

TW: extreme violence, death, transphobic/homophobic slurs and behaviors, strong language

And if I die today, I'll be the Happy Phantom...

Well, all due respect to Tori, but I did die today, and I am not happy. There're no nuns to chase, no strawberry fields, and I can't fucking forgive these atrocities. Guess I'm just not as good as others who've died... been hurt... who've been killed...

It's funny. Not ha-ha funny, obviously. More weird funny.

It really is the strangest thing. Some have called it an out of body experience; some consider it astral projection. But one thing's for sure, no matter what you call it: there really is no stranger thing. And confirming the existence of the soul? Well, humans have always known on some imperceptible level that we have those. Knowing is intrinsically different than believing, however. Staring at my body, still, motionless, broken, bruised, bloody, and feeling that... I'm dead... It's over... There really is no stranger thing. And part of me thought it was good we only have to do this once... Of course, I didn't want to do it at all...

More bizarre still was the realization that this ethereal existence could still feel. Apparently, the myriad cultures upholding the idea that there wasn't much difference between the living and the dead had some truth to their worldviews. My eyes didn't twitch from the flashing red and blue of police lights. I couldn't feel the humid heat of the summer night, or the cracked concrete under my feet. I couldn't feel my heart beating, or the subconscious movements of my body. But I did feel the absence of those things...

The people move like ghosts. Ironic, isn't it? Like stop motion figurines, fuzzy, faded, and phantom-esque. As if the whole world is moving too slow, or I'm moving too fast. Like they're not real. And I'm all that's left. I'm standing still as the world whirls around me. They can't see me. And of course, they can't hear me. All whipping past me in a way that makes the hurting worse. Moving around me, over me, and kind of through me, or the body that once was me.

"Poor thing. Shouldn't have been out at night," says the victims' advocate.

What was I supposed to do, just stay at work 'til morning?

"Name's *****," says a cop.

That's not my name.

"There's evidence under the fingernails that needs collecting," says a detective, "Seems he fought back."

I'm not a man.

"...got nice fake tits for a fag."

They aren't fake; grew 'em myself, asshole.

"...must've provoked him."

By doing what, walking down the fucking street?

“...stupid tranny.”

Don't call me that!

“...*****...”

That's NOT my name!

“...deserved what he got.”

I'm not a man!

“he” “him” “he” “his” “him him him” “his his his his his” “name's *****...”

Don't call me that!

“...freak...” “...mutilation...” “...basic biology...” “...asked for it...” “...belongs in Hell...”

Stop it...

“...disgusting...” “...filth...” “...probably escaped from an asylum...”

Shut up!

“Who would do something like that to themselves? It's not right...”

You don't even know me!

“...fucking faggot...” “...tranny freak...” “...drag whore...”

Stop it! Shut up! Stop it! Shut up stop it stop it stop it stop it stop it STOPIT!

“...glad my kid's not like that...” “...I'd kick 'em out...” “...love the sinner, but hate the sin...”

Fuck You! Fuck ALL of You!

“Who could possibly love someone so sick?”

.....

...fuck you...

...

fuck

I want to kick, shove, and fight like I never had the chance to do alive. I want to scream, like it's my last chance to make them – any of them – understand, but I don't have my voice anymore. He took it. Killed

it. Silenced it forever. No matter how hard I worked for the world to see me, to know me... No matter how fucking obvious it should be if they just opened their fucking eyes...

They'll never know how much I hate them all, when all I've ever know is how much they hate me...

She's been here the whole time. I know she has; I just haven't turned to see her. Haven't acknowledged her. She's probably been here since before, unseen. That's what I think, anyway.

"I'm so sorry, Brianna."

~~*You're probably the only one...*~~

"Oh, that's not true. The others just aren't here. The ones who care, I mean. 'Cause they don't know what happened yet."

~~*All I did was walk down the street...*~~

"I know."

~~*All I did was try and get away from him. As politely as possible. I was so fucking polite! Polite as hell!*~~

"I know."

~~*Sorry for shouting...*~~

"It's okay."

~~*Not mad at you.*~~

"I know."

~~*How could I offend him so much... so fucking much... just by being me... walking down the street... that he... he killed me?*~~

"I don't know."

~~*...I don't want to go.*~~

"I know."

~~*So why do I have to leave right fucking now?! Because of him?! When I'm finally starting to accept myself? Like myself? To be comfortable in my own body? When I've put up with all of their hatred all of my fucking life!*~~

"I know, sweetie. And I can't say that where we're going will be any better for you."

~~*Anywhere's gotta be better than here.*~~

“Well, that’s just not true, either, but I promise I’ll be right here. Right by your side. Every step of the way. We’ll go together. Into the Mystery.”

A cold, comforting hand slips into mine. Long fingers intertwine with mine. A wretched kindness fills me, letting me finally cry the tears that can’t actually fall. I can sob the sounds no one can hear but her. She tightens her grip. With relief, I tighten mine right back.

~~Okay...~~

We depart, fading into the infinite distance. Away from the deafening violence, the naked hatred, and into the black. Into the peaceful sound of silence, I can hear the gentle beating of mighty wings.

And I’d go wearing my naughties like a jewel;
they’ll be my ticket to the universal opera...