

Poem one: Scholastic Golden Key recipient, written in March 2018. Inspired by an open ended theater prompt to create a form of art from one of the phrases listed and I selected the phrase Handle with Care.

Handle with Care

The other day I met this young girl
Beautiful and rare
The pain behind her eyes was quite clear...
And she wore a note, like a badge pinned to her shirt
That read "Please handle me with care"
I looked at her and questioned
The words that I saw
And in a voice as sweet as honey, yet strained and raw, she said...
"I'm fine,
But...
I've been hurt before
By every person who walked out that door
My heart has become a doormat for every poor soul
And my love was used and abused until my heart turned to coal.

My skin is dry from the tears that I've shed.
My ears ring from all the lies I've been told
Every masked "I love you"
Every empty "I'll take care of you"
Nothing more than more than a marketing ploy.

My back hurts from all of the times they said 'I'll catch you'
But still let me fall
My knees are bruised from tripping over broken morals
And my feet, they're sore from chasing after pathetic guys.

My shoulders ache from the weight I take
And my eyes burn, as I blink back tears, praying that someone was still here
My pinky is scared of yet another broken promise.

Just thinking of the pain I can no longer take.

So I pinned this warning to my shirt
Cause I've already fallen apart
Just barely held together, with a broken heart.
My body is weeping, it can't take anymore,
So before I let you in, I need to know for sure.

Please don't say you want me
Or that you deserve a chance
Because if you don't plan on staying
I won't waste my time on a toxic romance
But if you say you need me
And no one else will do
Then hold me gently and lovingly
Within your tender grasp
Don't shake me
Or break me
Or leave me out to dry
Just hold me and love me, and never say goodbye
But most importantly remember that I'm broken
It's true
So I'd handle me with care if I were you".

Poem 2: Written in 2019 during the Bronx Loaf writing program. Inspired by the writing prompt "write a piece about the object in front of you"

Tea

He holds the cup, hands clasped around its sides.
A thin line of steam tickling his nose.
I cough,
But he doesn't look up.
I could fall right now and I doubt he'll look up.
He stares at the paper like he's searching for answers.
Maybe he's searching for someone new.
I stare down at the dark liquid in his cup,
Knowing it's the closest I'll get to seeing his brown eyes.

I envy that tea bag, how it gets to be so close.
How it can see the look in his eyes, and the scruff of his beard.
While I'm here,
On the far end of the table just praying he'll look my way.
I fiddle with my hair,
If it looks nice maybe he'll take an interest,
Even if just for a second.
He brings the cup to his mouth like it's second nature,
Not much of a thought.
I remember when kissing me used to be like second nature.
It was an instinct, not a thought.
Now I'm lucky if I'm just as much of an afterthought.
He sighs, comforted by the warmth.
I sigh, relieved it's good enough.
It seems like everything is just 'good enough'
He never eats breakfast, he says all he needs is a good cup of tea.
And with each passing day, it becomes more evident he no longer needs me.
I watch him hold that tea, lingering in its warmth,
I yearn to be that cup of tea.
Caught between his tender grip,
Pressed against his rosy lips.
The focus of his attention,
Source of his affection.
I remember when he used to love me.
He dazedly adds milk to the cup
A thin white figure forms and then it disappears,
I wish I could disappear.
Slowly vanish from here.
Melting inside him like honey.
Then fading away.
I wish I could be enough.
I wish I could be that damn cup of tea.

Poem 3: Written in 2020, inspired by the afternoon I sat on a roof with a friend of mine.

Wasted Youth

To rooftop picnics and endless summer days,
Drinking apple cider from plastic glasses and pretending it was champagne,
The only thing I was getting drunk off of was the way you said my name.

The record was playing,
And every now and then it'd skip a beat,
But that didn't stop us from stomping our feet.
Laying on our backs with the sun in our eyes,
As we watched Picasso paint the sky.

We ate cheese till our stomachs felt like they would explode,
Stuffing ourselves with olives and unrealistic promises to never get old.

