

“You don’t know what they have going on at home. Obviously they’re insecure about something, so they are taking it out on you. You can’t take it too personally.” My mom used to tell me this when I got into the car after school, crying my eyes out. Getting bullied isn’t something that can be easily understood. When it happened to me I felt like no one could possibly know how I felt. I felt alone and I felt worthless. As a kid it’s hard to understand that things get better someday. People grow up and eventually we all learn that words are heavy things.

I never understood the saying “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me,” because every remark anyone has ever made to me has gotten under my skin. A scraped knee has nothing on the phrase “You are so stupid.” Looking back on it, I wish I could have been that tough girl who would just laugh off all the remarks, but words hurt so much more than people realize. The saying “the pen is mightier than the sword” is more of a motto to me than anything.

How do you explain to your parents that you are upset because a kid called you ugly? How do you try to tell them that a stupid comment made by an ignorant little kid got to you that much? I couldn’t and so, for the most part, I kept the comments to myself. I became an unstable kid with sporadic breakdowns. I was called everything from a cry baby to bipolar, and that’s not something that was easy to accept.

I became angry, and the angrier I got the more I snapped at people. I snapped at my classmates, I snapped at my sister, and I snapped at my teachers. I just wanted to get away so badly. I didn’t want to hear what everyone thought of me, and I wanted to make believe that everything was okay with me when the fact is, that everything was not okay. I quickly became depressed and I taught myself to push people away.

High school has been like a reawakening for me. I've finally found people who I feel safe around, and it has made me become a better person, a more stable person. I realized that when I let those comments get to me, I also let them change me. That angry little girl is not who I am. I can't remember everything the kids in my class said to me in grade school, and I am really happy about that. It means I've learned to forgive and forget. Life keeps going and situations aren't always the best. I'm glad I got out of it with my life and I know a lot of kids haven't been so lucky. I think God and my mom are the reason I am still here today, and I am glad I can be who I am.

Dear Diary,

I need to get away from this school. I feel like I'm about to snap. Everyone in that place is a judgemental ass. I literally can't take a breath without it being construed as a sarcastic sigh.

Mom hasn't been home for a few nights now. I get it, she has to pick up more shifts to keep up with bills, but I MISS her. She is literally my only friend. I have to talk to the cat now just so I don't lose my voice out of neglect.

- June

Voices surround me in a dim hush,
Laughter suffocates me like smoke,
People staring but never seeing,
All the words cut through the walls,
Rumors infect me like a plague,
Someone save me, someone please.

Pathetic whimpers escape from my lips,
Striped of my pride and lost in the light,
Dark thoughts echo through my being,
Someone save me, someone please

I want to run away and scream,
But I feel the need to stand up tall,
The fight somehow leaves my form,
Someone save me, someone please.

Dear Diary,

When will it get better? I feel like I am starting to go crazy. I hate everything, especially myself. This is the fifth night in a row that my dinner has been hot dogs (minus the buns). I didn't want to complain to mom though... She is trying her best.

- June

Broken

I walk alone, like I do most days. My bag is slung low on my shoulder, giving off the air that I'm sloppy, which I guess I am. I hug my advanced chemistry book close to my chest like a security blanket, although the class definitely does not make me feel secure. Because of it, my GPA hangs in the balance. It's terrible too because chemistry is supposed to be all fun and interesting, but I can't get the hang of it, which I'm not used to. Two minutes until the bell rings. I wanted to go to the bathroom, but God knows that's not going to happen in less than two minutes. Instead I rush to class and try to keep my head down. I notice the same faces I do every day. The girl with the cool t-shirts, the guy with the thick English accent (I'm pretty sure it's fake), and the queen bee herself, Ashley. I never really understood why she was so popular, but it was universally known that she was better than everyone else. I can't say I ever envied her as a person, but I envied how easy she had it. She could walk with her head held high. She didn't flinch every time someone came close or called her name. She didn't get hate notes slipped into her locker.

"Hey nerd!" Dear God here it comes. Ashley started waltzing my way with her posse close behind. I try to keep walking. I was so close to the safety of the classroom, but one of her friends grabs my arm and spins me around. "Why do you always wear your hair like that?"

