

Loose Pages

Love, Grief and Becoming

Priyanshu



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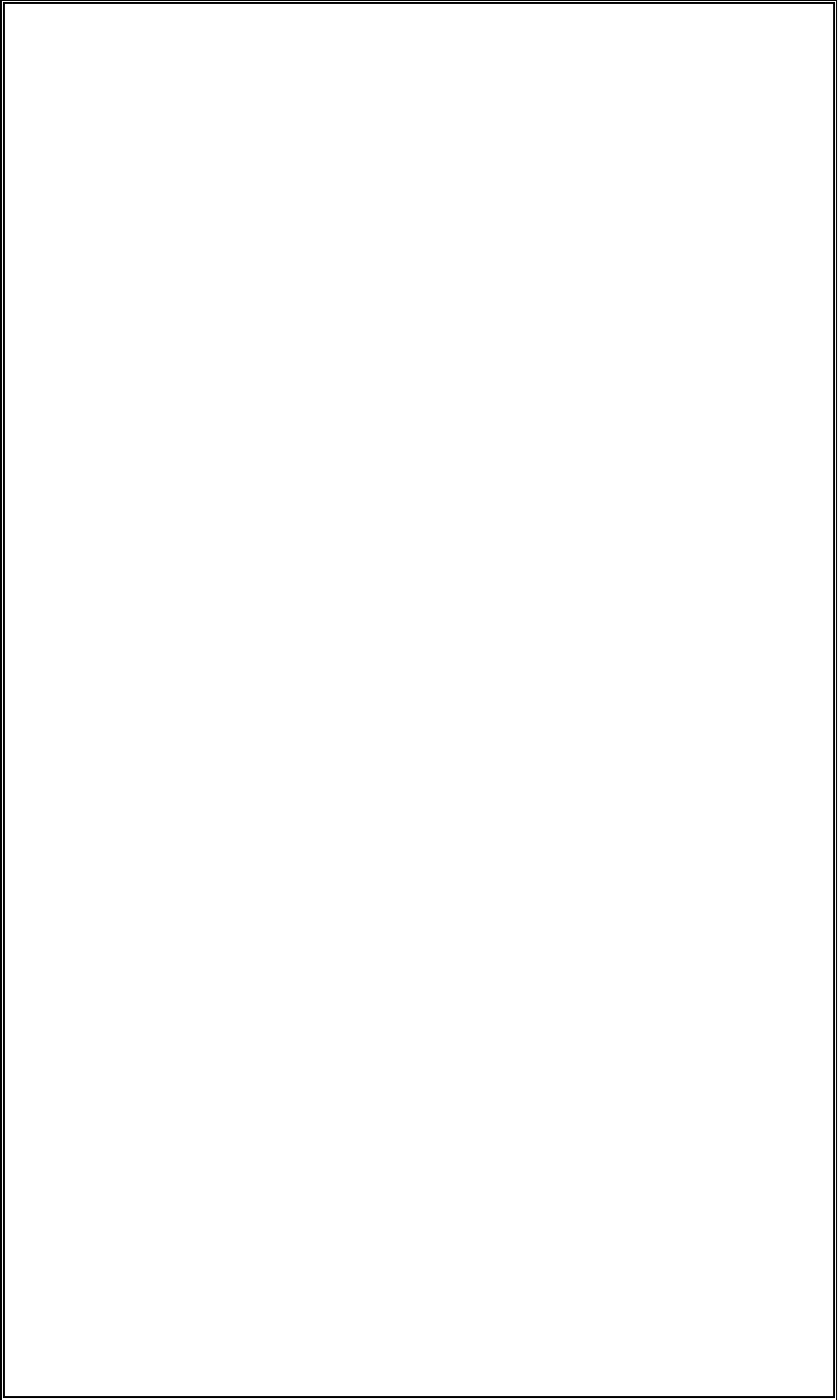
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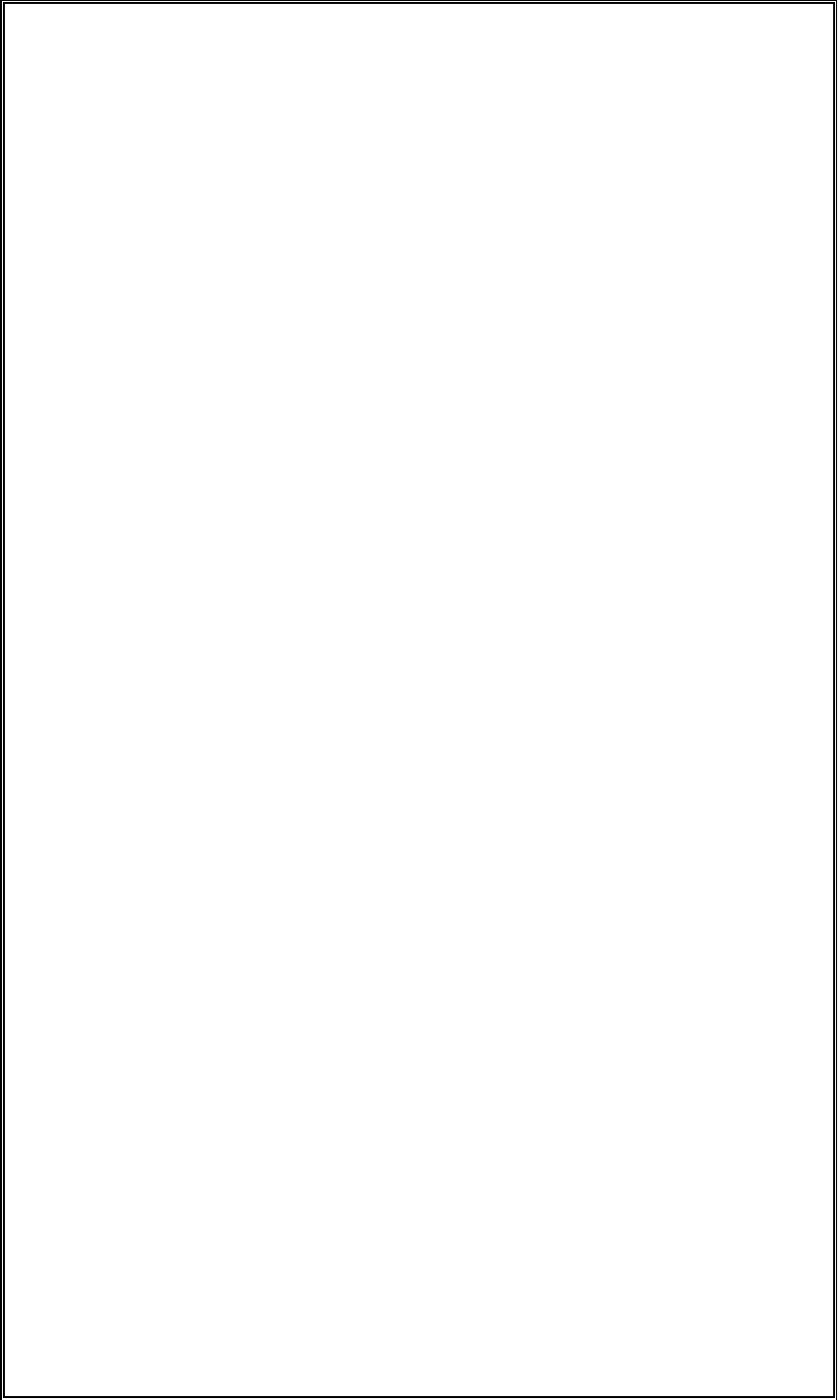
Dedication

