

"i couldn't articulate it,
so i wrote it down."

a collection of poetry
↳
unfiltered thoughts

aaliyah tardio



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so i wrote it down

a collection of poetry and unfiltered thoughts

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one of the things little me has always wanted to do was write and publish a book. this was always one of the things that constituted a happy life for me, genuinely. i always thought that meant a full length, menacingly detailed novel that was the first in a series by the time i was 16 so that i'd be young enough to be a prodigy or something. however, i have now made it to my 22nd year, and what i have learned is that i do not have to do anything in allotted spaces of time and it does not have to be grandiose and mean something to anyone but myself. there are no designated checkpoints and there is no one to prove anything to except for me. this book is dedicated to 11-year old me. i know you didn't hear this often, but i'm here to tell you that i'm proud of you, you are enough and look at how fucking cool this is? you published a book of you feeling your emotions in a way that finally worked for you. who would have thought? i am so proud of you. to everyone else who decides to pick this poetry book up and read it, i hope you find solace in the fact that i didn't think i'd make it to 22, the emotions, thoughts, feelings and experiences that came with that journey in between, and the notion of the fact that i did something publicly that i'm proud of without the desire of other's approval. keep pushing everyday, someone is so glad that you exist, even if you don't want to be here and believe it yourself. try to not believe your dark thoughts and combat them with an outlet that works for you and won't harm you further. thanks for feeling with me.



trigger warning: discussion & thoughts of depression,
anxiety, bpd, ptsd, eating disorders, racism, sexism,
harassment & assault.



when i moved to texas
i lost all sense of time
no longer would i be able to watch
the leaves turn orange
or watch the snow stick soon after
to know that vacation was near at the
fresh scent of rain without the heavy humidity
of texas heat
i miss my childhood.



whenever i can't feel anything i watch films.



life has been happening all around me
this whole time
and i have remained stagnant
trapped in the confines of my mind
because of the trauma i experienced
for the years that have passed
that seemed so present
but they are no longer my problem
today.



it's my stomach.
it doesn't look like hers.
it's the way her body is firm
and mine has bulges and curves.
my out of body experiences
analyzing how i look on the exterior
the way i cycle on visible bones
even though they're my interior.
is there a way to deflate my body?
to get it to look how i've always
been fed for it to?
or to keep starving myself
and shovel out my insides
so i can finally look like
you.



how would you act if you knew you were hot?



if you're having a bpd episode...

- phone a friend
- text a friend
- draw
- hang with ur cats
- cut ur hair only if it's fake
- dance
- listen 2 an album 1st to last track
- smoke some [redacted]*
- take a shower
- take a bath
- yoga
- stretch
- drink some water
- write poetry
- journal
- write
- color
- step outside and breathe
- lay on the ground



you learn quickly growing up that
the skirts and the hoodies
that your friends wear
won't hang the same on you
if you've never
had a flat
stomach.



how do you find the motivation to continue to do daily tasks as each day passes if you don't even have the motivation to live?

i'm lazy. i'm so so lazy. but i feel the want to do everything. but i can't work. i am not a hard worker. i'm lazy. i'm fat and lazy and now i smoke [redacted] too on top of everything.

like how are people so genuinely happy am i missing something?

even talking about these things out loud i wonder if anything retains and i can actually remember anything bc i'll probably just keep smoking and i'll be unable to stop bc i'm mentally weak.

or maybe i should just tell myself i'm mentally strong right and that helps i can't do anything unless i put my mind to it.

sometimes i even feel like i bother my therapist and talk too much.

like i feel so unfixable.

there's so many other people with actual wants and wills to live and work ethic that i simply do not have but then if i were to be on the brink of death i'd be so afraid and probably want to live longer so what is that?

but then i also want to die but like don't i don't know.



i don't.

i'm not willing to put in the hard work for the epic payoff and i don't know why i'm like this. i've been like this since childhood.

how do i put effort into myself when i don't care about myself?



i'm glad we met
the stars aligned
and the moment i saw you
i wanted you as mine.
my soul, body and mind
felt the pull of your magnetism
your scent still lingers
i'm enamored that you were so kind.
this connection that i feel
is an anomaly i don't care to unravel
your smile is intoxicating
i can't wait to see you again
whether that's front row at your concert
or on your boat
in your
bed. x



you're a rockstar and i can't wait for the rest of the
world to see.

