

# Animals

Experimental

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## **POLAR BEAR**

My mom always told me I was her little polar bear cub  
I didn't understand, until I had grown up  
And when I would get mad, or start to throw a fuss  
It would take some days, for me to feel enough  
Winter quickly turns to spring,  
and this cub could become a king  
Kind words had turn to energy  
And roars that they'd remember me  
But polar bears are delicate,  
And Words can turn to bullets  
That slowly melt the ice away  
And again, I'm left to sink.

## **ANIMALS**

Camp Salvaje felt so far away from life.  
Out here us boys were just left alone to think,  
and us boys always thought about what we shouldn't.  
We sat like sardines dipping our toes into the murk.  
Hunter, Sam, Tanner and I watched the other kids chase the nats.  
The girls sat in solemn circles scrounging daisies for chains,  
others aimlessly paced the lake.  
At the mouth of the woods sat Sergio,  
he had devils hair and dirt on his face.  
All by himself he played the part of predator and prey.  
The guys laughed, but I kept eye,  
I wanted to be more like Sergio.

In the dining hall we foraged our scraps and feed,  
like pigs at a troff.  
I picked at the food but I couldn't eat  
Hunter said something about the food being shit.  
The pigs laughed but I guess the words passed me by.  
Sergio was at the end of the table.  
Even the counselors seemed to forget about him.  
Hunter armed his spoon with mush and flung it towards Sergio,  
It smacked his face and the mush oozed down as he winced.  
Everyone snickered, hollered and snorted,

But I didn't make a sound.

We were demanded to settle down,  
And the class swarmed to a silent ruckus.

Sergio wiped the grime off,  
Before he nestled himself further away he glared at me with a cold  
detached look.  
I looked away.

The night flies danced around us as we were huddled by the fire.  
The light reflected our innocent faces to beastly shadows,  
and the congregation of the boys cabin chattered monotonously.  
I drew in and out of the conversation,  
complying ever so often with a chuckle or so.

But I wasn't inclined to participate.  
Sergio, figured like a stone, stabbed at the fire with a tremendous  
branch,  
watching it writhe and stretch.  
Hunter went on to tell a story about the *Wolves of Camp Salvaje*.  
Wolves haven't been seen at the camp for a few decades,  
At least that's what I was told.  
Sergio bounced his leg restlessly.  
The boys all listened with admiration to Hunter,  
but Hunter knew that Sergio didn't give a shit.  
Hunter grabbed a rock.

"OUUUUUUWWWWWWOOOO" he howled like the wolves of Salvaje  
and chucked it at  
Sergio.

It struck his jumping leg with a thud.  
All of a sudden the boys howled "*WE LOVE YOU SERGIO! WE LOVE YOU  
SERGIO!*"

Over and Over again into a chorus.  
It deafened the wild night and drowned it's nocturnal song  
"**SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT UP.** "

Roaring he shot up towards Hunter.  
Towering over him, Sergio clawed Hunter's eyes rabidly.  
In strife Hunter put his arms up and Sergio bit at them, foaming at  
the mouth  
His arm was painted red in freshly drawn blood.

In the wake of panic and commotion, Sergio fled into the jaws of the woods.

Screams now echoed over the wild campfire.

All I saw was Sergio disappear.

To myself I thought,

We're all just animals anyway.

Slowly the crickets would chirp again.

### THE ELEPHANT

One.by One. I arranged my animals in a single file

Learning the bumps of the new floor,

I didn't trust it yet.

"Mom, where's my other box!?"

"Baby. I thought I told you." Her face furrowed.

"No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no!"

In anguish, I ran as fast as my little legs could.

Up the jade carpet steps, and the rail wobbled as my hands worried too.

I guess I must've dropped my tiger and bear cub on the way,  
but all I could think of was my favorite one.

*Legos, Gameboy, Harry Potter, Dragons.*

I checked the boxes mom packed.

Still unused, but ripe in their neat colored cubbies,  
still couldn't find my other box.

I lifted my naked mattress, no elephant.

I tore open my bare closet, no elephant.

I ripped apart my boxes of clothes, no elephant again.

No elephant.

No elephant.

No elephant.

I forgot to close the door.

"Hey sweetie...I'm so sorry, but Daddy, *accidentally* threw that box away."

"But..bu" My head was full of thunderclouds and I couldn't see straight.