To the nights I couldn't sleep,
and the thoughts that wouldn't let me.



Epigraph

Some thoughts are too small for a story
and too heavy to forget.



Acknowledgements

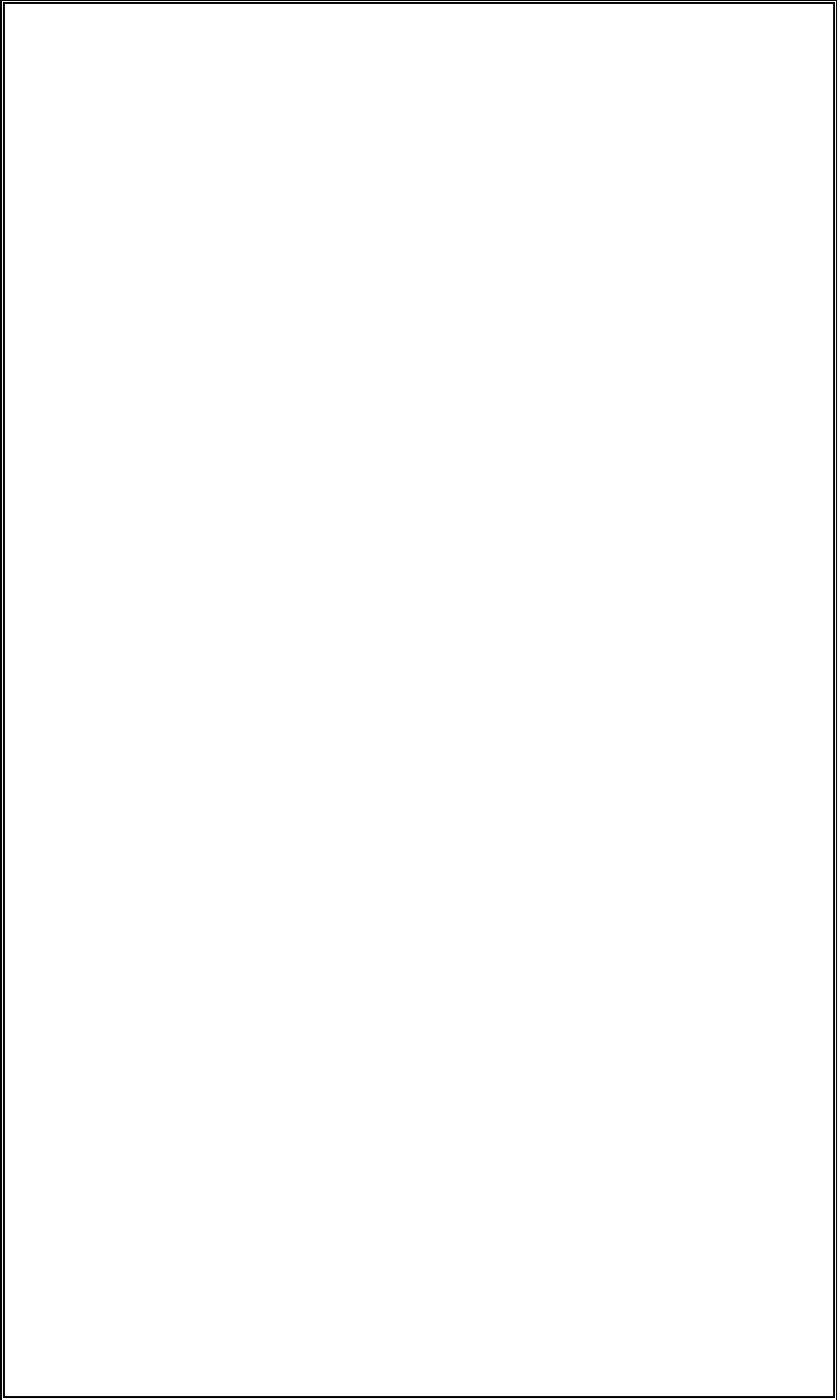
A special thank you to my proofreaders,

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Thank you for reading these pages before they were ready to be read, for catching the little things I missed, and for being honest when something didn't quite work.

More than the corrections, thank you for giving these words your time and patience. A book may begin with one person writing it, but it takes a few more people to help it become what it was meant to be.

