

Cinderella Story

By Maya Souden

Perhaps Cinderella,
Would have been better off
With someone who could recall
Her face,
Not just stumble on her shoe?

Maybe Sleeping Beauty
Could have minded her fingers
Around the
glowing
needles of a spinning wheel

And if Snow White was just so flawless,
What's with the
Eating an apple
From a strange witch?

Furthermore-
Sleeping Beauty, Snow White,
I don't know about you,
But I don't want a kiss in my sleep from some jock I've never met
Charming or not
This is not consent
I wouldn't be content.
Pounding this message into my child
'Till it's rooted there like cement.

Cinderella,
You spend your days
Wasting away
Terror-stricken by every pointy but pointless poke propelling from your sisters' lips
A wand wave later you have a gown and some impractical slippers
So everything is fine?

We sit clay-like minds in front of these pictures.
And watch them be molded by plastic promises

You see,
My story books said,

If I make a bunch of hair-brained choices I get a happily ever after
Well, I've screwed up.
I've had my slips
Slips of my feet
of my grades
of my tongue
Slips down farther than Cinderella's slipper

My storybooks said
I'd get a ball,
Well, I got a school dance with stale pretzels and Katy Perry
I tried wearing a dress
Without the help of fairy godmothers,
I was over dressed, over stressed, and wishing for the clock to strike **my** midnight
6 o'clock- the end of the dance
So I could go home

But my storybooks said
There's always a happily ever after
Right?

So how do those books explain to the little girl-
The girl growing up in poofy dresses- bippity boppity bood into reality
The girl who starts asking questions
"If we can wand wave rags to riches
Why is that man asking for change just to buy a meal?
And if we can just kiss sleeping people to wake them up
What about my uncle who my parents say fell asleep and couldn't wake up?
If kids with evil step-moms can be taken in by friendly dwarves,
Why does my friend come to school with marks he can't explain on his arms?"

How do we explain the curious 8-year old
That kind of plot convenience just doesn't happen.

The little girl is only ever taught conflicts in 1 dimension
She never realized that these problems become more real, more complex, than me, you, or any
Disney princess, could ever imagine

Somebody please tell me— Why are we sending our youth into this not-so-storybook life under
blindfolds of perfect fantasy?

You adults seem to be going on and on about all this "fake news"
You don't like being lied to--do you?

Well neither do we

So why are you feeding lies right back to us?

Like we don't know?

Like we won't figure out that it was all just a sham?

It's up to us,

To stop waiting for prince charmings in imaginary castles

We need problem-solving protagonists in our future

And parents,

They aren't going to write themselves

If we lock them in a tower

and tell them- "just wait"