

I think I'm where I need to be. Or not. I'm sure everyone would rather that I was back in my bed. Any of the various beds that I've called mine at one point or another but with special emphasis on the resort bed, considering time and place. Basically, I think I'm on the mountain. I think I'm on Mount Makiling where I need to be. And no, I don't know for sure. I can't know. The GPS on my phone isn't connecting. Nothing in my phone is connected to anything. No signal at all. No way to contact anyone. No way to confirm where I'm standing. It just feels right. It really shouldn't, but it does.

*(Pause)*

I know I shouldn't have done this. I keep saying that, but you know, actions are louder than words and all that. And my actions have been equally contradictory and disconcerting. If it makes you feel any better, the sun is starting to come out. Then again, you're getting this long after the fact, so it's retroactive reassurance, which is worth practically nothing. Does it matter how I feel right now if I'm not around anymore when you get this? I don't think so.

That's probably a dangerous game to play. I remember you trying to strike up a conversation about how much disabled representation in media includes someone losing or not having the will to live. It came up because of some movie was being shown on the quad as a student activity. I forget what the title was, but I'm sure you know which one I'm talking about. It was kind of recent. Then again, I'm sure that whole ordeal is fresh in your mind. After all, , how often you do have to do a suicidal ideation check on a student, am I right? I'm not, I know. You've probably had to deal with that more times than anyone thinks as one of the few professors who isn't being pummeled to the ground with research expectations and teaching commitments and all that stuff.

But regardless, I'll repeat what I said, I've never wanted to die, accident or no. I want to do things. I want to have a life, even if I can't tell you what that means in specific terms. I want to be happy. I want to have romantic partners and a baby, and it wouldn't even bother me if that baby wasn't biologically mine. Expectations and all that, you know. I want to do things, like as a job sort of thing, but I don't know what those things are, exactly. And that's one of those things where you have to set expectations because of the rest of the world, but you know, I'm doing the best I can.

*(Pause)*

No one is up here with me. No security force is marching up because what am I doing here right now. In fact, I don't... I don't remember any sort of barrier or sign or marker, so maybe I'm not where I think I am. Maybe I'm not where I'm supposed to be, but I-- I'm just out here, enjoying this nothingness. This open air. This space. Yeah, this space.

No, I haven't seen her yet. I'm not sure if that was clear when I said I've seen no one, so I might as well be explicit about it. And that was to be expected, right? Of course no one would be up here. I shouldn't be up here.

*(Starts walking)*

But I am up here, now. Wandering about. Nothing's telling me to leave. Not even the survival impulse. Even your figurative representative in my mind is asking not telling me to make better choices. Slight difference but a pretty key one. It makes me feel like less of a failure.

I keep telling myself that--out of anyone I've ever known--you'll be the most understanding, no matter how this turns out. Because you just want me to find my way,

and that means mistakes, right? Ideally not high stakes one, but you know, things happen. This happened. But it's not like the mere act of stepping out or wandering about is the bad thing. I feel like my family sometimes thinks it is. Mom especially. I mean, look at how the entire conversation about this trip went.

*(Stops walking)*.

Oh frick. Is our last conversation going to be an argument? I don't even mean that in the sense of dying up here. I mean that she can hold onto her anger and grievances far longer than any human other being, and I don't think she'll ever fully forgive me for this. And it's not that I want forgiveness; I want what gets coupled with it. The happily ever after and all that. I don't think I'll get it.

*(Starts walking again)*

And that raises a different question, right? I think I'll have to answer the no contact question when I get down. Except... Elephant in the room: my injury might mean, that's not fully possible. I need help. I can't afford to hire help, so there's that. I don't know what the solution will be.

I-- (Pause) What was that? (Stops walking). Hello? Hello? Hello?

*(Pause. Music fades in)*

The Mountain's Heart is a production of Hugot Podcasting. And this end song comes from the Sounds like an Earful music supply. See you in two weeks.