

girl with  
Good Bones

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*To anyone who has grieved and learned to live life  
again.*

*(And especially to my children. My spring and  
summer. I'm learning. I love you.)*

## **STEAL ME BACK**

grief left me skin and bones  
and skin left me to deal.  
so my youth creaked  
through space and then  
seeped down into dirt.  
and I couldn't feel  
my heart break,  
or the light steal me  
back.

## **THIN SKIN**

the thing about skin  
is it grows back in  
softly with the light.  
one layer over bone.  
and if it grows back right,  
it won't be thick,  
it will be vulnerable  
with life.

## **LIGHT**

so there in dirt,  
thick bone, thin skin,  
I saw six feet of light  
instead of my skeleton  
and I sat up to greet the things  
I could not feel at all,  
like myself breathing  
past hollowness  
and my story being  
something more  
than only  
skin and bones.

## **OKAY**

hearing the heart beat again  
sounds like what does not make noise. . .  
being in the same place  
but sitting up.  
picking flowers only  
in arm's reach.  
letting sky be gray,  
and drops of rain and tears  
stay on my skin.  
the erratic thud, thud,  
falls between good and grief.  
light pokes through  
old wounds and thin skin again.  
a fresh healing heart  
feels harsh against  
bones that never broke.  
okay, but not okay.

## **STRANGER**

to rest my bones,  
I press my back against  
the earth again.  
but it feels different,  
less like home,  
less like somewhere  
I could stay forever,  
less like it was friend,  
and more like I  
the stranger.



## **CHANGES**

the sun beats downs  
I let my heart go  
with that rhythm  
light, light, light.  
I stand up again,  
weeks later,  
breakable, translucent.  
light, light, light.  
next to bone, hope settles in.  
and it changes nothing  
where I've been,  
somehow still changes  
everything.

## **SOMETHING NORMAL**

I opened the door  
to my house,  
it had been awhile.  
I felt so brave,  
one foot over  
the threshold,  
doing something  
normal,  
standing in the dust,  
not angry at the  
damage.

## **WHEN YOU'RE READY**

they say a lot of things,  
“if one door closes. . .”  
(you know how it goes)  
but not always.  
grief is grief.  
light steals you back.  
bones can't hold you prisoner.  
and none of this is linear.  
but your door knows your hand  
even with different skin,  
even though you don't know  
yourself anymore,  
still it will open  
gently. . .  
when you're ready.

## **ALL OVER ME**

something happens when  
you wander through rooms,  
remembering.

thin skin lets you feel  
and bones that never broke  
finally feel strong  
in worn walls of home.

I'll open my own windows,  
thank you very much,  
and it's light, light, light  
all over me  
again.

## **BACK DOOR**

when I had mustered  
enough life

to brave the back door,

I leaned on it heavily,

but it opened softly.

I shut my eyes tight,

afraid.

it used to be lovely

before.

what could it be like now?

and what could I do

anyway?

I'd been replaced.

could this skin tend to

flowers?

## **ALL THAT TIME**

I couldn't tell you  
how long I played the statue  
in my own garden,  
but I'd learned to love  
the light.  
so my eyes flew open  
to flowers grown  
and seeds sown,  
to colors I'd not seen  
in years,  
to a river, roses, willow trees.  
like all that time as skin and bones  
like all those days spent in the dirt  
was how this garden  
grew.

## **WILD THING**

I sat awhile  
to take it in,  
how far I'd come  
without knowing it.  
grief and hope did  
the wild thing,  
but it was me  
with this new skin  
who faced the choice  
to choose this life.  
so I found my old watering can,  
filled it up, said yes.

## **DEAD**

it became my favorite morning thing  
to open my back door,  
coffee steaming,  
walk slowly in my garden.  
but fear crept in slowly too  
(as it often does when things  
are well and good and right.)  
I'd learned to trust the flowers  
grown by my skeleton,  
but what about the flowers here?  
more lovely than I'd ever dreamed,  
more vibrant than I could believe.  
would I just wake up  
one day, Be Dead,  
inside this beautiful story?



