

Maybe I am too sensitive, too kind, too weak, too eager to please, too proud, and I gave in too easily once again. Maybe I showed my hand too quickly. I am a fool. I spun a web and got caught in it. I dug a hole and jumped in. Maybe I wasted the only chance I had, and the good years are all behind me now. I have nothing left to live for. I am utterly alone. Only my failure and shame keep me company. Maybe I will never be happy, or maybe I will never be forgiven. The nights and days are an endless burden — but I still fear my death as much as I fear this debacle which has become my life. Those who I love are far from me — and my love for them seems almost a fantasy of the mind. My prayers, my ceaseless prayers? I wonder if there is still a God who listens. I was wrong many, many more times than I care to admit or even remember. I could have made all the right decisions, but cannot for the life of me understand why I chose so poorly, again, and again, and again. Being “self—absorbed” is only half of the right answer. I sit as at a bus stop, each and every day. The buses keep passing. They are all the right buses though. They hold my family, my friends, my very life rides along in those buses. They keep passing, one by one by one. They never stop, I never get on. There goes my life without me. This world passes at such an amazing speed — even for those who wait the interminable wait behind steel doors and razor—wire fencing. I always wonder, Is there still time to make things right again? I don't know, but I try to convince myself and others who will listen that there is still time — just enough time. No one believes me. I don't believe me. I am pressed to the limits some days. I live in a zoo, a war zone, a freak show. I live under the iron fist of pettiness and humiliations. I live where violence is king and where mere survival allows for all sorts of ugly things the good people of the world would rather not know about. I live where love is either dead or a myth, where kindness or charity is a wounded seal in shark—infested waters, a stray gazelle on the plains. I live where stench and noise are constant. I live where the humans bark. I live where crudity and banality howl all day. Where the stupid are in charge. Where mindless tedium carves up your soul. Constant anger, constant regret, constant ruminations of how to get back again. I live where the extremes live. I live inside the storm. I am hemmed in on all sides by hundreds and hundreds and hundreds like myself, the walking dead living dead lives doing dead time. I am constrained by concrete, glass, and steel. Under the glaring eyes of small—minded men with guns. My life has become a nightmare. I made it what it is. I made every decision, and yet never saw this coming. I awaken each morning to my only friend, a cold brick in the wall, and I remember as if for the first time, I am in prison. Is the tilling, this misery? Are my streams of tears in the desert world the necessary rains? Are there seeds of growth in my contemplation? Can I still reap a harvest of joy and peace? Is there work left for me to do? With the thorn of my loss, my shame, will I heal others? Where I was once confused and alone and lost in this life, can I now lead? I was baffled by the days and nights, can I now teach? I was abused and still I hurt many, can I comfort? I have survived. Can it be for something greater than myself? I do not know. But I will wait, with as much patience as I have, I will wait on all of this — and on love, a generous, self—less love that shall grow from the pain — a love that I could have never expected, nor have come to know by any other means.

There are no mountains without valleys,

No birth without pains,

No joys without sorrows,

No harvest without rains.