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## Little Boy Bones

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## Little Boy Bones

Victoria Berrios

Little boy bones.

Crushed under the weight of hard-line masculine agenda;

An initiation,

A solemn rite,

A poison called elixir,

Told to smack your lips at the taste like iron,

From the blood of Christian warriors,

Chivalry turned violent, turned blind-

Your only mirror, a blade.

The death of generations of manhood in that cup, that elixir you're forced to swallow.

Little boy bones.

Crushed within your small frame.

Limbs that wanted to climb trees in peace,

Now dangled as the marionette toys of someone else's perversion.

Little boy bones.

Playing in the shadows of your own suspended limbs.

Someone else still holds the strings,

Dancing the imitation of achievement;

The illusion of compensation.

No one wins.

Little boy bones.

Learned to live with the constant pain.

Learned to climb mountains, next.

Not out of the woods yet.

Little boy bones.

What to do with the strings of the marionette limbs?

How about make others hurt?

Just one.

Just for a moment.

Just for a day.

A week.

A few years.

A childhood.

Twisting the strings around another life form, just to feel.

Little boy bones.

Resetting broken bones of a childhood is pain that writhes under the attention of care,

Only having held together by neglect and the facade of resilience.

But infection had rotted the skin,

barely keeping those bones in your body.

Little boy bones.

I touched them.

I saw them.

I held them.

Your still small frame,

A man withered in my embrace,

Shook as the bones rattled within the boy,

The all too hasty and haphazard construction of the outward frame of a man

Who pretended to hold those bones disintegrating,

Waiting to finally return to dust.

A final confession of truth was all that was needed