## **COUNTDOWN**

the back door got heavier  
my coffee grew colder,  
the watering can got cobwebs  
and I braced myself  
for death.

one. . .two. . .three. . .

three. . .two. . .one. . .

I made up a countdown  
to inevitable tragedy.

## **BREATHE**

but light. . .

that thing I can't control

kept showing up

through my windows,

on my skin,

bouncing off the watering can.

I wasn't dead,

nor was I

about to die.

and what about last time?

didn't the garden grow

in the company of bone?

six feet of hope.

I breathe free in my

skeleton.

## **HERE**

I let the breeze be the breeze,  
instead of an impending storm.

I let the birds sing melodies  
without imagining them mocking me.

I let the flowers grow past my knees  
without the fear they'd suffocate me.

I let myself be happy,  
because happiness was here.

## **LEAVE**

it was time to leave  
my house,  
and live outside myself.

I was safe to go,  
full of peace,  
clothed in light.

I'd come back, of course.

but it was time to see  
something more than  
me.

## **SOFTLY**

I carry my pain in these  
unbroken bones,  
but my heart has learned  
to beat softly with grief,  
push me forward down the path  
toward life, more life,  
more life.

## **SOMEONE**

not long before

I meet someone

along the winnowed way.

eyes are the window to the soul,  
they say.

but if you're actually looking,  
everything else is, too.

hands, worn skin, labored lungs  
free breathing.

we find a bench  
and talk for hours. . .

whispers first,  
than songs.

## **GOOD BONES**

“that house has good bones.”

I know what they mean  
now.

because I stayed,  
but was replaced.

pain in me,  
me in light.

I grew into a new story  
confined by an old frame,  
and kept the walls that braced  
the windows

to keep the windows open  
to welcome back the day.

girl with good bones,  
she kept her house,  
and flowers always  
grow.

## **note to readers**

*I wish I knew your name because I'd start this little note much more personally. But I don't need to know your name or who you are to share these words with you. **Girl with Good Bones** has been such an important collection of poetry for me to write. In 2019, I found out I was pregnant after three+ years of infertility. The pregnancy and birth of my firstborn son remains one of the greatest gifts I've ever received. Motherhood has been rich with laughter and lightheartedness.*

*I wrote a book about my infertility years, [Hope Gives a Eulogy](#), because long before my son was born, life was born in me. God healed my heart and soul so deeply before I ever became a mom, and so I not only wanted to remember and share the emotions of infertility, but also the presence of God with me as He healed me from the hollow, life-altering pain of infertility. Still*



*there is a lightheartedness to motherhood grief and infertility would rarely allow even with such deep healing.*

*Since my son's birth, it has been good gift after good gift crescendoing into a second pregnancy we found out about this summer. God has surprised us again. Our second child is due to arrive earthside April 2022 the same month I published [Hope Gives a Eulogy](#). The goodness of it all is overwhelming. It feels scary to be handed these gifts after such pain and heartache. It seems too good to be true, and I admit I've recently crumpled in fear more days than I've celebrated the joy of it all.*

*For me, **Girl with Good Bones** reflects my journey beginning in the dust and ash of infertility into healing, saying yes to my life, being given beautiful, unexpected gifts along the way, and then learning not to be afraid of*

*those good gifts from God. I will carry the history of infertility and grief inside me forever. It is a part of my frame, but it is not my story. But these days, I'm learning to take long, slow walks in the garden I've been given without fear of death and the dying of all good things. I am beginning to understand good gifts from God will always be good gifts from Him even when the pain and brokenness of this world touch those good things. Once received, always received. I can trust God in the bad times and the good times.*

***Girl with Good Bones*** may mean something else to you. That's the beauty of poetry. Let your story live in these words. God heals and He is always with and for His children. He is the Light we long for. Keep those windows open. Walk slowly in the garden you've been given. Let the beauty be beautiful, the happiness be

*happy. We are safe to grieve and we are safe to rejoice. God is with us. Forever.*

## CONNECT

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