

ASHLEY PARRAS

Love Little Ash

A conversation between me and my younger self. I am only trying to make my mind a loving, compassionate, and happy place to be. As I know, it all starts with me.

I love so much, so hard, so fast.

I see who people—could be.

I know, hurt people, hurt people.

Unfortunately, the same way I acknowledge their pain is the same way they tend to cause me pain.

People can be so mean, so dark, and so scary.

They take advantage of my kindness and it hurts.

It

truly,

deeply,

hurts.

I don't think I realized how much it hurt until just about now.

Yet, as I write this down I can't help but realize—I am not actually hurt by this.

The little girl inside me is.

The one who just wanted to be seen, appreciated, heard, and valued.

I am beginning to realize any hurt I've experienced—little Ash—is the first one who takes the hit.

I, however, know that—hurt people, hurt people.

I've always been a ball of joy and love. I want to lead from a place of love. I've always known this, but I can't do so unless I first and foremost—love little Ash.

The world can be a mean and ugly place if I don't have my back, if I don't support myself, if I don't see myself, and if I don't acknowledge myself.

If I don't tend to little Ash.

You've seen, endured, and been through a lot. Not just this year, but your entire life.

Especially, during your most primal years when you **NEEDED** and **DEPENDED** on the love and influence of those meant to protect you.

I am here.

I see you.

ASHLEY PARRAS

Sigue Volando

Miro hacia el cielo y veo un pájaro volando—disfrutando del aire libre.

Sin esfuerzo,

It glides, swirling effortlessly in its flight, and I am inspired to soar high.

Aquí, me encuentro soñando.

Nací de parte de María y José—

The two most common Latin names, wouldn't you say?

Con mucho nublando su juicio, no pudieron expresarse libremente.

Constantemente, intentando hacer lo suficiente para sobrevivir

Por esto—ellos no pudieron buen vivir.

Comencé y atendí una escuela estadounidense,

Pasando la mayoría de mi vida aprendiendo, expresando, y hablando el inglés.

I somehow, still, felt like I was less.

Solo con mi mamá hablaba español—

Con razón, se me iba la habilidad de poder hablar español.

Aunque en la escuela me etiquetaron, they said I didn't understand their rules—I wasn't good enough here, y allá, they said I had a funny accent and sounded weird.

En estos momentos, sentía un vacío, un anhelo de huir, pero mis raíces olvidadas me rogaban a seguir.

En este momento,
Soy el pájaro,
que surca el cielo—
me encuentro volando libremente.

No soy destinada a pasar mi vida en una jaula.

Sino, me merezco volar.

I've known I am meant to soar high, and though it may take time, he
aprendido lo que es mío
nadie me lo quita.

Aunque no me enseñaron a tener orgullo,

Aquí, yo lo construyo.

Enmendado las raíces de lo que soy.

All that is me, I am beginning to sow.

Sé que están conmigo mis antepasados. En cada vuelo, su amor y
apoyo me levantan aún más
higher.

Sigue volando, las oigo cantando.

I know they want to see me soar beyond what the eye can see. At last,
they reap the fruits of their
once, deeply, buried seeds.

ASHLEY PARRAS

Be Free

Written in reflection of the absence of a father. A tribute to my journey towards forgiveness, letting go, and healing.

As I take in a deep breath, I feel the mist of Southern California's oceans fill my lungs as they come into contact with my rib cage.

It is in this very moment that I have begun to let go.

I could hate you, rightfully so—for all the reasons why you weren't here. For all the things that have gone wrong. For all the ways I believed I wasn't destined for greatness—that I wasn't ever going to be good enough.

But, right now, where the sun warms my skin, the blue sky drapes over me, the birds chirp in the distance, and the wind whispers through the weeds.

I am reminded of all the reasons why I should thank you.

Your absence left a never-ending hole in my heart. Yet, I find peace in knowing that the pain, the hurt, the tears, the negative feelings, thoughts, and emotions were only guiding me here.

To this very moment.

Where I stand, proud of the woman I've fought to become. I have everything I've ever dreamed of. I am living, walking proof that—I can and will—accomplish everything I want, without you.

Still, I can't hate you. I recognize the way you carry your own pain, hurt, and suffering.

Instead, I choose to set you free. To set myself free.

To let go of the belief that you would ever come home.

That you would ever hug me and tell me everything is going to be okay.

That you would ever proudly call me your daughter.

That you would ever tell me you loved me and I wouldn't have to question whether or not you meant it.

Be free.

For I love me—enough for the both of us.

Thank you.

Because your absence—slowly but surely—is leading me back to myself, where I can truly be free.

ASHLEY PARRAS

Divine Protection: A journey of releasing what was to embrace what is

I've befriended waiting, wishing, and hoping.
They've become my best friends,
They've been there when he wasn't.
I've deflected and projected from the hurt of rejection.
It's been my sense of perception.
The angst in my mind has brought so much affliction,

On a relentless search for an explanation,
An answer,

an anything!
I just want some relief.
Any—please.
You see,
my eyes still swell up with tears
every time
I come near girls and their dads

because

I always yearned for mine.

The void in my chest becomes so violent,
I gasp for air.
All I've ever wanted was to hear a sincere

I love you, my dear, come here.
But,

That is not my truth.
And that day is far from near.
There is no other option but to accept—
that day may never come here.
Rejection is simply redirection.

Divine protection.
And with time, I release what was—

to embrace what is and build upon this new foundation.