

Aubrey Case

My selfish desire for something picturesque
Has led me to pick up this book (my night's escape)
And light this candle (the beacon of my journey).
I flip through pages of a dead man's sad groveling,
Feeling myself so detached from words I once believed
Were my life source, or some sort of twisted portrait
Of a life I was convinced was doomed by some malevolent being.
The candle's scent is comforting, warm. It fills
My nostrils with familiarity and soothes my strained eyes
With the flickering performance of its light.
I cast a glance—a break from the sorrowful words
Spilled before me—to see you. At first I find myself
Startled, fight or flight activated in a moment of tranquility,
But my heart and mind adjust to your picture.
Your body floats, lifeless, in a soft orange wax that would burn
My gentle skin. I wonder about your last moments,
Whether it was the sweet scent or the dancing light
That brought you to this unexpected suicide.
For a moment I cannot help but conjure images
Of bugs trapped in Amber, preserved for millennia
By another soft orange fluid. But your death
Will not be studied, or marveled at by some future
Scientist hoping to uncover something great.
You will be discarded with this candle, and the wax
Will not be such a permanent grave, but for a moment
I am here to observe you. To create something I only hope,
As I read a suicidal man's words, will last a bit longer.

It was terrifying,
vastness filled with deceit—
lies in the name of honesty,
cruelty in the name of kindness,
judgement in the name of acceptance.
I could never hope
to understand it all, and god, I've tried.
I've torn apart the book,
memorized it front to back, inside and out,
line by line etched into my mind
and still no answer. They all know something
I don't. Or maybe I know something they are blind to.
I have ripped apart my psyche in a desperate
attempt to understand myself, and I am only ever left
with more questions. I try so desperately to understand
them, why they dance, how they sing,
what makes them go perfectly still and quiet.
why do we go on?
why do we go on?
why do I go on?



Aubrey “Bee” Case is a first-generation college student from Schaumburg, IL (or Mobile, AL, depending on your perspective) with a heart condition and many things to say. When she’s not writing or swamped with school, she loves listening to music, watching shows with her roommate, and having off-putting existential conversations with anyone who’s willing.