

Forests

What were you, before they came for a hike,
Before they kept walking off the trail,
Before they came back with chainsaws
And tore down your trees?

Did you sing in the morning? Did you run,
Around the block and then back home, greeting people in the early morning air?
You were always a hard worker, or maybe that's a search for your branches.
Where are your bare bones, love?

Did they give you to the lumberjack down the road, for sawdust?
Did you get turned into the pages of a book, or the paper on which the next hit star wrote down
Their first lyrics, the guitar riffs to make them famous?

Maybe in our search for the pieces, we could see the world.
Finally go into that city, maybe into an old morgue.
I will hunt for your leaves, should you let me.
I will replant what had been destroyed.

Hazel

Quiet!

Quiet in the courtroom, I preach.
Nothing is done, nothing is done!
Fading memories beat back over, and
Over, until you can't see anymore;
They crowd coffins,
You might as well be laid in the ground.

Flickers in the lights –

In, out

In, out

Like a dog and a doggy door,

We're like the raven –

Nevermore.

I can't see, so I dream, colors so

Vivid that I scream.

In these days, you'll come and go;

Come too fast, leave too slow

And I'll sit in the corner dreaming of

The ladies who come and go, speaking

Of Michaelangelo.

Oh the cathedral? Was that even him?

Do I dare to dream, to think

Of the days gone by?

I see hazel behind my eyes, and I

Am a Knight of Cups –

Sensitivity.

Yet I didn't care enough to save the

Hazel, lingering, behind my eyes.

Red locks pass over me, running

My fingers through auburn hair and

The raven is screeching –

Nevermore.

Music box dreams drawl on in a sing song,

Reap the land they sow and

I can't think.

I can't breathe.

You took that part of me,

Whistling in the night,

Through the building.

There's a Twisted Nerve and the

Classroom's silent,

Obituary's written,

Dinner is dead.

Veins lost color.

Hazel behind closed eyes.

Guitar riffs ring, and everything is silent.

I write, yet the voices keep yelling

Quiet!

Quiet in the courtroom

Let me be judged!
The raven screeches-
None to hear.

I am the Queen of Swords
Double edged body,
Sighs in the darkness...

Hazel eyes,
Haunt me in dreams,
Hazel eyes
Confront me in the worst of means
And guitar riffs still scream out of the stereo –
Twisted Nerve goes on
And on
And on

And the raven screeches-
Nevermore!

Silence

That was the day that silence fell over the dinner table,
the same day the blood in her veins fell silent,
the sound of her voice fell silent,
the hacking in the next room over that kept me up some nights
and the breaths that powered the woman that helped raise me
they all
fell
silent.

That was the day that we realized
No matter how hard you want to stay, or go
Or live, or die,
it's just not enough;
you can't love someone alive.

That was the day that her body began to truly rot,
empty, motionless,
no more memories to be made.
The blood that once ran the suit,
the heart that once pumped through it,
ran as silent
as we did at the dinner table.

They tell you about loss,
but do they tell you anything at all?
Do they tell you that you will wake up every day for the next week,
forget that they're gone,
and you'll remember when you hear a funeral arrangement,
when you suddenly get hit by the realization that
they really are gone,

never to return.

No.

They don't tell you that people cope in different ways
that over a dinner table of silence,
your family can be thinking about whores, booze, writing and slitting their wrists
all at the same time.

They don't tell you that there's always something you didn't do.

You didn't spend enough time,
You didn't treat them well enough,
You didn't brush your damn teeth before you greeted them every morning and,
somehow,
that progressed the death in their bodies.

They don't tell you that you forget the sound of their voice first,
that sometimes you wake up from nightmares running for comfort,
only to realize that it's not there anymore,
that sometimes,
even though it could never happen,
you convince yourself
that they're still with you
as a ghost,
or an apparition,
that they didn't really leave - not yet.

That,

maybe,

They traded in every single bone, blood cell, and hair on their head to pull pranks on you
in the afterlife.

They always talk about how hard it is,
about how you miss the person,

you miss what was,
but you don't have the choice to do that
when you're sixteen years old and the only people you've never seen cry
are off somewhere with tissues.
You don't have the choice to talk about your memories,
when the fondest ones you have are of
just the two of you, up late at night talking about how much you want out,
how much you just want to leave,
how you don't think you have the will to even wake up the next morning and brush your damn
hair.

People don't want to hear those things.
They wouldn't want to know about the words that tumbled out of her mouth that kept me alive
as most of everyone I knew turned their backs,
or walked out the door
or didn't really care in the first place.

No, they don't tell you that you don't stop your public facade.
You don't get to grieve like you should,
and, if you find the time to,
an extended family member showing up at 4 o'clock in the morning will fix that.

They don't tell you that people will flood into the wake,
into the funeral,
they'll hug you,
kiss your cheeks,
tell you they're sorry,

but no one ever tells them that their actions make it worse.
That the word is moving faster than your relative's heart,
You'll see for yourself, though
won't you?

They don't tell you it's coming.

Or, maybe they do,
maybe they prepare you
try to make you ready, for when they fall over.
They don't tell you that even when they've been in misery for years,
when they didn't want to even get out of bed,
they don't tell you that the knowledge doesn't help.
They don't tell you there's no way to prepare,
that all of us just have to get hit by the broom behind the knees,
fall on our asses, and hope we can get back up.
No, they don't tell you that.
But I will.
I will tell you that I cried oceans,
alone,
but I shed a handful of tears in public or to anyone I cared about.
I'll tell you about the nightmares you get,
I get,
about losing my entire family,
of her reaching out to me in her final moments and me being gone.
I will tell you about how I almost resented everyone trying to help,
because the words
"You meant so much to her" and "She loved you"
in past tense
made it almost unbearable,
like the oceans of "sorry for your loss"'s and "if there's anything I can do, let me know"'s
No, there's nothing you can do.
There's nothing anyone can do, not really.
You won't move on for a long time.
The won't tell you that one day,

you may not even remember the name you loved so much for sixteen years of your life,
but I will.

I will tell you that not a day will go by with a song playing by their favorite artist that you don't
think of them.

I will tell you that you can only stay strong through insensitivity so long before it catches up,
and I will tell you that no one can make you feel better.

They'll tell you that your loved one is in a better place, but I won't.

I won't say a word.

I will stand by when you need me, with whatever you need to kill off the pain because I know,
I know,

that I'll tell you that the sound of their voice is the first thing to leave,
and the second is the way your family used to be.

Their smell is next,
their mannerisms, their hugs, the little things,
those all go too, if you ask.

I'll tell you to hold on to the memories, to the photos and the laughs before you forget them all,
and then I'll tell you that
nevermind, the dinnertime conversation is the first thing to go.