

Impressions

SABRINA
BECKHAM

I'm an archeologist today.

July 1st

I'm an archeologist today, digging through my own self. I don't know when I buried these parts, these treasures. I thought one outgrew and shed them with age, yet, here they are, right underneath the surface. I'm careful as I dig them out, afraid they may break in my hands and turn to dust. That they may blend in with the dirt, that the very wind may take them away. How did this happen? Could my own hands have done this? The hands that crafted each unique fragment, the hands that ran across the mounds and found them once more? Could these hands have buried them in the first place?

They did. I buried parts of myself every time external judgement superseded my own, every time I perceived my own 'too much' and took less of my fair portion for the comfort of others. Every time I saw tenderness in claws and thanked my attackers for the scars. Perhaps it was an act of mercy. If I buried these parts, others couldn't hurt them. I took my shiniest, best, most valuable insides and asked them to lie dormant and lifeless. I put myself to aesthetic use and filled the gaps with meaningless things I wouldn't mind losing along the way. But this could never last. I yearned for myself and the creases never truly healed. The moment you learn to please everyone is the moment the façade feels most disgusting. I gave myself up for this? Really? I never want another compliment for a figure that isn't truly my own. Should I be despised or loved, let it be for the parts that are precious, not pretend.

I have so much to uncover, to unlearn. I find fragments and only then notice I'm missing parts of myself. But to miss yourself is the worst and best feeling, it is to realize you are less now and will be more later. The joys of youth do not lie in the past, but in the future. Youth is only a term for who I was before this plot was chosen and the dirt was stacked. It is not the ideal for what was. One never thinks of the past with nostalgia while still in their youth. Youth is knowing an expanse beyond the present is only a step away. When, then, did the expanse become a plot? I will fill my hands with cool earth, dirty my nails and clothes, and breathe in the scent. You, earth, have held me in your careful arms, have preserved me better than a shelf or box ever could.

Within this patch I find parts of myself that I gave to others. I kneel here, shocked, in disbelief that they still exist. I thought those who left me still had them, but now I realize they couldn't walk away from me without dropping my parts first. My parts were not collecting dust on shelves or in boxes. They were here, held by the earth. I always find my way back to myself.

I will study the theoretical, I will recall how to put these parts back together. I have found the resources to do so. I see instructions in the smiles of ten years ago, in the easy assurance of success that flows from the pen of a writer secure of herself and her world. Perhaps, even then, she knew I would need the steps outlined. She left me a key. She knew I would break apart, but not how, and she left every method of mending. In doing so, she inspires not only a mending, but a strengthening. Knowledge

flows through my creases and the elusive everyone cannot overcome me again.

I will break again. But what does it matter if I break now that I know I'm breakable? If one is threatened with the worst and the worst happens, there is little to frighten them. If I break, I know mending doesn't come from the inconstant external. I am the mending. If I can craft and bury myself, I can find my parts once again. I can put them back in place.

I am an archeologist today, digging through my own self. I am here alone with my discoveries and each rough slice greets me like an old friend. If I lose my parts again, let it be because they were knocked out of me. They'll be so much easier to find on the surface. But never again will I grope within and take out parts to bury because their life in the sun made others uncomfortable. I yearn for myself more than I yearn for their aesthetic. There are parts I buried in the dark, and only now can I see them for what they truly are.

Some parts are tiny and to gain them is to lose a lifelong papercut. Others are so large I am astonished to have stood and walked and breathed without them. Sometimes I don't think existence is about life or death, it's not counted in the minutes of bodily functions. It's in the whole and the hollow. There's life in this dirt and a wholeness only steps away. The finding and mending will happen. But only if one digs for long enough.

Yours,
SB

What is a romantic to do...
August 28th

What is a romantic to do
When there's no muse to turn to?
The object of greatest affection
Is missing from her introspection.
Who will compare to the rose
And who will throw her in throes?
Whose name will ornament speech
And whose favour will she beseech?
How boredom buries the mind
That seeks a world fully designed
By the greatest artists and writers,
Yet is fraught full of pale reciters.
With music and food all but tossed
Away in love's labor lost,
A writer must pair with her pen
And hope inspiration flows in.

Yours,
SB