**Grieving the Loss of Me**

I am yet to truly grieve the loss of an individual that was close to me,

But for the past year, I have been grieving the loss of a piece of me.

A piece that I didn’t realize was so vital, like batteries are for a toy,

Until it became the rival of my joy.

I took the placidity of my life for granted,

And now my world has been twisted and slightly slanted.

I have scoliosis, which makes my spine curved like the imperfect trunk of a bare tree.

My pain is hidden, but it is through the power of poetry that I set it free.

It is not the event that shakes us,

But the grief of what once was that shatters the shield of stability guarding our hearts.

We must pick up the fragments of our past and reshape it to frame the portrait of the present.

The stormy, sorrowful chapters in our lives are meant to nourish the drought of bravery in our hearts,

Fill the empty pages of naive bliss in our minds,

And create an overflowing oasis of perseverance in our soul.

When a tree is cut down, its branches and leaves fall to the ground.

It is now a tree stump, but its purpose is not stunted.

The tree becomes a pillar of solace, a rest place for the weary.

Likewise, rather than viewing scoliosis as the death of what once was,

I view it as the beautiful birth of what is.

My back won’t ever be the same,

But it has taught me to acknowledge the heavens’ individual teardrops within the falling rain.

I say that I wish I didn’t know the meaning of chronic back pain.

But without it, I wouldn’t be able to truly understand the suffering of others.

I say that I miss not having to do physical therapy, wear a brace,

Or be faced with whether to undergo life-changing surgery or not.

But these trials have taught me that strength and resilience cannot be bought.

I wish I didn’t have the desire to detach my vulnerable body from my defiant spine,

But this has encouraged me to mentally disconnect myself from the temporary pain,

Corporeal inconsistencies, and worldly things of life.

Now I look deep into my soul, where the everlasting joy,

Incorporeal consistencies, and the vessel of truth resides.

As I grieve the loss of my former life,

I realize that I have been given a new one in exchange.

In my mind, I climb up my spine like a ladder, using each spinous process as a foothold.

As I climb higher, my spine transforms into a tree,

With protruding branches that bear fruits like apples and cherries.

Nestled safely in a branch's embrace is the house of love that holds my heart.

I enter the house and gaze out the window,

Admiring the unfathomable height of my spine, the incredible progress I’ve made.

My scoliosis reworks itself, no longer adopting the form of a ladder or a tree.

Each vertebra now looks like a building block, suspended in air by faith.

My spine is like the unstable structure of a dilapidated skyscraper

That is plagued by thunderous spiritual storms, worn down by the persistence of time,

Abandoned by the fickleness of humanity, and balancing only upon a rusted beam of fragility,

Waiting to collapse.

However, it hasn't crumbled yet.

It has defied the law of inevitability that is applied to all hopeless cases,

Without room for miraculous nuances.

In its imperfect, curved form, my spine stays strong,

as if it is holding onto hope, helping me stand up tall,

Even when my confidence wants to shrink and feel small.

We all navigate the labyrinth of grief in different ways,

Searching for the museum of memories,

Where every thought is a finished painting,

Not a forsaken sculpture.

For some, this process is therapeutic, if you persist.

For others, this process will tear up you, if you resist.

I scale my scoliosis like a mountain meant to be overcome,

While swimming through the experience, like an ocean meant to be immersed in.

Don’t erase your sorrow. Embrace it.

Don’t repair your pain. Repurpose it.

After your tears have been freed, like a songbird trying to escape a cage of self-control,

You must compose a new melody in your soul to redefine the meaning of whole.

Transform a period of grieving a loss into a period of gratitude for love.

Grief means that you understand what it is to feel.

When you understand, you can connect,

Which becomes an invitation for someone else to heal.

Embracing the truth that sorrow is something we can share,

Reminds me that healing happens if we simply care to dare.