

UNTITLED

ANTOON TAIKATO

I stare into the mirror, my fingers tracing the outline of excess fat around my stomach and face, mapping the areas I wish I could change. Then I remember what my parents said, “You are a disgrace, can’t you be good at something for once in your life.” Plays in my head on repeat, getting louder each second and sinking deeper into my bones.

I search for any imperfection that nobody seems to notice but I just can’t ignore it. I get ready for school while trying to make myself look pretty but I just can’t be satisfied with what I look like.

I arrive at school and am standing with my friends. They always seem to talk over me and bubbling with laughter, they move in sync, seamlessly connected. While I’m standing there like I don’t belong, I can’t shake the feeling that they are laughing at me. But I’m pretty used to it by now, they have done this for ages and always have a different excuse every day.

I stop talking as much, stop showing up to plans I wasn’t sure I was even invited to. Nobody noticed. Nobody asked if I was okay. I tell myself it doesn’t matter. That I don’t matter. Loneliness becomes unbearable, each night it’s like a depressed entity entering my body to fill up all the emptiness but this just makes me feel worse and like most nights I cry myself to sleep and find another reason to.

I woke up and got shouted at by my parents to come downstairs because there was mail for me, but that was new. No one ever sent me mail. I thought no one cared about me but someone had to. I sprint downstairs as fast as I could, I tear open the mail and there was a letter from my old friend that moved away saying “saw this and it made me think of you” with a photo of us laughing together attached to the note and suddenly a smile appeared on my face, something I hadn’t felt in months. I chose to focus on myself and not what other people think because it’s okay not to be okay.

