

Trinity Slocum

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Be Free From Me

My black faux leather boots sink slightly into the soft dirt as I trudge over to the stale red bench swing in my yard. It's been sitting there for ages, and the thought of swinging on it has never even crossed my mind. Leaves and twigs, among other things that may or may not be alive, are piled high on the wooden seat. I sweep them aside gently, trying not to disturb them too much, and sit delicately, unsure of the stability of the swing. As I draw in a deep breath, my throat tightens from the crisp wind and my bones relax as if time were slowing.

My mind is clear.

I start to sway slowly, smushing my toes into the ground and pressing my spine into the browning wooden back of the swing. I look out over the lawn through steady rocking and see the tired grey grass growing old with crunchy burnt patches, while the fresh moss is taking over. Throughout this war of mossy grass, hints of bright lime and tiger-striped maple leaves are dispersed sporadically. The teal long-needled pine trees sway thoughtlessly in the wind. I feel my heavy burgundy jacket warming my chest and arms, but my face feels the cool sensation of summer fading into an autumn breeze. The aroma of dirt and wilted leaves fills my nose. The chilly air leaves my hair refreshed with a smoky tinge from the bonfire down the road.

I leisurely rock in silence and peacefully listen to the crickets chirp under the brushing of branches in the breeze. The cars on the road behind my house glide swiftly over the asphalt making a humming sound as they pass me by, leaving a trail of harsh odors that waft into my clean fragrant yard. This stench leaves me feeling oily and light-headed causing me to smash my feet into the dirt and the wood to slam into the fleshy meat of my calves and come to a complete stop. I clench my fists into red balls of frustration so intensely my knuckles turn pale.

Why must humans ruin everything? All they do is start fights and replace beauty with decay.

I refuse to let this ruin my tranquility, so I begin to rock once more. It's not long before these irritations are replaced by the light airy smell of the dew evaporating off the leaves in equilibrium. The soft wind plucks the crackling burgundy paint from the seat like feathers from a bird. I hear acorns thudding through branches dropped by squeaky squirrels stocking up for the cold. The loud buzz of a cicada being re-birtherd echoes in the distance.

The crusty chipped bench leaves my fingers raw to the touch like sandpaper, but I don't care. For the first time in months I can finally leave my worries, of politics and pandemics, behind and focus on the beauty right in front of me. I could sway here for hours in calming perpetuity. Loving, appreciating, and doing all the things humans are too busy to do.

As I slow to a stop and stand, rebalancing myself, the heels of my boots indent the dirt and I begin my slow stroll over the moist soil back to the house, reminding myself that I can always come back, whenever I so choose. I just have to choose it.