



Wisdom for Composing my Memoir

Feelings drive an arm toward fruit
We rest on deep rhetoric
When they say they saved me
My life would never be the same knowing
Falling off the bridge the body
hardly even makes a sound
In progress
I push the plush white towel to my cheek

Yelling in cars

She said I am worthless, unwanted like dust

Shimmer less, your joy disgusts me

I crane my neck, trying to avoid her gaze as she revels in pleasure

Her rhyme and reason seems real, it controls me

Violence only seen by the moon

Whipped, inundated with her narrative

Her mockmind doesn't mother me

I wish she'd snap my neck and kill

Astonished I am here, still not me though

Seatbelts

They're meant to [protect] you. I usually like them. Tight woven fabric, perfectly smooth to touch. This time, I felt like I was being restrained — breath heavy, heart rate rising. I couldn't move- I couldn't- I- Body frozen. Mind frozen.

The edges of the belt **digging** into skin.

They're supposed to [protect] you. Then again, parents are too.

Phantom

Haven't been in the same room in 506 days. Though she's been around more, recently.

Can feel her. Hand on skin. On leg. On body. On thigh. Time to disappear. Hand on—
Mind is reeling. Across country. No relief. Getmeoutgetmeoutgetm- Why can I feel her?

WHY CAN I FEEL HER? Helphelpmepleasehelpme. PLEASE. Mind still reeling.
I'm reeling. Body. Commodity. She's feeling me. She can feel me. Can she still feel me?
Here. Me, not her. There. Her, not me. She's gone. Gone. Her. She's gone. I'm here. I'm
still here. Me.

New

Some things are just dust, some things are worthless

Shimmering and disgusting, it can be both

Cranes are not always still

Don't let the rhyme schemes control

Moons are not violent, neither are you

The inundation of hate, words like a whip but,

Don't let the mockminded mother harden you

I will not stick my neck in her noose, I will not let her kill

Astonish them, me

Cell phones

I had my phone with google maps pulled up the whole drive.

I didn't know exactly where I was going but I knew I had to get out.

Eventually pulling over, the glow of its screen sterile, nothing like the pinkish purplish glow from the lamp in my bedroom I just left for the last time.

I turned it off, my eyes tired of the strain, I'd been crying the whole drive.

Out of my car.

I had my phone and keys in hand, not sure where I was going, but I knew I couldn't sit still in wait.

I'd only taken a few steps when my phone started buzzing in hand.

I glanced down, Stevi's name scrolling across the screen.

I hung up, kept walking.

They called again.

Why are they calling again?

I waited, staring at the screen.

They weren't hanging up.

Why weren't they hanging up?

Give up.

I already have.

I reluctantly answered but when I heard their voice I started crying again.

Crying, holding phone to ear, their words, soft and kind as they always were, but—

distant, I didn't know where they were, they sounded like they were scared but they didn't say it.

I ended up at the top of a staircase under a bridge and sat down, everything starting to get heavy.

At some point, I didn't even know what was in my hand and how I could hear Stevi.

It was cold from the air but my hands were getting sweaty.

Gripping on hard.

Didn't want to lose them.

Couldn't lose them.

Please.

p

l

e

a

s

e

“I've got you Al.”

Drowning her out

I am not worthless, I am more than dust

Shimmer in the face of disgust

Like a crane, finding pleasure in stillness

She cannot control, no more of her rhyme and reason, i am not my illness

The moon bears witness to her violence

Inundated, whipped, drowned in silence

Mockminded mother

She's got my neck, she can't kill me, please don't let her

Astonished, I will be me again, new

Zipper binders

I left it on the bed. I had just made it too. The sheet and blanket smoothed out over the mattress, laying flat and unmussed. The hard work it took, the money to buy it.

I had wanted a blue one, they only had red and purple at the store and I was too impatient to wait to go back another day. I chose the latter.

Black with an oblong purple patch on the front and back.

Mostly I liked it because it had so many pockets inside and it all zipped up to be contained in one big binder satchel esq thing. No risk of losing or forgetting.

