

FAWAZ A.H.



AT EVERY TUNNEL'S END

A COLLECTION OF POEMS

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Dedication

* * *

To everyone
Who found the time
To read this.

To everyone
Who finds a part of themselves
In this.

To everyone
Who sees the beauty
In the broken.

- To you.

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Fawaz A.H

... These things are your becoming.
- Cheryl Strayed

1. The Shattering

We all wanted to be happy.

I think that's what we all wanted deep down, just to be happy. When they asked us what we wanted to be in future, we would say a lot of things; we thought those were the things that would make us happy. Without those things, we thought we couldn't be happy.

And we continued to think that. The society we created has come to rule over us, to break us to satisfy itself. The worst part of it all is that we let it, and we continue to let it.

We continue to be unhappy, to please a masochist society.

Even though we don't have to.

.1

Do you remember?

How it all seemed somber

On your first days

As you learnt to do sums and write essays.

During the breaks

When you all gathered at the playground

Only you would be excluded

As the games went round.

All the other children

Already knew each other

You felt like an alien,

The stranger.

.2

Everyone seemed to be in pairs,
You managed to hold back your tears.

A best friend here
A boyfriend there, or girlfriend.
You knew since then that life wasn't fair
It felt like the end.

Try to remember
How no matter how hard you tried
You wouldn't fit in
So you learnt to shrink yourself, to hide.

.3

"Ask us anything",
The teachers would say
They said school was the best place you could have been.
Do you remember the first day?

They started to say you asked too many questions,
That you raised too many objections.

They taught you that ignorance is bliss
And of how curiosity killed the cat.
Your opinions they would dismiss
They wanted you to act blind as a bat.

Even now you're still learning
That what you don't know can, and will, hurt you;
Now you still try discerning
The lies they told you, and if anything was true.

.4

They taught you to be quiet
They taught you that they were always right
If you talked too much
They would call you a basket
"You shouldn't say such."
They took away your fight
"The empty barrels make the loudest noise."
They took away all your joys.

Baskets that won't hold water can hold gold
And empty barrels have room to store something new
The time is due
To forget the ideas that had you sold.

You should also remember
That if you aren't louder
You would eventually suffer fools
Who would make out of you a tool.

.5

With time, everyone gets used to things.

So you too got used to it
Yes, it didn't feel good
But you learnt to cope,
It wasn't so bad either.

Friends were overrated,
You began to think.
Behind their backs
You heard them say
The worst things
About each other.

You called yourself "The lone wolf"
As hackneyed as it seemed.

.6

Life is relatively good
When you depend on yourself
Independence, freedom.

Yes, it felt good.

You could only trust yourself, after all
You convinced yourself
That it was stupid
To have faith in others
But did you realize
That even your fate
Is not entirely up to you?

.7

It had been so long
Maybe even forever
Your company had become songs
You had lost faith in happy ever after.

All of your friends
Were from the books you read
There were even fiends
An entire world in your head.

From the novels
You knew what it felt like to be a wife
To live in hovels
To live life.

You were rarely ever happy
But you were almost never sad
You were fine with it.

Balance.

.8

The first time you spoke to her,
Or him,
Did you have to become an elaborate planner
Or was it just a whim?

Maybe you felt your heart flutter
And you suddenly started to stutter.
Or maybe you felt bored
And prayed for salvation from your lord.

You were borderline rude
And couldn't wait to return to your solitude.

But there is no escaping fate.

.9

Weeks passed by,

Months even.

Sometimes you wondered why

You always had on a permanent grin.

You never got tired of talking

Whenever you were in their company,

Or stalking.

You had never been so free.

There was a light

At every tunnel's end

Yours was so bright

Life had finally made its amend,

At least so you thought.

Nothing lasts forever

And that wasn't nothing.

.10

Obsession is not love.

No matter how it looks,
There is nothing beautiful
Or romantic
In letting your entire happiness
Depend on someone
Who isn't you.

Even now
You still wonder
Where you went wrong.

You still wonder
Why your love wasn't enough
To keep them with you.

2. INTERMISSION

And being sad, that isn't the worst feeling of all.

The worst feeling of all is feeling nothing at all. Being on a "screw it" level, where you don't care about anything at all. You don't even care about death. It just seems like your life isn't yours, like you're watching from the outside. People come into your life, people leave, and you're indifferent every time.

And sometimes you manage to convince yourself you finally care. Tell yourself a lie long enough, and you believe it. Then they tell you they don't care anymore. You expect your heart to break. Hell, you would like for it to break. But no, you don't care. You just reply "okay", because it doesn't matter to you either way. You fucking feel like- no, you don't feel anything at all.

.1

You've seen it in movies
When pain gets too much,
So much,
That the person loses consciousness.

The only difference
Was that the pain was on the inside
With you.

It wasn't sadness,
Definitely not happiness,
Numb;
That's what you were.

Remember when you would lay up
Till late at night
Slivers of tears
Leaking from the sides of your eyes
As you thought about
The only time you were truly happy.

.2

How does a person
Who is already dead,
Who isn't living,
How do they fear death?

They don't.

And so you waited for it.
Sometimes
You even considered suicide.

Even now
You don't know why
You never did it.

