

“Collide”

Digital photo work, image transfer, Arches watercolor paper
19” H x 19” W

This artwork is a poem and drawing by Kim Gantz, who lost her son, Nathan, too early in life.

“Collide”

I am not strong; I am broken.
Starting each new day in the same old shambles as before.

Forced to carry shards of myself.
A lonely custodian pushing an ever-growing pile of debris.
With nowhere to put it all and no end in sight.

Searing emotions wrestle inside of me, each vying for the biggest seat in the house.
Will bitterness win today, or will anger triumph?
More likely, the victory will go to the sobs and wails, the shrieks and moans that can't
face the light of day, the agony that eclipses all else.

In another world, another time, I was filled with joy. Each new day brought possibilities
and wonder. Awake to the pleasures in life, large and small, instead of counting the
hours and days and wondering how many are left.

It feels foolish and naive to hope for anything more.

But how do I keep from careening off the edge? What good remains?

How could heart-wrenching sadness and despairing grief ever intersect with a smile?

Can bitterness share any space with sweetness and warmth?

Where do joy and pain collide?
Is there a place where the two can truly reside together, mingle, blur their edges?

Where do peace and heartache coincide?
Can they both make a home inside me?

Where can this love with no tangible destination link arms with a love I can share, a
connection on Earth and in Heaven?

Maybe it's that my heart longs for something more, or that my body can't stop living.

Or perhaps just to feel something other than pain, I go in search of small, distracting pleasures.

Coffee drinking, food savoring, cocktail sipping, teddy bear squeezing, country music singing, radio blasting, book devouring, trail walking, yoga practicing, fragrance smelling, adornment shopping, back porch sitting, sunrise watching. No holds barred, consuming everything I can, desperate to cling to something sweet that still holds promise.

I've heard it said that I'll need to reenter normal life at some point, but that's the thing: there will never be normal again. And somehow I need to live bigger to try to fill the empty spaces, to push aside some of the ache. I need longer, tougher hikes, deeper stretches, fuller yawns, richer, spicier foods, louder music, longer showers, deeper hugs, more eloquent books, funkier jewelry, softer fabrics, stronger coffee, sweeter aromas, better sleep, deeper conversation, more truth and honesty, bigger feelings, more to fill the senses, and less to drain me. I don't have any space for more darkness or pain.

And this great big gift of you in my life that was cut down too soon, leaving nothing but a stump and a worn out bloom.
Will it forever lie dormant or could it ever grow another shoot?

Where do love and heartache collide?