"Like what?" I know I shouldn't have said anything. I should just take it and wait for an opportunity to flee, but my anger got the best of me.

"Like you live in a circus. What, do you not have enough time to wash it? It's not like you have friends. Can you not afford shampoo? Does your mommy not have enough jobs to pay for such luxuries? My dad's law firm is looking for a janitor." They laugh.

"Stop."

“What was that?”

“Nothing.” I dig my chin deeper into my chest and try to turn away so they won’t see the tears sneak out of my eyes.

“Oh come on, I know you can speak. What did you say to me?”

“I said nothing.” Sometimes it was better not to speak at all. Apparently this was not one of those times. Ashley grabs the books from my hands and throws them on the ground. Then the speakers blurt out a loud ring. Hah, saved by the bell.

“Oops, looks like someone is going to be late for class.” Before I could even bend down to pick up my books one of her friends spills something brown and heavy smelling all over my shoes. They collectively laugh, in that spooky kind of way, and stomp off.

They know nothing about my family. My mom works so hard just to keep food on the table, and she does it all with a smile on her face. If I didn’t have to worry about scholarships I would have took a swing at Ashley; but I wouldn’t risk my future on her.

It’s gotten so hard to bite my tongue. It takes so much of my strength to stand up that I can’t even make it to the chemistry room. I head straight for the bathroom. I try to call my mom but of course it goes to voicemail, she can’t risk taking her phone out at work. I lock myself in a stall and pull up my feet. If anyone came looking for me, which was doubtful, I could just pretend I felt sick and couldn’t make it to the office. The sobs overtake me within minutes, and I know I won’t be able to go to class. I hear a voice in the back of my head telling me to just stick it out. That high school was just a boulder I had to bypass in order to get to college. But for some reason I want to punch the voice in its nonexistent face because what does it know? High school is hell, and I’m just another one of the damned. Things may get better after high school, but how am I supposed to live through all the cruelty. It wasn’t just comments here and there. It

was the constant stares, the continuous snickers in the hall. The general bubble people left between me and them, and worst of all were the never ending threats from people who assumed they were better than me. "Get out of line and we will make it even worse." How could it get worse?

I stare into the toilet and wonder how pitiful it would be to die face first in that water.

They would just move my body, flush the water, and pretend it never happened. But how easy would it be to just give up. Sometimes the thought was so tempting...Sometimes I wished it was harder to think of dying.

Dear Diary,

I don't know how much more I can handle. Every day it gets worse and every day my strength lessens, I didn't even get to talk to Mom today because she worked a triple shift. I appreciate what she is doing but I need her here. I need someone to talk to. I feel so alone.

- June

Hey sweetie, how was school?

You know...it was fine.

did those girls bother you again?

No...

whatever you say. Don't let them get to you. make dinner for yourself, i'll be late again. love you.

K. Love you too.

Text Message Send

K. Love you too.

Mom?

Mom? Can you come get me? I want to go home?

i'm sorry, couldn't check my phone until just now. what's wrong?

where are you at?

sweetie i'm worried. where are you?

i'm coming home.

Text Message Send

Dear Mom,

I'm so sorry. I just can't take it anymore. It just got so bad and I can't handle it anymore. I know you tried to understand, but you could never grasp how much I hate myself. I hate my frizzy hair, my stupid glasses, my sagging shoulders and what I hate most is the lack of life in my eyes. I look in the mirror and I want to break everything within reach.

I'm so tired of being strong. I know I'm being selfish but I am done trying. My life is the only thing those girls at school haven't taken from me. It's all I have control over anymore.

I want you to know that I love you so much, and I want you to forget about me. Don't let them distort my death. I don't want my classmates crying over a grave they helped me dig. I want you to fight for kids like me. Find any broken, damaged kid being bullied and help them. I feel like no one ever tried to save me.

I'm tired of staring at the floor. I'd rather go out staring at the ceiling. Don't go in the bathroom. Just call the police. I don't want to leave you with a mess.

Mom, I need you to understand that this is not your fault. You were all I ever had. I love you, but I just can't keep breathing. I'm so tired... I'm sorry.

Bye Mom

- June