

Divide Your Life into Chapters.

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Poetry

Divide your life into chapters.

Chapter one.

What do you remember?

There were stairs reaching to heaven and nuns in white.

Chinese buttons on silk pyjamas.

And something that broke that night

and made your brother cry.

Chapter two.

Ask yourself if it's enough.

Is it enough that intentions were good?

That you meant no harm?

Were you wrong to pretend she didn't exist just like he insisted?

Or that you cried silently to show that brave girls don't cry?

Chapter three.

Take the day and show the moments that mattered.

The big moments of shame and the little ones too:

The day he pushed you away because you were too big for a cuddle

And too small to know he was wrong.

In Chapter four you wonder what to do with the rest that won't leave you alone.

Because it's the quiet moments that stir deep in the soul

And ask over and over and over

For your moment of absolution.

Like the day when Auntie Molly taught you macramé in a shared intimacy

passed down through generations of Irish women who said everything in the

quick movement of practical hands.

Poor white hands that must have felt familiar once or twice.

Poor white hands that were as deft with a needle as a tear that ran recalcitrant

down the cheek.

Auntie Molly who had asked for love in return but died waiting.

There's a conclusion to be drawn somewhere – a point to be made, a resolution found, an end written.

But it's an elusive somewhere and never always in the introduction.

Introductions are a difficult fumble-about language or even no-language.

Conclusions are the point we get to when the words come and the book closes in our lap.