

This is Just a Poem

Her disposition, nostalgic, ephemeral,
my mother would ask me
What changed? What happened to make you
kiss girls and be angry and

DO YOU KNOW I SEE YOUR BROTHER THREE TIMES A WEEK AND
HE DOESN'T SEEM ANGRY ALL OF THE TIME?

Well. He's kissing girls, for one.
But how do I explain?
How do I unearth the embers that keep me
burning at night and
put them in the palms of the woman who once told me
"God didn't make you pretty for nothing"
And if I did tell her.
If I gasped out the deepest recesses of myself,
the things that live in my bones,

that's what I would do.
BE pretty. Make it pretty. Play; pretend.
I would say
Don't worry mom. This is just a poem.
Because I can't just tell her my body is a cemetery.
My body is a cemetery for every man who's ever laid his hands on me.
For every fantasy curled in his throat
that I didn't fulfill
-or did-
and didn't live up to.
Every un-lived dream
every missing hug from his mother
decays inside me
-still-
like spider-thin parchment paper
curled around the foliage that is the little bit of
Heart. I. Have. Left.

It's gone
but fuck it is familiar
and MY GOD what if it happens again?
What if I can't outlive it this time?
What if I'm buried alive
and finally suffocate in another man's
disappointments and regret?

Don't worry mom. This is just a poem.

What if he cases the windowpanes, the
joints and bones of this body that
is my home looking for any
valuables left inside?
Little does he know
the jewels are gone
and there are only
ghosts left inside this temple.
Don't worry mama. This is just a poem.
My body is... a coffin.
Where pain that is not my own is buried.
This. Is just. A poem.