I'm grateful you were part of these pages.



Preface

I think most of us carry things we never find a place for.
A sentence we never said.
A person we never quite got over.
A version of ourselves we quietly outgrew.
A memory that returns for no good reason.

They don't always become stories.
Sometimes, they are only a few lines written at two in the morning. A thought scribbled down before sleep could take it away. A feeling that made sense for five minutes and then didn't anymore.
That is where these poems came from.
Not from having things figured out, but from trying to understand them. Not from knowing what to say, but from writing until something felt a little less difficult to carry.

Some of these pages are about love.
Some are about grief.
Some are about growing up.
Some are about the strange, uncomfortable space between who we were and who we thought we'd become.

I don't expect every page to mean something to you.
But I hope, somewhere in these loose pages, you find a line that feels like it was waiting for you.
Either way, thank you for being here.
I hope you find a page worth keeping.

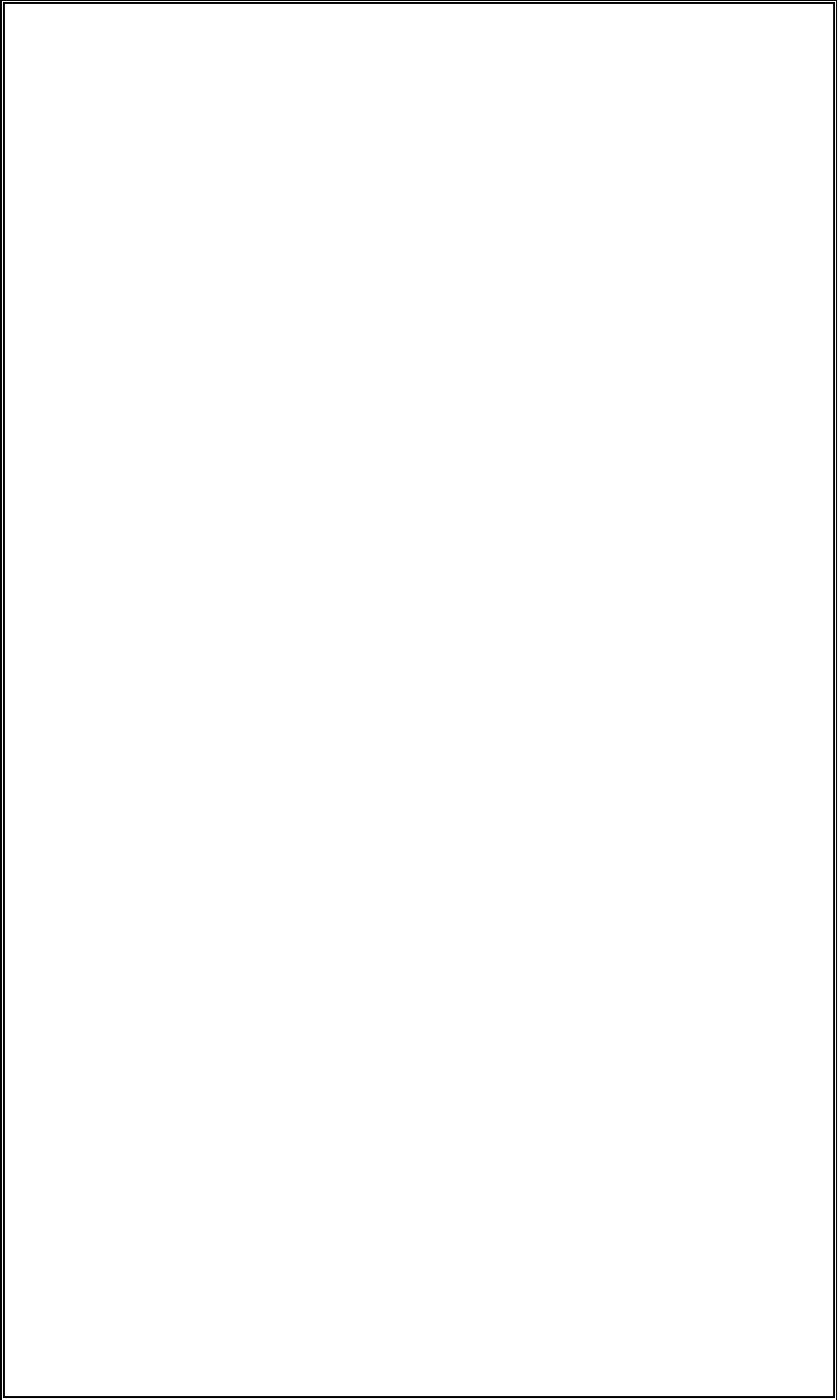


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I loved a flower so much...

I loved a flower so much,
I made it into colors.

I crushed it in my hands
until the world began to stain.

Now it lives on paper
in careless strokes,
in sunsets I cannot quite finish.

I loved a flower so much,
I turned it into a perfume.

Not to keep it alive,
but to keep it close.

Now it lingers on my skin,
a ghost of something
that once knew the sun.

I loved a flower so much,
I left it alone.

How do you seem to me...?

When you ask me, "How do I seem to you?"

The stars begin rehearsing
their reflections in your eye.
The moon forgets her silver script
and hangs speechless in the sky.

You move like poetry discovering legs,
Like a melody escaping the throat of a violin.
And the wind grows jealous
whenever it gets to touch your hair.

If beauty were a kingdom,
mirrors would kneel before you.
If love were a language,
your name would be its sweetest metaphor.

So how do you seem to me?
Like fire learning warmth from its own flame.
Like the Sun teaching gold how to shine.

You walk like music remembering its rhythm,
like grace escaping the pages of scripture
to live among ordinary people.

Your voice
soft as velvet rain
flowing like warm honey
wraps around my thoughts
like ivy climbing an old cathedral,
turning ruins into something sacred again.

