



To the boy who wants to fix me

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Received: 04-JUL-2015

Accepted: 28-JUL-2015

Published Online: 02-AUG-2015

You remember that time you came over
When my parents weren't in town
And we spent all night watching reruns of I Love Lucy?
You remember that morning
When we met outside college
And you told me you didn't like my haircut?
And then we fought... over my hair!
But that was just how you and I were.
I wish we could still be like that,
I wish we could laugh along with Lucy again;
But we don't.
We don't laugh.
I don't.
I can't.
You try.
I can't even do that.
Because, yes, I'm broken
The pieces have broken too,
And then those broken pieces
Dissolved into the air –
The air that I breathe
I choke, sometimes,
And I see you trying hard to bring me back,
But I can't come back.
You keep doing these small things –
You write poetry for me,
You leave notes on my nightstand,
You make smileys with ketchup on my toast,
You doggy-ear the page of the book I'm reading,
Why do you do that?
Why are you so good to me?
When I'm not good for you?
I'm not.

Cite this article as: Menon P. To the boy who wants to fix me. RHiME. 2015;2:43-45.

They've all said that –
Family, friends,
Our neighbours,
The milkman who sees you pick up the packets every morning,
The McDonald's delivery boy who gives you extra ketchup...
They all know what this is doing to you –
What I'm doing to you.
Why can't you see that?
Why don't you fight with me?
Why don't you raise your voice?
Get exasperated, frustrated, betrayed, hurt?
Let the neighbours hear the clang of pots and pans
As you lash out.
Because all they hear
Is the creaking sound of the wheels
As I move around our home;
They hear me bang into the bureau
As I lose control;
They hear you rushing forward to help me.
They hear you ask me in that always worried tone –
“Baby, are you hurt?
Should I get you anything?
Where does it hurt, love?”
It hurts everywhere.
Every fiber of my body hurts,
Writhes in pain and
Cries out.
But it's my heart –
It weeps.
It breaks every time you look at me
To see if I need help with anything;
Every time you call me from work
To see if I'm doing okay;
Every time you carry me to the bathroom
In the middle of the night;
Every time you tie my shoelaces
...I ache.
I see the way you look at other couples
And their children.
I've seen you push the neighbour's boy on the swing-set;
How happy you looked then!
Your smile reached your eyes,
And your eyes looked lighter, brighter –
As if you weren't burdened for those few minutes.
I can't be fixed, my love.
My feet will never again feel the wet earth after the first rains,
My toes will not wriggle as you slip under the covers and pull me close,
My hips will never buck and arch, because you cannot make love to me.
When I feel your lips on my neck,
I want to turn towards you.
I want to wrap my legs around your waist
And stay like that until eternity breathes its last.
But I can't.
So I hide my face –
My tears talk to my pillow,
Drenching it with all that I want to say
To you.
But you never listen.
You never listened to me all those years ago either.

You say you love me
And you want to be with me –
But don't you see what it's doing to me?
Don't you see how the pieces that had gone up into the air are choking me again?
I need you to be happy.
I need to know that once I'm gone you'll be happy;
I can't give you that feeling,
I can't give you any feeling.
So please, love, listen to me,
I don't know how much time I have,
I don't know if I'll be able to read the page you doggy-eared tomorrow morning.
In case, I can't,
Promise me, you'll find happiness again.
Promise me, you'll find love again.
Promise me, that no matter what, your smile will always reach your eyes.
And in case I do wake up tomorrow,
Will you please take me to the salon for a haircut?