I started to exhale punches and my teeth trembled.

Why would he throw out my favorite animal,

Why would he throw away my elephant?

Mom was gone all day because she had to help Aunt Jennie with some grown up stuff.

Somethin' about a will. But I don't even know who will is.

She left me to stay with daddy.

Which usually meant I'd stay in my room. Play mario till my eyes hurt  
and eat all the fruit

snacks mom bought for the week.

I loved dad, but we weren't on good terms.

He never said sorry.

And he never even *told* me that he threw my elephant away.

A car must've pulled up cause I could hear an engine idle softly outside.

I set my stuffed raccoon down next to my other friends, and grabbed my water bottle.

Jabbing my fingers in between the folds of the blinds, I bent them quietly.

The light shot through suspiciously,  
and I saw my dad walking back towards our door.

Holding someone's hand.

They moved like mice because I couldn't even hear the door open.

Or slam shut for that matter.

Curious, I danced my tippy toes towards my door.

Moving like dust, I crept it open ever so gently,

And stuck my neck out dry.

I shuffled towards the mouth of the stairs,

And heard the two squeaking.

One. Two. Three.

I worked my way from these careful steps.

I set my water bottle down.

My hands gripped the rail bars like a crook in a jail.

From the slice of my view I could see the living room, dark and secretive.

The light from the tv illuminated these sofa figures.

There he was.

I cocked my head out a little further and my eyes squinted down.

He was saying some sweet things he always would say to mom.

*Love...neck...quick...okay...worry*

That's what I think I could hear.

The two embraced,

so small, they seemed like mice.

I leaned in just a little bit more.

***Dun Dun Dun***

My water bottle rolled down the steps.

"SHIT"

My eyes widened to the size of stars, and my father's little black eyes

met mine.  
 I got up in a flash and made for my room.  
 I heard the other person say, *what now?*  
 That *wasn't* my mommy.  
 The next morning, my hair was all done up  
 Like a balloon danced with my head.  
 I swept my creaky eyes.  
 I didn't sleep that good over the night,  
 on account I couldn't stop thinking about it.  
 I can't get my little elephant off my mind.  
 I even *dreamed* about him.  
 I was laying down on some uncut grass, in my polka dot pajamas.  
 One arm out, the other carrying my head.  
 I'd look up and see him floating around the sky,  
 with all the other clouds, monkeys, birds, cats, and dogs.  
 Then, the sky would wash grey and the clouds black.  
 All of the animals eyes would flash red,  
 And the elephant would start to cry.  
 These rats in the sky would grab him and pull him up and up and up,  
 until I couldn't see him.  
 I made my way down the blemished stairs and headed for our dull  
 little kitchen.  
 My mom was on the sofa, just getting back from Jennie's,  
 and dad was on the toilet.  
 I hated waking up so frustrated.  
 I dragged the step ladder across the floor to face the fridge.  
 I stomped towards the ceiling, and grabbed my box of *Trix*.  
 Along with a bowl, spoon, and milk that was a day spoiled.  
 Mom got up and joined me at the table.  
 "Sooo, how was the house yesterday baby? You have fun?"  
 "Erm-," I had a mouth full. "Kinda boring. I just played in my room."  
 Looking down, I spun the  
 cereal in my bowl to a whirlpool.  
 "C'mon now, that's it? You didn't go exploring? You didn't see any-"  
 My dad walked in the kitchen wiping his hands on his *Mickey Mouse*  
 shirt and abruptly stopped.  
 "Hey hunny, Joey was just telling me about the day you boy's had  
 yesterday!"  
 My dad's face went red as a spank.  
 "So what did you guys do? I missed ya'"  
 My dad kept staring at me.  
 "Nothing"

He started to breathe funny, and mom looked at him funny back.  
 "Wha-, well, sounds very exciting boys." she drew a long breath of  
 question.  
 He kept staring at me.  
 He looked like he wanted to squeeze me.  
 "Am I missing something here? You boys...are acting like I'm missing  
 something."  
 "We had a great time, *didn't* we Joey? Right Joey? Right Joey."  
 My elephant popped back into my head.  
 How could he say *we had a great time*, when he knows darn well  
 what he did.  
 It really made me red.  
 I played with my cereal, but didn't say anything.  
 "What's the matter baby?"  
 Dad's ratty eyes still glued to me.  
 The kitchen was heavy and disgusting.  
 "baby? What's wrong?"  
 I raised my head,  
 slowly.  
 And looked right at my dad.  
 His face went from red, to a vice white.

