

The white sky had become a mirror to me as I sat in the upstairs laundry room, which was also my office, and stared blankly out the second story window. The whites of my eyes were the same color as the bleak sky, gray but not without a mix of hopelessness, too. It was October and I knew something was coming, I just didn't know what quite yet. There had been rings around the last two full moons, the ones in September and August, which meant trouble was not far behind, at least that's what I grew up hearing. The next full moon was just six days away and the anticipation to see if it had a ring around it, a sign of trouble on its way, was burning in my head. I felt like one of those doomsday people who stand on street corners with their sign reading *THE END IS NIGH* as they shout and plead with the unattached audience members on their commute home.

Another look out the window and I felt like the clouds scowled at me, quite literally looking down at my face. This month was always the hardest because it mimicked so much of myself, the sharp parts, and was a constant reminder that I was no longer the freshly green girl I thought I'd been during the summer. No more freckles acting as natural makeup, bronzed stretched legs like a cats, lazy days in bed spent happily because the windows were still open and the fresh air cured any sorrow.. Those days were long gone and I needed to accept the fact that I was transformed back into my natural state of being when October came; slumped shoulders which held a head too heavy with sentiments, my green-girl eyes were sunken back into their deep sockets and not nearly as bright.

Underneath the constant rain cloud of self-deprecation and hours spent staring out of windows, I liked myself in this October way because it's how I truly was even during the warm weather seasons. I could mirror the pretty girls on the beach and their natural giddiness, imitate the kind of girls who never worry about their side profiles and always seem to have the energy to keep up with the world. Yes, I could act like that when I needed to. But the growling truth of how I really was never left, it just took a nap. October was just one big depiction of my insides, like a map where the twisted, spectral trees were my spine and the brown leaves that fell and crunched under feet were the thoughts that came and went as they pleased. Everything seems to move slower in October, as if the human race and nature agreed to surrender from the constant sunshine and graciousness. Even the candles burn in slow motion and without hurry, the wicks in

my room lit simultaneously like they're holding a conversation. Green candles for luck, red for love and lust, white for protection and calling spirits, blue for calm, etc. Someone well versed in this color language could look into my room on any given day and report exactly what I was trying to manifest based on what burned. I am always wearing my soul on my sleeves, it's just a rarity that people ever notice unless they, too, speak in sad tongues.

I became so empty that I bought a puppy, a decision that shouldn't be made rashly like buying a pair of jeans. He only made things worse. He wanted love but I was like a mother with postpartum depression, my milk had soured, and I couldn't keep up with his energy. I didn't see a baby face and floppy ears like I was supposed to but, rather, I saw a ball and chain with a tendency to cry whenever it wanted to. I could barely take care of myself anymore. Halloween came and went not with trick or treaters and cheesy slasher movies but panic attacks and razor blades like I was sixteen again. The house was never clean enough for my mother, my father looked older by the day. The boy I loved was just a body next to me at night, his hand didn't feel good around my throat like it used to and now I wonder if it ever did. He pushed me onto my knees while he finished, he didn't ask about the fresh cuts on my legs, he told me to open wide. I stopped envying the pretty girls on my phone and started wishing I was the man who jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge.

The jaunt of even trying to get back to the self I was before October came was too intimidating. I wanted someone else to do it for me but no such luxury existed. The unwashed dishes in the sink accumulated to a point where you'd think I was collecting them, the dust bunnies under my bed were no longer endearing signs of a girl who doesn't clean often, it wasn't cute anymore to neglect myself like I did when I was sixteen, when people can blame it on angsty girlhood. That was always it, youth being an excuse for deviance, for the reason that everyone expects you to grow out of it.

But what about the ones who never grow out of it? Where do they fit into the rat race? I was a grown woman now, which meant the world replaced its pity with blame towards me for not brushing my hair for a week. *I'm sorry, the handle is too heavy for my hands today.* It would go on this way until it didn't. The guilt of being ungrateful for the air in my lungs loomed over me

and I would, eventually, find the will to go through the motions. During these times I felt like I was giving my best impression of someone that can do life. The peculiar thing about depression is not that people don't want to live but that they just don't know what to do with all this time.

Perhaps this month isn't trying to kill me like I've idolized in my small brain-world because, inside of there, I am the center of the universe. No, maybe October doesn't want to be my demise, maybe it doesn't notice me at all. When I think about those two different scenarios, I wonder which is worse; the world spinning for the sole mission of my total and complete destruction, or the more realistic version in which I am the last thing on the world's mind.

It wasn't until the month was over that I realized this was my way of getting back to my roots, the same ones that grew around my ankles when I was sneaking out at fifteen and locking my bedroom door at seventeen. I hadn't looked down at myself in so long that I almost forgot they were there, along the girl I used to be, our long brown hair tangled up in the vines. She was staring up at me with a smile, a sight I wasn't used to seeing in the mirror those days. She compelled me to write this letter to October. She urged me to text the boy I loved who thought I forgot about him. I said *I love you still, even if you don't love me back as much. I understand* and hit send. The girl in the vines showed me how to become a raw wound once again and she was good at it, too, because that was her true form. Day in and day out, persistently walking through the world as a piece of flesh that a scab had been freshly plucked from. Throbbing, vulnerable, always waiting to heal. I'm convinced we are always waiting to heal from something.