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## Letting Go of the Unnecessary

Isabel Arnout

Providence College, [iarnout@friars.providence.edu](mailto:iarnout@friars.providence.edu)

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**LETTING GO  
OF THE UNNECESSARY**



Isabel Arnout  
December 10, 2020

Dedicated to my person

## **Five Days**

A five-day suspension for sticking up for something I believed in.

I remember the day prior.

My principal said these exact words, "Our school will not be participating in the national school walkout as a protest for gun-control. Instead, we will come up with other ways to advocate for those lives that were lost"

*Five days.*

For speaking up for those lives that were taken by a bullet

Before they could defend themselves.

*Five days.*

I was furious.

But I didn't listen to his command.

On March 14<sup>th</sup>, I was in English class, and some of my classmate were getting ready to walk out of the school.

The school that shut out our voices.

As soon as I walked out those doors,

I felt a sense of freedom.

I remember running down the stairs and trying to escape before the principal was notified by my teacher.

Once I made it out with my other classmates, I knew what was coming.

The principal stormed out the school, and I have never seen such anger manifest in someone before,

It was the *devil* himself.

He yelled at us to go inside immediately,

Or we will be suspended.

I was not going back in.

My mind was set to walk to the state house

And join hundreds of others in protest,

And to honor the lives we lost.

A few of my friend went back inside,

But my friend and I kept going.

The principal stopped my friend and I.

He said, if you do not go back in,

I will give you a five-day suspension.

I just turned away,

And

Kept walking.

Are you ashamed of what you did?

Was getting a five-day suspension worth it?

Yes, it was.

And  
I  
Will  
Never  
Be silenced  
Again.



## Broken Souls

You left me again.

In a field of thorned roses.

Knowing my love of sunflowers

You left me again

And you took my trust with you

You deprived me of the only security

You established.

We were two hurt kids

Trying to fix

Our future

When our chapter

Was

Already

Over.

The damage has been done.

Our love was more toxic

Than poison itself.

Our love was pure.

Our love was addictive.

Therapy couldn't fix us

Because we still relapsed.

Even though

We tried our hardest.

We could have gotten up.

When our lips touched,

We were like Adam and Eve

Disobeying

The law of fate.

I wonder if one day,

Maybe

One day

I will be enough for you

To stay

Or

Is she your soulmate?

Not.

How did you touch her lips?

While you had my parfum

Spread amongst your shirt.

She is a thorned rose.

Sorry, I couldn't mend your broken soul

But give me a chance

And maybe we can grow old, together?

Us together is

Just a figment of my

Imagination

Together we are

Disaster.

But I need you to stay.

Without you

I need someone

To

Piece

Me

Back

Together.





## **The Fall**

*If only it, too,  
could fly away, never to return.*

She tries to  
Ignore it  
But it is attached to her  
Like a leech.

She tries to breathe,  
But its hands get tighter  
Around her neck.  
The more she tries to inhale life

Death enters her lungs.  
Life is a responsibility,  
And ever since it moved in,  
She isn't responsible anymore.

The thoughts come in like a strong current.  
Overflows her mind with  
Its own toxicity.  
"I don't want to live" it says.

She screams hoping someone would notice the flood,  
The wind rushes in  
Blocking out any sudden noise.  
The trees begin to fall,  
The waves begin to grow in height almost reaching her.  
She places her hands on her ears  
To see if that would stop the voices,  
But  
They just become louder.  
And louder.

The water has reached her now.  
She is holding on tight  
But the flood is *too powerful*  
One last time,  
She tries to stop the flood from overtaking her,  
But  
That ounce of hope  
Disintegrated into the  
Water.

The birds in the dark sky  
try to regain their balance

As the wind intensifies.  
The girl is trying to hold on,  
But a black cloud is being blown by the wind  
And limits her visibility.  
She loses all control of her *mind, body, and spirit*.

The wind slows down.  
She enters the  
Stage of *forgiveness*.  
She looks up,  
And whispers  
“im sorry”

There is a last gust of wind.  
The most intense one.  
Instead of staying.  
She let's go  
and  
Falls into the water  
To join the others  
Who  
Lost control too.



\*Line taken from Dzvinia Orłowsky's poem "Kalendar" from her book *Bad Harvest*

## That's Not What I Meant...

My friends kept on bugging me and calling me a loser because I couldn't find the bravery to talk to her. I wanted her to come talk to me first, but they didn't understand that because I was a dude and dudes always make the first move (it doesn't have to be that way). I bumped into her last week at the supermarket. She looked stunning. Her beautiful, yellow flowy dress complimented her glistening hazel eyes. Her black, voluminous curls could catch anyone's eye. I tried to avoid her at all costs, but she recognized and signaled for me to come over. She was at the other end of the bread aisle. I tried to pretend like I didn't see her, but my idiot self-made direct eye contact with her. I made slowly my way towards her, hands in my pocket. I felt droplets of sweat start to form on my forehead, my hands started to feel clammy. I wiped the sweat off my forehead and tried to play it off by making it seem like I was moving my hair back. I made sure my dad stomach wasn't showing by adjusting my shirt. While I was adjusting my shirt, I realized that I had a tomato sauce stain on my white shirt from dinner last night (What a moron). As I approached her, I fixed my posture, chin up, like the "brave" man I was. I didn't show an ounce of fear (But really, I was dying inside). Here is how the conversation went.