Slant

Slanted lines Slanted lies Slanted compliments
Chin-chin
Almonds Dark/black/cat like Ethnic

Oriental Exotic Can you even see?
Ching Chong Snake slits
Chink Alien

Chenzhou, Hunan Province

instead of a mother
concrete steps holding me
left alone
maybe wrapped in a blanket
an infant a week old
maybe warm rain falling around me
heavy and thick
air
suffocating
humid and empty
i imagine the sky dark
no way to actually be sure
i don't know
i remember though

Sorry

2018

“We don’t understand you.”

“Why are you like this?”

“What did we do wrong?”

2019

“I’m sorry. I’m sorry I was such a bad mother. I’m sorry I’m a terrible person. I’m sorry you hate me. I’m sorry.”

2020

“Why are you still doing this to us? We apologized. What more do you want?”

2022

“We thought you were better. Why would you lie to us?”

2023

[

]

2024

“You can come back but we don’t want you to.”

Dear—

I'm [REDACTED]
my own [REDACTED] sorry [REDACTED] I am
sorry [REDACTED] boundaries [REDACTED] are [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] painful [REDACTED] acknowledge
[REDACTED] pain. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] mine [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] stop [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] think [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] see this,
[REDACTED] me [REDACTED]

Love,

Searching for—

Don't know what to write
Words feel

Trite

Stale

Old

Stuck in the past?

Or learning from it?

Someone

Please,

Please tell me where to look.

Forgive and forget right?

Do I make too big of a deal?
Or not big a deal enough?

Am I healing or just rehashing?

Corners

I like right angles
because I like bein
g right. When pose
d with the question
of if I'd rather mak
e peace or be right,
I would rather be ri
ght. Stop rewriting.

Stop rewriting. There is no right, right? Am I right? You're right, I am right. That's not right.
No I don't care if you do something wrong. I just like to be right. I am not alright. No yeah th
at's alright. I'm just not alright. Corners are right. I don't fight though, that's not rightrightrig

Quiet

I was six I was six
I was six the first time she touched me and told me not to tell. "It's different," she said. "I'm your
I was six I was six
The school guidance counselor's videos never mentioned anything about this. They always
I was six I was six
mom so it's ok." "Only men can touch you inappropriately." "This is safe because I am your
I was six I was six
said our parents were safe and to tell them about unsafe touch. That must mean that their
mom." "I'm your real mom, no one else is." "I can touch you like this because you're my
I was six I was six
touch can't be unsafe, right? I was six I was six
No one would believe you. You are lying. Why would you say that. Don't make things up.
daughter. It isn't weird. I was six I was six
I was six I was six
They'll be worse to you than this. Don't be ungrateful. I was six I was six
She told me she was the reason I was alive. She saved me. I owe myself to her. I owe this to her.

moons

mockminded

violence (p)

(l) mothers

s h i m m e r

PLEASE

dust

disgust

please

stillness

astonish

(e)

pleasure

you

no.

witness

(a)

control

whip

drowned

(s)

DON'T

harden

please

(e)

Please.



Window
cans & lamps nearby
by

protected by soft
vallet

bubble of safety

under black walls

where it
is

Jenny's
chair

laughter from
S

swan

talking
ughing
from
students

Jenny's messy
desk

open to
of giza

Purple

My therapist says that although kids might not admit it, they crave boundaries. They signal to the brain safety, predictability, that an adult knows what's happening. They are contained.

I hate making decisions. Secondary colors were always an easy answer to my favorite color because then I technically got to choose two colors.

My mom's a therapist. She must not have heard the boundary thing before she bought me. Jenny graded with a purple pen instead of red. Not because she was trying to make her corrections and comments less intimidating, just because purple was her favorite color. Just because.

My body has been in fight or flight mode since I exited the womb. No adults to set boundaries. The first time I felt my body collapse in on itself, I thought I was dying. Turns out it was just releasing, softening.

She hugged me in the hallway as the two minute bell rang. I told her I was fine. She told me class could wait. I soften a little more.

My classmates said the color purple had been ruined for them. They couldn't look at it without feeling like they were being critiqued, scrutinized, judged. I felt the opposite.

8am bell rings. One more squeeze, a soft smile.

Tea

The kettle full, Stevi turns it on.

Gave me their favorite mug.

I understand why it is,

Hand painted. The perfect weight

and shape in my hands.

A good handle too. Big enough

to slip my hand through it.

