound of us laughing
I hear your voice
I hear my name
leak from your lips
I remember the three words
That you never had to say
because I knew
we did not have to speak
or have conversations
to communicate
It was all in your eyes
Everything I needed to know
Silence tells you more than words ever can
It told me when you were angry
It told me when you were excited
It told me when you were in love
It told me when you were sad
and one day
it even told me
when you no longer wanted what we had
now it's been so long
that every sound is fading
I can't remember your voice very well
even the silence is faint

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