

My Bird by Claire Summa

I hate it when you look at me
It used to be appreciation and awe that
Struck you as your eyes found mine
Now it is Pity
Fear
Guilt
Love that is afraid to be caught in its
selfish act of existence
I watch you watch me die

You fight and fight while I lie here
stuck in this body I no longer own
You blame yourself for my weakness, I
was never as strong as you wanted me to be

Couldn't fight the invisible monster
that destroyed me from the inside out
Couldn't stop my foreign blood from
escaping the body
Couldn't cover up the proliferation of ugly
The shell I am now encased in
The black, blue, brown bruise that
defines me

I'm sorry
I'm sorry my eyes are fading,
my face waning, my hands shaking
I'm sorry you refuse to let go
I care too much to let you suffer
But you say the same to me

Do you remember summer 1981?
We went to the beach
The water sparkled, the sun
wrapped around us in a warm cocoon
only we shared
Do you remember the way we laughed
when they stared?
Do you remember believing that love would
conquer all?

Do you remember the day we knew?

The day our illusions shattered like the mirror
we used to gaze at one another through
I do
But I don't want to

I want to remember the way we felt at the beach
I want you to forget the being who has succumbed
to a life spent lying in waste
I don't want you to remember the person
constricted by hyperbolic chains of literal degradation
As you wage war to save the ones
who can't be saved

Please
Forget that guy
Forget the hospitals, clinics,
specialists, medications, treatments
Because not one of them did any damn good

I can't look at you anymore as you
sprint in place
You believe with all your fast-beating heart
that you can take that first step forward if you just
run a little faster
But you can't
Because there it stands blocking you,
blocking us, from breakthrough
and I'm terrified the invisible monster
will catch up to you too

So please
Stop running
I know this is selfish of me but I just
Want you to be with me
Want you to hold me one last time
Want you to kiss me one final goodbye

Just want to let you let out your cry

There are no words left to utter
No false grievances to be heard muttered
Just your presence is enough
Just your hand in mine

Hold it tight until I fly away
Until I'm free like you always said I would be

I'll wait for you until you can join me

And then we'll fly away together
The way we always knew it would be

San Francisco General, Ward 5B
1983

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