much love and all admiration



i miss who i was before the world learned of my
existence.



i think i once loved a boy
at the bold age of twelve
i had felt so consumed
by all the feelings that he felt.

the messages he'd send me
were filled with such magnetic grandeur
spilling with poetic finesse
his words felt like a cure.

for the emptiness i'd feel inside
the way that i'd set me aside
for him
i would have done anything.

i think i broke his heart
when i completely cut him off
i don't remember the reasons why
but i know i played my part
in deciding
to stop trying
and keep hiding
from emotions that might
make me
overwhelmed
and feel like i'm dying
we didn't speak for years.

occasionally he'd swipe up and tell me
that i was looking well
i'd respond and ask if he was okay
cause i could tell

things were wrong
i remember all of the songs
that he used to tell me he'd relate to
they were the ones that kids
made fun of us for adding to their queues.

when it was me and you
i never felt more true
to myself.
and if i'm being honest i wish that you had picked
me too.
not just then, not even now;
i honestly couldn't tell you when
but i know someday
i'll see you again.

yeah i'll see you again.
yeah i'm sure
that i'll see
you
again.



i peeled my skin back
and saw my core for who i was
i was absolutely repulsed.

it was me all along.



feeling is the only magic we have.



don't you love making her mind break?



i guess that i have just
come to terms with the fact
that mortality is so fucking fleeting
and that this is really it for us
as human beings
as these creatures
as these potential beings of light
maybe in our meat suits
or maybe we're just human
so i put in all of my effort
to the little mundane
hobbies i have
as this human in this body
in this life
until one day i'll inevitably die
and the point will have been
to have lived.



i feel like the fat just needs to be squeezed outta me like
toothpaste.



i don't know the difference between nice and flirty
because every time i try to be nice to a guy
they try to get down and dirty.



i hope you think about me with every single song you
hear
i hope you hear that karmic pressure loud and clear.
i hope you're satisfied with all the lies you couldn't hide
i hope you understand but if you don't i'll tell you why:
you make me sick,
you think i'm naive like these other girls but i know
exactly what you crave
we are not the same.



there was once a girl
who dreamt of a fantasy,
one where she'd talk about the past
as if it were all a distant memory.
she'd laugh and she'd cry,
but none of it would matter
because she'd have great friends
and her mind would no longer scatter;
but then when she let them in
that's when it'd all begin,
no more playing pretend.



if i were to kill myself
would it have even mattered
put my feelings on the shelf
and now the glass is shattered
tell me what you thought
about all the things i said
did you think about them once
before or after i was dead?

i want to share my body with you
i promise that i do.
it's just i can't stand the way
my figure looks
whenever i'm on top of you.



good dudes with good vibes
big smiles and all lies.



you praise black women publicly
for all of your followers to see socially
but when it comes to the morality
in the current fantasy
that you reside in
the black women you have in your life
are thrown to the wolves
and are simply emphasized
as the objects you wish to wave as
trophies for the activism,
the sheer malapropism of sexuality confused with
the reality that you just like to fuck us for clout.
you are dangerously unaware
of how much gasoline
you add to the fire of
ignorance.

i wish to have the credits roll
after i have made an impact on my peers' lives.
that woman i spoke to at the grocery store
a montage of moments i made someone happier
a cleverly strung together sequence of scenes
where i was laughing
and grinning from ear to ear
to show my captive audience
that i was anything but
sad.

