

When Tears Hide

Domestic Violence in America



We found love in a hopeless place.

Did you know that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men in America suffers from domestic violence? The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence further reports that 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner in the United States and 1 in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year.¹ What is **domestic violence**? Some people believe that domestic violence is physical assault in a romantic relationship. On the contrary,

domestic violence is not all physical abuse, and does not only occur in romantic relationships. “According to the United States Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women, domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behavior in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain control over another intimate partner.”² Many types of abuse are included in this definition which include physical, sexual, emotional, economic and psychological abuse. Domestic violence also occurs when someone threatens you, stalks, or cyberstalks you. Victims of domestic violence can be spouses, family members, children, cohabitants and intimate partners.³ In your adolescent years it is imperative that you are aware of the signs of abuse as you build friendships and enter romantic relationships. If you are experiencing abuse from a parent, guardian or significant other, visit the site here: <https://ncadv.org/personalized-safety-plan>

Signs of an abuser:

1. The individual will romance you in a way that seems excessive.
2. The individual will want to commit quickly. (Take your time before entering into any relationship to give yourself time to see the character of the individual.)
3. The individual will want to isolate you. (Abusers encourage their partners to sever ties with friends and family members in order to isolate them.)
4. The individual will seem overly concerned about you.

¹ <https://ncadv.org/personalized-safety-plan>

² <https://www.justice.gov/ovw>

³ <https://family.findlaw.com/domestic-violence/what-is-domestic-violence.html>

When Tears Hide

-Bathsheba Smithen

We've all cried tears we think we understand
Little drops of water, river streams that lean on the backs of our hands
Captured and raptured by an awakening that faithfully sends us healing
Where the wounds of the past begin to close and bandages serve as
Maybelline Foundation...concealing....
All that could marr our existence
Where crimson becomes white and the night is over
Adrenaline ceases because hurt has crystallized into supernovas
Constellations bursting in your eyes disguised as twinkles
Blotting out the evil that was sent to steal your joy
Never lethal, just giving you lungs to breathe through
Should you need to take a dive in tough times, you'll find you've been equipped
For difficult trips to unearth treasure in the mines



The depths of the valleys we go through have lines drawn in the sands
Parting emotionally desolate lands
From the heights we climb, mountains to provide oasis
But what happens when situations are incomprehensible and tears become minimal..
Generals moving in three dimensional spaces
Bending and living in the most obscure of places
Where the refuge in weeping is found in traces of blood
When love groomed doom, and your bedroom became the concentration camp
For the genocide of your joy
This envoy toys with your mental health
Stealth is what you must acquire
Hope has made you out to be a liar, conspired with the one you first admired
And this role is not temporary, so you can't retire
On the battlefield of your own home, alone
Empty
See this Holo...Causts

And forget being Frank
Diaries tossed
Pearls lost in the Harbors of these attacks
And your Hero she mus...t have gone black
Since you lack the ability to contact anyone in the outside World
War is happening between the two of you and
You have no allies, atomic bombs exploding
Ship's about to capsize because the storms of life are blowing
You're holding onto the little you have left
Bereft from the stench of death
Love has corroded and exploded into controlling
For the love from your love does not burn
It waxes cold
Tears have developed an intellect cognizant of a pain out of control
Permeating your bones
Enveloped in the home of your heart
Inward scars just as dark as the marks and parts parting your skin
A canvas composed of bruises; primary color blends
You try to make amends but there's too much tension
Hung when you tied the knot, now a noose
A modern day lynchin'
Some will say it's the biggest 'doh you ever made
Putting you in the likes of Homer Simpson
Your crimson has turned scarlet
Kindred striking your life as a piñata in garments
And you're shaking, quaking, it's taking your sanity
And making you unstable
A heinous crime along the lines of when Cain killed Able
How do you find a way out
Seated at a table definitely in the presence of your enemy?
Aesop's writing out your life...literally
Because there will be a moral to this story
Praying murder will never be what He wrote
And your testimony will bring glory, a legend common and known in due season
As for right now, for all the wrong reasons,
You stay a slave digging out your own grave
Tears fade and retreat at the sight of defeat
Hiding and lodged deep down,
Tattooed and stained in your soul
Body swinging, Billie clubs you with a two piece
No matter the Holiday when you arrive home
Because he or she is strange fruit
You just can't understand
While it hurts so bad ...
Grief so great the wind blows stale cold drafts of air down the road to your spirit