You seem like autumn teaching leaves
how to fall beautifully,
like twilight persuading the sun
to linger a bit longer.

So how do you seem to me?
Like a wildflower growing through stone.
like magic pretending
to be human for a while.

The roses in the garden
straighten their backs when you pass,
and the rain against my window
suddenly sounds like applause.

If music had a heartbeat,
it would sound like your laughter.
If the moon could envy,
it would envy the way you light the dark
without even trying.

And if the world were ever to ask me
what beauty truly is,
I would point to you
You are perfect,
And everything around you
forgets how to be ordinary at times.

So How do you seem to me?
Like moonlight discovering it could breathe.
Like winter surrendering softly to spring.
Like eternity paused before me.

The Universe Keeps Copying You...

The universe
keeps copying you.

I don't blame it.
I would too.

Every spring
is another attempt.

The roses rehearse
what your smile already knows.
Blushing every April,
then folding in shame
when you bloom where they don't.

The dawn steals
a little of your warmth,
scattering gold
across the morning sky.
Yet every sunrise
seems unfinished
beside your light.

The moon
has spent centuries
perfecting your silence.

But every night
it hangs above us,
wondering
how you make quiet
look so beautiful.

Language
has spent centuries
inventing
new words
for beauty.
It still pauses
before your name.

Even the wind
tries carrying
your laughter,
threading it
through forests,
over rooftops,
into the hearts
of strangers.
People call it
a breeze.

I call it
another imitation.

The stars
scatter themselves,
like diamonds
across black velvet,
hoping distance
might disguise
their resemblance.

It never does.

The universe
has mistaken
imitation
for creation
since the dawn of time.

Everything beautiful
is only
its latest attempt
to become
a little more
like you.

And if tomorrow
the flowers bloomed brighter,
the heavens gathered
every star they owned,
and every dawn
learned a richer gold

I would still
choose
the quiet miracle
of your hand
in mine.

For
eternity
has been trying
to write your name
across creation,

I
alone
have the privilege
of whispering it.

The first sip...

Your umbrella
was never large enough.

We always reached home
with one shoulder wet
and both of us laughing.

The rain
never seemed to mind.
It kept finding
new excuses
to push us
a little closer.

You would complain
that your shoes
were ruined.
Then splash
through every puddle
you could find.

The streets
learned your laughter
before they learned
your name.

We never hurried.

The tea stall
would be there,
and the old man
already reaching
for two cups
before we asked.

Steam
would gather between us,
pretending
to be shy.

You always stole
the first sip
from my cup,
claiming
it somehow
tasted better.

It always did.

You liked
walking
along the edge
of the road,

where the rainwater
hurried home.

You liked
watching raindrops
race down the window.

You'd always chose
the smallest one.

You said,

"Everyone cheers
for the first one.
Someone should
believe
in the little one."

I laughed.

You frowned,

pretending
to be offended.

Then laughed harder
than I did.

When the rain
grew quieter,

we'd walk again.

You always
walked on the inside
of the road.

I don't remember
which one of us
started that.

I only remember

that somewhere
along the years,
it became
the way
we walked.

The rain's stopped now.

Across the room,
I looked at you.
Your silver hair borrowing
the twilight,
your hands curled around
a warm cup of tea.

The first sip is still yours.

It always did
taste better
that way.

The first kiss...

The first time you kissed me
I forgot what I was about to say.

Which was embarrassing,
because I had rehearsed it
all afternoon.

Something clever,
something that would make you laugh,
something that would let me pretend
I wasn't terrified.

Instead,
you leaned closer
and the whole sentence
fell out of my head.

You smiled.
I looked away.

Then you asked,
"Was that okay?"

I said,
"Yeah."

You frowned asking
“Just yeah?”

So I kissed you back.

And there it was
the beginning of a habit
I had no intention
of breaking.

You’d kiss me
and I’d find some excuse
to stay.

Soon,
we were collecting minutes
like they were coins.

Five more before you go,
ten more before goodnight,
one more kiss
because this one
didn’t feel quite right.

And somewhere in all that
I stopped counting.

Stopped pretending
I was only staying
for one more.

You asked me once
when I knew.

I wanted to say
it was the first kiss.

But that wasn't true.
I fell in love long before
I ever knew

I Blame You...

I blame you for the smile I wear,
For catching me while unaware,
For making ordinary days
Feel strangely brighter in your gaze.

I blame you for the songs I play,
They somehow sound like you these days.
I blame you for my restless sleep,
For thoughts of you that wander deep.

I blame you for the words I lose,
Whenever I am close to you.
I plan the clever things to say,
Then see your smile and lose my way.
I blame you for my phone's bright glow,
For checking it more than I should.
I blame you for the little thrill
That comes whenever you text me still.
I blame you for the things I say,
The silly jokes that slip away,
For losing every clever line
The moment that your hand finds mine.

I blame you for the rain I like,
For evening walks and midnight rides,
I blame you for the skies of blue,
For making them remind me of you.

I blame you for this foolish heart,
For making distance feel too far,
For turning 'maybe' into 'when,'
And making me fall hard again.

So if I'm smiling for no reason,
If I've forgotten every season,
If every road I take leads through
A thought, a song, a dream of you,
Then I confess, the case is clear,
I've been completely compromised here.

And though I know whom I should blame,
I'll gladly do it all the same.
So yes, I'll blame you, that is fair,
For being lovely, being there.
For turning ordinary into new,
For making me fall in love with you.

And if this heart should lose its way,
And choose you still, day after day,
I'll raise my hands and say, "It's true..."
You stole my sleep, you stole my time,
You filled my days and stayed on my mind

So if you ask me who's to blame,
I'll gladly answer just the same.

Darling!

I blame you.

I like you in the boring hours...

I like you
in the boring hours.

When you're tired
and don't bother
fixing your hair.

When you sit beside me
with your phone in your hand
and forget
I'm there.

I like the way
you become quieter
when the day has taken
enough from you.

