

Prose and Poems

Yujin Choy

What If I Told You I Hate My Mom?

My whole life I've felt like an empty phantom, forever stuck living the same scenarios over and over again. I tried to comply, I wore the silly little dresses and uncomfortable stockings. I'd sit on the edge of her well-kept bed and let her rip out my hair as she pulled it into tight hairstyles.

"I don't think God cares if I wear pants to church like my brothers..."

Dresses were restrictive. How was I meant to run around?

"Little girls shouldn't run around when they're in skirts. Sit with your legs crossed. Back straight."
"

The way I look has always been up for debate and criticism. Other people would say I was lucky, that I had a progressive mother. How else would a nine year old be allowed to dye pink streaks in her hair to look like Avril Lavigne?

It was easier when I was younger. Even if I hated an outfit she chose, I'd begrudgingly wear it, but the older you get, the more free will takes over. And she didn't like that.

X X X

My teenage years were spent in constant arguments over what I chose to wear. My staple wardrobe at the age of fourteen was band tees, leggings or sweats and a hoodie. Basic high school outfit.

It wasn't as if I was going out in overly exposing clothing, but there was still always a problem.

"You look like a slob."

"Might as well go bum it with the hobos."

"I can't *believe* you would go out looking like *that*."

Why?

Sweatpants. The ultimate cardinal sin. Better to have all your skin exposed than leave the house in... sweatpants.

XXX

This is the foundation of our relationship. No matter what I do I have never been up to her standards. I got into makeup as a middle schooler during the rise of YouTube beauty gurus. When I look back on those days, I wish she had told me I was beautiful without all the layers. I wish she had explained that makeup is a creative outlet and not a mask. Under all the layers of foundation, even with my acne filled preteen skin, all I needed was for her to tell me I was good how I was.

However, she did the opposite. Bare faced meant mocking. I wasn't offered help with my skin, just heavily criticized for it. I was blamed for my changing hormonal body, it was my fault I didn't take care of it. It was my fault I didn't know how to. Clearly at twelve I should have all the solutions.

But it's not just how I look that poses a problem.

It's me as a whole.

XXX

No matter how much time passes, the arguments are always the same, and the outcome never improves. Nothing changes no matter how much I try.

I'm told I'm stubborn, reactive, sensitive, lazy.

Never have I been seen.

Never have my feelings been acknowledged.

Why must the fault always be on my shoulders? Back then I was a little girl, a child; her child. I didn't understand what was happening, but I knew that I was the center of the problem. Every small insignificant annoyance is attributed to me.

I get accused.

I get called names.

I get the blame.

I get ignored.

And yet I am always expected to repair whatever damage she did. Forever left to piece together the shards, I must control my own reactions to the very imperceptible level, I must console her, apologize for her upsetting me, beg for forgiveness.

The fights don't *look* like fights. There's no screaming, no throwing; never physical. But a constant verbal assault; leaving me this empty phantom.

I'm too rough for a girl.

Too blunt.

Too loud.

Overly animated.

Somehow, I must be kept under lock and key. A good daughter sits quietly, follows orders, doesn't interrupt and is always polite. My responsibilities are to ensure the house is well kept, to make sure the animals are always taken care of; this includes my father and brothers, but the most important role I have is:

Always take the blame, no matter the issue, and don't fight back.

I'm reminded daily of my failures as a daughter and a human. I'm wasting my potential. I lack drive. I could have been so much more if I wasn't so lazy. I carry this weight of being a failure everywhere I go. I sabotage friendships. I move jobs constantly. I lack confidence.

I get into situations where I'm used, I think that if someone is insulting me it must be love.

If they tell me I'm not good enough, I change.

I do everything in my power to be loved and accepted by people who don't know how to offer it.

Because love comes with a set of terms and conditions. Even if the condition is:

"don't be yourself."

XXX

I've spent my entire life chipping off pieces to try and mold myself into the image she's created. I've tried to play the part of her perfect daughter. I've tried to be polite. Tried to look the role of the perfectly feminine and polite daughter. But no matter how hard I try the parts that she doesn't like always slip through the cracks.

And we argue.

She throws insults she will never be able to take back.

“I never wanted a daughter.”

She plays the victim.