-2:47 am



sometimes i think the lights are just going to go out
like the electricity running rampant through my head
will fuse out from attempting
to spark up a conversation.



no one ever finds me in the
moments that i wish to be found
the moments i am suffocating
and wish to be resuscitated
by the kind questions and genuine concerns
of whether or not i am doing well
because i am not
and i haven't been
but no one cares
and it is 12:34 am
i am drunk
i cry remembering every time i have ever
felt this way
and my brain is clouded
and only recalls that it has always
been like this.



teen hood flew by
i spent most of it wondering why i would cry
when i would occupy
my time
with those
who didn't cherish me
as i should have cherished myself
to begin with.
for dishonesty and toxicity
were ingredients
to a recipe
that everyone found delicious,
but if you knew me then and you know me now
you'd know that i am a
picky eater.



draft #1, instagram caption/rant

to all of the “friends” that i have that are only just now saying stuff because they are feeling the shame and white guilt of media pressing down on them to do so but never did anything when i myself as one black individual brought it up to them as an issue because i considered us friends; for every time that i called you out because we were “friends”, i no longer want to be under the label of friends with you. you should have spoken then and the only reason you are speaking now is because everyone else is. thank you for doing so still; but i know exactly who you are now. we are acquaintances from here on out if we go to the same school and you know i have called you out. i have been tolerating white privilege my whole life and quite frankly i’m more tired than you’ll ever understand. if you are still posting daily life activities and shit and not fucking doing everything in your power to help what’s going on in the black community, disassociate from me. i don’t need or want you in my life. growing up i was shit on for everything that makes me who i am. part of that is being black. and now it is a trend to be black. but it is not a trend to be black when it comes to fighting for the nonexistent human rights that didn’t come along in the pretty package of hairstyles, music, dance, fashion and everything in between that we gave to y’all. this is a kind message and i am not attacking anyone. but i am tired. thanks for posting and stuff now; but honestly, it’s very overdue. your silence on this is the loudest thing i think i will ever hear. something else i’d like to add, is that black people are completely aware



that not all cops are bad and not all white people are racist; if you are one of the people who keep saying this to rebuke anything said about the black lives matter movement, you are completely missing the point. this is also equivalent to saying all lives matter, all lives can't matter until black lives do. i saw a quote somewhere that said black people have every right to burn down a country that they built for free. if you are more outraged about a target being looted over a black man being murdered... let that sit, and check your privilege. i want to say a lot more but i'm sure i'm not the only black individual posting videos so keep informing yourself and keep doing things to help and to advocate for us. if you need information on how to help, let me know i'll send things your way. but i'm sure you've seen plenty of ways to help; go tap or click on any one of them and do your part. it doesn't take long. forgiveness is a thing, but not until you earn it. respectfully,

a tired black girl.



i want to know someone the way
that i know you.
but i want it without the
heartache
hurt
scars
anxiety
depression
darkness
drugs
despair
and everything in between
that you and only you
put me through.
but they wouldn't give me
everything
else.

i should have yelled at you but i never did.



i am all things.

i am meant to be described poetic and grand.



i wish i could
find the syllables
and the words to properly
describe to you the pain
that i have felt.



hi my name is aaliyah
and i often build people up in my head
because they're a lot nicer to me
in here.



only want my time when you're not doing something better.



i keep scrolling through our messages
i don't know what to do
i keep thinking maybe i'll wake up tomorrow morning
and all of it won't be true.
but it is
and we're here
i wish all of it could just disappear
it's been hard
it's been so hard
i wonder if you still love me
even though you shouldn't be on my mind
but you are,
and my love, i think about you all the time.



everywhere i look i see fragments of what once was
i hear your laugh in the corners of my thoughts.
i wanna know if i'm even still in yours
i've got an ache in my heart that won't go away
and i know it sounds cliché
i swear i'll never get over you
even though i know one day
it's all gonna be okay
and memories of you
will all fade away.



do you remember the coffee shop
you took me to when you asked me
to be yours?

i didn't know what was going on
but still i've never been so sure
you were the one i wanted
you were the one i needed
the way you looked at me
it's what made my heart
keep beating.

and i know that sounds like a lot,
but that's what you were to me,
i could breathe when you were around,
but since we've left each other,
it's like i've gone and drowned.



it just hurts now
because of what you did
and you know me
i couldn't believe it
because it wasn't you
it shouldn't be true
but maybe one day
we can start all over
make it all brand new.



as badly as i crave
to hear the sound of your
voice or get some
dosage of words
being exchanged between
us i know it's better for you
to hear my silence
than to hear the static
of my repeated
attempts
of finding a
lost
signal.

my mom left the car on
and the steady
metrical beeps of
an unfastened seat belt
reminded me of the
noise i'd hear in a
hospital room
one day until
my engine
shuts off.