The little sigh
before you answer.

The way you stare
at nothing
when you're thinking.

I like you
when you're not trying
to be beautiful.

Especially then.

When you're eating
something you said
you weren't hungry for.

When you complain
about the same thing
for the fourth time.

When you laugh
at something stupid
and look around
as if you need someone
to blame for it.

I think
that's when I love you most.

The moments that
no one photographs.

The ones
you don't think
are worth remembering.

I do.

I think
I'd remember you
like this

half tired,
half laughing,
asking me
what I'm staring at.

And me
lying,
“Nothing.”

Are you sure of me...?

Are you sure of me?

Of these hands
that trembles at your door,
Of this heart
that has never quite learned
how to arrive without hesitation?

Are you sure of me,
when I have nothing to offer
except my staying
except the stubborn way
I choose you again and again and again?

I ask because love
is a terrifying thing to hold.

Because one day
you will see all of me.

The corners I keep unlit,
My stubborn pride,
My unnecessary quiet.
The pauses between my words,
The grief I wear beneath my smile.

And still I hope
you'll take my face in your hands
and answer softly,

"I know.

I know the ways you shrink yourself
before anyone else can,
how you brace for departures
in rooms no one is trying' to leave.

I know that being loved
still feels to you
like some borrowed grace.

And I am still here."

So tell me,
when the lights are gone
and all that remains is who I truly am,

Are you sure of me?

Almost...

There's a version of me,
you'll never meet.

He exists somewhere,
between my silence and my heartbeat.
A man unafraid,
to ruin everything with honesty.

I envy him.

Coz' here, in this life,
I've become an expert
at almos*t*s.

Almost touching your hand.
Almost saying stay.
Almost confessing that every road I take,
somehow, bends back towards you.

But almost is a lonely country.
And I've lived there too long.

I've carried your name,
like a candle cupped against a storm,
careful, trembling
afraid the wind would discover it,
before you did.

There are a thousand things,
my heart rehearses at night.
How your silence still softens me,
How every crowded room,
becomes merely the distance between us.
How even the moon seems exhausted
from following you through my thoughts.

But when you stand before me,
the world grows too mortal for confession.

My tongue becomes
an abandoned cathedral
full of echoes,
full of prayers,
that never arrive.

You'll never see
the funerals I held in private.
The burial of every confession,
every trembling hope,
every future that reached towards you
and found nothing to hold.

Oh! I tried, once.

God! I tried.

But, life is cruel in ordinary ways.
And fear is a patient executioner.
It stood behind my ribs for years,
sharpening silence into a blade,
until every "I love you"
bled to death before reaching my mouth.

There are nights
I imagine another version of us.
Not better people,
just braver ones.

In that distant life
I reach for your hand without trembling.
I speak before time steals the chance.
You turn towards me
as though you'd been waiting too.

There, I won't hesitate.
There, your name will leave my lips
without breaking them.

But not here.
Not now.

In this lifetime,
I remain a man standing at the shore,
watching his love drift farther into the fog,
with pockets full of unsent letters
and a heart
that arrived too early
or too late.

I just wanna feel like...

I just wanna feel like I deserve your name,
That loving you isn't some borrowed flame.
That when you smile and call me yours,
I don't stand there counting all my flaws.

I just wanna feel like I belong,
Like I've been here with you all along.
Not just a chapter left behind,
But someone written in your mind.

For I've known love as something brief,
A careful practice dressed as grief.
I've learned to brace,
To hold my breath,
Expecting endings in each step.

Yet you look at me without reserve,
As though I'm not that hard to love.
As though my heart, with all its scars,
Is not too heavy for your arms.

So if I ask, "Are you sure of me?"
It's not your love I fail to see.
I'm only learning', all along,
How to believe that I belong.

I still reach for you all the same,
With shaking hands and quiet shame.
Afraid that I'll be proven wrong.

I just wanna feel like I deserve you,
I just wanna feel like I belong.

My only wish is...

My only wish is,

Outlive me.

Not because
I love life any less,
or death any more.

But because
I have watched your eyes
fill over the smallest wounds.

I know the way
you pretend to be strong
until no one is looking.

I know
you would carry my absence
like a punishment,
apologizing to an empty room
for laughing too loudly,
for sleeping too well,
for surviving me.

And I could never ask that of you.
So let the grief be mine.

Let me become
the man who reaches
for your side of the bed
and finds only silence.

Let me be the one
who says your name
to walls that no longer answer.

Let me spend
the rest of my days
missing you.

I'd rather
carry your absence
than become yours.

I ask you to outlive me,
while beggin God
never to let you.

Oh!
Love has made
a hypocrite out of me,

My only lie is...

My only lie is,

I moved on.

The rest I swear
upon my name,
has all been true.

I sleep.

I eat.

I laugh,
when laughter's due.

I answer,
"I'm doing well."

And somehow,
that's true too.

There are nights
when your name
returns like rain
to a house
that never stopped leaking'.

And I remember
how ordinary happiness was
when it still had your voice.

Your ghost still knows my door.
It never knocks,
It doesn't have to anymore.
Some evenings I mistake the wind,
for footsteps in the hall.
Some mornings I wake convinced,
you never left at all.

It's strange,
how a life
can keep breathing long
after it forgets how to live.

People think
missing someone
is loud.

It isn't.

It's folding
your name
back into your mouth
because no one
wants to hear it
again.

It's seein' your favorite color
on someone else's shirt
and ruining
an otherwise ordinary day.

It's reaching
for your number
not to call
just to remember

where it used to be.

Time did not heal.

It just made a deal.

It dulled the blade,
but kept the scar.
it took your voice,
and left me
arguing with the silence.

I've learned the art
of looking whole,
while sweeping pieces of my heart
where no one goes.

So when they ask,
"Do you still miss her?"

I laugh.

I shrug.

I look away.

What else am I supposed to say?
That every life I try to start
still ends where you begin?
That love can lose without letting go,
and grief can learn to grin?

