

Contaminated Eggs

Wiping the last few tears away, I make my way out the cracked glass door of my house and outside. The air is heavy. Thick with the smell of cigarettes and smoke. Even though nobody is here, even though no one is here to see what I am seeing, I am embarrassed of where I lived. Embarrassed of the unpaved sidewalks and the thrift-shopped clothes that are too big and hang off my body. Embarrassed of the broken and crooked fence that do nothing as it lined the perimeter. The cracked driveway that holds my family's beaten car. My eyes focus on the darkened corner across the street and I see the shadowy figures, hands moving discreetly behind threadbare coats. And I know. I know what they're doing. I know the signs of exchanging. Of drugs. I understand because I live in it. Here or there, it is present. In the alley, in the parking lot, at school. So I turn my cheek. Because I am used to it. And I look the other way.

I knew what I was doing was wrong. I knew that at school they told us to get help, to stand up, to make a change. But that was the exact place where it happened. I know this because Juriana offered some to me behind the metal doors of our lockers. Her hand was slightly curled into a fist surrounding the plastic baggie. Take it, she said. It won't hurt you. I swear, she whispered, pushing her hand towards mine and looked at me with glassy brown eyes. Because I trusted her, because I loved her, I said Yes and took the baggie and stuffed it in my boot. And after school she and I went besides the fence and swallowed each pill. One. By. One.

We giggled after that, not really knowing why it was funny to us, but it was. So we laughed. And we ran home and I don't remember anything after that. Nobody found out. But I know that it was wrong. And it hurts to keep it stuffed inside. My secret is coiled, a snake in my heart, waiting for the perfect moment to strike. I wish that I didn't do it. I wish I didn't swallow those pills One. By. One. But I did. And I can't go back.

And I wish it harder than ever, more than anyone else. Because it's such a problem.

Especialy in my family. Papí takes them, mis hermanos take them, and Mamí takes them because she wants to forget that Papí y José y Juan take them.

I wish this because they all come home, Papí y Mamí y José y Juan, angry and sad and happy and crying at the same time. And sometimes they hit me. But I know it's not really them. So I wish. Wish to fly out of here. Wish to fly out and escape from under the hard hands of Papí y Mamí y José y Juan.

I wish that when my family came home from work and school that we'd smile with sincerity and not fakeness. I wish that I wouldn't be scared to be in the same room with them. And I wish we didn't get money from the grimy hands of José y Juan because we all know where that money came from. Dealing. Because now my eggs are marijuana. And my milk is heroine. And my cheese is cocaine.

But I still swallow it down. Eggs and milk and cheese. Because it's all I'll be given. And know it's the only food I have. For now.

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