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Plentiful

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Plentiful

Maeve Conway
December 10, 2020

I dedicate these pieces to *anyone* who may gain something impactful and worthwhile from them.

Not A Born Natural
Maeve Conway

Practice begins with technical skills.
My teammates and I line up on half-court,
waiting for Coach Maki to commence the exercise.
As she explains the drill,
my inner critic thrives off of the dreaded words,
Crossover dribble between the legs.

Beads of sweat form on my forehead.
The whistle siren rings in my ear like a rusty sink handle.
My pulsating heartbeat echoes throughout the gym.

I feel as if I have chugged a five hour energy drink,
for I bolt before even letting go of the basketball.
As I come to a halt,
The basketball flies out of my hands,
slowly rolls down the court.

Finally, I reach the line of my fellow teammates.
Coach Maki tries to indirectly reassure me,
Don't worry, some people are just naturals.

My face turns cherry hightop red
As I grip my best friend Anna's arm.
At this moment,
I am the sun at the center of the planets' attention.
From this point forward,
I will strategically take a water break
during my team's execution of the drill.

Fake Beauty
Maeve Conway

Mariah Carey lost 30 lbs and gained her confidence back.
Angie's secret tummy tuck said, "Bye-bye stretch marks!"
Jessica Simpson lost 10 lbs in 10 days to gain her "sexy" body back!

*What did they lose other than inches off their waists?
The sparkle in their eyes that grows dull
when their mother says
"Drink more water, it'll fill you up"?
What number on the scale is beautiful?
If I have stretch marks,
If I cannot fit into these skinny jeans,
am I no longer "sexy"?
How long must I starve myself
before I gain the confidence everyone raves about?
How much of myself do I have to lose
in order for the desirable parts to be left?*

*If my worth can be measured with a scale,
Does less have to mean more?*

We allow these intrusive thoughts to dictate our minds.
But what happens when they completely take over?
Beauty is not based on these warped views of "health."
You are enough as you are.

What does living mean?
Maeve Conway

Maybe that's what living means:

The feeling of victory as your hand slams into the wall after coming in 1st in the pool

And you can only focus on catching the breath you lost.

Gripping your grandfather's hand as he

slowly takes his last breath,

and feeling fiery tears stream down your cheeks.

Clenching your sore stomach after laughing for hours with your sister

on her bedroom floor about petty drama at school.

Watching your cousin walk up the aisle to meet her

teary-eyed best friend at the altar and knowing that will be you one day.

Hugging your mother so tightly after setting up

your dorm room and attempting to ignore the silent sobs

because you cannot stand the thought of being so far from her.

Maybe living means to genuinely embrace all of these breaths,

because without them would we truly be alive?

*Line taken from Dzvinia Orłowsky's "Fine Despite" from her book *Bad Harvest*

Happy Place
Maeve Conway

Siri, take me to my haven.

After departing from the rush of I-94, take the exit onto Highway 50. Here, you will be welcomed with an endless scene of perfectly matured corn crops— a beautiful symbol of the Midwest. Remain at a steady 55mph pace, because those Illinois plates are just asking for a speeding ticket. As you continue to drive west, beware of Thompson Strawberry Farm! If you are not cautious, you may get sucked into a 3-hour ordeal chucking more strawberries at your sister than you are collecting. Continue west down the road, and keep your eyes peeled...I cannot promise you that a deer (or God forbid a wild turkey) will not start a fight with your windshield (and win, might I add). Once you reach the end of the magnificent cornfields, head southwest on South Lakeshore Drive. This will bring you on a tour of the most beautiful houses on Lake Geneva. If you look closely, you may be able to see hundreds of speedboats decorating the glistening water through the clearings. As the houses fade away, the Abbey Springs guard house will soon be on your left. Take a sharp right turn down Country Club Drive, making sure to drive cautiously past the pickleball court and hole 9 on the left. Finally, turn left onto Burning Tree Lane and park your vehicle in front of unit 707B.

You have now arrived at your destination.

I am ecstatic to retrieve my belongings from the backseat, practically stumbling over my own legs while rushing toward the house. This is my childhood. Unit 707B holds a part of my heart eternally. Walking up to the front door, I catch a glimpse of the Close/Leyden family crests before reaching down to take the little green key out from under the rock where we store it. The wonderful smell of must and laundry detergent fill my nose in perfect harmony. I am home. I walk directly to the bunk bed room and lay my belongings out on the furthest bed from the door: my bed. “Maeve, will you drive me down to the beach in a few?” These beautiful words flow from my grandmother’s mouth, and I grab the keys to the golf cart with a little frog keychain on them. I shove a swimsuit into my mother’s beach bag and I am off. Pride washes over me as I think of how lucky we are to have 707B. This is my haven.

You Can Let Go
Maeve Conway

“Maeve, I need you to get to the hospital as soon possible.”

The sky goes gray. *This can't be real, I saw you yesterday. We're supposed to get breakfast tomorrow. You're in such great shape for your age. How can this be happening right now? Maybe you're just tired from dialysis. I'm sure this is being blown out of proportion. I'll see you soon, Papa.*

The night is gloomy and cold. We drive past flowers and playgrounds, but the color has drained from these little sources of joy. The world *feels* dull. I pull up to the hospital and run into the lobby. *Our family is nowhere to be seen, maybe you've already been discharged.* My mom runs out of a room sectioned off from the main waiting area. Her eyes are bloodshot from crying, I wait for her to tell me it will be okay. She doesn't.