"Dad...I know what you did."

### FISH BOWL

What would bring you more joy?  
 A fish in a bowl,  
 Or a guppy in a pond.  
 The fish is well fed, and always on time  
 He has an eccentric bed of stone,  
 And the same log.  
 Does that bore you?  
 He is content,  
 This fish will never leave your sight.  
 You are in control.  
 The guppy might starve, or be eaten  
 Does that scare you?  
 But he swims freely, he always swims with gusto  
 He is content  
 This guppy might swim to a different pond

Out of site

The guppy is in control.

### COCKROACH

It reeked of cigarettes. And the ash burnt my nose. It's scent perfect-  
ed from the air.

All I could hear was the usual yelling from my parents down the hall.  
So I crawled onto my bed. With its leather, white and decaying. Its  
tattered strips hung in  
contempt.

But I bore the burden of its lay. And it's foul musty smell.  
I wanted to drown them out. I could hardly make out the hell of what  
they were saying to each  
other. Their muffled cries irked me, really pissed me off. I'd imagine I  
was some kinda  
champion boxer. Someone with a real nice punch ya' know, and I  
would storm down that  
hallway. Huffin and puffin my little lungs. Worn down from their bitter  
lives and

BOOM-BOOM. Out cold, the both of 'em. But I'm not the fighter type,  
really. Just in my head. I  
didn't wanna be like my old man.

I reached for my bag perched by the old fashioned coffee table. It  
was really something, made of  
mahogany, my dad would boast. A real family treasure, covered in  
empty Johnny Walkers,  
orange stained napkins, half eaten baguette and a split ashtray. I'd  
rummage through my bag  
every now and then to see if I left myself something neat. Most of the  
time I'd find a moldy

ham-and-cheese sandwich my mom graciously gave me. Sometimes  
I'd find some poetry I wrote  
on old assignments that got crumpled and left to die. Words must've  
slipped through the cracks  
cause I heard my mom mutter,

*[Don't bring him into this Greg! Or...]*

I could hear my mom's footsteps trail my fathers. The bastard crashed  
through the damn door.

"LISTEN boy, I'm not your FUCKING friend. Your mother is NOT your  
friend. I am your god  
DAMN father. I pay for the roof above your head. I paid for the COUCH  
you sleep on, you little  
SHIT."

That hot face feeling you get when you're caught started to creep up  
on me.

"You ungrateful little shit." His skinny bowling pin shaped fingers  
pointed towards my neck like  
a bloody knife.

"DON'T ever talk behind my back. Be a MAN next time. If YOU have a  
problem with ME...say  
it to MY FACE you pussy." He was really working himself up this time.

Mom was sobbing in  
the back, she kept saying *I'm sorry, I'm so sorry*. I couldn't tell who  
she was talking to though.  
I kinda fell mute. I mean, I could hear him yelling at me. I could smell  
his vulgar words. But I  
couldn't make a god damn peep. I stood there, looking like a class act  
idiot. All tomato faced,  
glass eyed and mute.

"YA GOT ANYTHING TO SAY BOY?"

From the soiled carpet, a cockroach scurried from underneath my  
bed. For a moment, I felt a  
sense of sweet relief. I thought about the timing of this little guy.  
How embarrassing it all was for  
this cockroach. His beautiful brown back shined with brief innocence.

His long antennas pointed  
eagerly, but with an inherent droop. Where was he going in a time  
like this? We all peered down  
at the poor thing. He tried to get past my father.  
Just like that, the bastard squashed him. A bloody mess all over my  
carpet.

"Jesus kid, clean your fucking couch"

My glass eyes began to swell up real quick. The tears rolling down  
boiled against my skin.  
I couldn't help but feel sorry. Sorry and angry. What did *he* do to him?  
He didn't do a damn

thing, and he killed *him*. This bastard really was heartless.

All heated, my face squished and my jaw clenched.

"Wutcha gonna do."

I cocked my arm back like a gun. And hit the lights out of my old man.  
I felt the hard kiss of his  
jaw against my fist. And felt the blood pulp into my hand, I could feel  
the damn thing beating.

My hands were beating like a goddamn heart.