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“Shining through the Darkness”

Jonathan Baumgartner

Flowers withered,
Petals on the floor,
Get well balloons deflated,
Lights flickering,
And panic in the hallways.
The hospital was filled to the max,
And it seemed like the end of the world,
But Murray and Edna wouldn't let that gloomy darkness shine brighter than them.
Their beds pushed together,
Smiles large and bright,
They reminisce of times when they were younger.
With the chaos around them, they could only hear each other's laughter.
Their hands together,
Fingers intertwined,
They slowly faded away.
Their final words were “I love you.”

“Memories”

Brylee Ceraul

I waited for you,
but I guess our time never came.
I can still remember the first time I saw you.
You had that twinkle in your eye,
gave me that little smirk.
Now I'm left with just the memory of it.
I never realized how hard it was to move on,
until now that you're gone.
How was it so easy for you?
I guess you just weren't the one for me,
even though I begged you to be.
I can still hear your voice telling me I was perfect,
but maybe I just wasn't your perfect.
Did she have what I didn't?
Or maybe it was just the thought of someone new.
I never knew you could love someone like you loved me,
but now it's clear to see.
I was never the one for you.

“Elder”

Zoey Gill

The time is now
I've waited to hear
Run out because I hate it here
Emotions came at me at full force
They made fun of me, of course
What do I expect?
The same person who claims I'm ungrateful for standing up for myself
Is the same one who will tear me down for expressing my mental health
But that's okay
I made it here
The month of love and history
Run away from misery
Find passion in curiosity
Should I rebel and kiss the devil?
Their lips are calling my name
Lose myself in money and fame
If I sell myself, then who's to blame?
Let my lust get the best of me
My true intentions are hard to find
My heart is flooded by consequences
But I don't trust my own mind
I want to call out for my mother
But I'll make excuses for my pride
I refuse to confess my actions
I'd rather choke and die

“Loving You”
Ryen Gordon

I love you
I love you
I love you
I still write my name with your last as mine
As if I am a child in grade school
Images of you float around my brain making their way to my temporal lobe
You're on my mind 24/7, 365
My enemies are yours and yours are mine
My eyes expand just looking at you
Seeing you causes a storm of butterflies
A storm that is uncontrollable
A storm with no mercy
A love like ours is rare
Knowing someone for so long and never getting tired of them
Seeing each other everyday and still being excited as if it's the first
I love you and only you

“A Different Kind of Love”

Amani Hamiel

Our relationship is unreal,
feels sent from above,
impossible to bear to some,
loving to us,
incomparable to even the most loved love of them all.
Our ears listen,
hearts beat simultaneously,
eyes locked into one another.
languages do not match,
but our understanding is impeccable.
I love my four legged protector.
He loves this two legged pal.
A dog is truly a girl's best friend.

"A Mother's Love"

Steffanie Powell

There is nothing better than a mother's hug
A warm embrace that feels like home
Where nothing else matters
Where all senses are flooded with the feeling of love
Kind eyes meet her child's eyes
She wipes away all the tears that stained her child's face
Soon the tears stop falling
And the child's breathing evens out
Everything becomes okay again

“Love’s Definition”

Sarah Verbeck

Love.

So simple, yet so easily misconstrued.

A natural passion in unnatural expectations.

Love is everything.

It’s late night talks,

lunch in a Kroger lot,

a large drink to share,

dances in the kitchen,

thrift shopping,

singing your favorite songs,

riding with the windows down.

You ask what is love,

rather than what is it not?

“My Way Back”

Alex Clarke

I deviated away from a spot of happiness that I once resided
Now I see myself looking back trying to find it
I became lost in my ways
I take a step backwards every day
I looked deeply at a picture from when I was a little boy and I envied my smile
Because I realized I haven't smiled like that in a long while
I became too dependent on what people thought of me
Painting pictures of who I ought to be
Love within myself is what I figured I was missing
No longer listening to people that wouldn't listen
Now I see the love from me is all I need
Now I see the love from me is how I get back up on my feet
Learn to love yourself
So you no longer will need it from someone else

“So so far”

Erik Davis

When we first saw met each other,
I was from a different state
You were from a different country.
Yet our friendship became strong.
The times we saw each other face to face was short,
Yet those precious moments are some of my favorites.
Although we leave a sea apart,
I still feel your love.
You're the closest friend I have ever had.
I think of you daily
And I dream about the day
That we get to see each other face to face again.
The day we can reunite as friends.
Although I haven't seen your face in years.
I still feel your kindness.
Although it has been years since we sat down and ate lunch together,
I know that you still care.
Although I have not heard your voice in years
I still know that our friendship is strong.

“Ruptured heart.”

