

*To The One I Love*

Hanna Cho

To The One I Love,

I love you.

Nothing will ever compare  
to the love I have been feeling  
since the first day I saw you.  
My heart has always belonged  
and my mind has always reverted  
to the refuge inside your heart.

You accepted my insecurities  
and turned them into my strengths  
You held me when I was torn  
and re-assembled the pieces  
You quenched my undying thirst  
and drenched my angers  
You took my fears away  
and offered love instead

I lived off your compliments  
and depended on your presents  
I told my family about you  
and their laughs filled the room  
I told my friends about you  
and their poisonous envy lurked around  
I told Jenna about you  
and she beamed with amazement

Those summers were my best ones  
When I took Jenna to meet you  
She honked joyfully  
making loops with her smoke  
and running around with her oil  
You smiled and laughed  
As if nothing was hurting you

Little did I know

That while my summers ripened with glee,  
your winters deteriorated your heart  
That while I stood alongside the cliff,  
you were holding me from underneath  
That while my pleasures echoed,  
your ears bled with shrieks  
That while I sought to feel alive,  
your brothers slowly died next to you.

When you told me you were sick  
I was busy drinking your water  
When you told me you were hurt  
I was busy spilling my food  
And when you told me you were okay  
I stared at you until the moon rose  
And you just smiled.

That one sleepless summer night  
I turned my lights on and thought  
How much does one have to love  
to offer so much, yet expect  
nothing, nothing at all?

I walked towards your home  
Where you lied with your eyes closed  
I took your hands into mine  
and saw the spots on them  
Countless amounts of little black spots  
Consuming, feasting, devouring  
Every single piece of your body  
The solid, insoluble substance smirked at me  
with its bloodcurdling red teeth

I tried scraping it off your hand  
I tried scooping it off  
I tried smudging the patterns  
I tried rubbing with soap  
I tried tearing and biting it off

Until I realized that it was me who had been doing it all along.

You woke up in surprise and saw  
Sighing, you held me in your arms  
You caressed me with bloody hands  
You wiped my tears off with your blood  
And whispered, 'It's alright.'  
That night I wet your bed with tears  
Which you dried with your breeze

I vowed to myself  
To protect you forever  
To love you like you do to me  
To help you around with your illness  
I promised not to hurt you  
But here I am, repeating myself  
An endless loop of sorrow  
with a circumference of your forgiveness

As I close my eyes and listen  
to the whispers you tell me  
You tell me you'll be alright  
Yet your voice trembles with fear

But isn't it so odd  
That despite everything,  
Despite your look of despair  
Despite your lifeless stare,  
You are still as beautiful  
As you were on the first day

Isn't it so wrong  
For me to see you like this  
Yet hide into the shadows  
And make sure I'm safe first

My heart tells me it's you  
But my brain tells me otherwise  
As I reach deep down from the sky  
I look at you to catch me where I fall  
Within the meters of your intoxicated heart

I reach down to embrace it  
And whisper,  
“I will protect you.”

Your lullabies and waves,  
Your beauty and scenery,  
Your kisses and water,  
Your brothers and animals,  
Your embrace and food,  
Your scent and air,  
I depend on every single aspect of you,  
but so does your illness.

Here I stand, where you can reach  
Whenever you need my help  
I will find a cure for you  
And strive to do what you did to me  
And love you until my last day.

I love you.

Yours forever,  
Mankind

One of the most heartbreaking types of any kind of relationship is where both sides have a strong passion toward each other but are unable to develop their feelings, because it hurts one or the other. No matter what each side strives to do, there is nothing they can do but go back to their own paths. Before I carefully reflected on what kind of feeling I wanted my writing to portray, I thought of the relationship we, as human beings, currently have with the ocean, rather than presenting mere single-use facts. Quite interestingly, this analogy perfectly matched the mood I was looking for. As I worked on writing and structuring my poem, I thought of a letter that would match the depressing, agonizing mood so the reader could sympathize and undergo an emotional trip, in which he or she comes to realize a heartbreaking, pitiful love story. Personally, I view the destruction of our oceans as something irreversible yet possible to change. Just like the “turn” in the poem itself, I dream of a future in which we turn to cure the ocean and help it rise from its mortal disease. In order for that to happen, however, we will need to spread awareness by applying such problem into more relatable, familiar terms. I hope this poem helps out with the process.