*Hey! Hey...* (What I really meant was "man, you're so beautiful") *How are you?* (How am I? I am freaking out because I don't know how to ask you out) *I'm good...* how are you? *I'm doing great!* That's good...what are you doing here? (what a stupid question to ask. What else would she be doing at a supermarket. Maybe I should just get straight to the point and ask her out. That's all I have to do. It's not that big of a deal. The worst thing that can happen is that she says no.) *Uh...* (oh no she thinks I'm stupid) *Just getting some groceries...* (That was a long pause...yup, she thinks I'm a loser. All right, time to change the subject). Are you fre— (Great now her phone is ringing) Five minutes go by, and she hangs up. *Hey, Sorry. I have to go. See you in class Friday!* Yeah, no problem. Good seeing you. (Another failed attempt. I guess I'll try next Friday...) Today is next Friday, and we spoke again, but this time, my friends won't be mocking me...



## The Ending

Am I in hell? What happened to me? My thoughts run rampant-- they won't stop. My thoughts are like a never-ending race, they have full control of me now, and I have no idea how I got here. I simply cannot let my reputation go into ruins, but this feeling, this *thing*, has full control of me. I lay in my black, spaghetti, stained sheets. I submerge myself in my mind instead of fighting what is destroying me. When did this start? I was fine. Everything was fine. My eyes start to get heavy, and a formation of water starts to fill my eyes. One tear escapes my right eye and makes it way down my cheek, and a million more follow. I need to convince myself that I am fine, just fine. I'm just tired. I kept repeating these words until they became a reality.

I don't have time to dwell, I need to do my homework. There is no time to feel. *I am fine just fine*. I have a soccer game later, I can't let my team down, plus I am more than capable because *I am fine. Just fine*. Was I always like this? My life is perfect. Yeah, it's probably all just a phase. I'm sure every teenager goes through it. Suddenly, my heart drops. My chest begins to tighten, and the air in my lungs is limited. My thoughts start racing again. Except this time, I can't convince myself that *I am just fine*. I try to shout for my mother's name, but I feel a presence that makes me freeze. I gasp for air, but the thoughts continue to overwhelm me. *Help!* I shout for one last time. Next thing I know, it is morning.

I try to go about my day as if yesterday didn't happen. If I don't think about it, it isn't there. Remember, *you're fine. Just fine*. I get up from my enticing, yet toxic bed, and I make my way to the bathroom. I was more tired than usual. I feel that presence again as I am brushing my teeth. I thought I got rid of it last night, but it was coming back again. I run out of the bathroom, and into the kitchen. *You're not good enough. Your brother is dead because of you. You're useless*. Stop! I yelled. What is going on with me?

Mom! I shout. Where are you? No response. I try shouting again, but my chest tightens once again. A lady in a white suit enters my room. *Sir, do you know where you are? And who you are?* Yes, my name is Isaiah, and I am in my room. Why are you in my house? Who are you? *Sir, you are in a psychiatric hospital due to severe depression and psychosis. Your brother's name is Isaiah; he is dead. Your name is Isaac*. This lady is delusional. I need to escape. I run for the door and everything goes black.



## I Didn't Do It

I'm innocent. Why don't they believe me? It's been 379 days, and I am going insane in this dark cell. There are no windows, just pure darkness. They have me trapped like I'm some animal. *I didn't do it.* Why would I kill? In their eyes, people with my dark skin are always up to something malicious, something criminal. My skin color is labeled in the system, and I will never escape it. The man who did this is walking freely. He's out there breathing the fresh air I should be breathing; seeing the sun rise and fall; probably plotting who his next victim is, but I'm still here, staring at the same gray wall.

My lawyer is trying to get me out of here, but the witness continues to lie about what she saw. I know she saw me across the street at the time of the murder, but these people will do anything to see people like me fall into ruins. They're *afraid* of people like me, but we should be afraid of people like her. Now I'm here, waiting for someone to set me free because no matter what I say, I will always be the enemy.

The plea deal is in a few days. If I take the deal, I will accept the mark of a "criminal." The mark that will destroy my life forever. But if I stay in this cell unsure of when my innocence will be proven, I will destroy me—permanently. People like me are always *guilty*. I've prayed so many times to God to send me an angel from above, but God he's busy. Too busy allowing the man who did this walk freely, while I suffer for what he did. What grave sin did I commit for this to happen?

That day, I was getting groceries for my family. I was standing in the parking lot, when I heard two gunshots. I look across the street and I see a girl, lifeless on the cement in a puddle of blood. I saw a man with a gun in his hand. The witness standing right next to him, looked at the man and then shouted "run." She looked around, and we made eye contact. That is where I became her target.

Why won't she come through for me. If she knew me... If she knew me like my mom knows me, she would change her mind. God, I can't stay in this cell another day. She saw him pull the trigger. Tomorrow is the last day I can take the deal. I either admit to guilt and suffer for ten years or keep fighting, but I have lost all hope to keep fighting.

"Sir, please sign here to secure you deal." Ten years. I look up and I whisper, "this better be worth it." I sign my name, and now I am officially a criminal—a murderer.





Isabel Arnout is eighteen years of age. She was raised in Providence, Rhode Island, and is currently a freshman at Providence College. Isabel loves to sing and play piano as pastimes. In her high school years, she developed a great admiration for poetry. She describes poetry as an escape from the world and a form of expression. Poetry will always be a part of her.

“Isabel Arnout brings to light so many raw and real topics that deserve extreme recognition. She explains her points very well, and her insight is vivid and significant. Her voice is one that calls people to listen, learn, and engage in chance. I admire this writer!” - Maeve Conway

“Isabel’s writing is securely grounded with profound imagery and meticulous language while being wholeheartedly unafraid to push social and racial boundaries. She exhibits a strong and authoritative emotional voice that is effortlessly etched into her poetry and short stories and leaves the reader both speechless and in awe without fail. Every single one of her works is a new journey to discover.” - Thao Pham