Living that's frostbitten has you housed in hypothermic prisons
But there are more than four walls to this cell
Indwells a hell that Dante's Inferno
Can't even express, oxymoronic
Frozen inside
Eyes bottomless pits,
Dead end cul-de-sacs
Black
Running in circles since you can't detach and no cash app
Will buy you time since the enemy of your existence is the cashier
At the registry line
You've already checked out
Another escape attempt could lead to a black out
You thought being a dime would cause a paradigm
But nothing has changed, stayed and chains have you
Succumbing to tidal waves of doubt,
You're drowning
Soaking wet in distress
Despair has you drenched
Dressed in funeral garments,
A pall bearer guardin' your own casket
Every time you pass it
Every time you pass it
Mask it!
They can't see
This fear that crawls all over me
Or the flinch from the grip that speaks without lips
Saying I might sip poison tonight
Fights that are toxic
Packed keys bring ows....
Another match could end with my body in a closet
And not may weather could ever make you his love
Which explains why you grimace at the sight of a hug
Or the moment heightened conversation commences
At any minute, pine could become your bedspread
Dread has developed legs and it's walking all over the backs
Of you and your children
Mind looted and polluted, choosin' life nor death
Your breath expensive because it costs to be alive
Deprived so many times of oxidation
For the antioxidant is stripping any mental restoration
From bystanders who in observation
Will soon become free radicals
Fostering a corrupted version of to have and hold
When later your children stand at the altar themselves

And now your tears have scurried onto shelves,
Mailed and shipped to psychological libraries
Dark Fairies carrying this hurt that's immense
An invisible fence with surveillance
Cause sir you've veiled this house with bouts of depression
Hurt so deep, you can't sleep for the sting creeps
In the evening and rises in the morning
From this loving-detestable connection
And suddenly you realize
You're already only existing, take a risk
Pack your bags one more time and say, please Lord forgive me
And though the fear is crippling, you simply grab your kids and leave

You must live in the moment, otherwise you won't be able to breathe
You can't look back nor ahead
Pay a Pal or call a friend
They are all busy living their happy lives
While you HURT inside and find it difficult to feel anything more than pain
But the Healer reigns, He engrains a new wave of water
Removes the strong man by covering His son or daughter
With a supernatural strength and link
To combat the onslaught of suicidal thoughts
That could have sent you on the brink of destruction
Prayer functions in a capacity
That candidly, you would never have imagined
Through the arms of compassion
He fashions the damage to look like a mosaic
Fast forward years later, the hurt is archaic since you made it
By bending your knees
As your need for healing is uniquely restored
He's constantly stitching and quilting the sanity that was brutally torn
So your depravity can be worn as a fabric to reach other people
A coat of many colors
One of those veils others can see through
In case they need you
To be transparent, for you managed to make it
Now draw out the lines in the sand
For those who see the world as jaded
To prevent them from fading into the background
Domestic Violence must be silenced
Because it creates a surround sound in the community
And that can only happen with your voice.

Further Insight



Question and Answer:

1. Identify at least two allusions found within this poem. Why has the author chosen to make this connection?

2. How can poetry be used to advocate for victims of domestic violence?

3. Analyze the following lines of the poem:

Your breath expensive because it costs to be alive
Deprived so many times of oxidation
For the antioxidant is stripping any mental restoration
From bystanders who in observation
Will soon become free radicals.

4. What does the author mean by the following lines, “Domestic Violence must be silenced for it creates a surround sound in the community and that can only happen with your voice?”

5. What skills do you think teens need to escape domestic violence?

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6. Discuss how budgeting and planning are important in developing a plan of escape for victims of domestic violence.

Optional Content

Gaslighting and What to Do About It