The inside a cobalt blue.

The outside mustard yellow, with a

black cat half smiling at me,

Shrouded with small pink flowers.

They plopped a tea bag in,

Said it was their favorite brand,

And sat back down.

I sipped on the tea, still hot but not scalding.

And felt the tension in my jaw lessen a smidge.

I drifted in and out of sleep and at some point,

they covered me with a blanket. The clacking of

their keyboard and intermittent humming, easing

Me back to sleep each time I shuttered awake.

Kitchen Table

It came with the house.

A little stained, divots in the surface of unfinished wood.

But sturdy.

Sturdy.

Placemats placed strategically, blemishes hidden.

Placed by the window.

Watch the cars and bikes whir by.

Watch the people and their dogs walk.

Watch the birds in the sky.

Even after four became five

We still sit at our kitchen table.

We have a bigger dining room table.

Habits are just hard to break.

Mammals are pattern seeking.

We like predictability.

I like predictability.

Table moves throughout the day.

By night, has shifted at least an inch away from the wall.

We move it back.

Start again in the morning.

Title

School¹

¹ Breaks from school, they were like walking into a spider web. But school was where I could take a full breath. I only had to change lockers once a year. I had to change houses twice a week. Home sometimes got the power and water shut off. Home had shouting. Home had diets I had to follow. Home had new men every other month. Homehadhomehadhomehadhomehadhomehad

Table of Contents (CWE #9.3)

Franklin Elementary School Library².....1
Freedom Intermediate School Art Classroom³.....17
Freedom Middle School West Wing⁴.....28
Hume Fogg High School, Floor Two, English Corner⁵.....45
Seattle University, Student Center 120⁶.....62

² I never got to go to muffins with mom. Mom never showed up. Probably forgot and was asleep. Mrs. Bryant took me in fourth grade. We shared a poppy seed muffin.

³ Told Miss. Land I was sad. Told her I silently cried every night. Told her I felt hopeless. She told me to tell my mom, to ask to see a doctor. Mom told me I was fine. She knew what depression was, I didn't have it, I smiled too much to be depressed.

⁴ Spent more time in the art room than either parent's house. I liked the smell of dried paint. Liked how all the shelves had labels. Liked the windows that peaked out on the purple irises.

⁵ A dream where I want to go home and I get to and when I get home I arrive to Jenny's classroom. She's boiled water and a cup of tea is waiting for me.

⁶ In EMDR you create "resources" to use when you're encountering a traumatic memory and you start to get flooded. One of the resources is a safe place that you can imagine going to, a place where you feel safe and grounded. I go to Stevi's office. Their arms wrapped around me, their breaths even, lulling me to softness like a hammock in the summer.

Pennies.

Love?

Saw a penny on the floor,

“Heads up, good luck!”

Picked it up, gave it to me.

“Your luck now.”

Slipped in pocked.

Carried it.

Carried me.

It carried me.

Moved houses with me.

Moved 2,406 miles with me.

The penny. Not her.

Lost the penny. Lost her too.

Pennies?

Love.

Manufactured hardship

Didn't know better,
Me not her.

Spend child support on clothes,
Hers. Perfume. Scarves.
Boyfriends.

Full shopping carts, (grocery)
Card reader beeps in error.

Not an error.

Reader beeps again.
Cashier taps foot, hear the echo of foot on floor, foot on floor.
FootfootfootfootonflooronFootonfood.

“Sorry. Really don't know why it isn't working.
We live close. Gonna run home. Grab a different card.
We'll be back in a moment. Please leave our cart for us.
We'll be back”

Won't be back.

Can wait til school tomorrow.
Get home. Hide. Her breath is quickening.
Face red, can see in mirror.
Avoid eyes.
Hide. Under bed?
Hope she forgets. You.
Sleep before stomach pangs.
Slip out quietly.
Just get to school.

Manufactured hardship.

When mothers are *sycophants*

And not *safety*.

Stopped before a *scream* can be shrieked.

Stopped struggling. Stayed *still*.

Rather hand shoved in *sizzling* pan

Than convinced I wanted to *share*

My body. Her body.

Her (?) body. No, no. My body.

Sure I'm to blame.

Sleep *substituted* with shame.