She never sees the damage. She refuses to.

And I hate her for it.

I hate her for repeating the same mistakes as her mother. I hate that she will never learn. But most of all I hate myself for dreaming, for caring, and especially for fooling myself for so many years.

XXX

What if I told you my soul is being torn apart.

What if I told you I'm tired of playing this never ending game of not having the mother I deserve.

What if I told you I hate my mother even though I love her.

Labels

The panic attacks started in the latter half of eighth grade. At the time I was dealing with extremely toxic friends, and a lack of support from school and home. I used to be convinced that I needed to tell everything about my day to her, so I'd go home and I'd vent. I'd tell her about how unfairly they had treated me, how hurt and upset I was. Just hoping for some guidance or support, a shoulder to lean on.

Foolish.

Spilling my heart out to the person I thought I trusted most, and in return she offered blame.

“Well why did *you* do that?”

“I think you're overreacting _____ is a good kid.”

“Shouldn't have said that. It's your own fault that they're acting this way.”

So I began internalizing my problems.



In high school I continued the cycle of toxic and damaging friendships. I would latch on and devote my whole heart and soul to people who treated me like shit. People who would never offer me the things I gave them. People who mirrored her. I think I was addicted to the pain, the constant fighting, always considering myself the “mature one,” I wasn’t mature, I was traumatized. The cycle I’d known my whole life was this: fight, get accused, get ignored, and then go apologize. But not apologize only for my role in the conflict, I must apologize for them too. No matter what the issue was, or who started it, I will always hold the blame, I will always come out the villain. For this is the way of life, this is the way it has always been. My feelings don’t matter so long as I can mend their ego. I’ve been doing this for almost two decades. I’ve been chipping away at myself hoping that if I keep molding myself into others’ ideals and needs, I’ll finally find love. If I can make them feel like a God, they’ll stay with me... they’ll love me. But what is left for me? Who is left?



Nobody. I am nobody, I am nothing, I am empty. My trust in others has shattered completely. My idea of love is unhealthy. I’ve spent so long accepting my role as a villain in other people’s stories, that I’ve become one in my own. Self sabotage is my greatest strength. I chipped off so many pieces, gave away so much of myself, made myself smaller, quieter, weaker, invisible. I’m nothing more than a speck of dust. Reality is long gone, I have no connection to it anymore. Days, weeks, months, years all pass, and I stand on the sidelines of it all. I don’t feel like a participant in my own life anymore. I don’t know who the young woman is that stares at me in the mirror. I’m a ghost.



I make new friends. I lose them. I self-destruct. I find new friends. I become attached. They become my world. The only thing I care about. I mimic them. I like what they like. I dress like them. **I am them.** And then they’re gone. Empty again. Self-destruct. Isolate. Blame myself. Hate myself.

“It is and always has been your fault.”

“Too needy.”

“Trust issues.”

“Abandonment issues.”

A word cloud of mathematical symbols and formulas, including integrals, summations, and various mathematical notations, arranged in a circular pattern.

Poetry

[Untitled]

Why do the days get darker?
I thought I knew what laid ahead;
I thought I was past the days of my dread;
But we move in different directions.
I don't know how to hold on. I've lost my grip and we're drifting apart.
I wish we could go back.
I wish we didn't have to go through the motions of heartbreak and loss.
All this trauma builds up, leaving us both empty shells of who we could have been.
Maybe we don't belong here. I wish our paths could have continued together;
No matter how hard I try, no matter how much I beg, we can never go back.
Ignoring it was killing me;
Leaving me a fractured silhouette; No longer resemblance of human.
For all the love and pain,
I can't let it go,
I can't erase the past,
I can't escape the present,
I can't envision a future.

Nepenthe

A frosted whist sweeps over the land,
Leaving all of nature in a drowsy haze.
The bitter cold caresses our morning commutes,
Warm cups of coffee enjoyed observing the dark sky morph into
A most beautiful murky display of colours enveloped in the crystalized air.

Puffs of frozen breath hang along the path.

It's a tiresome and unpleasant feeling to be standing amongst the chill,

Flesh and bone huddle in groups for comfort and warmth.

The winter chill brings along with it an old friend, Nepenthe;

Reminding us of the comfort in the chill.