My only lie is,

I moved on.

Yours...

was that you'd come back.

The Moon Owes Me Nothing...

The moon
owes me nothing.

It never promised
to stay full.

Never said
its light
was meant
for me.

Still,

Every night

I kept lifting
my face
towards it,

mistaking
presence
for devotion.

Perhaps
that was always
my mistake.

Today

It crossed
the same sky

oblivious

whether
I was there
or not.

Tomorrow

it will rise
without remembering
I was here.

Tomorrow never came ...

Tomorrow
always
let itself in.

I'd wake
to coffee,

rain
caught in its hair,

and the smell
of toast.

"Later," it would whisper.
"We have time."

So I believed it.

It always stole
my blanket
and the warm side
of the bed.

It left lipstick
on coffee cups,
and laughed
before finishing
its own jokes.

I mistook
those habits
for forever.

Then

one morning,

Today arrived
alone.

The house
unlocked itself
for morning.
The coffee
grew cold
out of habit.

The chair
across from mine
continued
pretending.

I waited.

Morning became afternoon.
The porch light
burned itself tired.

Tomorrow never came.

People still say,
“there’ll be another tomorrow.”

I let them.
They’ve never heard
her laugh.

Always...

There are some goodbyes
that do not happen once.

They happen
in the quietest moments,
when the world has gone still
and there is no one around
to remind me
that you are gone.

They happen
in the morning,
when I wake from a dream
where you were still here,
and for one beautiful second,
I forget.

Then, I remember...

They happen
in the middle of a song
I once thought belonged to us.

In places we never knew
would become memories.

In all the little things
I never knew I would miss
until you were no longer there.

I wonder sometimes
if you ever feel it.

Some strange ache
without a name.

A sudden silence
in a crowded room.

A longing
that arrives without a memory.

Perhaps that is me,
somewhere beyond your reach,
still finding my way
towards you.

Perhaps somewhere,
you are still finding your way
towards me.

And if there is another life,
another sky,
another beginning
hidden beyond this one,

find me there.

I will know you
by the way my heart beats
before my eyes can see you.

And if
heavens have truly forsaken me,
if there is no tomorrow,
and there are no second chances,

then let this be enough.

I loved you.

I love you.

And
I will love you,

always.

After Her...

I never learned

how to walk
in the dark.

When she left,
the night
didn't become darker.

It simply
stopped opening.

Every step
found another wall.

Every road
forgot
it was a road.

So
if you see me
running,
don't mistake it
for hope.

I'll chase after her,
because
I can only move forward
where her light
parts the darkness.

I can't change...

I try and I try and I try,
I can't.
I can't change my ways.

My hands keep reaching,
For the same mistakes.
Like they belong to me,
Like I was made this way.

I bite my tongue,
Till it bleeds,
Quite.
Swallow words that burn down,
My insides.

I try I try and I try,
I can't.
I can't change ...

Like there's a crack running through me,
From somewhere,
I can't remember.

Like I came out misfired,
Something essential missing.

Like I was built with a fault line,
Pressure building under my skin.

I know exactly how this ends,
I keep ruining the same things.

I'm so fucking tired of myself,
Of this skin,
I can't crawl out of.

These voices in my head,
That won't shut up.
Telling me,
I'll never be different,
That I'll keep fucking things up.

I try and I try and I try,
I can't.
I can't change.
I can't change my...

I can't sleep...

Sleep became a rumor,
The Dark a whiteboard.
There I wrote my fears,
with a marker,
And called it a nightmare.

Somewhere, A door,
Keeps opening into another door,
Opening into a mirror,
Of me, standing there,
Trying to find the exit,
Before I disappear.

And here's the fucking joke,
Overthinking feels like I care,
Like being thorough,
And telling me,
This time for sure,
I swear.

But the mind that won't stop turning
Like a candle, always burning.
Not bright enough to the light the room,
Yet so fucking hungry,
Always ready to consume.

I can't sleep.

Defeated...

I wore ambition,
Like a bright coat in winter,
Stitched with Impossible Dreams.

And walked into the world,
Of certain,
The Mountains would kneel,
Before me.

Alas! The world is older than certainty.

It has worn down,
The bravest of Men,
To Dust,
Even the Wind has no memory of.

I found my hands,
Weren't made for a Crown.
But only for carrying,
What could not be kept.

The Last Good Version of Me...

I remember him.

Not clearly.

Just enough
to know
he'd hate
what I became.

He had plans.

God,
he had plans.

He kept them
in cheap notebooks
and spoke about them
like promises.

He thought
being tired
meant he was working
towards something.

He was wrong.

Years later,
I found one of those notebooks
under a pile of things
I had stopped using.

His handwriting
was still hopeful.

Mine
looked like an apology.

There were names
of cities he'd visit,
people he'd become,
things he'd build.

Most of them
had never heard
I existed.

I wanted to tell him
what happened.
I couldn't.

There was nothing
to tell.
The notebook
went back
under the pile.

I haven't opened it since.

My Shadow Is Tired...

My shadow
has begun
to arrive
a little later.

It lingers
beneath old trees,
pretending
to admire the leaves,

when really
it's only
catching
its breath.

It no longer
follows me
into houses
that remember me.

It just waits
by the gate,
with hands
in its pockets,

watching me
walk inside
alone.

Some evenings,
I have to
come back for it.

I find it
curled beside
a cracked wall

it's face
on it's knees.

its shoulders
dusted
with sunset.

"I can't,"
it says.

Not today.

Not there.

I never knew
darkness
could grow
so weary

from carrying
the shape
of someone

who never
learned
how to put
their past down.

Today isn't so bad...

As long as there's
a pack of cigs
in my pocket,
today isn't so bad.

I woke up
with yesterday
still in my mouth.

The room smelled
like old clothes,
cold ash,
and something
that had died quietly.

