

Slipping

It starts small, intimate, surrounded by loved ones and people who care about you
It starts with colors being bright, and attitudes optimistic
It starts with the days being short and the nights being long
Trust is built
It starts with smiles and laughter
Good times and memories being made
It starts with the knowledge of much, and confidence in many
Then, without even being noticed, it starts slipping
Slipping into reality. It begins to be a little less bright and optimistic
It becomes vague and mysterious
It becomes less inviting, colder
Trust is lessened with every passing day
The days become longer, filled with stress and questions The nights become shorter, never
providing enough rest And then, without even realizing it, it comes to a close
But then, once your breath is lighter, you look back at the small intimate beginning that
gave
you life and all you are able to say is "I let it slip."

I see her there, staring into her closet.
She wants to look nice for her first day as a mini teen
She wants to impress but not overdress
She wants to be liked, but respected
"Be yourself" I tell her
She rolls her eyes my way with more than subtle sarcasm
"I know ...that's what everybody says .." she sighs in frustration
She reaches in to her draws and pulls out a simple light colored shirt, thick dark colored leggings and boots
She looks at me for my approval
I say I like it, and it looks good
She tosses it gently on her bed as if I wasn't convincing enough
It pained me to see her struggling so much, going to such lengths just to be able to feel confident in a room full of her peers
But I understand, I remember
I remember enduring the looks of judgment and the looks of indifference
She wanted to matter
After trying on seven different shirts and four different leggings and two pairs of boots she decides on the first arrangement she showed me
I help her with her hair and putting some shiny lip gloss on
I didn't like seeing her put makeup on, trying to cover her natural charms that she considered faults
I let her pick out a scarf from my closet because she said it always made me look pretty and thought it might do the same for her
I indulge her, but say she is already stunning but as she looks down at her feet I know my comment is in vain
She fusses with her delicate sandy blonde hair and adjusts my scarf around her neck
She looks at her reflection and tries to smile
She's going into the belly of the beast I think
I was determined to be there for her, even from my dorm room
"I can do this right? It'll be okay?" She asks as her voice breaks
I didn't want to lie, but I didn't want to make her even more nervous
"You, my gorgeous, intelligent, clever, unique little sister, are going to learn so much." I say. That was true. My sister, so small with the quiet strength, was going to learn so much she gives a meek smile and says
"Cya after school ok?"

Tomfoolery

I believe in giggles. I believe in giggles, chuckles, snickers, snorts and even the occasional tee-hee. I believe in laughter. I believe in the simple, happy action. I believe in the use of our subcortex or the right orbital frontal cortex or the ventrolateral prefrontal cortex or what the heck makes our brain find humor in life. I believe in happiness. I believe in those that make others laugh, and in those that do the laughing. I believe in bursting out in laughter at unexpected moments and cracking up and smirking at a good punch line. I believe in those that can make fun of themselves.

What makes me believe in a deep belly laugh? Well, it's memories of a dad stopping on the side of the road, opening all the doors and dancing circles around the car while his daughter's face turned red. It's memories of a brother making corny jokes. It's memories of a little sister hearing a song in a restaurant and declaring while she stands up and swings her hips that she "feels the music". It's memories of friends and inside jokes. It's memories of a hard time becoming a little easier with a witty one-liner that make me believe in laughter.

I believe that it's okay to partake in tomfoolery. It's okay to have fun. Yes, this world is filled with disappointments, bad grades, mean kids, cruel adults, student loans, gross vegetables, and lots of responsibilities- all the more reason to crack a joke. It's okay to be silly, whimsical, dorky and giddy. It makes life charming. Laughter brings smiles, and smiles brings peace of mind. Laughter is worth believing in.

Taking The Bus

The morning always came too soon. He rose and slowly moved his legs so that they hung over the bed and felt the cool touch of the cherry colored hardwood floors beneath his toes. He looks at the clock, 6:00 a.m. His shoulders slump, thinking of another day that would be just like yesterday. His body is wrinkled, but not unreasonably old. In his mind he had earned each wrinkle. Some were from laughing, others from the lack of. He new exactly the wrinkles he had received from the happiness of the birth of his first daughter, and the wrinkles he received as a reminder he had lost his wife the same day. He rubs his face gently, as if to wash the wrinkles away. He raises his head and opens his eyes just enough to see the picture of his daughter in her cap and gown. She was so beautiful. Her mother would loved that picture. He stands and puts a hand on his lower back out of habit. He takes a few steps to the bathroom and turns on the light. He hates this light, it gives his face a yellow color that advances his age. How he missed them both. His love and his precious girl. His love went first, at the birth of the precious girl, then a week after her graduation she went next. He hasn't driven a car since. He showers. It is 6:20. He gets out and shaves his aging face. He stares at his reflection without emotion. He didn't think he had any emotion left, save empathy. His enlarged fingers grip the countertop by the sink as he feels the sharp, but familiar pain in his knee. Side effects of getting old he supposes. Oh how he missed his ladies. He gets dressed slowly, as not to awaken the pains in his other joints. He often wondered how he, as old as he was, managed to survive. He lives on, yet his wife who bore his child with love and courage, did not. How did he survive, when his daughter who was full of life and named after her mother's favorite flower and had just barely started to live, did not. He takes the bus to work, trusting the bus driver's abilities more than his own. His forehead creases and he thinks about the days upcoming tasks. What would his cubicle require of him today? He gets to work, it is 7:50. He sits down in the office chair that wreaks havoc on his neck while a coworker asks how he is this morning. He looks up and gives a meek smile and says "Just another day at the office."