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Appositional Growth

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Appositional Growth
Brandon Stettenbenz

At age 8 it was Snow White & The Seven Dwarfs
Aladdin and
Beauty and the Beast
Happily Ever After

At age 10 when my mom threw my dad out of the house on Christmas,
it wasn't supposed to be this way
This wasn't in the Disney cartoons!

At 15 That puppy love cheated on me with my best friend.
Welcome to the dating world

At 19 I was asked out to prom and winter ball
After I graduated high school
Then dumped and never spoken to

At 23 she was my girl for three years
when she confessed she was bisexual
wanted to pursue a woman in her life
and ended up saying that to cheat on me
with another guy three months later

At 24 We lived in my Ford
After two months, the first frost of winter hit
I left colder than that ice on the window

At 25 we broke up twice
She dumped me both times

At 26 I settled for a two week tryst

At 27 I fell for beauty and seduction
Passive the whole time
This trophy would look good right?
Cheated on

At 28 I rebounded for a relationship
Doomed from the start
She moved to South America three months later

At 29 I fell for a succubus
Heart, love, strength, trust, depleted

At 30 I fell hard
A new decade, I think I figured this out
Sacrificed my dreams, school, heart
Destroyed

At 31 Anybody can pick up the pieces
Don't half-ass anything
Cheated on again

At 31 1/2 We soaked in Hot Springs
As our eyes collided under redwood forests
Hope

At 32 she moved out
Took the dog and blocked me

At 33 I started swiping
The slot machine beeps
This is weird

Today
I feel trauma and amnesia
Unapologetically falling in love with
Myself

All these relationships formed an ossification, they allowed a new bone to grow, a crooked, snarly, bone coming out of my ribs and connecting to my heart. Every time it happens again, every time I wake up, every time I fall in love this bone wants to grow, and crack and break my heart for good. I can't love the same way. I don't have a high school sweetheart. I have a bone that is so traumatic when she doesn't call or text me goodnight I lose sleep. When she doesn't stay the night, if I don't kiss her soft lips for one day I panic. If I think about it long enough this bone will pierce me, shake my hands, scare the fuck out of me, and I wake up to a nightmare that she's breaking up with me. Do I just give up? If I stay away from the human species I'll be okay, I won't have anxiety, I'll be wealthy, and live at the gym, no more stress, panic, maybe this bone will decay, or hollow without the calcium of a woman.

Except why give up? When the elixir of love can heal. It may not be a month or two, or even a year but if I can love me, believe in honesty, believe in compassion and empathy, then I can prosper. My heart can grow, grow big enough to pop the ossification. With her, my rock, my bird, in my mind I can achieve anything. Love with the chisel that breaks off that bone, stunts it's growth and caps it off to never sprout again. I haven't smoked a cigarette in 45 days, I have lost 33 pounds, I've been sober for over seven months, I'm happier than I've ever been, and yet I still can't wake up almost every single day like she's going to breakup or cheat on me. Yet perhaps it's the way it has to be for an anonymous alcoholic, one day at a time, control the beast, moderation. It may be uncomfortable but it will grow, grow into a red Rose, with glasses, bangs, and a growing bright red heart that makes me smile and calm every moment her name comes into contact with my heart.