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What Do You Know About Beauty

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What Do You Know about Beauty?

By Kylie Walsh

I know that my mother is beautiful,
it fades slightly with each added wrinkle
and burden we lay upon her, but she has absorbed enough
sunshine to last her the rest of her decades.

Holding onto hipbones like prayer beads is beautiful,
knowing that we are made of something stronger than the flesh
is reassuring to those of us who test the limits of what these bodies can take.

His hair in the sunlight was beautiful,
so were his lips by the stars.
The way he said my name was beautiful,
I could hear the practiced syllables.

Tasting a new drink is beautiful,
knowing that this might keep me on the edge of drunkenness
but not on the edge of weightlessness because I'm already there,
have been there since yesterday.

The first snow is beautiful.
Watching things fall and not break,
holding on to all that stinging potential.

Driving home at night is beautiful,
knowing that it's okay to trust something other than myself
to get me where I need to be.

Opening my eyes is beautiful,
my body's way of saying hallelujah,
I have begun to let the light in for another day.

Breaking down is beautiful,
not back to square one,

but as close as I'm going to get to a new beginning,
a collection of elbows, fingertips,
and irregular heartbeats on the floor.

Kissing like it's open-heart surgery is beautiful,
so we can feel every cell working to keep us alive,
a constant earthquake that has learned how to operate
with moments like this threatening to spill over ourselves.

Moonlit drives just so I can watch the sunrise
from somewhere new is beautiful.
Exchanging my horizon for someone else's,
conquering the night by staying on the move.
I promise we're not done running,
but we're done with running from.

Red lipstick is beautiful,
both an invitation and a warning.

Drinking whiskey with my brother is beautiful,
Learning the good kind of burn, how to take it,
and when not to anymore.
There's a difference between shots and shooting.

Walking barefoot in the sand is beautiful,
having the ground rise up to meet me,
proof that no matter how many times I've been beaten
it's still possible to provide warmth and resistance.

First kisses are beautiful.
Ours was borderline holy,
I could start a religion, write Scriptures, feel God
with the way her lips felt on mine.

Haircuts are beautiful,
letting go of any unnecessary weight,
it'll always grow back.
Things will always grow back if I let them.

Skinny-dipping in the Pacific is beautiful,
the waves caressing my body,
absorbing the salt,
returning to the waters from which I came.

Stale summer days are beautiful,
lying half naked in front of apathetic fans,
everything stagnant and still in ways we had not known before
or maybe just never took the time to notice.

Sitting in the passenger seat at gas stations is beautiful,
watching someone I love stare off into space,
reflecting on what is really powering us forward.

Feeling God for the first time
in who knows how long is beautiful.
I cannot explain.

Feigning sleep in the car is beautiful,
overhearing his declaration of love, my father's tired sighs,
off-key singing, souls expanding.

Stargazing is beautiful,
reconciling the dirt and the emptiness,
pinning our hopes and stories to something as
infinite as ourselves.

Trees undressing shyly in autumn are beautiful,
shedding pieces of themselves softly.
Hoping I notice the changes reflected in myself
as I let parts of myself go out into the world,
a broken shoelace here, a chipped tooth there.
I have made these marks and they cannot be erased.