

Dirty dishes and a suicide attempt

Poetry • Nicole Annone

1. Why did you try to kill yourself?

The only thing worse than this question
are people's preconceptions:

Selfishness, cowardice, weakness
Lack of effort, absence of faith
A fundamental moral failing

We all have a story we tell ourselves when something tragic happens;
Simple explanations for unanswerable questions

2. Do you want to know why I tried to kill myself?

Dirty dishes.

My roommate had an affinity for cooking
and an aversion to wet sponges
I grew up in a household where spotless was standard,
lived-in was unacceptable,
and cluttered was uninhabitable
So, our cohabitation presented a challenge

When my roommate got her first load of groceries;
I picked up my last prescription of antidepressants
The fridge filled; the stovetop stained
Effexor gave two-weeks; Paxil broke the lease

I grew begrudgingly familiar with a full sink
As the mountain of kitchenware festered,
So did my resentment
While fruit flies found home in our silver basin,
Suicidality reclaimed its residence
In many ways, my problems felt like a pile of dirty dishes
Chronic anxiety, an eating disorder, unsorted sexual trauma,
Educational and occupational overcommitment,
A tumultuous love affair with an obstinate addict
The stack seemed even taller once unmedicated

I managed
in the liminal space between ideation and action

Once fervently committed to getting better,
It was all I could to get through the day

I managed
until I couldn't manage any longer
My soul stained; my problems immutable
Suicide went from an option to The Option

I was still in the process of planning
when I took my routine path through the kitchen
One glance at the sink did me in
My precariously balanced problems toppled over
A bottle of barbiturates, a handle of tequila
I was tired of a world full of messes

3. Why did you try to kill yourself?

The only thing worse than asking this question
are the motivations behind it:

Chronic combativeness, a superiority complex
To quell morbid curiosity
To soothe self-doubted sanity

We all have a story we tell ourselves when something tragic happens
But it's time to change the narrative
Suicide survivors aren't your antagonists

Why did you try to kill yourself? How can I support you?