Fatoumata Diallo

We fell in love with each other's sound.
The way our heartbeat sounded when we were close.
How you lowered your voice when talking to me.
I loved you.
You were my calm after the storm.
And you reminded me how I was your roots that held you down.
We were everything to one another.
You loved me.
At least until you found another.
Someone else who you shared your sound with.
Until someone else took my position as your roots.
How could you just leave me?
Like what we shared wasn't special.
What did I do to deserve this?
I begged you to come back but you ignored my calls.
So now I sit and wonder why am I here?
Why am I alive?
You were my life,
My one purpose to live.
You were my heart
but now I'm empty and bitter.
Hating when I see others in love.
You have destroyed me.
What I once found special is something I despise now.
Although these feelings of hatred is strong,
Sometimes I still find myself wishing you would come back to me
because nothing will beat the sound of your heartbeat when I was around,
and how you talked to me in the gentlest voice.
I loved you
And I know you loved me.

“Drown”

Martina Jeudy

The aspect of self love
Is such a foreign thought
Loving yourself unconditionally
Because if you don't
No one else's will matter
It's the starting point
For good relations
Good health
Sane mind
The first step
To the stairs that will guide you
To the ultimate
“I love me”
Because it is all you have
When the world swirls out of control
Gaze into yourself and wish
For the enamored feeling to seep out
And drown you in it
In hopes that your soul will eventually soak it in

“Sisters”

Emily Moody

Nothing can compare to the love of two sisters.

No matter how often they fight,

The love will remain,

And they will bounce back.

They're friends

But they didn't choose one another

They were stuck with each other

And they wouldn't have it any other way

“My First Love”

Jordan Powell

I just wish the love was real.
Where'd it all go?
Those late night dinner dates.
Those midnight movies.
The happiest times of my life.
That smile that was on your face.
That look I used to put in your eyes.
Loving you was my only mission.
Making you happy was the only thing on my mind.
My love for you will never go missing.
It just won't ever matter.

“Melancholy Grey”

Maia Sigler

You barged into my heart all at once not even bothering to wipe your feet at the door

I still see traces of your shoeprints in the corridor.

I still feel your heartbeat when I run my fingers through.

I should've stopped you

I should have pushed the breaks but you brought up so many new things for me

You unboxed feelings I kept hidden in the corner of the attic.

Your smile brought luminescence through the windows

I would gaze out of them everyday, shaking off the looming shadow of darkness more and more until it was gone.

I guess I shook you as well because after the darkness left, you left too and you took your light with you.

Now I have nothing, nothing but a big empty heart and no one to share it with.

A big empty heart that once pumped rivers of vibrant red blood, but now flows rivers of melancholy grey.

“Unforgettable Love”

Jairah Tucker

My love for you runs as deep as the ocean
No matter what happens or how far we go I will always love you
I never thought that I would fall so hard
Till the day I met you
I don't wanna go a day without seeing your face
Just to see you smile and laugh with you makes me happy
You've changed my whole life
you've made me a better person
You've picked me up whenever I have fallen
You've made me strong when I was weak
My love for you is unforgettable
My love for you is everlasting
No one could ever make me love as hard as you do
Being with you, close to you
Brightens up my whole world
You make me happy on a cloudy day
Every moment with you has been like a ray of sunshine
Without you, my love would be incomplete
Throughout all the things we have been through I still love you
I still care, you are my whole heart
You are my first true love
An unforgettable love you are

“Different Affection”

Nia Williamson

A couple both with different pigmentation of their skin
A fine restaurant they chose with glass tables and fancy seats with flower bouquets covering the
back
They chose the finest restaurant that will define how true their love is
The music was played by violins that matched the perfect pitch to their voices
The tension rose as the night got any longer
His hand reached over across the table lifting her hand then locking them together
There was a heartbeat in between each other's hand
Love that you feel surpassing through each others body
A connection that felt like a lifetime but in reality just a few years
Love that is so tight it feels stuck like a dog and its owner
Once you have that bond with that is unbreakable the love is unconditionally strong

“Chains”

Maya Joyner

I love you like no other,
Care for you more than myself
But we must break these chains of control.
You show me love in poison
Care for me like a burden
Spew toxins like they're affirmations
And yet I still love you like no other
But I must break these chains of hatred.
Claims of love roll off your tongue effortlessly,
While tears flood my eyes.
The sweet nothings are nothing more than a lie
And we both know,
These chains are bound to break

“My Love”

Elissa McAdams

My love is handheld,
Placed perfectly in a pocket on a rainy day.
Waiting for the sunshine,
The warmth of hands once more.
My love is endless,
A bottomless pit that we cannot see the end of.
A match dropped is no match for this cavern,
Just fall in.
My love is gentle,
Soft and desirable, yet unforgiving.
A silkworm’s spindle could not rival my heart,
I dare you, fall in.
My love is harsh,
Brash and abrasive at times.
I am not too much,
You don’t love me enough.
My love is for you,
Wrapped up in a nice neat bow.
I do not ask for your’s in return,
It will be welcomed.

