

Lumina

My Home

The house stands tall. It dwarfs everything in comparison. Its shadow looms over the fresh-cut grass like a dark cloud, heavy and thunderous, determined to storm. Other than its height, it is in sync, uniform with every other house on the block. A large red brick house, an ordinary paved driveway, a stout grey door with a wiry, worn welcome mat: that is how it looks. Green grass, patterned and slightly discolored by the blades of a lawnmower: that is how it looks.

When you open the door, there is a smell that I'm immune to, that I can no longer distinguish, that wraps around you. You walk down the large hallway listening to the chirps of the birds that have nested in the chimney, the chimney that we don't use. We have two chimneys.

Then you go to the living room with the green carpet, fresh from constant cleaning due to the dog who does not learn. You enter the kitchen where the wallpaper has been peeled and the undersides of tables have been scribbled on by a lonely toddler with too much idle time. You go up the stairs. You pass the room where the parents wrap gifts on Christmas Eve, then the room where the last baby cried. You pass the room where I stay and the room you don't go in. That room has too many scary witches but when little feet walk in with a flashlight they flee.

You travel down the white stairs that only guests can use. You pass the room we aren't allowed in; a soft room, with a plush white carpet that shoes don't walk on lest it become dead and brown. You pass the office two lawyers don't work in. A room layered with old files nobody opens and dusty books no one reads. You go out the door and

pass the front garden. Weeds and wild grasses appear to take over but it still looks pretty when the sun shines on the yellow dandelions in the spring.

You still have not seen my whole house. You see what I give you to see, nothing more nothing less. The rest you have to see yourself. You can imagine the color of the scratched basement walls, if you like. You can picture the size of the windows that flood the sunroom with light. You can visualize the uneven placement of the stones on the used fire place or the hidden door to the attic or the scraps in storage, but the rest is mine. It's my house for me to look at and live in and know inside out. It's my freshly scrubbed green carpet and mutilated paper walls and witch infested guestroom. It's all mine. It's my house. It's my home.

A Flawless Picture of Words

I want to be great someday. When people hear my name I want them to say, "Who? Her? Oh, I love her work." One day I'll get there. One day I'll be great. But right now I'm not great. I'm not even good. But I will be.

I'm not sure what I want to do with my life. There are so many choices, what if I choose wrong? For the rest of my life I'll be stuck. There is no rewind. That's it.

All I know for sure is that I want to be an author. I want to be a pilot. I want to take people places. We can go anywhere we want. Off we go, to the moon, back in time, to school, to summer camp, to Russia, to Egypt, to the future, anywhere we can possibly imagine. It's ours for the taking. We can create a story. We can do anything. We can be infinite.

When I'm gone I can go anywhere. I can do anything. I can be anything. I am a doctor, a fifth grader, an army veteran. I am a revolutionary, a princess, high priest. I am an author, an artist painting a flawless picture of words. One day I will grasp that I have an entire canvas. One day I will no longer paint a flawless picture. One day the world will realize that all this time I've been creating a web, a connection. They will understand I am not painting a picture, but a mural.

There is more to learn, lots more. I know nothing now. I am but a fledgling, struggling to stretch my wings. I know that I don't know much. I don't claim to be more than I am. I know I have a long journey down the road of no end, a path of twists and turns. I know where I must go. I don't have to follow. Those before us paved a road; not so we would follow it, but so that we can learn to make our own way. One day I'll be great. One day I'll be remembered but until then I will continue to try. I will paint a flawless picture of words.

A Wicked and Wily Wind

"The only thing to fear is fear itself." Those words of one man have resounded throughout history. While I'm sure he was a wise man that statement is completely ridiculous. There are lots of things to fear. You can fear venomous snakes, or bears, or death, or hell, or failing. You can fear disappointment or defeat or the winds of change that roar like lions. There are plenty of things to fear. If you ask me, fear itself is the least of our problems.

I fear this. This place I'm trapped in. I feel like I've scaled a mountain only to find I'm still at the bottom. Maybe I haven't moved at all. Perhaps, I climbed my hardest and yet at the summit, I realized there is another mountain. I never really reached the top. Now I'm

climbing again but I'm worried I don't have enough strength to finish the climb. I'm stuck, hanging between the balance of heaven and earth, too close to descend, too far up to let go. I guess the only place to go is up.

I fear it: the wind, a wicked and wily wind called Change that pulled apart my delicate house of cards, brick by brick. What do I mean brick by brick? You should figure it out yourself. As they say, it's for me to know and you to find out. It has meaning though, I promise you.

A wind, wicked and wily is as cruel as it is deceptive. It disguises itself as good but when it rears its ugly head all it leaves is destruction. Devastation. People crave the wind. They wait for it to blow. They hang wind chimes and sit by their windows to hear the soft, euphonic symphony. I see you sitting there by your window. Can you hear it?

Nobody likes where they are. They want to be here or there. They wait for the wind to carry them away, gone with the wind. Once the wind blows by, you can never go back. The windows are closed; the doors locked. The memories are still fresh. Those are all you can keep.

The wind is sometimes right. Sometimes it carries you where you need to go, where you're supposed to be. Sometimes the wind is wrong but it comes with good intentions. It doesn't dangle happiness in your face, like a carrot, holding it just beyond the reach of your fingers. It doesn't yank it away, taunting you.

