

# Someone

*social media education every day*

## Naming by Mary Pinkoski

I do not know how these stories begin  
or why they are so hard to tell,  
or why they are almost impossible to name

I do know that they are easily confused  
with the stories of those times  
When strangers and friends turned the promises of their tongues  
into backwards prayers  
Let their words fall careless and loose  
into the air like tornadoes  
Until their meaning twisted against your skin  
in a verbal snake bite

Words like fat, ugly, loser, lazy, failure become  
An alphabet that bruised your body to the black betrayal of ink

I do not know when their words became your words  
When their river of hate rushed into your throat  
and settled onto the banks of your body  
and you became something more than that the infinite possibility  
you once believed you were

I do not know when that moment of saying "I hate onions" or "winter" or  
"avocados" or "the sound of nails on chalkboard"  
Became just as easy as saying "I hate myself"  
Became just as easy as naming yourself something less  
than you were named

I do not know when you peeled yourself back  
Pulled yourself apart  
Took the holy out of your being,  
Until you became just a pair of arms, just a stomach, just a thigh,  
just a mistake, just a space that is lacking  
I do not know when your body became something less than it is  
When it became this object  
to toss around like a piece of garbage

What happened in that moment when you began  
to write the poison of hate speech

into your own creation story  
Did you feel the life go out of you?

And yet, did you know that no matter how many volumes of inadequacy you have  
spoken into your body  
Whispered into the recesses of your mind  
Written into the suffocating air between you and your reflection

Did you know you cannot undo a miracle  
You cannot erase the hallelujah under which you came into being  
You cannot take back that amen after which you were first named  
Gift, Blessing, Beloved

Did you know that in ancient times it was believed,  
That if you named someone it would give you a power  
That provided insight into deepest parts of that person

That you might be able to pull a light from the darkness  
Hold a candle to their inner most being  
That a part of you would be connected to a part of them

And so, in the spirit of joining together  
In the tradition of naming,

There are people all around the world calling out  
to you in the darkness  
Beckoning those who have not yet found their way  
out of a detailing a dictionary of hate speech toward themselves

These people, these lanterns of light,  
these voices in the dark, they are calling you,  
they are saying:

“Take this. Take my spine.  
You firework,  
you brilliant flash light.  
Take this and swallow my stand up straight,  
gulp down my resilience.  
Take this gnarled trunk of tree spine  
and let it ring with wisdom inside you.  
You young warrior,  
it is not that I don’t think you can do it  
it is just that I don’t know how else to name you  
without first giving you the story of myself.”



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