“Silent Music”
Shelby Powell

You play the silent music when she's around,
She's the type of girl who thinks every song is about her.
Every line a declaration of love,
Each verse a confession,
Every note a promise she knows you cannot keep.
But that doesn't matter,
Even in a world absent of all sound,
She would care.
So as the silent music plays,
She will continue to love you.
Never uttering a single word,
Despite longing to speak...
If only just once.

“Butterfly”

Rebecca Meze

When I die I want my body to be dropped into the sea
So my life will have finally helped someone
Or something
I wanna change my unwanted face to something new
Something prettier than what I was given
Something I can be happy with
I want the bits and pieces that I hate to just
Fall off
And be replaced with the images in my head
And on TV
And Instagram
I want to be covered in the prettiest scars you've ever seen
That will soon heal and reveal a beautiful butterfly
Because I am trapped in this ugly cocoon that people tell me to love
But I'd rather it burn
Because self love is a lot harder than tweaking what's wrong
And making it seem better
But it never gets better
Because the problem wasn't the cocoon
It was the butterfly...

“Knife”

Norah Sheldon

I came in your life
Showed you love
While you pulled a knife
You plunged it in my back
Paralyzed.
Is this what love is?
Under attack?
I never thought love would hurt this much
Torn between love and hate
Until this date.
I never stood my ground.
While you hunted me down like a hound
Running through the woods trying to get away
You never stopped coming my way.
Maybe that's why I always circled back every time.
Was it a crime?

“Secret Love”
Ayanna Bravo

As soon as I wake up
My head is filled with you
I wish you knew
The way I felt
About you
Everytime I look at you
My heart starts to melt
You have no idea
No clue
Just how much I love you.

“do not thank me for loving you honestly”
leea copeland

it is hard to not love you
when your body is a synonym of softness
when you drown me in your love
yet manage to set me aflame with each kiss
when your words hold so much weight
that i feel as if i am sinking whenever you speak.
i remember that one day in november
when we held hands for the first time
sweaty palms folding over boyish fingers
i made a promise to love you back then,
just to make sure that you knew
that i would be here for you now, even on your worst nights
because the moon still rises when the sun takes her time.
so please, do not thank me for loving you honestly,
this is the true tenderness you have always deserved.

“Eternity”

Kaitlyn Gardner

I somehow find all the luminous colors in this plain gray room
I hear lovely mellifluous sounds in the silence of her presence
She brings me everything, even while we do nothing
People walk past
Completely unknowing of our tie to one another
Blind to our blissful bond
What anyone else is aware of is insignificant
For you,
I'm willing to wait for eternity

“Simple”

Zack Jenkins

The days we share together are as few and far between as the coming of snow
But, even then, I treasure your presence like that of finding a grain of alexandrite within black
sand

And, in the midst of winter's silence, we both know

That while our threads are thin, we'll each still hold the last remaining pieces in the palm of a
pale, withering hand

“Family”

Isabella Monge

I'm here

Here for the Sunday breakfast

Here for the beach days

Here for the cookouts

The unconditional love

Family can be the best thing or the worst thing

But no matter what

You'll always love them

I'm here

Here for the neighborhood walks

Here for the movie nights

Here for the road trips

The memories that shape me into who I am

The words that will stick with me forever

I'm here

Here for the fun times

Here for the sad times

Here for the type of love you won't find anywhere else

I'm here for my family

“Perfect Match”

Janiyah Shaw

A best friend bond is something like no other
Better than a sister, mother, or brother
It can lead to something better or stay how it is
But in the end, that love will never fizz
He, she, they, it, however they identify
You love them for them, that's something you can't buy
You're able to understand them when no one else can
In a type of way, you're their biggest fan
Best friend love is precious like a gem
So after you read this, tell your best friend you love them

"I love me"

SaiSai Wortham-Green

Healing from a broken heart taught me

i need to love myself before i love anyone else

So i learned to be selfish with my love

People say being selfish is a bad thing

But im selfish about me, my time, and the love i give out

I love myself with no regret even tough it took years to

i love and embrace all of my flaws with a smile

I had broken wings but i learned to love them and became a beautiful butterfly

Im in love with myself and no one can take that away from me.