everything is so
saturated
with
them.
there is not
a place
i look where my eyes do not
recall and my nose
does not smell
the fragments
of moments i cherished
from times
that are now
black
and
white.



the voice i used to
read with has gotten
quieter in my head
over the years
and i kind of miss her
because she always made sure
my head was filled with
wonder.



i hope when you're lifted
you're high off my scent
and you feel your entire world
has shifted
because you can only remember it
when you're sunk into the couch
inside of your friends' house
underneath clouds
of smoke
and memories of me are just
as hazy.



my first love
broke my heart
even though
it was placed
on his
lowest
shelf.



it's only when it's late at night
and the optimism lining the events
of the day leave my atmosphere
pass through the stratosphere
and make it to the moon
and slowly but surely
thoughts of you
break the sound barrier of
my mind
creating a cosmic disturbance
to be heard through and through
the galaxies of what i thought
was my world.



i'm like really fucked in the head.
a lot of the times i find myself sleeping in
to avoid waking up to the day
and hopefully greeting the comforting hours
of "just a few more and you'll be right back
in bed."

i'm like really fucked in the head.

they kissed for a bit and he retracted,
and when he told her this isn't what he wanted
and then later told her he felt guilty,
it came to me as no surprise when he told
me how she reacted:
"i don't."

i'm like really fucked in the head.
i find solace in closing my eyes
and having all of the noise in my head
just go away when the clutches of
r.e.m. gently caress my darkest
whispers into nothing and my anxiety
becomes nonexistent.

i'm like really, really fucked in the head.
i often find myself not knowing the point
to all of this.
i'm frankly quite terribly fucking exhausted,
and i wonder if it's possible that
i could be someone to miss.
but i know it's not the answer.
i know there's things i must live for.
i just wish i didn't live in the mental state



that has created and molded me
since i've entered this universe.

it's a battle everyday,
and i'm fighting with every last breath.
i'm really fucked in the head,
and my grip on reality is becoming
more and more
loose.
but you will never catch me giving in
to silence's grim noose.

i'm stronger than i think,
and i'm tougher than i know,
the sobs and cries that echo through my
chest are what are helping me grow.

this may be a cry for help,
but i don't know what you would even do,
because it's been me this whole time,
it hasn't always been me and you.

maybe one day this will all
make sense
and maybe it won't
but all i know now
all i know for sure,
is absolutely nothing at all.
i just don't.



i can see it in your eyes
you're hypnotized.
and it's not by
me.



i want you to discover the exact moment you knew you
loved me.



to: my middle school crush
from: my notes app

hear me out i know this is weird as fuck but i definitely feel like i need to tell you because if i don't i'll be bothered as hell. for yeaaaarsssss i was literally obsessed with you and when you moved i was like well fuck what do i do now the guy i like is all the way the fuck in [redacted]. then you moved here and it was right when i was getting you out of my head and i was like okay i'm gonna ask him to hang out it couldn't hurt. i was a little girl and thought that crushes would end up like movies and shit and i expected you to feel the same way but you didn't really show it and you were awkward when we linked up and i was like well okay he's going to a different school so it's not even worth it but i still liked you. then we never hung out again, and no matter how much i wanted to i wasn't about to text you and look desperate (even though i was) and we never hung or talked again. so i think i deleted you off my snapchat and shit to get over it. i think two years passed i don't even know and i heard you had a girlfriend and she requested to follow me multiple times, me of all people which is weird because you and i had no contact and i have no idea why she'd follow me out of all the other girls you were with. i let her then she unfollowed me and then i was just kind of like okay whatever you and i aren't really associated with one another anymore. but every time i'd see you somewhere every so often you'd act like you didn't see me or you'd see me and never would approach me? like what the fuck is that? dude it's not that deep we could have at leassstttt been



friends like i love you dude you're hilarious and we were good friends in middle school and i'm still friends with everyone else so why is it different with you? and at the party you asked me why we stopped talking and i asked you and then you said i never hit you up? bullshittttttt you never seemed like you wanted to talk to me. you make everything weird bro for real and i hate that about you. if i hadn't approached you first at alex's you wouldn't have said shit to me lmao. i'm honest to god just trying to be your friend and if you don't want to, cool, just let me know because it matters to me because i feel like we've been playing a dragged out game and it's annoying as fuck. no relationship, just friends for real that's all i want from you. i'm leaving to college and you're going into what the navy or air force or whatever i don't even know because we don't talk lmfao. i know this is annoying to hear and shit because you probably didn't even think about any of this shit and you dont care about anything, cool, but i do. so here. let me know.