I have not yet learned how to deal with the wind or its many faces. I, too, struggle with it. Occasionally I am also swept away. The only advice I can give is to cherish what you have. That is where you must begin before all you love is snatched away by a wicked and wily wind.

My world of broken pieces

I've never told anyone this but I don't get bad grades because I don't try. I get bad grades because I can't understand what my teacher is saying. It's not because I'm dumb or she uses big words or anything. It's because I can't hear her. Sometimes I can see her mouth moving but I don't hear any sound or when I do it's nothing but nonsense.

I've never told anyone this, about my condition. I used to think it was normal. That everyone heard and saw the world in broken pieces. I slowly learned that no one else did. I remember crying as a child because, for flashes that lasted minutes or seconds, I experienced blindness. My mother never understood what was happening. Neither did I.

Doctors don't know what's wrong with me. For short periods of time I can't see and I can't hear. Sometimes I'll try to talk but I won't be able to find the words. I'll move my lips accordingly but silently. The scariest part is the temporary paralysis. I can see and hear but I can't move. I cannot scream for help. I can't lift a finger. It's like being dead. I can imagine myself slowly dying there alone and wordless.

There is nothing that triggers it. It just happens suddenly. What do I do? What can I do? I cope. I adapt. It's only temporary after all.

Host of Light

My name means luminescent. It means brilliant. It means luminous. I am however none of those things. My life is darkness. It has no definite start or finish. It started somewhere and will end somewhere else. Maybe it won't end. Maybe I am doomed to a life of twilight. A sort of darkness that makes your heart heavy. A sort of heavy that crushes

your lungs and ribs. A sort of heavy in which your heart falls straight out of your chest and withers to nothing.

My name means many but I am not many. I am one. I am small. Everything about me is small. I have a small body with small fingers and small toes attached to small arms and small legs. I live in a small neighborhood with my small family. I have a small mind with tiny little thoughts and miniscule ideas of what my itty bitty life should be. I have elfin hands that do meager acts. I have puny feet that walk my miniature world creating only shallow footprints. Footprints that seldom last, quickly washed away by wee rain drops. I feel small. I feel small every day. I have a small voice that no one hears. Small words escape small lips to fall on small ears, ears attached to bodies and minds every bit as small as my own. We are all small, caught up in our small thoughts of frivolity, not noticing that our cage is getting more and more cramped as bodies just as small as our own are forced into our box.

Lumina. That is my name. It isn't common but it isn't meaningless. I am not meaningless. Lumina Legion. That is my entire name. Together the meanings are beautiful and pure. They do not describe me for I am neither. I do not know who they describe. I do not know to whom my name rightfully belongs. I hope whoever they are they are worthy. I hope they can forgive me for using it in this life; calling it mine. For my name, it has meaning, meaning that is beautiful and pure. It means host of light.

2,021 Words

I have now done the impossible. I have given you everything and nothing all at once. How have I done that you ask? There are 2,021 words in these pages. With those 2,021 words I have stripped myself bare. I have peeled back every layer of me. Leaving me

naked and cold. I've let you see me inside out. My exoskeleton is cracked setting me free. I have exposed my lungs. I have shown you all the skeletons hidden in the folds of my closet. I have put you on my throne and locked you in my cage.

Yet what do you really know about me? You know my name, condition, fears, and hopes. You know where I live. How much have I really told you? Is it really my cage that you're locked in? I am still a stranger. You know only the littlest details of my life. You have only random words in a story too vast and intricate to understand. You think you have peeled back my layers? You haven't touched the surface. You're still right where I want you to be, seeing only what I want you to see.

I am scared, you see. That is why I keep you in this place. This place where you are infinite and yet nothing. Should I tell you everything, what would you do? Would you leave me? Would you fix me? Would you bear my story silently? Would I burn in your mind as it burns in mine?

I am fragile. My dreams based on the art of storytelling. My mind broken, unable to be figured out by doctors. My fears stuck to me. My name stolen, bestowed on me by wishful thieves. My house nothing more than bricks easily stolen by mischievous wind.

I don't tell you everything for I don't know everything. I am a mysterious anomaly to myself as well. I have questions, too. I cling to temporary things. I try to break free from restraints with which I shackled myself. I live in a house of glass and I throw stones.

Maybe when I figure myself out I will tell you. Maybe I won't. You have what you know now. Maybe you don't. Things change. People change. You think you have answers but all you have are questions.

Don't worry. I'm not leaving. You will see me again. One day you will watch me rise. You will see me on your bookshelf. You will read about me in your morning paper. You will

hear my name spoken out of the mouths of your children. My name will be indefinite. My small words will be forever. Death cannot move me.

Remember the girl who you read about today. Remember these 2,021 words. She will be gone soon, snatched away by time, envious of the days when her life was ahead of her. She will look back, nostalgic of the past, expectant of the future, as if it were promised to her. She will never catch up, no matter how the future calls to her. She will love. She will grieve. She will laugh. And she will tell the world about her love, her grievance, her laughter.

I know it's hard to admit, but we are all waiting on the wind. Even if it's only just to see where it will carry us. I don't know what is to come. You don't know the future. Nobody can predict the life they are going to lead. Nobody really has a full grasp on anything but that, my friend, is the beauty of life.