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What is your weapon?

I am my weapon.

My words have changed hearts and minds and they are still coming.

My voice has inspired people and I am not done talking.

My brain? My brain tries daily to destroy me, so I listen, listen, listen, to those who tell me I've helped. Listen to those I love.

My brain is a weapon against myself. Love is my shield. I will not hurt those who love me, weapon that I am. So I will not self destruct.

I have been a weapon since I was born, and I don't have blood in my teeth or a knife in my hands but I have my voice and I have my soul. I fight nonstop and wish I could do more.

I am a weapon. Use me.

You are your weapon. You are your shield.

You are their weapon. Their shield.

You fight for your own survival and justice for those who have been wronged by the world.
Justice, justice you shall pursue.

You shield yourself from your own hardest, cruelest thoughts. You shield the hurt of the world and the wronged with the words you spin and weave and drape across their pain and doubts.

You build fortresses with those words. Spaces of peace and beautiful futures of power, love, justice, and mercy. On your hardest days those fortresses stand tall even when your thoughts are foggy and the doors you've built are hard to find.

You pray for the days that those fortresses can hold the whole, broken world. You fight like hell for a future in which the battering ram of pain and patriarchy and hate will clear and your fortresses can become havens, your weapons, toys. Until then your words will continue to build, to batter against those forces of despair, and to hold strong and true for everyone who needs their shield--for yourself and for every person touched by injustice.

Holy II

I tire of being human:

To be human is to be cursed, isn't it?

I wish to be holy.

You were cursed from birth
with blood that pumps hot and thick and loud in your ears,

My hands, bless not bruise—

beating the drum of more more more, never enough.

my mouth, sing not sin—

the rhythm of better better be better better run run run.

my heart, unbroken with purpose,

The beat of save them save them and—

just like they promised me

I would be if I could be a savior.

Your curse has seen you bleed.

It doesn't make much difference,
though.

It has seen you bruise and twist and fall and break.

My time is limited here,

Heal over those broken places with

and no matter if I manage to bruise

tendons of scar tissue that are

or bless,

stronger than the skin that came before.

no matter how much I desire otherwise,

Mop up the blood of the fallen beside you. And press on.

I am human

(What would the tenderness of a caress mean
if that hand couldn't also destroy?)

and

And I have seen you rise again.

I will do what I must before it's over.

I will not leave you

You will know what you want
at the barrel of a gun,
when you jump out of a plane
and think, "I'm not done yet,"
when you think,
"There is more I want to do."

But what do I do if
hope is a thing with feathers
and despite my best efforts,
my feet are firmly bound by gravity?

"Hope" is the thing with feathers, Emily Dickinson said.
Perched on the soul. Asking nothing of the branch it lands upon.

But hope has always asked so very much of you.

It asks you to stay. To fight. To take the next step. To do the next best thing. To feed yourself and bathe and clean and walk and sing and write the next email and read the next page even when buried under the rubble of despair and crushed to the floor by its sheer, ever growing weight.

If your feet are trapped by gravity, can I be your wings? I have never felt comfortable with my head amongst the clouds—that was always you—but for you I would sprout wings. Hold you gently within my talons, and fly you through the gale and storm when your feathers are bedraggled and those endings are calling you.

Hope asks you to consider what might come next. Hope asks you to imagine a tomorrow even when yesterday fills the whole horizon like the ever-setting sun.

Or perhaps it's I who ask you that.

Well, I'm still listening, aren't I?

What if Orpheus had stayed

Would you, I want to ask,
would you follow me into the dark?
Into the endless night and
the nothing to follow,
to make sure I had a hand to hold
in case I felt afraid?

I would follow you into the dark
I would close my eyes against the empty
and I would brace my body against your pain
and fear
and hurt
and I would follow.

If I fought you tooth and nail,
would you listen to me or your heart?

*When you screamed, STOP,
I would look into your eyes
and tell you that I follow you
not as your protector,
not as your shield or your guard, but*

If I said I would never forgive you,
not for throwing your life away with mine,
would you do it still?

*as a hand to hold.
A breath to sync your breath to,
as a heart to remind you love exists.*

Are you going to come with me,
against my protests, against my wishes,
because you'd rather I be angry than alone?

*I would follow you because
the light does not exist for me
when you are in darkness.*

When I feel the pull, feel the tug,
and you think you can bring me back from the sunless land
but you know that there's no way to be sure,
would you take my hand,
an Orpheus who didn't look back?

*And I cannot promise you I would not look back.
Because after all, doesn't Orpheus prove his love with that glance?
He will not step into the light if Eurydice is not behind him.
He trusts no god, no greater force.
His faith is not in the heavens
but in her smile.
In her heart, her kindness, her laugh.*

If I am Eurydice and I am doomed,

would you follow me into the dark?

*But if I looked back.
If I doomed the journey to fail.
I would follow you down once again,
side by side, shoulder to shoulder, walking step by step
into a new kind of light.*

Is it hard to love a girl with a hero complex?

