

it still heals



for the nights it still hurts

THE BROKEN POET

it's late.

you can't sleep.

stay up with me for a while.



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THE BROKEN POET

before you start

this book is one long night.

it starts at eleven, when it still hurts and nothing anyone says is any use. it ends at eight in the morning. you will notice the pages getting lighter. that part is on purpose.

there are a hundred pages in here, and every one of them is talking to you. not to someone stronger, or further along. to you, tonight, exactly like this.

you don't have to read it in order. you don't have to feel better by the last page. open it when you can't sleep, read one page, and put it down. that's enough for tonight.

the broken poet

the night

11 PM *it's allowed to hurt*

2 AM *let it go*

5 AM *come back to yourself*

6 AM *it gets lighter*

8 AM *the morning after*

and after the last page: one question to take with you



☾ CHAPTER ONE · 11 PM

it's allowed to hurt

for the first nights, when nothing helps and nobody gets it.

*if you're reading this at eleven
at night, this page is for you.*

the lights are off. the screen is too bright. you told
yourself you'd sleep an hour ago. it's okay. you don't
have to fix anything tonight, or understand it, or be
better by morning. you only have to stay here for a
few pages. you're not the only one awake, and you're
not the only one who can't stop thinking about them.

you keep saying you're fine.

you've said it so many times it's started to sound like a word in another language. fine at work. fine to your mum. fine in the group chat, with a laughing emoji. then you get home, close the door, and the fine falls off you like a coat. you don't have to keep wearing it in here.

of course it hurts this much.

you didn't only lose a person. you lost the future you'd already started living in. the trip you'd planned. the name you'd picked for a dog you never got. the version of next year that had them in it. you're not overreacting. you're grieving a whole life that was only ever real in your head, and that is still a real loss.



Albert Pinkham Ryder, *Moonlight Marine*

you don't have to be over it by now.

someone will tell you it's been long enough. maybe you're the one telling yourself. but whoever set that deadline has never been inside your chest. there's no clock for this. some people take a month. some take a year. most take longer than they admit. you're allowed to take exactly as long as it takes.

the phone, face down on the bed.

you turn it over so you won't see it light up. then
you turn it back every few minutes, just to check.
you know they probably won't text. you know it
wouldn't fix anything if they did. that isn't
weakness. it's hope that hasn't heard the news yet.
be gentle with it. it will hear, eventually.

*it's never the big
moment that gets you.*

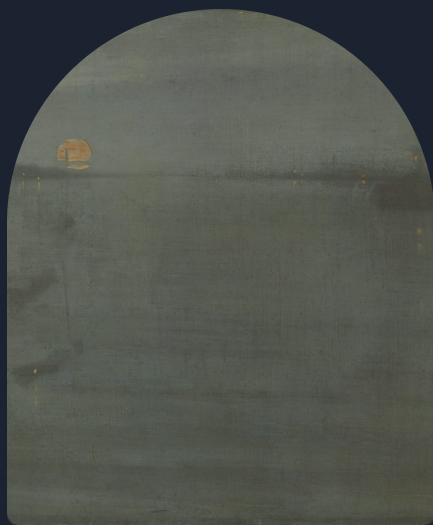
you were ready for the big ones. the anniversary. their birthday. what you weren't ready for was the song in the supermarket, or reaching for two mugs in the morning, or turning to tell them a joke before you remembered. the small things are sneaky because they're everywhere. that's how you know how much of your days they were part of.

*you can miss someone and still
know they were wrong for you.*

both are true. they always were. you can remember
how they made you laugh and also how they made
you feel small. you can want them back at two in
the morning and be glad they're gone by ten.
missing them isn't a sign you should go back. it's a
sign you loved them. those are different things.

you're not being dramatic.

you're grieving something that didn't die, which in some ways is harder, because it keeps walking around. they still post. they still exist in the same city, in your friends' photos, in the corner of your screen. there's no funeral for this kind of loss, so nobody brings you flowers. that doesn't make it smaller. it only makes it lonelier.



James McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne: Blue and Gold—Southampton Water*

let it out wherever it comes out.

crying in the shower counts. crying in the car counts.
crying at a bus stop because a stranger's dog looked at
you kindly counts. you don't need a reason and you
don't need a good time. tears aren't you falling apart.
they're the part of you that is still working properly,
doing its job.

*you keep replaying
the last conversation.*

word by word, looking for the sentence that would have saved it. if you'd said this. if you hadn't said that. but there wasn't one magic sentence. a relationship doesn't end in one conversation. it ends in a hundred small ones before it. and you were never the only one holding it together.

YOU'VE READ THE FIRST 16 PAGES

the night keeps going.

ninety more pages, from eleven at night to the morning after.
the part where you stop checking. the part where you come
back to yourself. the part where it gets lighter.



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it still hurts.
it still heals.

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