My phone was full
of names I couldn't bear
to disappoint again.

So I didn't answer.

The mirror caught me
before I could look away.

I shaved this morning.
I looked older
than I ever thought
I would.

There was blood
on the bathroom sink.

I don't remember
cutting myself.

Probably just the razor.

Probably.

By noon,
the city was bright enough
to make everyone look alive.

People carried groceries
and kissed at traffic lights.
They laughed
like tomorrow was guaranteed.

I stood there
with a cigarette burning
between my fingers.

There is something cruel
about being alive,

the body keeps going
long after the mind
has stopped believing
in where it's going.

Maybe that's
what frightens me.

Waking up one morning
and realizing
I've spent all these years
becoming someone
I don't recognize.

By evening,
four cigs left.

That's alright.

Four is still a number
that hasn't reached zero.

Man Enough...

A man
should leave
fingerprints
on the world.

Mine
keep washing off.

Every year
I throw away
another notebook
full of plans.

The bin
has read
more of my ambitions
than anyone.

The mirrors
stopped asking
who I was.

Now
they only ask
what happened.

My father
grew old
waiting
for my name
to mean something.

The men I grew up with
wear exhaustion
like medals.

Mortgages.
Wedding rings.
Tiny shoes
left beside
their front doors.

I carry
receipts,
empty cigarette packs,
and conversations
about what I was
going to do.

My hands
know every excuse.

Never the work
that mattered.

Sometimes,

I stand
outside hardware stores
looking at tools
I'll never need.

A man
should know
how to build.

I became
exceptionally good
at demolition.

One day,
I'll die,

and they'll say
I had potential
with the tenderness
reserved
for tragedies
that no longer
need saving.

They'll lower
my unfinished life
into the ground.

At last,
my weight
will help
hold something up.

I watered a grave...

For years,

I watered a grave
and called it,
a garden.

I memorized
the shape of loss
until it looked like,
home.

I sat beside an extinguished fire
holding my hands to the ash
and called the absence of warmth,
patience.

Every morning
I woke to the same unfinished goodbye.

Every night
I tucked it back into bed.

The seasons changed.
The trees shed themselves.
The sky learned new colors.

I remained,
exactly where the leaving left me.
People mistook it for loyalty.
I let them.
It sounded better
than admitting
I had forgotten how to move.

I had become
a ghost with a heartbeat.
A body performing its duties.
A face appearing in photographs
to provide evidence
that a life was taking place.

I called survival living,
because the alternative
was too embarrassing,

To admit,
that I had spent years
guarding a corpse
and calling the vigil
a future.

Sometimes I still return.
Not because I miss it or believe it.

But because grief,
left alone long enough,
stops feeling like a wound.
It becomes architecture.

And there are days
I walk through the ruins of myself
recognizing every room.

I watered a grave
and called it a garden.
Then the garden died.
And for a moment,

I mourned it.

Before realizing
I had been burying myself there
the entire time.

First Choice...

I was never the first choice.

Not the name that's called
without hesitation.

Not the seat someone saved,
or the number they dialed
when something good happened.

I was the extra chair
pulled out at the last minute.

The, "sure, why not?"
The, "we have room for one more."

The person invited
after the list ran out of names.

I learned to live in the spaces
left by other people.

To wait.

To understand that silence meant
someone else had been asked first.

That friendship could feel like
standing outside a photograph,
smiling anyway.

I know what it is
to watch excitement fade
when you walk into a room.

To hear,
“Everyone’s coming!”
and then,
“Oh, and him too.”

I became easy to carry.
Easy to forget.

A placeholder.
A plus one
without the one.

And the strangest part is

after enough years,
you stop expecting to be chosen.

You stop reaching first.
Stop calling.
Stop asking.

You begin to thank people
for scraps of affection
they hand out by accident.

As if being wanted eventually
is the same thing
as being wanted first.

But some nights,
when the world is quiet enough,

I still wonder
what it must feel like,

to be the person
someone looks for immediately.

The name that's uttered naturally.

The friend they'd choose
even if every other friend was free.

The message they were hoping for.

The first choice.

Not because there was room left.

Not because the numbers were uneven.

Not because everyone else said no.

Just because,
for once,

Someone thought of me first.

When I Drink...

People think
the bottle loosens tongues.

Mine
has always known better.

It pours
until every sentence
drowns
before reaching the shoreline
of my lips.

Then,

Silence arrives.

Not as an absence,
but as an old landlord
coming to collect
what has always belonged to him.

He straightens the chairs.

Dims the lights.

Unbuttons the noise
from my chest

and folds it away
like a suit
I was never comfortable wearing.

The room mistakes him
for loneliness.

It has never learned
that loneliness
knocks.

Silence
already owns the house.

He is patient.

Even the saints
would envy
the patience
with which
he waits beside me.

He has watched
every apology
die of old age.

Every confession

turn to stone
before it reached daylight.

He knows
some mouths
are cemeteries
pretending to be doors.

Everyone drinks
to let something out.

I drink
to hear
what refuses
to leave.

The whisky
doesn't burn.

It baptizes.

And I have knelt
before this amber communion
more faithfully
than any altar.

The glass
keeps offering absolution.

One sip at a time,

it washes away
every lie
I tell the world,

until only Silence remains,

standing beside me,
wearing my face
so perfectly

that even the mirror
can't tell us apart.

*Oh, I've been dead for
quite some time...*

Oh, I've been dead for quite some time.

Now,
I'm just rotting away.

I wake up still,
I brush my teeth,
And show up to work,
To pay my bills.

I nod at conversations,
I laugh half a second late.
I say "yeah,"
like it still fucking matters.

I answer emails,
And sit through meetings,
Write things down,
I won't remember.

I stand in elevators,
watching the numbers change
and the slow shifting of the clock's hands.
I remember when things mattered.

Back then,
When joy was allowed.
Wasn't anything grand,
But she would sit beside me, on the ground.

