

My Stuffed Bunny

Memories are chains,
Chains that bind us to our past.
No matter how rusty the chains are,
They won't ever break.

I hear the screams coming from the bedroom at night,
The crackling pain in their shrieks of thorny words of steel.
I cover my ears with my small, shaking hands to hide my fright.
I cover my ears because I don't want to feel.

I don't want to feel the despair that my mother wails into the night air
as her shrills choke into whispers that drag along the windy breeze beside the curtains.

I don't want to feel the anger my father expels into his condescending imprecations as the
fiery horns of Lucifer excruciatingly corrode at his scalp.
One hand clawing at me, the other reaching for a Bible on the altar, the same night.

I don't want to feel my brother's loneliness in his silent prayers from a treestand
as his somber words go flat on the open ears of a nearby lone buck innocently crunching on fallen branches.
A gun, pointed at his head from afar, that he cannot see.

I don't want to feel my sister's guilt (forced parentification) as her playdough dries up quickly after being taken from the container,
Her chapped hands, starting to bleed as she runs water over the playdough, trying her best to save it (me)
Both are forced to dry out before reaching their potential, growing old too soon.

I lay in my small bed, pulling up the princess covers.

This was a common occurrence:

The *constant* anxious finger-fiddling that created small blisters,
The *constant* bellowing of souls bedridden in the hounds of hell,
The *constant* sobs from my mother that could drown the sun itself,
The *constant* words of venom chomping down on the sealed skin of my neck.
The *constant* bruises and marks we left home with, decorating my porcelain skin with cracks,
The *constant* slapping my mother received from him, like an old work cap thrown onto the floor.

My dreams were filled with nightmares, a reminder of my dismal despair.

My head filled with fear, my soul filled with a lingering sense of yearning.

I awoke to my mom shaking me to get out of bed.

"We have to be fast," she quietly breathed out.

"Grab all of your dolls and stuffies."

I looked out onto our gravel road as the morning welcomed a foggy haze.

My grandparents emerged from their old pickup truck,

Their wrinkled faces strained as they carried our furniture.

The conversations were murmured as we snuck out of the paralyzing, plagued house.

My tiny body grabbed my stuffed bunny and waited for our departure.

I climbed into the "family" van, glancing at the miserably alluring sunrise.

I glanced out of the steamed window, drawing little smiles while the water beads streaked down.

My mother's face was forlorn but peaceful, departing from the house of tainted memories.

We arrived at my grandparents' house.

The brown bricks are so big, like my hope for a new beginning.

The growing cherry trees breathed vitality into my soul.

The daffodils bloomed so beautifully, even after a harsh winter.

We unpack the car and truck, walking inside.

My dolls and stuffies, plastered across the wooden living room floor.

The divorce was finalized over time.

I tried to love the parts that he bruised, physically and emotionally.

"Things happen without reason or rhyme,"

but out of all lives, why did it have to be mine?

As a child, you do not realize the further repercussions.

Even if the abuse was crushing,

The sin of leaving felt like something I couldn't atone for.

Time passed.

The once-dark leaves—
shades of blacks, oranges, and reds—fell.
A new soul (joy for life) grew back.

Memories are clouds,
Clouds that are free,
Free to roam inside the sky, we call our minds.
All memories will continue to float around,
Learned lessons and growth cause some to evaporate,
Purifying the mind.

My mother was married for twenty years.
Her tragedy started at the innocent age of sixteen.
I am blessed to watch her overcome these fears.
Her once polluted mind became a landfill of new opportunities.

I am so proud of her.

My sister found herself in all the wreckage.
She was able to break free from the puppeteer
who strung her along with false promises and marred purple skin,
But as the purple night of darkness arises,
A pink sunrise follows to show a glimmer of sanguineness.

She dyed her hair pink.

I am so proud of her.

My brother was also neglected.
He found consolation in drugs and friends.
He was never able (brave enough) to truly escape.

We don't talk.
And even if we never do again,

I am so proud of him.

I pack my stuffed bunny in a box under my bed.

I thought the washing machine my mind used to be would keep spinning,
but never remove the excess feelings of remembrance and longing.
The veins of sinners, their vain sins, would continue to throb, embedded in my skin.
I realized these feelings were created from the fiction we call facts.

I am (**worthy**) a "good" daughter.

I am (**worthy**) a hardworking student.

I am (**worthy**) someone who deserves respect.

I am (**worthy**) someone who overcomes the challenges thrown at me.

I am (**worthy**) someone who doesn't let memories define me as a person.

As the memories of my ten-year-old self creep back into my teenage mind,
I cut the rusty chain with the promise of a good future.

Memories are the soul of life.

My bunny lies below my bed,

holding opportunity and purpose,

and most of all,

the soul of a little girl wanting to change and be changed,

Our souls free us to grow.

(our souls) They won't ever break.