“it’s like you’re drowning and no one will throw you a line”



i am sick and tired
of feeling second
to everything that you do.

i am sick and tired
of feeling like the issue
or wondering
about the things or the people
that you might do.

when i don't speak to you
for hours do you think
about who i am with,
who i could be seeing;
or are you content with just being?



do you not wonder whether or not
i am driving to my old lover's home
to tell them words of thoughts
that do not even matter?
thank god i do not have a car.



a haiku i wrote while being in quarantine

silence and loud sounds,
deafening things you can hear,
does it all make sense?



“ask yourself if you can actually feel what life is like today?”

a simple notification that showed itself on my phone this morning,
inspired this very poem that i randomly am writing in this moment,
without warning.

what exactly could that mean?
is life something that is seen?
perhaps it is something you can feel,
or maybe it's about having a really good meal.

maybe it's about being captive indoors,
and really getting too accustomed to the feeling
of your feet on wooden floors.

is it the feeling of toes in the sand,
sun on your skin, and a nice, ocean breeze?
then again it could be that time you wanted to start a band,
travel the world; a bunch of opportunities you never seized.

no, it's probably that crush you never said anything to
in the eighth grade?
or it's probably that time you never got the nerve to
audition for that one
play.

it had to have been your first kiss,
the one where your braces got caught



and your lips missed.

you're forty, you're nineteen, you're twenty,
you definitely took all of those days for granted;
you know? the ones where it was sunny?

what does life feel like?

is it the fact that i am aware that i am creating this
poem right here, right now?

maybe we'll figure it all out at some point,
this poem is coming to an end,
this is all my brain will allow.



i wish i could just do it.
i wish i could just see.
i wish that every bone and breath
didn't scream with anxiety.
i hate the way i look
i hate the way i am
i wish that i could find a way
to give more of a damn.
i wish there was a possibility,
a way for me to witness,
everyone who would care
if i was on my own hitlist.
i am tired of being here,
i am tired of being there,
there is no where, and i mean
nowhere for me to get some
fucking air.
i cannot fucking breathe,
i want to fucking see,
who the fuck would give a fuck
if i just ceased to be.
i could never actually do it,
i'm way too fucking scared,
but god if there was an easier way
i promise i'd be up there.
someone please help me,
i'm so fucking tired,
i just want to be happy,
but the thoughts in my head have conspired. they're
telling me it'll be like this forever, i'll never be okay,
i promise i would never,
but forever could end
today

i wish i was a white man.
i wish i could do the bare minimum and get by.
i wish i could traumatize someone and have everyone
turn a blind eye. i wish i could laugh about women
behind closed doors
then charm them even though last night i called them
whores
i wish i could smoke weed with my white male friends
and know there's not one police officer that i would
offend.
i wish i could just smile at someone
and know they weren't afraid
i'm white and safe and beautiful,
i can openly degrade.
i wish i could blame things on all of my white male
problems
and have people pity me at my feet
my problems always matter more
everyone else have a seat.
the way you'd believe the words i say
like law coming from between my lips
we could makeout and even fuck
but i'll deny it if it slips,
out of my mind, undeniably so
that's what everyone says
those girls are just hoes.
everything will be okay,
i won't ever get arrested
everyone loves me too much,
trust me, they've all confessed it.
i make jokes and i'm kind,
i use it as my crutch.



my humor is my blockade
oh i'm sorry--that was a friendly touch.
my smile is my fuse
i never did that to you,
i'm not a fucking bad guy
you must be confused.
she's fucking crazy dude,
i don't know what her problem is,
i would never do that to someone,
unless that someone was you.
no one even has a clue
no one's really thought this through
i'll walk away without a scratch
meanwhile you'll have no one to
turn to.
sorry, i didn't mean to get like that,
anyways though,
isn't this girl's ass fat?



