**\*Note** I am including this fiction piece along with my four essays. I am including this to show I do know how to be subtle and play around with words, I just need some guidance when it comes to personal essays.

The Moon Tree

“You’re not enjoying this conversation are you?”

“It’s not that, it’s just…”she looked around at the drunk teenagers screaming and the bums trying to sleep through it all on the park benches. She wasn’t sure she’d be able to be homeless herself and wondered what they thought about when they slept without a pillow in the cold night air on a hard park bench in the middle of the bars.

“I just, I want to go home”

“Okay well you can go. I need to walk around for a bit”

“Okay” her heart sank a little. She had hoped they could stop this stupid walk and this stupid conversation and both go home. Was he really going to try talking to her about this? And especially right now.

“Are you okay?”

“I’m fine.” She kissed him lightly and turned the other way, through the thickest and most drunken area. She wasn’t sure why they were out at this time anyways. They were ridiculously misplaced.

She heard him opening the door and felt the immediate need to change what she was doing but she lacked the strength to move. She stayed put, lying on her back and staring at nothing in the darkness of their tiny living room. A crack of light from the hallway shone through as he opened the door but it was behind her and so his entrance went unnoticed. She didn’t need to look up. She knew what he looked like.

“Have you just been lying here in the dark?”

“Don’t say it like that.” She put her hand to her forehead and pressed.

“Like what?’

“Like it’s a bad thing, all judging.”

“I’m not judging.” He lowered himself until he was level with her, trying to see what see was seeing.

“What are you looking at?”

“That tree out there.” She took her hand away from her head and pointed through the darkness outside the sliding glass door. “It’s illuminated, more so than the rest of the landscape”

“What do you mean?”

“Well I can see the leaves so clearly, it seems unnatural. Like it’s a space ship or something. I’ve been trying to figure out what I could compare it to, like if I was telling someone about it”

“Who would you be talking to about a tree?” He shifted his weight from one bent leg to the next. He was crouched like an animal waiting to take off after its prey. Why couldn’t he just sit. His pose was making her tense.

“Well like a friend or if it was something unnatural like a reporter or something. Maybe even the President”

He smiled and sat back.

“You’re going to tell the President about the tree outside our balcony?”

She smiled and felt her muscles begin to uncoil.

“You never know”

She thought for a while.

“Maybe it’s an upside down chia pet, obscured by the roof all except for the head. Or like a giant leafy moon that glows supernaturally against the porch. That’s what it is, a moon tree”

“That doesn’t seem very original”

“What doesn’t?”

“Either of those. Of course a tree would look like a chia pet and what isn’t compared to the moon”

“Who are you to tell me that?”

He fell back on the floor and sighed.

“I just mean that,” he thought for a minute, “I think you could do better,” he said.

“That may be the problem.”

“You think it’s a problem that I believe in you?”

“No not that part.” She rubbed her hand for a minute. “I don’t know that I can do better. I feel like I’m stuck right here right where I am and I’ll never be anything better. It’s like I’m not fully participating in life. Like I’m not really present in the world. I don’t have anything to put my soul into. I want something to put my soul into. But maybe I’m not meant to.”

“Do you have to have something?”

“I feel like everyone does”

“The world isn’t as hard to figure out as you seem to think it is. You’re smart. You’ll get by~~,~~”

“I don’t want to get by.”

“You’re going to have to.”

She looked down and started picking at her fingers. He figured this was as good of a time as any to sit in the white armchair across from her. She was thinking, let her think. She took a sharp breath in and her face flushed. Her eyes began to sparkle with that quality that he loved so much about her.

“I think it’s like this. It’s like I’m building an igloo, spending all that hard work and effort into putting each icy brick in place, and then I’m just sitting in it and waiting to die”

“Why are you just waiting to die in it?

“I just…I don’t know…see that’s what I’m talking about I don’t know and that’s the problem. Why can’t you just let it be? Why does it have to have a reason? It just is okay!”

She was beginning to get restless. Her legs were twitching and she wanted to throw her arms.

“I’m not looking for a reason. I’m just trying to help you figure this out.”

“I don’t need help I need you to just sit down and listen for once”

He sat forward.

“Okay I’m listening”

She took a few deep breaths.

“You’re just you’re always looking for logic. You’re always looking for reason”

“Does that annoy you?”

“Sometimes”

She looked down at her hands again and peeled the skin away from the nail on her middle finger. She didn’t notice the pain. It began to bleed and she brought it to her mouth to suck on.

“Is this about our conversation earlier?”

“No” She answered too quickly and she knew it.

“Someday, hopefully, you’ll have a daughter of your own to put your soul into.”

“That’s the hope right?”

She wished he could just stop talking about this.

“I’m Sorry –“

“It’s time to go to bed. I’m tired. Are you coming?”

“I think you’d be a good mother.” He shifted off of her and pushed his arm uncomfortably under her neck.

“You know that’s not going to happen”

“There are ways –”

“Can we cuddle?”

He looked at her for a moment searching in her eyes for the things she didn’t want to say to him. He sighed and rolled onto his back.

“Not right now”

“I understand” She moved to the other edge of the bed, trying to get as far away as possible but still she was unable to escape the reach of the arm and the hand that dangled awkwardly from her neck.

“Don’t be like that”

“I’m not being any way. I’m just trying to give you space”

She looked out into the depths of their room. The desk, the clutter on the ground. No way someone else should live here. Not like that was even a choice though. She began thinking about something but it was just beyond the reaches of her mind. Like one of those squishy toys you get at the aquarium that wherever you grab it, the rest just squeezes out the other side. She thought it was something he said earlier.

“Hey, what did you say earlier, about reason?”

No answer.

“Honey?”

He always fell asleep long before she did. She didn’t even feel tired. It was probably because he worked harder and longer during the day. She tried to think about it herself but the words couldn’t come back to her. There was something in what he said that she wanted to think about now but it was impossible to remember. She rolled silently off the bed and crossed the room to the door that led to the bathroom. She opened it just slightly and took the robe that hung from the back of it. She pulled it on and left the room, leaning on the doorframe so as to close the door as quietly as possible. If she woke him up he would be angry. He had to be up early to go to work and why couldn’t she just control herself and go to bed like a normal person? He hated her night owl behavoirs but it was the only time she could be excited.

She went out to the porch and sat on one of the two old beach chairs they had put out there. They didn’t match in the slightest but she preferred them that way. Her favorite of the two was the yellow and white striped one. It had a slight rip in the side so she felt like she sunk in more and could pretend it was one of those fancy mattresses that you could jump on and not spill the glass of wine next to you. It gave her a sense of luxury that they couldn’t afford. She propped her feet up on the railing and leaned back. She looked up at the moon tree and thought about how great it would be to just climb up into its depths and never come down.