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Survival

Bailey Little

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Survival // Bailey Little

what I really hate the most is all this talk of “survival.”
my life is not a jungle filled with striped tigers and striking snakes.
my life is not a building going up in flames.
my life is not an airplane racing risky toward the ground.
my life is not a sinking ship filling up with frigid wet.
my life is not a building going up in flames.

so why then am I so frequently reminded to just “survive?”
I don’t need a lifeboat or a flare gun or a spray down by a fire hose.
I need a hug.
I need a friend.
I need laughter and hope and promises kept.
I need to move and to run and to be far from here by morning.

and I need more than just survival to be preached.

do not tell me that happiness is a luxury.
don’t tell me that I just need to “make it through” this day.
because I can do that. easily. food. water. sleep, and I’ve made it.
and you seemed pleased enough with me, and so suddenly all it’s
ever about is making it through another day and another day and
another day. food. water. sleep. food. water. sleep. and I am praised
because I am surviving.

I do not want survival.
I want life. I want to move and to run and to be far from here by
morning.

my life is giggling like a silly girl at texts from silly boys.
my life is loneliness curled under blankets.
my life is binging on chocolate chip cookies to take away the
sadness.
my life is acing tests and studying too late into the night.
my life is loneliness curled under blankets.
and that is more than survival.

I am broken and my pieces have been scattered to the farthest
ends of this earth and survival looks like acceptance and

resignation at this point, like I should just keep my head down and keep my mouth shut and take step after wretched step. and I'll admit that some days this is all that I can manage but this is not the definition of my life. I will not be silenced by the mantra of "survival."

I do not want survival.

I want a battle. I want to move and to run and to be far from here by morning.

I want to fight until I cannot fight. I want to bleed until I cannot bleed.

I want to win, because I cannot lose.

failure is not an option. survival is not an option. I will not be taken prisoner of war in order that I may survive. I will not lay down my sword so as to preserve my chances at existence. I will move and I will run and I will be far from here by morning.

to survive is to be, for all intents and purposes, dead, but pleasing the world with the falsified image that you are not so. if you appear to be alive and well, that is enough for them.

but that is not enough for me.

I do not fight this hard every day for food and water and survival. I fight to pass time memorizing the face of my lover, and laying in fields of flowers, and writing poetry no one cares to read.

I fight for all these things because I deserve to.
please stop treating my life like a natural disaster.
please stop telling me to just survive.

please stop acting like that's all that I am capable of.

because isn't that really what someone means when they tell you to survive? that you're weak and useless and practically hopeless and that all you are capable of is remaining?
the thing is, this place I'm in is desolate and maddening, and I

REFFUSE to remain here. so what I really need is someone to tell me to fight like hell. to fight like hell every day until I get the hell out of here. to fight like they know I can. to fight because I deserve more than this wasteland. anyone who knows this place does not want me to survive here. the future here is bleak and I will no longer wait around on my haunches breathing in and breathing out and surviving.

I will live.

I will move and I will run and I will be far from here by morning.

and no one will ever mistake me for a survivor. I may have the cuts and scrapes of those ravaged by life, but I will not remain stranded on this island, surviving, waiting for rescue. I will not be cracking open coconuts and anticipating your arrival.

I will live.

I will move and I will run and I will be far from here by morning.

so far from here by morning.