



Her hope

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She had stopped eating.
All bony elbows, hollow cheeks, and desperate breathing,
she worried her family like she worried that lip.
She never rested, attention arrested
on the next meal she'd possibly skip.

She refused to quit, refused to eat,
retched up every bit of her birthday feast.
Her family had had enough,
"Please get help," they pleaded,
and she fled every time they did.

One day she came home looking like a corpse,
even brought with her the silence of a funeral home.
The family had *definitely* had enough.

They brought her in hesitant and scared;
unfamiliarity crept in and her face paled.
She understood now, her monster's depth,
and yet she didn't eat,
she was overcome with gloom,
such is the nature of a hospital room.

I too had stopped eating;
My family too had gotten worried.
Same uniform as hers but different rooms;
same disorder,
barely standing and eyes drooping,
but something was always new.

I found in her what I couldn't find in the world...
Hope.

Pity crawled in, hope is slimy,
it escapes your hands the way a skilled bandit flees the police.
But I wanted her hope to stay.

It was decided, I'd help her keep her hope.

I visited every day, bought her food that would stay.
One spoon one day, four the next, the goal got closer day by day.
She would keep her hope,
and with that, I would cope.

The pandemonium stood in awe of the monsters she slayed.
The nurses, with all the pity and care they displayed,
asked after my own absent promenade.

The girl left the next day,
no longer just bones and gray hair,
eyes no longer looking far away, life swimming in them,
like they could drink the oceans bare.

Then I saw her back again and my spirits fell.
But there was a new charm in her face and health in her veins.
With authority in her voice she said,
"I'm going to get you out of here".
I said a prayer to the gods: she wasn't here to stay.

She nursed me with tough love;
made me commit to health and to warm picnics
of sunshine and laughter galore.

Weeks passed and promises were made,
then the time came to see if they were kept.

On the weighing scale, on my dinner plate,
in the mirror, and in my healthy state,
I saw what I had only seen once before:
I saw hope.

And I wanted to keep it that way.

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