This poem means a lot to me -- I think that as humans, we relate a lot to the idea of suffering. Because we have all suffered. And as tragic as it might be, humans naturally connect with one another more when we’re suffering. When our lives are good, we’re good. We don’t need anybody else; we’re just chilling on our own. But when we’re weak, and we need someone stronger than us to come and pick us up and brush us off and say “hey, you’re gonna get through this.” And I think it’s beautiful that we need each other so much in times like that. I think humans are gorgeous. And the sermon tonight is going talk about how we can’t see the reason behind our suffering when we’re in it, but there is a purpose for it, and this poem is one of the times that I tried to find God’s meaning in suffering.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

You won’t get this now,

But I had a friend;

His life was good.

2 younger brothers, a sister;

He had parents that loved him,

Raised him,

Bathed him,

But he still felt misunderstood.

He was a masterpiece on a blank canvas,

But he couldn’t master the peace

Within him.

From social mishap chronicles he fell victim

To a prison

Where he became only a number

Lost in the system.

A D D I C T

He was labeled.

Tattooed

Forever reminded

Of his weak minded

Satisfaction

That only lasts a minute.

His joy, his color, his art

Was ripped apart

A spiral kaleidoscope

Of glass shards

Ripped

From bits

Of misfit existence,

Twisting

At a dangerous distance…

The standards of what others thought

He ought

To be

But they only saw what they wanted to see,

and it wasn’t enough.

Glass shards cut through his skin

Like the pain he felt deep within

When he pushed down that needle

And (release)

numb

He couldn’t feel a thing.

But I remember when he laughed --

That crooked smile that glowed for miles

He was a poetic metaphor of

Waves crashing against a shore

Eyes shut tight as though hiding from the light

That came from inside him.

I remember when he loved –

How he saw the best in everyone

Drawn to those who couldn’t stand up for themselves

He fought for the fightless,

Drew for the artless

Misfits that didn’t stand a chance in this world

And somehow, he made himself one of them.

How he showed people who God was

without even uttering His name.

aren’t those kinds of people great?

People who love

Not just when it’s convenient for them?

He showed the boys, now men,

How to treat women

by loving his mama.

He taught that little girl, now a young woman

What true love better look like.

And it’s crazy to me that none of us could see how

even when he was hurting,

his love ran so deep.

He told me once

That I won’t get this now,

But when love comes my way,

I have to hold on to it.

Because it can fall, and it can break,

And it can crumble, and it can take

Every last bit of my strength

To put myself back together again.

I didn’t know that I was grieving when I was

Cuz

I was grieving someone who wasn’t dead yet,

And I didn’t get it.

Have you ever felt like there was something so close

That it was completely distant?

See, no matter how badly I wanted to understand things,

God seemed so deeply resistant.

And I pointed fingers,

And I placed the blame on anybody

Who shared his last name.

See the fact of the matter is,

The truth train left the station

And I missed it on purpose.

Because guilt will make you late.

But I remember the way he lived –

And I honestly don’t get it now.

But when 99% of the people

Just like him

Are either in jail, in rehab, or dead,

What do you do when the odds are always

Stacked against you?

That feeling, lonely and strange

Like rage

At the one who did this to you, the one who put you here

Is a lunar phase disdained,

A foreign exchange

That rains pain and stains

Like blood from your veins.

And all he could do was beg something bigger than him

To grant him the serenity that he needed

To accept the things, he could not change.

He was carrying serious weight,

The kind that puts you in an inferior state.

And it’s sad, but it’s true.

It’s an excuse.

to take the beautiful life God has given you,

and just call it a truce.

I had a friend.

He was an addict,

But he was a beautiful boy;

And I get it now.