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For The Boy Who Broke

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For the Boy Who Broke

By Yvonne Bamba

You were the boy who broke.

Broke into laughter.

Broke into song.

Broke into a smile.

Broke into brokenness.

You had this terrible habit of breaking things, especially people.

Especially yourself.

You flaunted your hard exterior—your hard muscles, your hard conscience, your hard mouth.

You had this intense flame, burning behind your eyes and a little fire between your teeth, hoping to dull your senses from feeling too much.

Because you know what it's like to feel too much.

Your words were heavier than the smoke that escaped your lips. You giggled like a 10-year-old girl, but everyone knew that your fists were balled up at your sides, ready to swing if anyone said the wrong things.

You used to be so angry at the world. You used to care too much.

But then, a not-so-delicate hand of a not-so-delicate girl tugged you through the doors of a dark room with colorful, spinning lights to blur the image of her so you could never see her enough to imagine what she would look like in the light. She shoved you against the wall and made you taste the toxicity of the air she breathed. And boy, did she make you fly. You flew and flew until you were high enough in the sky to fall. And you fell hard.

Now, you're not so angry anymore. Now, your hands just hang at your sides when you walk, and you've got this intense flame, burning between your teeth and a little fire, dying behind your eyes.

And everybody keeps saying she 'fixed' you.

You used to be angry.

You used to care.

You used to feel too much.

Now, I'm the only one that notices you don't seem to feel anything at all.

You take me by the hand and drag me onto the other side where the night is much darker and the lights blink harder, and I find myself falling too.

But I can still smell her perfume on your liquor-stained lies and on the not-so-delicate things you say.

My dear friend, I don't think anyone's told you yet, but you are what you breathe—visible but not tangible.

I can only nod and exhale words you want to hear but I will never understand.

And it's not because I don't smoke.

You are no artist or poet, in search of a muse.

You are just a boy who broke.

Your endless cycle of flying and falling can never be broken and your heart can never heal until you sober up, let her go, and learn how to breathe again.