We threw on fancy dresses,
Even though they were too large,
And let the old fabric drag against the pavement as we danced beneath the stars.

We laughed as our eyes glistened in the night,
Our sun-kissed faces burning bright,
And our hair was loose, wild, and wavy,
As we wore crowns of white daisies.
And caught moonbeams and stardust,
Turning moonlight to spotlight as we put on a show.

We howled at the moon,
And sang every song,
Watching the night turn to dawn.
We stayed up talking for hours,
Balance beaming on ledges,
As we shouted into the night.
And as the sun came out our wild souls began to settle,
For the fear of sitting still was no longer in our bones.

The sun rose and our hearts slowed,
No longer scared of growing old.
We nestled in a corner,
Blankets wrapped around our shoulders,
Our bare feet hanging off the edge.
We grew more somber,
As our shadows stretched longer,
And I didn't want us to end.
As our eyes began to close,

Rose-colored dreams began to play,
And it was then that I knew, in this moment is where I'd forever stay.
We'd always have this day,
Even years from now,
We'd stay this way,
Crazy and young,
Wild and free,
Kindred spirits,
Of the beautiful you and me.

Poem 4: Written in the fall of 2022, inspired by the way hair seems to change color with the seasons.

Seasons

Your hair was like the seasons,
A fact I once loved.
I'd silently count the colors in your strands that mirrored the days of the month.
I fell in love with you when your hair matched the bright August sun.
When you shined like a summer's mid-afternoon.
But the days began to change and your light began to dampen.
Once shining now dimmed,
And I watched as you began matching the color of fallen leaves.
You became dull, almost lifeless, unmotivated.
Like one strong gust and you'd be taken with the wind.
By December,
You were gone.
Became dark like the bark on the trees.
And I waited for equinox warmth but it never seemed to return.
Gone indefinitely.
You were cold and unrecognizable.
Distant and withdrawn.
But I weathered your storm,
Waited out your freezing days,
In what I once called our home.
But all things come to an end,
And your winter solstice did too.

And you returned, but as a reflection of someone I once knew.
You were gold,
Like the setting sun that marks the end of Dak's Day.
But you were different.
A stranger I had met.
A ghost to make re-fall in love with me.
See my dear,
You were the **embodiment** of the seasons,
A fact I wish I knew.
And I watched you change before me
Until I no longer recognized you.
Forever cursed to love a single season in the everchanging you.

Poem 5: Written in 2022, this poem was inspired by a quote that said "Cleopatra filled a room full of roses so Marc Anthony would never smell a rose without thinking of her"

Roses

They say Cleopatra covered her bedroom with roses,
Stuffed it to the brim,
So Marc Antony would never smell a rose without thinking about her.
So let my roses be everywhere,
In everything you do,
So that like Cleopatra my memory will haunt you.
Let every moment be filled with thoughts of me,
From the moment you open your eyes to when you fall asleep.
May my roses be found in the laughter of people.
And in the smell of vanilla cupcakes, that you swear resembles my perfume.
May roses be found in freshly fallen snow and remind you of the night we spent hiking
over piles in December.
Find the roses in sunsets and think of how my eyes glistened in their glow.
Hear music and remember the way I sang.
Drive down to the coast and think of all the times I sat there next to you,
And all the times I won't be able to.

Find roses in the newspaper as you read and turn to my chair as if to say 'look what I
read' only to find I'm no longer there.
Find roses in jokes you can never tell me,
And in the shows, I used to love.
Find roses in the still of the night, when the silence engulfs you, the silence I once broke.
And at the small kitchen table, when the empty seat stares back at you.
Find roses in the loneliness that sets in and realize all that you've lost.
All that I was.
See them in everywhere I was.
See them in passing faces, and cups of tea.
See them in art stores and flower shops.
See them wherever you go and remember that I loved you.
More than you loved me.
And know you lost something great, foolishly.

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