

The Defeatist

She was the kind of girl who put flowers in the window
And opened all the shades when it was raining outside.
Some days she would speak so fast that she would lose all her breath,
And other days, she barely spoke a word.
She had eyes, wild and soft as a beast of the jungle
A laugh that brought electricity into the air.
She never asked me to tame her; to unplug her.
Partly because she knew she couldn't be,
And partly because it never occurred to her to let me try.
I desired her, the way she was,
Arms swinging beside her slender frame as she walked beneath the street lamps.
Those wild eyes ever so often daring to glimpse back at me,
Her laugh inviting me to find the light in the darkness.
She wanted me to love her.
Worst of all, I wanted to love her back.
But we learn that we don't always get what we want.
Beside her, I still daydreamed of new directions.
My compass pointed me away from her beautiful way of speaking,
And the prick of her own plans for us.
It was the kind of day where everything was overly saturated.
The sun shone extraordinarily bright.
The sleeves on my shirt were too long.
Her skirt was a shade too yellow.
Piles of leaves towered more like mountains.
Someone always in earshot.
Every breath was sharper than the last.
Each thought taking up more space in my head, than what I had room for.
And she was there beside me.

Her head on my shoulder, her hand holding my hand a little too tight.

I didn't even look at her.

I didn't deserve to.

"You want to be the girl," I said. "But you can't be. Not mine. Not really."

It was like popping a balloon.

All the air escaped us, and I wished I could follow it, up and away from the little wooden bench where we sat.

A Siren.

A Coward.

And a question.

I know her wild eyes searched me for answer that I couldn't give.

An answer that I had been looking for every day since I had met her, on a sidewalk outside of a coffee shop.

She had been walking to her car and stopped to gaze up at the moon on a cloudy night.

I wondered if she felt more alone now, than she did then.

It wasn't that she wasn't enough; it was that she was more than enough of something else.

An ice cream cone with sour cream in it.

I continued to stare down at the gravel.

My leg unable to stop bouncing like a thoughtful prisoner.

I squashed my heart underneath the sole of my converse, again and again.

She let go of my hand, so softly that I barely felt her leave my skin.

She laughed.

No twinge of hurt or grief hung within the static.

Only a pulse of warmth and light.

"You know me too well," she said.

She took her head off my shoulder,

Standing to face the river of gravel.

And she left me there with the bench and a regret. I knew then,

I'd never look into those wild eyes again.