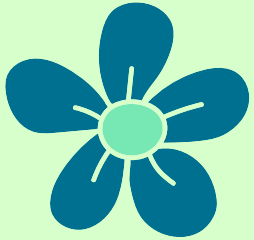


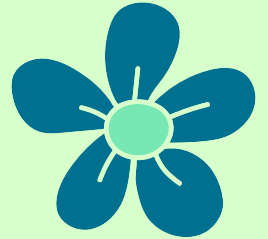
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Wildflower Post

Newsletter



TODAY'S WRITER

Solani Merrowe

Solani Merrowe is a hopeful young writer who wishes to transform the world one word at a time. When not writing, they can be found in Houston, Texas, with a half-dead Expo, too much coffee, and a book in hand.

Longing
SOLANI MERROWE

You,
My dear,
My sweet,
My darling,
With your locks of noir,
And your eyes of obsidian.
Your veiled soul is
The darkest shade of cocoa,
The most bitter dark chocolate,
With an aftertaste I can't unlearn.
Like a moment of peace,
After fighting through the pain.
Your eyes are cloudy windows,
Secretive and curt.
That sweet soul of yours is hidden
In a spruce cabinet,
Locked tightly away.
Rotting slowly, vintage.
Priceless to those who want
To fix what is broken.
To me.
To those who cannot stay away
From your dangerous allure.
Your siren song,
Kept close to your heart.

The heart you keep under a layer of ice
That only melts for one.
One that is not me.
One that is so much better,
One with a heart of gold,
And a voice of sweetness.
A personality of fun,
And hazelnut eyes,
One that is good for you.
One you deserve.
So I dare not to speak.
In the fear that
To win your heart I will
Break my own
And break hers too,
Irreparably.
But I already have.
Your words cut through
My messed-up brain.
Which knows I'm struggling,
Needlessly,
Drowning in the affection
I harbor for you.
To my messed-up heart,
Beating, slowly,
With no rational sense.

My heart,
That beats for you.
Even if
You will never know it.
You are my most toxic addiction.
The want I know is bad for me,
The desire I know will end me someday,
Yet the drug I cannot quit.
The drug that I crave.
That I need.
Your wit is a blade,
And you wield it,
Without flaws.
Slicing through me,
My affection thinly veiled,
Contained in my veins,
Slowly seeping,
For you.
Your words are my greatest weakness,
Insults,
Compliments,
Idle conversations.
And
I can't help but wish
To hear you speak,
The content need not matter.

Although I'd always listen
To anything
That pours out of your sweet,
Sweet lips.
As if you were my divinity,
Those words of yours
Are laced with venom,
To keep all else away.
Lucky for me,
I'm just as toxic.
And I have nothing you'd choose.
Yet you are my suffering,
My own choice of pain,
So I bear the weight
Of your words.
And fight silently for your attention,
Your affection
all I crave.
Although I'll never get it.
Call you my deity
Even if I know,
You will never think
The same
Of me.
Will you?
I know,
You won't.

Room of Many Faces

SOLANI MERROWE

There is a
room
inside of me
that keeps
changing shape.
Some days
it is a hallway,
Narrow
and suffocating.
Some days it is
a cathedral,
echoing
with voices
that sound
like mine
but speak
in languages
I don't remember
learning.
Always,
though,
there are mirrors.
Hundreds.
Thousands.

Each one reflecting
a different version of me
 some familiar,
 some strangers,
 some things
I hope I never become.
And on the floor,
a scatter of masks
like fallen leaves
 after a storm.
 I pick one up.
I never know which.
This mask is carved
from obedience.
 Smooth.
 Polished.
It fits too well.
When I wear it,
 my voice
becomes gentle,
 my posture
straightens,
my thoughts
 line up
like soldiers.
 I say
 yes. I say
of course. I say
whatever you need.

The world
Loves
this version of me.
They call me
reliable.
They call me
mature.
They call me
good.
But the mask
tightens
every time I swallow
my own wants.
It tightens
every time I pretend
I'm not tired.
It tightens
Until
I can barely breathe
Sequins.
Feathers.
A smile
painted on
so bright
it blinds me
This mask
is loud.
It demands
attention.

