Spring 2023

with the cold of sunshine

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with the cold of sunshine

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts
of Bard College

by
Riley Truchel

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2023
Artist Statement

The most precious moments are the ones which appear impermeable, having found their resting place amongst the quiet corners of the mind. Held by an eggshell-like border, what is encapsulated within remains only to be delicately handled. If not, its integrity is risked. The impermeability these moments once held onto so adamantly, are revealed to have always been a facade. The eggshell then cracks and light fills what once was, becoming the sole interpreter of the contents held inside. Remnants of what once existed now reach out through the solitude found in sleep. Sending subliminal messages in dream form, heralding in momentary comfort. A comfort that takes the same form as shadows that have found a resting place amongst a delicate surface. Within these spaces I have found solace, staying up, hoping to catch a glimpse as they prepare to make way to my dreams. Desperately eager to welcome familiarity, to experience these feelings once again in the waking world. To have proof that they were in fact real, yet never the same as before. Still holding onto hope that the core remains untouched, unscathed. How I remember it being. I stay up. Only under the acknowledgement of the moon, I try to see, but succumb to sleep. My body knowing what my brain does not. Time has no home in the mind.

I am brought back to childhood, as if innocence never abandoned me and there was never such a thing as present, past, or future. All that has ever been felt and experienced has collapsed in the absence of time. I remember what it was like to wear mittens during a snowstorm, to take them off and to feel bitterness. Only holding familiarity with an environment that never knew stillness, the way in which the snow paused the external world, kept every person and car home, allowed myself to feel as though all was open. Sound was muffled and all that was rugged was made inviting. But, the snow remained bitter. Willing to so freely give frostbite to those who chose to see it as it truly was. Unable to bear sweaty hands, my mittens would make their way off. With exposed hands wet and numb, unable to feel, even a child could recognize the serenity of something so cold.

Once it is understood that cold really does exist, it is impossible to know warmth as existing separately. All the wonders of childhood become plagued by the mind that knows a post-childhood, darkness melds with innocence, creating a world where the two exist alongside one another but not without tension. Feeling the snow with the absence of mittens is to learn how reality can maintain integrity when it is so ferociously challenged by contradiction. To know that any attempts to define such an existence will lead to disillusionment. There is no making sense of it. Sense cannot be made out of something so grand, something divine beyond mortal existence. Left with no ground to rest on, our only choice is to exist. To exist as a product of all the tensions, all the pains, and all the beauty. Recognizing the mortality of all we perceive to be in existence yet still longing and attempting to make beauty out of it. Even the most uncomfortable.
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