*As a little girl,
all she wanted was to be good.
as she grew, she learned there were consequences
if she couldn't give up thoughts of martyrdom,
of adventure,
of dying for love,
because this real world never quite lived up to its promise.
So if she still plays at the hero, how can you still love her?*

You've never been so attuned to anyone as
you are to her,
to the way her gaze flickers away when she's uncomfortable
or the pleading glances when she needs saving
(she never really needs saving).

God damn.
It is NOT hard loving a girl with a hero complex.

You know her smiles.
Beyond sincere and insincere,
beyond polite and excited,
you know her better than anyone.

Sometimes it hurts, sure,
when she sacrifices herself for the greater good.

(She knows you better than anyone, too,
but she keeps everything closer to her chest.)

You know to ask even if you're
certain of the answer,
not to push too hard,
and to sit in silence and in pain.

Sometimes it hurts, sure,
when she cannot seem to see
the blazing wings of gold,
the halo that erupts in light around her
when she strides into a room,
ready to take on injustice and hate.

You know not to slay her enemies,
the men who sent her to hell

because when she clawed her way back
she asked you not to,
and her desire for the possibility of goodness

must come before your need for revenge.
(Well, most of the time.)

She tells you that you would be fine without her,
and you know, you know, that
if she died the sun would go dark.

So you tell her,
It is never hard.

Growing symbiotically like the vine around the tree.

She would die for you in a heartbeat,
and she would sacrifice you for the greater good,

and she loves you more than anything.
And maybe,
just maybe,
the ancients were right. Maybe you two
were born together and separated,

Sometimes it hurts, sure.

But it is NEVER hard.
It is always easy.

Easy like breathing.
Like drinking cold water when you're thirsty.
Like relaxing into bed after a long day.

Because we've been created around each other.
Yes, I love you,
(holding each other.
holding space for each other)
yes, you will save the world one day,
yes, I will believe strongly enough for the both of us.

Like the mushrooms that flourish
in the shade of the brush and
in return nurture the soil
so the bush can grow strong and wild.
(yes, I am so afraid for you).

Loving a girl with a hero complex
means getting to see her change the world.
And that is NEVER hard.

because all you know is that you stopped crying
when she was born.

And this became a conversation in which
the girl in question once again thought,
how do you see me as this avenging angel
when there are days in which
I can barely get out of bed?
I'm not special.
I just want to save the world.
And I will fail.

And you reply,
Don't worry, love,
I will believe in you enough
for the both of us.

The fight: a reminder

I know I have to keep fighting. But I'm tired.
I need something to push me back into the fire,
amongst the wolves, feel the iron in my blood.

But I'm down.
But this is one of those times I don't *want* to be.

Give yourself a moment, an hour, a day—
let yourself breathe.
Let yourself break if breaking is what you need.
Close your eyes against the world for a second.

You will fight again.
You may be down for a time
and you may need help,
but the fight will call again and
you will answer.

It *will* call.
I *will* answer.
It needs to call—

It's just—
I'm so tired of fighting life.

My dearest hope
is that sometime very soon life gets tired
of fighting you.

Because you're that last woman in the ring—
life punches but it does not bring you down.
Someday soon life is going to get tired of bloodying its fist
and say, I give up with this one.
Time to give her the crown
and pave her path with roses.

Ya'aburnee

Do you know what it feels like
to be completely loved?

To be—well, baffled?
Undeserving, most certainly?
Caught up in this modern cliché of self loathing
and constant disbelief?

And then you have a friend.
And your friend says that she's not a writer,
but when the words are about you
it feels like it's something
a simple poet laureate might dismiss
because they can't see the nuance in
each gently billowing vowel.

And she know all of your smiles
and thinks they're all beautiful.

And she can drive you crazy,
can care about you too much,
can hold you too tightly.

But that's the thing.
She loves you.
Too much.

Do you know what it's like
to have found your other half?

Not just found it,
but never had to look
because she was always there next to you—
growing around and between your empty spaces,
creating depth and understanding
and love where you only had
smooth, granite walls?

She writes things that takes your breath away
and lets you touch her hair
and comfort her when
the touches on others feel like sandpaper

and she hugs you sometimes
so you believe you can hold the world together—
just the two of you.

She thinks she doesn't deserve
any of this,
but she doesn't realize
this miraculous *love* wouldn't exist without her.

And you'll never understand,
because your edges have all broken too sharp
and you're the furthest thing from normal
and she still thinks sunshine spills out
from all the cracks in your hollow bones
not yet filled with gold,

She's created the sacred
with her very presence beside you,
because when she walks into a room
the empty holes fill up with light
and the chasing shadows of
toomuch notenough faster farther do better all go quiet.
They are nothing beside her smile.

and you'll never really understand why,

There's no room for them because you fit together—

and you can't imagine anyone else
ever loving you like this,
but you know you already have
more than most people get
in a lifetime.

you on your tiptoes to fit your chin over her shoulder,
and her head dipped low
so you feel her hair on your cheek
and your arms tugging, pulling,
taking strength in the embrace.

Because you have her.

Love—all and any love—is never unidirectional.
Love exists between *people*
and it needs *their* strength
to keep it alive.

You just have to hope you die first,
so you never have to live without her.