It demands
applause.
When I wear it,
I become
a spectacle
all glitter
and jokes
and exaggerated
Charm.
People laugh.
People cheer.
People adore
Me.
But
the applause
never lasts.
It fades.
It always
Fades.
And when
it does,
the silence
Hits
like a fist.
The mask
cracks.
My chest
cracks with it.
I drop it

Before
it shatters completely.
This mask
is soft,
Stitched
from other people's needs.

When I
put it on,
my hands
move automatically
Soothing,
fixing,
holding,
patching wounds
that aren't mine,
carrying burdens
I never agreed to.

I become
a vessel.
A sponge.
A quiet harbor
for storms
that don't belong
to me.

People call me
selfless.

They call me
nurturing.

They call me
strong.

But the mask
absorbs everything
every cry,
every confession,
every fear
Whispered
into my shoulder.
It grows heavy.
Waterlogged.
Suffocating.
I peel it off
and my skin underneath
is raw.
This mask
is jagged.
It cuts
my palms
when I lift it.
I never
want to wear it.
But sometimes
it leaps
onto my face
before I can stop it.
In this mask,
I am
sharp.
I am
Loud.

I am
the storm
I pretend I don't feel.
My voice
becomes a blade.
My thoughts
become fire.
My heart
becomes a clenched fist.
People flinch.
People recoil.
People whisper.
But this mask
tells truths
I bury
under politeness.
It screams
the things
I swallow
until they rot.
I rip it off
but the heat
stays,
burning
the inside
of my ribs.
This mask
is beautiful.
Too beautiful.

It looks
like the person
I wish
I were.
Confident.
Effortless.
Unbreakable.
When I wear it,
I feel
powerful
Like
I could walk
into any room
and the walls
would part for me.
But the mask
is a lie.
A fantasy.
A cruel joke.
It slips.
It cracks.
It exposes
the trembling
beneath.
I drop it
before I start believing
I could
ever
deserve it.
This mask
is small.

It barely
fits.
When I wear it,
my voice
softens,
my fears
grow louder,
my hands
shake.
I want
comfort.
I want
safety.
I want
Someone
to tell me
I don't have to be
Everything
all the time.
But
no one comes.
No one
ever
comes.
The mask cries
and I
cry with it
until I
can't tell
where the mask ends
and I begin.

I tear it off
because the
vulnerability
is unbearable.

This mask
has no features.

No
eyes.

No
Mouth.

No
expression.

It is the
Easiest
to wear.

It asks
Nothing.

It feels
like nothing.

When I put it on,

the world
becomes

distant
muted,
blurred,

Like

I'm watching
my life

through thick glass.

No
fear.

No
joy.

No
Grief.

No
hope.

Just the quiet hum
of existing.

It is
peaceful.

It is
Terrifying.

It is
seductive.

I remove it slowly,

Afraid
of how much

I wanted
to keep it.

There is
one mask
missing.

The one that
should be mine.

The one that
should feel right.

The one that
should fit
without bruising me.

I search
the room.
I search
the mirrors.
I search
the shadows.
Nothing.
Every reflection
shows a different face.
Every mask
feels like a costume.
Every version
of me
is temporary,
unstable,
Slipping
through my fingers
like water.
I stand
in the center of the room,
surrounded by faces
that are all mine
and none
of them
mine.
My hands
shake.
My breath
Stutters.
My chest
tightens.

I reach for a mask
any mask
because being
Nothing
is worse
than being wrong.

But the masks
blur.

The room
Spins.

The mirrors
ripple.

I try to
choose.

I try to
settle.

I try to
become
something
solid.

Real.

Consistent.

But
every identity
slides off
my skin
like oil.

Every version
of me
fractures.

Every mask
cracks.
And in the end,
I am left
with nothing
but a face
I do not
recognize
and a room
that will
not stop
changing.
There is no
final form.
No
stable self.
No
resting place.
Only the
shifting.
Only the
mirrors.
Only the
masks.
Only the
ache
of never
being able
to stay.