the world does not need what i have to offer. the world
does not need my thoughts.
the world does not need my fantasies.
the world does not need my anxieties
that eat away at my concept of time day in and day out.
the world does not need my sadness that tears into my
soul
and robs it of any sense of worth. the world does not
need me.
this poem is simple.
i am not needed.



would anyone remember me?
if i died today?
would people remember the way
that i laughed
and all of the things
that i had to say.
will i have created enough smiles
upon enough faces
left marks on territories
and a multitude of places
i often wonder what it's like
to see myself
from your mind
will you remember all of the times
that i laughed
that i screamed
that i cried
that i seemed
to be okay
to be quite alright
to remember what it's like to take flight
on an airplane
across the sea
at this point i would already be a memory
will my lovers mourn me
will my friends talk about me?
would they hear the echo of my voice
on the adventures they all go on one day
i just hope
and i pray
that with each passing day
you'll remember me.



i want to paint on your back.
i was thinking of painting the night sky,
with constellations so that when you're on
top of me
and the muscles in your back
contract
i'll claw
the universe.



i told you and now i just want more of you.



i've never done that before but i keep feeling like i want
to with you.



i wonder if you
still think about
her smile or the
taste of her lips
the minutes to
hours to days
to months you
spent with her
i need you to assure me you're
with me. she was your everything
and now you're mine
will i be yours in time?



don't fall in love with her again. please.



i know communication is key
but i lose it everytime i
try to unlock the room
where my thoughts and my words reside
my worries and anxiety collide
and finally i
find the key
but one to go back further inside
and lock myself away
and hide.



feeling insignificant and inconsistent
but it's okay because i am
persistent.



i'm not stupid but sometimes you make me
feel like it.
and i've been through too much
to let anyone make me feel like
less than the woman i am becoming.



you make me feel high.



your voice gets me not just drunk
but dangerously inebriated
i feel faded when your
words enter my ears through the grazing of your lips
you make me feel
some type of
way.



late at night i can still feel your hands on me.
i'm too far gone and
i'm sober.



i know you still think about her.
i feel it.
there's nothing i can do.
i feel it almost every day but i know you
feel something for me too.
but it's probably not the same.
or it's in my head, but hopefully it's just a situation i
misread.

i see you from a distance and dream of you
walking over to kiss me.
you probably do the same with her.



i dream of galaxies and wish to get lost in them so i
don't have to be here.

painting feels nice but i'm not sure that you do.



i feel sad a lot. like i'm always a bother.



i let you in and you tore me apart from the inside out.



i let you climb the tower i placed myself in for
so long and you
just wanted to claim it as your own.

she painted every role of us.



i wish you loved me because i find myself
thinking about how badly
can't breathe
when i see you thinking of
her.

there are songs that remind you of me and
songs that remind you of them
and i know they're the type of
melody you can't get out of your head.



i am so in love with you
i can smell your scent
and picture the crinkle of your sheets
when we wake up together
in the morning.
your smile ignites my veins and whenever
i think of you i feel sunlight on my skin and get
high off of the thought of my lips
saying hello to yours in collision creating
an energy that is cosmic.



i want to stop giving a fuck about what you're doing.



i'm so into you.
it's torturous
to be in your vicinity
because i know you're also into
our quiet threads of
tension.
the ones we sew with our hands
behind our backs.
and smile about
from across the room.
i know you see me.
i see you too.

a response to a poem i wrote; a year later:

i realize now that what i
was feeling was a hope that
the one person i liked
that liked me
back after having
a friendship would
give me a love story that i always read about in books
or watched in films;
but you had gone and grown up while i refused to
come out
from underneath the blanket of nostalgia that you truly
did not purposefully craft.
you simply filled a part of me i missed from years ago,
i did not love you and you did not
love me.



