

Amber McElreath

I wonder what went wrong

This is about a dear friend who committed suicide. He was accomplished and seemed to have made a wonderful life for himself. Suicide often leaves many questions which go unanswered: “What happened?” “What went wrong?” “How did it happen?” It’s human to ask these questions but it’s futile to continue to do so for long. You will more than likely never find the answers. This piece is about the aftermath and that questioning stage where the people left are trying to piece together a story that will explain that which is sometimes unexplainable.

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Is this how it’s gonna be?

This piece is a response to Covid-19 and the panic/anxiety that have arrived along with it. This depicts a family in crisis. The mother is trying to manage the household while the father is afflicted and in quarantine in the basement. The mother is anxious. The father is sick. The children are worried about their father as well as their own future. They ask, “Is this how it’s gonna be?” They have had to grow up a bit earlier than expected because anxiety, uncertainty, and mortality have had such a sudden presence in their lives. There is an attempt by the mother to make everything as normal as possible (ex. the regular tea time, the love shown towards the children, playtime, keeping the house, etc.). However, the dad is fighting the virus in his quarantined room where opening the door is not an option. The house is stocked with emergency food. The children are home rather than playing with friends. The house has become a haven/fortress protecting them from the outside world but the virus has invaded that haven. The virus has invaded and (temporarily or permanently) taken away their father’s presence, forced the mother to take over all parental roles/responsibilities, threatened their livelihoods, and has threatened the lives of the entire family.