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Unforgettable Moments

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Unforgettable Moments

Grace Aklestad

He'd use those three words like a weapon
Yielding them to accomplish his next objective
And every time he pulled out his three-word sword
He would carve out a piece of me for himself
Taking pleasure in leaving it on the ground
Watching the blood drain out and die

Two years of losing piece after piece
Left me with only a small bit of heart
Attempting to pump blood throughout my body
Yet my remains lay gray and lifeless
A pile of mangled body parts
The carnage of three words

The words by themselves were harmless
Flattering even
It was often what followed them
That sliced off piece after piece of my being

The metaphorical sword was soon replaced
By very real fists and firm hands
Starting as a just barely-too-hard shove
A slap in a particularly heated moment.
Quickly my wardrobe was filled with black turtlenecks
Fresh-faced look replaced by thick smudges of concealer

Pushes became punches
Me saying no, but him forgoing my autonomy
Hands cutting off air

Flushed cheeks replaced by a purple tint
Dark, splotchy remnants dotting my body
Reminders that my life was not mine to control

And if I forgot, a short text
Saying where I might find him in the morning
If I didn't find a way to stop him
"The ball's in your court," he'd say
A hint: I'd find him at the basketball courts
Tying a sturdy rope to the hoop

Begging and pleading ensued
He'd push me around a while
Place the blame on my shoulders
Tell me I should be the one hanging
Have his way with me while I complacently obliged
And then it was over as quickly as it started
We were as we were, until the next time

Standing in front of a mirror
Gingerly covering the oblong purple welts
Of fingers on my neck
Wondering how I got here
If I'll ever escape
And what pieces of myself
I'll be forced to leave behind
As I flee