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Confessions of The Self-Medicating

A box of bandaids sits on my bedside table, in case of an emergency. This morning I placed one over a bruise on my left knee. Yesterday I placed a bandaid on the roof of my tongue, around my first molar, and against the gum of my teeth, I had a toothache. Tomorrow I think I will place one on my upper lip, in case I have a nosebleed. If you look at what lies next to my bandaid box you'll see five bottle caps scattered around, and five beer bottles lined up against the wall. These are my bandaids for the wounds you can not see when the weight of my breath has weighed me down and glued me to the sheets of my bed. I lay there, hoping the alcohol will cleanse the wounds inside me, hoping it would remove the bacteria, and keep my wounds from becoming infected. I saw my father tend his wounds this way, the straw-colored liquid would stain his shirt around his chest, and he would let it sit there as if it was seeping through his skin, into his heart, and cleansing it. I didn't understand why my father reached for this liquid, but I assumed it had some magical property since it could turn my father from a weak man to a brute. When I was older I found out that this was not true, and decided, this is just what adults do.

You may wonder how I find restoration in something so destructive. I have been trained this way. When a zit emerges from under my skin I use a face wash to help it heal, and it burns, but that's what makes me think it is working. Similar to the way that beer burns my insides. Raised with the idea that pain is the result of labor. Now there are many reasons to avoid this method of medication. Some side effects are that my lips are often chapped, and my mind runs a little foggy. For that, I am truly sorry. I am not always present. I do not collect memories I collect a collection of forgotten moments. I exist in only fragments. 24 years diminished to 17.

Today I woke up with eight new bruises, they are all scattered across my body. Don't ask me how they got there. The "how" is not very relevant, they are simply there; If I were to dwell on it I fear that I would enter a perpetual loop of curiosity and wonder. I can not afford such luxury. If I am honest I have accepted the fact that a bruise will always remain on my body. At this point, I have started to believe that my skin is beginning to shed its melanin and acquired a taste for green and purple pigmentation. Although my body has decided that my wounds should be visible, I do my best to try to conceal the byproduct of my hurt; mending my skin with bandaids. The tan adhesive merges with my skin and it is as if nothing ever happened.

Out of Season

On that warm summer day,
at the farmer's market,
I held your left hand;
and with the other,
you handed me an apricot.
Its skin was surrounded with
fuzz. An odd texture,
that reminded me of petting a hairless cat.
So instead I reached for a pear;
causing your fingers to slip out of my grasp.

“A pear in July?”

I offered you a slice,
and was met with a monologue of your hatred of pears;
calling it the most disappointing pome fruit,
You criticized its shape and color,
“a weak impersonation of an apple”

So I picked up the apricot and cut it to share.
giving you three slices and keeping one, and
Forced myself to enjoy its goo
Forced myself to love
the mushy substance.

Then the trees began to lose their leaves
and the apricots went with them.
I guess I should be happy
that October has surrounded me with pears,
but the only person to share with
is a green-eyed stranger.

Now when I hold the stranger's hand
at the farmer's market,
I search for you in the crowd, hoping
that amongst all piles of pears,
an extra apricot is hidden.

A Child of the Berries

I was raised in a strawberry field
contrary to what you might think
I did not see rabbits and fairies,
I saw strawberries bleed.
A battleground that made you blue and meek.
Nevertheless, it is where my memories were made,
where I danced and played.

Where I pretended to be a pirate
protecting those too small and afraid;
from their parents who glow red,
brighter than the strawberries they ate.

At night sometimes the strawberries bruised & wept;
falling off their vine after so many moons unslept.
The next morning no trace of strawberry was to be seen
except for when it peeked through my mother's spleen.

Then she would beg and beg
that she was sorry and weak.
That her wrath was meant to guide me,
that the blueberry bruises on my legs
were out of care, and that one day
I would understand
when I raised a berry of my own.

I learned to not be a strawberry,
Cautious to not glow shades of red.
If I ever have a berry of my own one day,
I hope she is a raspberry
pink, ditsy, and free
I hope she never sees my blueberry dread.