

I opened up an older notebook of mine. One where it was probably September. The cover was ocean themed. The inside of it held the old-fashioned handwriting that I'm used to seeing but the pages that I opened to-- adjacent from each other was a poem I wrote about my father in the weeks he wasn't around, and a letter I wrote to Steven the day after he purposely didn't tell me happy birthday. Both were letters written to men that have brought me jovial pains.

HERE -- I wrote that *Dad's nowhere to be found*. And on the other page, I wrote-- "no relationship is healthy if you haven't seen them." It didn't take the same race to produce the same dark colors on my mood rings. Time was never kind to anyone, but it definitely played a part.

Dad came around here.

And then he left somewhere around here.

Then he came back around

HERE.

With three hundred dollars and a promise that we would be closer.
[I wrote him a poem, but he didn't really like the honesty, just the soliloquies.]

He left somewhere around here.

And he produced a track of *these lives*, and betrayals-- also, an overuse of periods that transfixed and changed any other relationships I've tried to nourish. Relationships regarding similar boys that didn't want to see me grow up because I wouldn't need them, and if I left the city for another one then they couldn't impact me as much.

So technically:

Dad came around here.

Steven was also here.

And then they both left around here.

Then dad came around.
The other one didn't show up.

[I wrote both of them poems, but Steven never took the chance to read his.]

Dad left somewhere around here.

Steven came back as an unknown
number and a text that alone was a curse.

I was supposed to understand his frustrations since I was his ex-factor, and I was supposed to understand the factors that went into Dad's new job and his need to change from soul food to Mexican.

I changed from Ecuador to Dominican. And Dominican to Black. Then I kind of liked Chinese food, but Chinese food wasn't deliverable anymore, so that became uncontrollable.

I never stayed angry with dad long enough because his money was sufficient and his love was in the groceries he provided; nutrients.

I enjoyed it when the attention was prolonged because then maybe there was more of an investment in me emotionally. Yet after all this time, men that were not around enough to make choices felt the need to tell me that we were going to hang out on Tuesday-- "I'll take y'all to the movies."

How could men that weren't consistent enough make the decision on when I was redeemed tangible and then intangible?

And then you know where you found me?

In a jail cell adjacent to Steven because I didn't think that I had the power to say no. I couldn't say no when dad promised things would be the same and how Steven believed he could reinvent our summer. So here I was, dumber, sharing space in a holding cell with criminals because I could never believe that things like this could happen to me. Where rooftops weren't just for teens, but for the police to tell us to freeze, put us in cuffs, call bluffs, and assume there was a need to stop and frisk because now we shared the same air with those that mugged for a living.

All because I couldn't figure out when intelligence overruled love, and brain-like rock beat love like scissor. And when no was more probable than a quick quiver and shiver, but then again I bit fate and ran away from God cause I wanted to love, and God had found a new way to teach a lesson-- so I was in a cop car, shoved.

Times like this make mother ask me how well do I know myself, and I respond with-- *not enough*, but when she asked me about my confidence, I said a nine out of ten because there are nine opinionated prophets living inside my head. All of them named after ego, and all of them I wish were dead.

Times like this, you make a bed and you lie in it, Jamorra showed up to the precinct, we got in an uber, she asked me *why* in it, and I blamed it on my emotions because I've cried within. So I continue to lose because I keep making the same tries to win, but insanity had met his match and I haven't been the same since.