

***MY LIFE IS A
PRAYER***

A Novel In Verse

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Prologue

My name is Catherine
and I'm an introvert.

I say it as if it's a crime
or a curse
or a crippling disease

but actually
it's a gift,

a gift I haven't
quite learned
to embrace.

There's so much
I'd like to
erase

but all I can do
is receive grace.

I took one of those
personality tests.
Found out I am
“INFJ”
the rarest type.

I – Introverted
N – Intuitive
F – Feeling
J – Judging

the rarest combination
the rarest personality
of all.

No wonder I feel
like I am weird
all the time,
different from everyone
around me.

No wonder life is so
hard for me.
Everything is hard
for me.

Feelings rise
like tidal waves,
threatening to overwhelm
me over the
simplest things.

People talk

talk

talk

and drain

my energy,

sucking life from

my bones

my mind

my heart.

I Care Too Much

I care,

I care,

I care so much.

A family gathering...

conversation swirls

around me.

So and so has cancer...

cancer...

cancer.

There are soft murmurs,

and the conversation

moves on,

but I am stuck.
Stuck in a loop.
Time has stopped.

A weakness spreads
through my limbs
like a stain.

A fear pulses,
my stomach rolls,
I feel it all.

The sickness,
the cancer,
the future unrolls
in my mind,

and I see pain
and suffering
and I care too much.

The care depletes me.

Don't Tell Me

Don't tell me
any more "news"
I don't want to hear
I don't want to feel.

You can go on
with your day,
enjoying your meal,
talking and laughing,
moving on to other things

but the news
stays with me.
It is a stone
dropped in my heart

pressing me down,
holding me in place

to witness every
inch of it.

The stone does not dissolve.
Who will roll
the stone away?

My life is a prayer
crying out for relief,
take the stone away
and let me live.

Scary Movies

I don't like scary movies
any more.

It isn't real
you say, laughing

but to me
it is possible

to me
it is real.

It exists
in our minds

and even just
saying it

can make it
real.

Our breath can
give it life.

You don't know
the power we have

the power
to create.

There's already
too much bad.

I want to create
something good.

It Is In The Telling

It is in the telling
that burdens are released,
that boulders are blasted
into smaller chunks

that can then be carried
away, or laid at the foot
of a cross.

It is in the telling,
but who will listen?

Who among you
can bear the burdens
of the deep?

No one can take it,
not even I,
not even I can carry
the weight of my own
thoughts.

Who will let me tell
the stories that need
to be told?

Part 1

Early Days

Once There Was

Once there was a little
girl who cried every
day at school.

“Cry-Baby” they called her,
or “Scaredy Cat.”

The kindergarten class
smelled
like wet paint.

My hands
smelled
like wet fears
wiping tears
messy smears.

Oh, mama, where is
your love and prayers?

Oh, daddy, where is
your wise advice?

Is heaven too
far away
from the messiness
of earthen clay?

Every Day

My tummy hurt.

My mouth wobbled.

I was afraid to go
to school every day.

My fears erupted in tears
and I hated that...

I hated all of it.

My teacher taught us songs.
I loved singing about the little teapot
and I liked learning
numbers and letters

but when the recess bell rang
terror swept through my body.

The rush of kids to the playground
was overwhelming,
pushing and shoving,
running and screaming

open space with
no rules,
no boundaries,

left me shaking,
my head splitting,
my heart breaking.

Always Alone

I stood alone,
weight against the red
brick wall,
observing the kids
interacting at playtime.

I was apart
always alone
the weird one
with no friends,
the Scaredy Cat.

I was too scared to run
but if I could convince my legs
to join me, I would
scramble to the tall fence
at the edge of the schoolyard

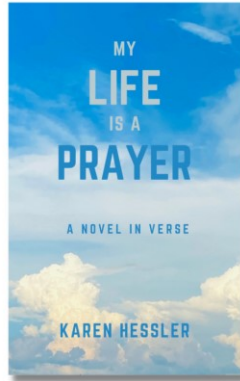
and Scaredy Cat would climb
higher and higher
above the noise,
above my fears.

If I could convince my mouth
to open wide, I would
let all these feelings rise

and Scaredy Cat would
hang on the fence
by her claws
and yowl from the depths of her soul,

until darkness covered the school
and the moon and stars came out
to quiet the world
and to sing me to sleep.

END OF EXCERPT



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