

“What happened to you?”

Millie looked into the mirror and saw a much younger face, that of a baby girl from an old picture, residing within her own aged reflection.

“All we wanted was love. And we’re still searching.”

She sighed impatiently and looked down.

“While everyone else soared like eagles, we’re still pecking around on the ground looking for love and stability.”

She felt heavy and dejected. The rest of the evening lay ahead of her but she had no idea in what direction to head. She sat and wondered what made her happy as if she hadn’t already known. Millie had done it all already; taken a bath, mixed a latte, and watched an informative documentary. Her physical senses were satisfied.

But she couldn’t contrive others’ love for her. She could convince herself that a passing interaction with a woman at her company from a few days prior indicated a liking for her, but it was in vain. It was a selfish attempt from a coworker at keeping the peace at the workplace in order to sustain their own sense of mental and emotional safety. It was hard to miss. The woman had initiated a lively back-and-forth only to fall back into a demeanor of stoicism as soon as she had perceived the response from Millie was positive and moved on. It disgusted her. It was disgusting to see and disgusting that she found herself doing the same.

She had given up on the call back that was promised to her from a family member. The call felt forced and waiting to be cared about made her feel pathetic. Millie had calculated that in order to receive love, one must have the capacity to love another. That seemed to be how it worked amongst people. But when one had no capacity, not without want of it, what were they to do?

Once again she found herself stuck and without an answer nor the energy to try and come up with one.

*I ponder the days of old;
I meditate on all that you have done;
I ponder the work of your hands.
I stretch out my hand to you;
My soul thirsts for you like a parched land.*

She thought of gold leaf. The beauty of its aesthetic. She thought of the way certain colors made her feel. Today, it was magenta where within her arose a warm ‘je ne sais quois’. She loved the way light and dark contrasted in a painting. She thought of soup and the way it made her feel when she was cold and needed the nutrients and the atmosphere. She was intrigued at the way her long, tied hair felt on her back, as though keeping her from doing anything rash. She loved the restfulness of an old novel, and the mindful pace in which it spoke to her as she lay in bed. She oddly enjoyed the restraint of a slight sickness when she had nowhere to be and nothing immediate to do, giving her reason to take a break, easing her need-to-do mind.

As she drifted through these moments, Millie sneezed. Then she walked over, sat by the window, and looked outside.