-love yourself

“My Pride and Joy”

Naiema Camm

Love is everywhere
It could even be in the clothes you wear
My love is in my pets
My cats are my kids
I raised them since you could see their ribs
I feed them by hand
Not everything went according to plan
They are my babies
Even though neither of them were ladies
They are boys
We even got them toys
We had beds
They were so tiny you could put a scrunchie around their head
We took naps together
We could sleep forever
When everything was perfect
Someone came along and rekt it
The people in the office gave us a fine
So we had to say goodbye
I gave one to my grandma
I gave the other to my friend down the street
I can still see them whenever I want
But it is not the same from when they were home
When I get a job and get the money
Someday I will get them back to where they belong
Home with me and running free

“Untitled”

Talijah James

A true friend is someone you can count on in the darkest moments.
To be there for you and to strengthen your spirits
And to remind you of the elegance that is all around you
A true friend of is patient and one of a kind
A true friend will often make you laugh.
A true friend is always going to tell you the truth
Friends are always going to protect each other
They always trust each other
They are always persevering
True friends don't envy, because they are like a gift from heaven.

“Learn To Fall In Love With Yourself.”

Nastasia Mirabal

I grew up thinking I was never going to be good enough.

My thighs were too big, my stomach isn't flat, and I've never been the athletic type.

I thought that my image defined me, and if we're being honest some of those feelings never went away.

Sometimes I'd stare in the mirror for hours thinking about all the things about me I had to “fix”.

Part of that is because of how I grew up.

Girls were supposed to be curvy but only in the right places, don't eat a second plate, those calories will catch up to you. Unlimited access to the internet and seeing all the girls who were deemed “perfect”... and I looked like none of them.

I realized I was too young to be worrying about those aspects of my life.

Then we got to middle school, surrounded by all the pretty, skinny, straight haired white girls and I wanted, more than anything in the world, to look like them, and eventually I lost myself.

There wasn't a day that went by that I woke up and like the way I looked, for years I could say I hated myself because I didn't look like everyone else.

One day, there was a girl I saw who looked like me, and I loved her.

I went from wanting to be like every girl at my school to wanting to be her.

I then realized that I can't be everyone else. No matter how bad I wanted to be someone different I had to learn to be me, whoever that maybe.

It took so long to find me, my interests, my humor, my style, my friends. All of it was apart of a process.

Then one day I woke up, and I thought I was beautiful. I still had my flaws, but my appearance, and my personality just fit me.. finally.

“My lovely pupper”

Grant Russo

We have come very far
From the beginning of 2014
To now in 2021
See for years I have wondered what would I do when your gone
For many people losing a dog is sad
This will include me too
Your not gone your still here
But what will I do
When you are
You are my reason for staying happy through the last year
The reason I still do what I do and keep pushing on
You make me feel safe
And make me happy
You keep me warm when I am cold
See my Little Pupper
You are my pride and enjoy
Like a dad to a child
You are mine
I love you my child
With all I am
I will keep you safe
Till it's your time
I love you good boy
You will understand
That I will keep you safe till the end

“By Your Side”
Diamond Hicks

I've stood there for years,
watching you change and grow.
I've lived many days with you.
Days where the sun envied your smile
and where the rain echoed your cries.
Yet, I stayed here with you.
Watched as your interests evolved,
the hobbies you picked up and dropped like hot coals.
I encouraged the relationships you built
and cried over the ones you destroyed.

You changed over these years.
Some of them you hated,
others you liked.
But we both knew these changes were necessary,
and you built yourself around those changes.
Improving yourself further,
growing up and preparing for the future.
Even behind the glass mirror,
I couldn't be more proud of you

“For the One Who Knows”
Jadayah Parker

When you told me,
I wanted to grab your hand
To dance with you.
I wanted to look you
Dead in the eyes
And tell you I love you.
When you told me,
I wanted that moment to last forever
I immediately dreamt of my future with you
How I would just talk with you and your mother about nothing,
And we would laugh in her living room
That once belonged to you too.
When you told me,
I wanted to pick you up and
Run around the world.
Thousands of marathons in one
To celebrate what could be.
When you told me,
I was in my room talking to you
And forgetting about how
My heart and mind runs faster than my feet do.
Oh how that window of opportunity opened
And the winds came pouring through to my soul.
When you told me,
I wished I was yours and sometimes I still do.

“Self love at its finest’

Kara Ashley

I did it
I broke the barrier
I finally learned how to love me
Nobody can take it from me
I refuse to be drained of my self love again
I will be the strongest being I know
I will shine like the beautiful star I am,
Above everyone else
I’ve rid myself of all negativity
All rumors about me shall remain,
I know who I am and what I do
They don’t have a clue who I am
It shall remain that way,
At least until they mature and find love for themselves
And not look for it in others
It’s a waste of precious time that we need to heal ourselves
Healing is important
All the things we’ve gone through at a young age
It’s hard to love ourselves
But I’ve found the key
I have achieved what others struggle to get so much as a taste of
I love myself more than any being other than God
My love for myself can no longer be removed
It is stuck to my heart and mind
Anyone who tried to remove it shall be removed from my life
I have no time to deal with haters
Nor do I have the time to deal with disrespect
No matter who it’s from, I will not tolerate it
I love God
I love me
I love my boyfriend
And, I love me
I love my boyfriend
And, I love me