

A woman's hands are shown holding a small, white, crescent-shaped ceramic dish with a gold floral design. The background is a textured, light-colored wall. The woman's hair is visible on the right side of the frame.

Smiling *in the Dark*

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The Distant Rumble

On the edge of a volcano I have lived for many years.
Now it seems the distant rumble's getting louder in my ears.
I have tried to walk away from broken pieces of the past,
but their edges tear my feet like shattered glass.
I have tried to push disturbing thoughts beyond the reach of man.
I have tried to burn my bridges but I've only burned my hand.
Pushing things under the carpet hoping that they'll go away.
but I know I'll lose my balance any day.

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Alone

I'm fine; the sun is shining. God is in the heavens.

All is well with the world.

I am dying; it is dark.

God. where are you? Have you forgotten me so quickly?

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Smiling *in* the Dark

When greatness seems to vanish faster than the morning mist—
when purple robes dissolve beneath a touch—
when crowds and cheers are hushed and stilled
and spotlights turn their faces—
I stand alone, I'm smiling in the dark.
He who would be greatest must be the servant of all.
I hear it now, a softer, truer, call.

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Lost

Of course. I'll never fail you.

You can count on me.

I'm the one who is always faithful.

I feel my feet are slipping.

I hear them count me out.

I'm lost, faithless.

I'll never make it home.

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Denial

Denial is my closest friend— it keeps the world at bay;
it makes me dance to any tune and say what I should say.

It builds a wall around my heart invisible but strong.

I'm always there but never quite belong.

Winter

A winter landscape no relief.

A cold gray blanket settles on my soul.

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Illusion

One day I decide to see if there is more beyond these mocking,
mirrored walls; there is only one way out.

It is through the glass.

I cut my hands, my feet, my heart.

I think I'll bleed to death, but the ground I am on is solid,
though covered with my blood.

I look over my shoulder to see my glassy cage,
but it's not there.

It was only an illusion,
an illusion strong enough to make me bleed.

Fear

Today I am afraid. My enemies are many;
they march up to my door and blow with all their might.
They take my name and tar and feather it for all the world to see.
I stand and watch. They whisper in my ear.
“It’s all over. The curtain’s coming down.
The crowd is going home. The lights are going out.”

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Close *to* the Floor

I never knew you lived so close to the floor,
but every time I am bowed down,
crushed by this weight of grief, I feel your hand on my head,
your breath on my cheek, your tears on my neck.
You never tell me to pull myself together,
to stem the flow of many years.
You simply stay by my side for as long as it takes,
so close to the floor.

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Why I Shutter *my* Heart

Why do I shutter my heart?

Why do I keep it closed on days when it seems about to break?

Why can't I let it go?

Why can't I ask for help and admit that I'm barely alive?

I think if I voice it-I'd have to believe it, to hear all the sadness.

I just could not bear it.

That's why I shutter my heart.

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Fear *and* Shame

Fear and shame have clothed me like a suit of cheap perfume—
impossible to point to, but felt in every room.

They keep me walking on the line; They hold me to the flame,
yet make me smile as if my blistered flesh can feel no pain.

They pull me far away from those whose hands I long to hold;
they keep me safe; they keep me winter cold.

So now I choose to walk away from what I know so well.

I leave behind this Judas seed and all the lies I tell,
and as I stand with empty hands upon this valley floor,

I ask, dear Jesus, walk me through this door.

Silence

Silence. I hear my breath, but nothing else.

The world is quiet. I am alone.

Someone turned the lights out and everyone went home.

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Let It Go

So many nights I sat alone weighing the emptiness,
 handling this stone.
Day after day, lost in the noise, stifle the sadness,
 muffle the voice, and then the hammer fell;
 it took the house as well.
Let it go. let the whole thing go.

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Time *to* Laugh Again

I tore down the dark and dismal drapes
that hung like dead men on the gallows.

I threw open the windows and cried out
as the sunlight spilled into this silent room as surprised as I.
And as my eyes became accustomed to this fierce and searching light,
I realized it was time to laugh again.

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

I Whisper Your Name

I whisper your name and before it sounds on my lips,
you are here by my side.

Too blind to see, too afraid to ask
it took the loss of all I had to discover who I am.
Some nights are darker than the sea bed with no moon,
but a stronger light that fits me like a baby in the womb
moves me through the mist.

I would live a thousand nights without one star
to know that when I whisper your name here you are.

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Finger Painting *with* Picasso

Master strokes across a faceless canvas— bold moves,
color splashes over stones. unfettered, young, full of dreams.
Beneath his brush the impossible comes to life, awesome and intimate.
I stand amazed, silenced by the gift; then He dips my finger in the paint
and I become part of the picture. I feel so small.

It's like finger painting with Picasso.
But as God takes my hand the paint on His melds with mine.
A new color is born.

NOTES, THOUGHTS, ETC.

Do You Want *to* Get Well?

Prayers are heard when children pray,
though sometimes it takes years to find the strength
to listen to the truth behind the tears.

Her body grew, as children do;
inside she lived alone, a little girl,
her spirit bruised and trapped beneath a stone.

But one day in her prison cell,
a tiny shaft of light began to burst through bars of steel
and lift the dead of night.

And as the little girl looked up she saw herself all grown,
and the hand she took that led her out
looked strangely like her own.

Joy

It came so soft one winter's night;
I never heard the door or felt it dance into the room
and sail across the floor.

It crept upon my shoulder and kissed me on the head.
and joy became a friend of mine to call me from the dead.
For so long I have felt this need but never knew its name
until its warmth began to melt my snow-encrusted frame.

I see a look upon my face. I know it came to stay.
I never will forget this winter's day.

