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Page 189-197

Vineet Nandwana

My knuckles in rain

It's raining outside so we can't play.
We watch it smear the window
And you smoke a cigarette you shouldn't have,
As I tug loose threads on my blanket.
And we've stopped watching the TV,
Instead we start watching each other,
Weak Adam's apples forcing dry throats to swallow.
We wouldn't be caught dead letting our voices crack.
Think before you speak. Think before you act. Act on nothing. Over
think everything.
It's raining outside so we are frenzied with energy;

A fever trailing under our arms,
Red pools on our freckled cheeks and foreheads.
There isn't enough light in the room
and if my mother walked in we'd feel guilty for being too close.
What does it mean to feel guilty for existing?
It's raining outside and you dare me to kiss you
This is when I feel most rotten
We play this game and I know you think I'm kidding but I'm not
And we press our mouths together
And every time we do this something is new,
A hand on my cheek or my knees in your chest
But when the rain stops it's still just a game.
It should happen more than this,
More than when rain keeps us inside.
You say nothing and I say nothing

The Holy Cross Story

You have seen faces turn up in disgust
when you hold his hand.
The barista has not raised her eyebrows
and shook her head
when you paid for his coffee (cream, no sugar).
When you were 17
you didn't have to beg her mother
to let her daughter go to prom without a boy.
You didn't see him torn apart or
given nightly devotionals and
extra time at the church and
meetings with the pastor
to cure him of your time together.
You have never felt the guilt
of being the reason her family hates her.
or the fear that because of you she will be
sent to the streets.
You have never been so on edge with him
that the slightest whisper
makes you jump out of your skin,
knowing being seen could mean he is ripped away.
Mothers don't pull their children away
or avert their eyes when they see you hold her.
they do not think your love is a virus
they can catch through eye contact.
Your space to love loudly
is not inhibited.

You can find it at every turn.
so do not tell us that
in taking a fraction of this for ourselves
we have created the need for an added month
of straight pride.
We thought twelve would be enough for you.

To us, I am sorry

To the kids that hate themselves for dreaming of running away
To a place where the smallest stars don't feel like home
more than being under their own roof does.

To the kids that sit crumpled on their bathroom floor,
broken, red-eyed and tear-less
the ones that itch to see crimson draw across their wrists again
just one more time
(one more line)

trying to bleed out the inescapable dirt
that they think runs through their veins.

To the kids who go straight to their room without having to be told,
not saying a word.

To the kids who don't talk to their parents anymore
because they're afraid that
today will be the day they hear that disgust,
crushing disappointment,
waves of hatred lapping at the shores of lips
whose only purpose was to say "I love you" when they needed it.

To all the kids who were taught,
from the moment they realized,
that God is every kind of love but theirs,
that their existence is a one-way ticket to hell, a fault.

To the kids that can't help but love the people that break them
because they want nothing more than to feel that way themselves.

To all the queer kids;

to us.

I'm so sorry.

Then and now

In kindergarten I learned that the word gay means happy
But in middle school I learned that the word gay was
 offensive
 derogatory
 nothing related to happiness
So I admired girls on television
Became infatuated with beautiful women
 And I told myself
 “I wanna be like her”
Because society never told me I could like girls
 But then one day in high school

 You realize
 You want to be on top of her
 But when you tell your mom
 “I’m gay”
 She rolls her eyes
 And “no one wants this for their child”
 And “it’s just a phase”
 And “it’s not natural”
 And “I’ll be praying for you”
But Mom, I’ll tell you what it’s really like
 It’s like getting drunk
 So you can force yourself to kiss boys
Hoping this time it will maybe, just maybe, feel different
 It’s like doing everything you can to convince yourself
 And others

“I’m not gay”

“I would never”

Like how the word lesbian still feels dirty rolling off your tongue

It’s like falling into depression your senior year of high school

Because you can’t even tell your friends

And you’re scared

And you’re anxious

And society tells you it’s wrong

And you think back to kindergarten when the word gay was
supposed to mean happy

But Mom, I’ll tell you what it’s really like

It’s like one day you meet a girl with eyes as blue as the clear
summer sky

And she makes your heart skip a beat

And she calms even your best days

And maybe this is what feelings are

And maybe this is love

And maybe no man has ever come to close to making you feel this
way

So your good days become great days

And your self-confidence is the highest it’s ever been

And you feel free

And you feel you

And you have hopes

And you have dreams again

And that’s what it’s really like, Mom.

And this isn’t just a phase

And this is my life

And in kindergarten I learned that the word gay means happy and I
finally believe that it does.

Vineet Nandwana

Vineet Nandwana is an Engineering Student, doing his Bachelors in Computer Sciences. He has been since last few years, indulging with his writings in various writing projects for films and radio series. An emotion can only be portrayed through one's thoughts and the love which is at the receiving end of all human emotions is just a comparison that exists in the mind of a person who has a comparing perspective. His poetry reflects such an elated form of existence, which exists and is, on the scale of low to hard, extreme.



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