All you know is that
Even though you weren't dead
You weren't alive
You felt like a zombie.

Undead.

.3

Judgment is hard to pass
When you understand just how close
You've come
To being the criminal.

So every time you saw another,
Every time someone took their own life,
While everyone talked about how they were weak
While people said they should have talked to someone
You just remain
Wondering
If that would ever be you.

.4

Remember

All the times you wanted to scream.

Just last December

You felt like you had reached your extreme.

All the times you wanted to hit something,

Or someone,

Because inside you were aching

I wonder which side of you won.

And all the times you wanted to feel

Anything at all

So much that you either cut yourself with steel

Or drowned yourself in alcohol.

.5

In the night

When you're alone,

When you would give the least fight,

Into despair you are thrown.

There's the anxiety

And the mood swings

All for free

Your demon brings.

And after walking the length

Amidst all the horror

You discover your own strength

And realize what it was all for.

.6

Late at night
That's when it pays you
The most visits.

While you lay alone
It slips under your covers
And under your skin.

You feel it across
The length of your body
As it once more consummates
Your bond.

Depression
Has become
Your lover.

.7

It's a mystery how someone with eyes
So bright
Was dulled by the world.

So you became a husk
Of what you were.

You became the evidence
Of the flaw
In our world.

.8

They thought you had no care
You acted the part well
Your eyes would only glare
As you screamed in your cell.

Things are rarely ever
What they seem to be
Beneath your anger
You just wanted to be free

Now you bear society's curse,
You've suffered the loss.

.9

It's strange

That people who don't matter

Make you concerned.

That people who don't matter

Make you overthink.

It's strange

That you let your anxiety

Live off the fear

Of what they would think.

.10

You've perfected the art
Of shrinking.
You never seem to react
At least that is their thinking.

Remember screaming inside
A prisoner in your own mind
In whom were you to confide?
When you found yourself confined.

You are finally what they wanted
Yet they still complain
Never mind the fact that you felt haunted
Who are they to ordain?

You act again and again
You have become your own chain.

3. THE REGROWTH.

You're happy now.

You've learnt that you shouldn't put yourself down, that you should be nice to yourself even when no one is. You understand that people can never really know you as well as you know yourself, and so their opinions of you shouldn't matter more than your opinion of yourself. You see your worth now, how much you are, and you've regained your confidence.

And you want to live.

Remember when you only wanted to die; if not for anything else, at least for the pain to stop. For you to be out of everyone's way. And then after a while you didn't want to live, you weren't so sure if you wanted to die though. Remember when you finally didn't want to die, when you started to see that life wasn't all bad. Now you want to live and it feels amazing. You see that amidst all the terrible people, there are still good people.

.1

Never have I met
A strong person
Who had an easy
Past.

And in your way
You've had the hardest past
Of all.

.2

How could they love you
When they could never even
Understand you.

How could they love you
While hating
Some parts of you.

They didn't.

They thought you were one
In a million,
But you aren't.
Not even one in a billion,
Not one in seven billion.

You're one in a universe.

.3

On some days

You feel so certain

That you have moved on.

Other days

You're scared of what you would do

If they ever called you.

Both are fine

As long as

You get through those days.

.4

You've been the scissors,
Shredding people
As you went by
Leaving pieces
In your path.

And you've been the paper,
Getting shredded
As you remain in the same spot
Leaving pieces of you
All around.

Now you hold the scissors back
And tape papers together.

.5

On some days
While you do the most ordinary things
Like reading a book
You notice things so tiny,
Maybe a few words,
That bring back all the memories.

And you wonder
If you would ever get better.
You doubt
If you would ever heal.

You've gotten better
If it has become
Only a memory.

And sometimes healed wounds
Leave scars.

.6

It has become so hard
To listen,
To obey.

It has become so hard
To define yourself
By the opinion of others.

It has become so hard
To make yourself
Be what they want.

That is just right.

The butterfly shouldn't shrink itself
To fit in a cocoon
Meant for the caterpillar.

.7

The other kids

They sometimes still say hurtful things.

But you understand now

That it isn't you they hate,

It's themselves.

They hate how uncomfortable they feel

In their own skins.

So when they say you are difficult,

Too difficult to be understood,

You know that they hate

How simple they are.

They envy your complexity.

Their envy

Truly is

Disgusting.

.8

Now,
When you pass by the mirror,
You don't dart your eyes away
In shame of the image
It holds.

You always look
And wonder how
You ignored such beauty
For so long.

They call you a narcissist
Cause you have finally learnt
To love yourself.

The narcissist you are
Now,
Is better than the self-loather you were
Then.

.9

You are a dam.

All of your emotions
Behind a wall
Because it seems to suit
Everyone better
That way.

But eventually
The walls shall fall.
And no,
They wouldn't drown.

When your walls fall,
Your waters shall sate the thirst
Of someone worthy
While it drowned others.

.10

I hope you've learnt
After all of these
That although you have been burnt
And things rarely turn out as we please,
I hope you've learnt that things get worse
And then they get better
Despite all of your loss
Gain comes after.

And I also hope you understand
That whatever joy you want to last
Upon you it should stand
Or it would die fast.