4 something am

stop invading him.
you are searching for things to tear you apart
ray by ray until you
no longer shine
and you are no longer the
sun.

why do you lie?



i don't want to speak negatively
of myself anymore,
i hear how it sounds
like i'm ungrateful, pessimistic,
and simply irritating to be around.
it's not like i want to think
or say these things out loud
i just feel it so intensely,
i promise i'm not looking for a crowd
of people to listen to my
complaints
of the restraints
i have guarding some sort of
guide for loving myself.
i just want to not have these thoughts
at the forefront
of all of my days—
for the rest of my life.



you finally spoke the truths i already knew.



an anchor, a ball and a chain.

we often tie the realities
we remember hearing about
on winds that find themselves
in our ears every time we
care to listen.

the wind will always be there
some days and it will
create waves of nostalgia
to drown you in when the waters
become too rough because
of the ball and chain of
them

around your foot
and the anchor to a past that no longer exists
to keep you in your place until
slowly you sink
down further and further
until you
can't
breathe.



why does the color of my skin
and my father's threaten certain people?



i wish to break
the chains of bigotry and ignorance that
have choked the
voices of myself
and my friends
from speaking
up in high school
history class.

i will never be silent.
not for my mother.
not for my teacher.
not for my classmate.
not for my friend.
not for any of you.



i'd get you the moon if i could.

i love the way you make me laugh. you exhaust me.



you got me to start writing again.

you've never actually been my friend,
it's a competition and you thrive
in watching others tear me down.
i know you've never once stood up for me the
way that i have for you.
your silence is the loudest in a room
full of people yelling about me.



for as much as i wish to
not exist,
i fear too much to execute me or the plan.

i set myself on fire for you.
you loved to watch me burn.
i lost everything i'd ever had
and it never got to be your
turn.

my flesh kept you safe
i took all the pain
the knives in my back
are what kept me sane.

my bones kept you warm
while my teeth and soul shattered
i remember the day i died
i understood i never mattered.



thanks for the stars i got to put on my ceiling.
they made the nights that i was alone
with only the company of my intrusive thoughts
less crowded,
because i saw the exit in that space from
the glow they emitted
in the darkness of my old room.

i get really into the depth of my brain
inside the thoughts that speak over one another
i look at her through fake accounts
and wonder what her stories are all about
they're definitely indicative of you
you invoke feelings that suffocate people
in an intoxicating way
people who only got to know you for small
amounts of time, never really seeing the whole
painting of who you are.
they didn't get to see the brush strokes and cover-ups of
the old relics of your inner workings
that lie beneath.
and i get to.
yet i still
wonder if you're with her,
even though you are the most
reassuring person i have ever been with.
i'm sorry i am this way.



your eyes lined with tears
as i opened up to you about my insecurities
in the parking lot of a crystal shop
it was confusing to me to try and wrap
my thoughts around the fact that
you actually care.
how strange after being away
from my body for so long
to see that i am here and
affecting
another.



i didn't do anything for my 22nd birthday
double the age of my lucky number
i didn't think i'd even make it this far
i was happier when i was
11.



have you ever wanted to cease to exist?
to cut off all of the parts of you that you
can never fix?
to disappear and watch if anyone
would give a fuck
to continue to live as you have been
in forced silence
that became comfortable
and familiar because no one was listening anyway.
it is already so difficult to exist,
so do not allow room for anything else in your life
that makes it
more
insufferable.

This poetry book is a collection that I have been writing down on paper, my poetry journal, notes app—basically anywhere and everywhere whenever I had an overwhelming thought or emotion that needed to be released from my body and put somewhere. I found comfort in poetry. It has always come naturally to me and provides me with the serotonin I need to keep navigating this life. It's a coping mechanism I developed and found that worked for me—that didn't damage myself or others within my emotional blast radius. I have BPD. In recent months, I have began attempting to meld my mind into perceiving my mental health wounds as superpowers. This book is for me and anyone else who struggles with their own brains. I'm so happy you're still here and reading these words in this moment.



Aaliyah Tardio (she/her) is a proud Italian-American Black woman from Germany, Italy, and Texas. As a current senior in the BFA Theatre Program at Texas State University, Aaliyah hopes to pursue a meaningful and fulfilling career in art ranging from acting in television and film or theatre to publishing novels—all while helping create beautiful stories and amplifying and elevating those who are not often heard or understood. Art is the base of soul and a language everyone understands in her eyes, and she wishes to exist in it for the rest of her life. This is her graduation present to herself for making it this far in life.

