

You Won't Understand When You're Older

Abstract: My goal in this project was to exemplify the feelings of insecurity that manage to leak into adulthood. Regardless of their origin, whether that be childhood wounds or recent tragedies, insecurities have been a propelling influence on all of our lives. I didn't want to convey anything other than their presence and affect, because oftentimes those two things are all that remain.

The boogeyman is my best friend,
My coach, my confidant.
I tell him my greatest fears, and he tells me how I feel.
The boogeyman thinks for me,
Speaks for me,
Sometimes even eats for me
(Only when I've been eating too much, he tells me).
He offers me helpful advice
And realistic timelines
Like when to stop talking, show less teeth when I smile, or
Laugh every once in a while – lest I look desperate.
He tells me that I am, but he holds my hand every step of the
Way down the staircase to Dismay.
“Everyone winds up down here,” he'd say.
I think he means everyone down here winds up afraid.
Fears of growing up, of clowns, even the dark for some newcomers
Most people are scared of much worse – rejection, isolation, abandonment.
The best part about Dismay, the boogeyman tells me, is nobody's lonely here.
“You can't be in Dismay by yourself.”
I'd smile at him for making me feel at home,
But he hates when I do that.
The boogeyman tells me he's the best friend I'll ever have;
Strangely enough, I don't feel all that glad.

At first I wanted to be a veterinarian,
Then I wanted to be an actress.
I went from wanting to help to playing helpless
I used to think alcoholism was impossible

I still told myself this, halfway through the week's third handle

Turns out alcohol's good for only two things --

Making a really big mess,

And cleaning.

Being skinny came so naturally to me as a teen

That I almost blamed myself more for eating too much

Instead of being pretty.

Almost.

One of the most well-known videos from my youth

Is of me making fun of my teeth

After I spent high school bridled by braces

I stopped finding younger me's natural smile funny.

Before, a nose job was too expensive

Now, the results are priceless.

I'm not sure at what age, time, or phase

Natural elegance becomes constrained and confined

I just wish I cared as much for other people's bodies and lives

The way everyone seemingly cares for mine.

My words used to mean more,

Back when I didn't care what I wore

Black and white aren't so different anymore

Now I reside in greyscale

Where there's no Heaven or Hell.

The monsters under my bed keep me well fed,

Morsels of nostalgia to make me believe

The kid in me's not still dead.

She was reckless, impulsive, and self-indulgent

Everything I need to be

And nothing I ever could return to.

I lose sleep over a scale,
Stretch marks, crooked teeth,
Asymmetry and being too pale.
If I could change anything about who I was
I'd change only places;
Go from following trends and phases
To losing track of days and
Getting drunk on the Sun's rays.
If younger me had one thing right
It would be living in spite of being wrong.
I've traded spite for fear
It was a losing deal.

Mother Nature cries not for her grass covering her flesh
Nor for her existing craters and natural mess.
She ne'er stumbles under the weight of gravity,
Loses no sleep under the dirty looks of the universe.
Her voice speaks in thunders,
Not in whispering tremors.
She seeks to be cherished for her magic endured,
She yearns for an unconditional embrace of unspeakable grace.
Her heart beats only to the rhythm of her soul's song.
I am my Mother's daughter.

As a child, I was terrified of elevators.
No matter how high, no matter how long the ride
Confined to a highly improbable demise
I'd rather have climbed to the doorstep of
Heaven, without a harness.
I trusted my hold on anything more than I did technology

With age,
That fear has not faded, but changed.
I now cannot get a grip.
I stand for nothing, perpetually falling
For the wrong promises
The wrong people, yet
The right lies.
I'm not afraid of elevators
But I am scared of heights,
Only ones that imply a fall of great calibre;
From a pedestal of my mother's expectations,
From the way my partner so highly reveres me,
From the path of my mind that leads nowhere,
From the peak of my life's trajectory.
If I fall from any of these
There wouldn't be enough stairs to get me back from square one.
I think I'll take the elevator.

The child asks me a question
Eyes red after school, from negative attention,
"Who are you?"
It costs nothing to be honest, but to myself I
Have everything to lose.
I tell the mirror,
"I am you."
Our laugh sounds unreal, hers leading mine
Duality of a child is adulthood divine;
Innocence begets maturity.
She'll learn of divorce, of debt, of loss
And I'll learn to forget what I'm told to do, feel, or say.

Getting old is a lot easier when you simply refuse.

“If you don’t compete, you can’t lose.”

A mantra for the unbothered,

Never ringing any less true,

Yet here we are playing for keeps.

If there is no race to be won

And I cannot keep up,

Will I still sacrifice my stake in the game?

I’ve placed my bets on the right place and

The right time

In the eleventh hour I find

Solace in the middle of nowhere.

I cannot be where I am needed

I cannot be who they seem to desire

I can only be enough for me;

What does that make you?