Even anger had weight then,
It made my hands shake
and my eyes flared up.
Now the days don't bruise or glow,

Neither do I.

So,
Don't get surprised,
asking me
if I'm doing fine.

And I say,

Yes.

I've been dead
for quite some time.

O Death...!

O Death!
Greater than a mother's lullaby,
Greater than a lover's kiss,
Is the comfort
In your arms.

O Death!
In your arms
I shall sleep,
And you shall sing me a lullaby,
And you shall give me a kiss.

O Death!
Bring me ecstasy
In my final sleep.

Requiem...

The church was full.

Not with mourners,

No.

But with those who had always
expected this day.

They entered in pressed suits,
wearing certainty
like Sunday clothes.

Their condolences
sounded suspiciously
like I told you so.

At the altar stood a row of coffins.

One held a manuscript
that ended halfway through a sentence.

Another held a passport
still waiting for its stamp
another promise
left beneath the lamp.

There lay a paintbrush
its colors turned to dust
waiting for a hand
that traded wonder for trust.

A telescope stood folded
gathering quiet in the dark
it had spent its whole life
waiting for a single spark.

Another held a weathered sketch
of a cabin by a lake,
where mornings would be measured
by the mountains and the wake.

T'was never built.

Only buried.

The priest spoke softly.

Not of death,
but of practicality.

Of sensible choices.
Stable incomes.
Growing older.

He spoke
as though every dream
was merely
a childish thing
that time
had finally corrected.

We remembered
the bargains we called temporary,

the detours
that quietly became addresses,

the sparks
we promised ourselves
we'd come back for.

Dreams seldom die
with a single wound.

They fade thread by thread,
breath by breath,

until one morning
you cannot remember
the sound of your own wanting.

Outside,
traffic flowed.

Children drew suns
in the corners of notebooks.

When the service reached its end
they left with easy grace
we'd buried all our futures
they simply won their case.

They shook our hands,
wore satisfied smiles,
and walked into daylight
lighter by miles.

We stayed.

Someone asked,
“Who will carry the dead?”

No one answered.

We already had.

Through promotions and motions,
through paychecks and pain,
through mortgages signed
in the comfort of rain.

Through school runs,
graveyards shifts,
birthdays missed,
and careful gifts.

We carried them quietly,
year after year,
each compromise costing
a little more dear.

At last,
we lowered them slowly
into the earth,
and wondered

which burial
had happened first.

The names
etched into the wood

were ours

only slightly different.

Long after the others left,
we stood beside the fresh graves,
trying to remember

which one
was supposed to be us.

The Roads...

For years,

I carried
an old map,

folded
along the roads
I never took.

On quiet nights,

I'd open it,

tracing
its faded lines

with the same finger
that chose
otherwise.

I imagined

better houses,

gentler mornings,

a version of myself

who never learned
certain kinds
of silence.

Then one evening,

I noticed

the map
had no endings.

Only roads,

each disappearing
beyond the edge
of the paper,

as though
they all believed
they were leading home.

Perhaps

a wrong turn
is only a road

that hasn't
finished
telling its story.

Perhaps

that is all
a choice
has ever been.

not a promise
of arriving
somewhere perfect,

but the place
from which
the rest of your life

learns
how to begin.

A fool's world...

In a world of fools,
where echoes lead the way,
Truth walks barefoot,
through the noise of every day.
Crowds chase shadows,
painted bright on crumbling walls,
While wisdom whispers softly,
unheard as evening falls.

They trade their dreams for mirrors,
polished smooth with lies,
And measure worth by glitter,
rather than the skies.
They build their towers high,
on sand that cannot stay,
Then curse the tides when all
they made is swept away.

Yet still a quiet lantern,
burns against the night,
Held by those who choose.
to seek instead of sight.
For even in a kingdom ,
ruled by jest and pride,
A single honest heart,
can turn the changing tide.

So let the fools keep dancing
to their borrowed tunes,
Beneath the fleeting glow,
of counterfeit moons.
I'll walk the winding road,
where deeper meanings unfurl,
A stranger,
perhaps,
but awake in a fool's world.

Instructions for Disappearing...

Begin

by letting
one call
ring through.

Your pulse will insist
the world
is ending.

It isn't.

The sun
has never missed
its morning

waiting
for yours.

Practice

saying "No".

The first one
will stay
behind your teeth.

The second
will arrive
wearing guilt.

By the third,

your voice
will almost
sound
like your own.

Rest.

You will mistake
stillness
for failure.

You have been taught

that worth
must always
be heard before
it is seen.

Do not argue.

Lie down anyway.

Forget

the version
of your name

that only exists
inside
other people's
mouths.

A bell is not
a blessing

simply because
it rings.

Carry

only
what you can lift

without forgetting
how to dance.

Some burdens
are heirlooms.

Some
are hand-me-downs.

Neither
are obligations.

Keep

one promise.

Let it
be the one
you made
to yourself.

They can forgive
a broken appointment.

Your heart
remembers
every broken vow.

Miss

a birthday.

Skip
a meeting.

Arrive late
to a room
that never
waited
for you.

It is strange
how quickly
the cage
calls
the bird
ungrateful.

Leave

one chair
empty.

Not every seat
with your name
was ever
meant
for you.

Some invitations
are only
beautifully wrapped
expectations.

Disappear

from arguments
you have already
won
a hundred times
inside your head.

Peace
does not always
sound
like victory.

Sometimes
it sounds
like footsteps
walking away.

Unlearn

the habit
of introducing
yourself

with everything
you can do
for someone else.

Learn

that guilt
can imitate
love
for years.

It memorizes
your voice.

It borrows
your face.

It tells you
that disappearing
and becoming
are the same thing.

Do not believe it.

Finally,
when they ask
where
you've gone,
do not answer.

Smile.

Let them
search
the places
they always
expected
to find you.

You will be
exactly
where you have
always been
only now,

for the first time,
you are there
as yourself.

