Bathtubs and Brinks

The rim of my bath tub squeaked against soaked skin as I sunk my shoulders deeper below the water line. A cigarette at the end of a hinged arm carefully made its way between red-painted lips and I took a small drag. My other hand tugged at the white wedding veil that trailed to the floor in a romantic waterfall. The clock at the edge of the bathroom sink read 4:49 am and I felt the anticipation of her new husband’s wake stir in her chest with a sigh, “Mr. Miller who do you think will drive the wedge today,” I chime with a sarcastic brightness, lowering my head and face into the suds.

The media had an inexplicable infatuation with my love life and making my personal affairs public. I wonder how they would like it if I were to document every coffee-shop, single-serving flirtationship they have ever had and blew it up to the size of Times Square as if
its value took up any more room than a thimble.

When I met Albert Einstein, he explained to me how scientists theorize that the things we can observe about the universe in comparison to the actual volume of endless galaxies is like looking at a thimble of water and expecting it to represent the whole ocean. I think the human condition can be adequately summarized within the idea of a thimble sized perspective: we see only what lies in front of us (obviously) and sometimes not even that much. People look at me and see a bouncy blonde bimbo who throws herself onto anything that breathes and has a wallet. What they do not see are all the faded bruises and dried tears and empty pill bottles. The countless days without sleep and countless years without security or companionship. All the times I have given parts of my heart away, never to see them again and all the times a smile meant nothing more than a smile yet gets twisted into a scandal that takes multiple marriages down with it.

When I never met my father I decided I never wanted to be like him. If I had
to thank him for one thing it would be that he is so easy to not become. Step 1: don’t leave, don’t give up, don’t be an asshole. When my mother tried to smother me with a pillow, I decided I never wanted to be like her either. This notion posed a slightly increased challenge…

(*baby I’m feeling so lonely)*

(*baby all I need is you to want me right here and right now*)

Step 1: love is necessary, even when it is not.

(*you goddamn whore, you cannot try to tell me you weren’t asking for it)*

Step 2: love is necessary, even when it is not.

*(critics describe you as talented, lazy, and self-absorbed, is there any comment you would like to make about this?)*

Step 3: love is necessary, even when it is not.

           I find it delectably interesting the way in which society refuses to acknowledge the whole of a story, especially in regards to mental disease. Depression is undoubtedly the most inaccurately romanticized disorder of them all. And yes, I would call it a disorder, even a disability depending on how crippling the case is. Movies portray the sad and quiet girl as a delicate little mouse, waiting to be saved by the gorgeous football captain to wipe her tears and make everything okay and perfect and fixed. Depression is not mere sadness or loneliness. Depression is a thick wool blanket that suffocates a person’s little white and frantic soul. It is heavy and itchy and the world around you falls completely and utterly black with no sense of direction or purpose. How can you breathe when you don’t care if you do? At this point a victim will do one of two things: panic or fade to grey.  I have been known to do both, but I think I would rather fade to grey every time. It seems that the nights where I panic, emotionally flailing and losing control of every word and movement in my body, I never fail to take down an innocent by-stander with me. But I think it is the day-afters that are worse than the falling apart: I’m constantly crippled by shame, begging the sincerity of all my apologies, and then hit even harder by a consistent lack of empathy and understanding.

           I want to fade to grey. I want to break my neck and touch the world with a hand where everything feels soft and distant. Nothing can hurt you when you’re numb. Although, this is the part where you lose the most people in your life: the part where you can never explain why you’re crying or ignoring your messages or forgetting to meet your friend at the movies. Everyone looks down at your pathetic fetal position as if you wouldn’t stand up if you could…

Step 4: always force yourself to stand on broken legs.

And so here we go again, another day wedging swollen ankles into a pair of little white flats, smiling for a world that might not deserve it. It almost feels like the times I shouldn’t be laughing at all are the times that I laugh the most, and I can’t decide if my forced laughter helps pull me through each lull in mental stability or drives my mind deeper down the rabbit hole.

“Marilyn baby! Tell us what you wear to bed!”

“What do I wear in bed? Why, Chanel No. 5 of course.”

        Witty response here, charming smile there. None the wiser.

(Marilyn baby! Tell us how you cover up the stench!)

(Why, what stench?)

(You know! The stench of your broken heart that’s been rotting away in your chest every day since your father left!)

Baby, tell us what it sounds like? Honey, the slamming of the front door didn’t *sound* like anything. It felt like an earthquake that shook out my mother’s last screw and maybe that’s why I can’t hold a cigarette still. Darling, tell us who you’re wearing? Oh dear, I wish I could tell, but not even I recognize this reflection in the mirror.

If a building doesn’t have a foundation can it have walls and a roof? Maybe not, but maybe that’s not such a bad thing…

Jolting upright back in the bathtub, a rattling breath comes racing back into my lungs like a herd of deer frantically escaping a cave. The color floods back into the world around me and the clock at the edge of the bathroom sink reads 4:51 am.

(Baby, tell us what you know about lifeguards!)

What do I know about lifeguards? Why, I save my own life every day.

Works Consulted

"Marilyn Monroe's Early Life." *HowStuffWorks*. N.p., 28 Aug. 2007. Web. 05 Nov. 2015.

"Marilyn Monroe." *Bio.com*. A&E Networks Television, n.d. Web. 05 Nov. 2015.