My mom is always the one to make an unfortunate situation seem like the light at the end of the tunnel. Her lack of immediate reassurance concerns me. *Is this really serious? Are you really not coming home this time?* I feel my knees go weak, and I catch myself on the hospital couch that turned into my bed for the night.

Why aren't they letting me see you? Are you okay, Papa? Please don't leave us. Please don't leave me. We are brought to the ICU where they are transferring my grandfather. He is still unconscious, they tell my grandmother he won't make it through the week. They allow us to keep him in his room for the rest of his life. *This isn't fair. You were fine 24 hours ago. How did things change so quickly? I didn't get to say goodbye.*

Family and friends travel from far neighborhoods to share their stories of my grandfather and say goodbye. It feels surreal. *You always taught me about the strength of God, Papa. Thank you for shaping me into the person I am today. I will make you proud. I know you will be watching over me.* I know he can hear us, even if he can't respond.

It is Wednesday, November 22, 2017 at 7 PM. They are about to turn off the machines, but this is not my time to shut down. *I know you love me, Papa. I know you can hear me, hear everyone. I love you, Papa. You can let go. We are here. It's okay. We will be okay.*

7:55 PM. You are gone now, but I always have you with me. I'll see you later, Papa.

Karma
Maeve Conway

"Miss Davis, would you like to add anything more to your statement?"

Yes. I'm lying. Can't they see that? Of course I know everything that happened that night. Even though it was three months ago, I feel like I relive it every single day. We were just supposed to sleep at Annie's house. How was I supposed to know that Annie wouldn't make it back from our adventure in the woods that night?

This isn't my fault. It can't be. I didn't do anything. Why should I be the one to live with all the consequences? It was all Kelly's idea. She made me tell Annie to meet us in the woods. We had no idea that would be the last time we saw her. What if she's telling the other officers that I had something to do with this. No. She wouldn't do that. We promised each other not to say a word. Stick to the story, it'll be fine.

Except it won't. It'll never be "fine" again. Our best friend is gone, and for what? So we could successfully tell people we went into the woods after dark and survived? That would be a lie.

They think she is missing, but we know she's gone for good. I can still hear her screaming our names. Who took you, Annie?

Who leaked the voicemail that Kelly received that night saying if we went to authorities our families would pay the price? I fear that we are being framed. We should have just turned in the voicemail the first time we were brought in for questioning. They didn't suspect us of anything. How did we lie so well?

Maybe I should just tell them about her blood curdling screams. I can be honest, maybe they can help. But how do I confess to knowing about a potential clue for three months and saying nothing about it? I'll go to jail for being an accessory. I have to go to college. I have to have a future. Annie would want that for both of us.

I don't deserve to have a bright future if I am coward enough to be a blockade for Annie's potential future. How can I even think of myself when she could be anywhere suffering right now? What is wrong with me? I wish I could just confess. But I promised. I promised Kelly I wouldn't budge. "We are in this together," she said. I can't just let her down now.

They haven't stopped the searches. Maybe there is still hope we will see Annie again. But if we ever did, she wouldn't talk to us. I know she wouldn't. We are the worst friends on the planet. How could you ever forgive someone for betraying you this much?

We deserve to be punished. Why didn't we just tell the police right away? It's too late now. I can't go back.

"Miss Davis, I asked you a question."

"Oh, I'm sorry. I just spaced out for a minute. No, I would not like to add anything to my previous statement. Thank you."

As Riley Davis and her best friend Kelly Lyon walked out of the station, they were overcome with guilt. They looked at each other with the mutual feeling eating them up inside. Their parents were tugging their shoulders, consoling them. They kept repeating how sorry they were that the

girls had to be put through this and relive Annie's disappearance again. Little did their parents know, they had been experiencing the consequences every second since.

"Kell! Ri!"

The familiar voice brought immediate chills to the girls' spines. Were they dreaming? The distinct, raspy voice came from behind them. They turned around almost in slow motion, the reality of what was about to occur forcing their stomachs to turn inside out. As Riley allowed her eyes to focus on the source of the voice, she lost her breath entirely. Standing 3 yards from her was the strawberry blonde, freckled, sweet girl that had taken up her entire mind for the past few months: Annie.

"Remember me, guys? It's been so long! Let's catch up tonight. My house?"

Annie's cold response followed by a wink only brought a pit to Riley's stomach.

What am I getting myself into? This will NOT end well...



Maeve Conway is nineteen years old from Glenview, Illinois. She is a freshman at Providence College, and is a Marketing major. She intends on going to law school, and wishes to partake in a career that helps people directly. Maeve is extremely interested in service, and loves to be social by spending time with her friends and large Irish family!

"Maeve Conway's poetry and prose are written so delicately and truly strike a chord within her readers each time. All her works effortlessly evoke emotion with her vulnerability and ability to relate to everyone so deeply. I leave these works reminiscing on my past, but also with a sense of comfort." - Kate Laliberte

"In *Plentiful*, a coming-of-age collection brimming with lyrical intricacy and grounded in fearless honesty, Maeve infuses her rich, warm tone with pathos, humor, and heartfelt openness. Maeve's vibrant writing forms a rollercoaster of a collection - a moving, cathartic journey that is equal parts gentle and bold, poignant and exhilarating. *Plentiful* overflows with raw candor, an unapologetic celebration of life in all of its abundances: heartbreaking, nostalgic, volatile, and beautiful." -Sydney Cahill