

Years 11-12 Category Highly Commended

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Forever Fragile

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In my mind, the most fragrant bouquet of flannel flowers rest in a forest green ceramic vase upon my kitchen table. This vase has the most extravagant curved body and delicate brushstrokes. The petals are a perfect pearly white, elegant and simple. The vase and flannels harmonise to brighten the room. They look like they'll live forever.

Until they don't.

As the flannel flowers endure the painful march of time, the petals become weak and fall, wracked with sorrow and misery. On a lively Sunday afternoon, in a room overflowing with laughter and joy, an accidental hand ever so slightly brushes against the unsuspecting vase and the flannels fall to their floral grave. The vase shatters, revealing the truth it once concealed - the stems have become brown and darkened, much resembling the sight of the flowers above. On the wooden floor lies a catastrophe of lifeless blooms surrounded by discoloured water. And a vase, once so beautiful and whole, is now smashed into a million shards. Forgotten, only to be remembered by the brightness that once was.

I am that vase. We are all that vase.

Sometimes, even if the most insignificant inconvenient event takes place, I feel like my heart and mind will shatter the same way the vase did. The same way the flowers fell, any small thought or emotion that had been trapped within would be freed, until my soul is truly hollow.

The most fragile of things can hold the greatest beauty. Maybe because the objects are valuable, or maybe because they have been crafted carefully. Or maybe as humans, we have the understanding that fragile things are so beautiful because they are easily broken.

Fragile.

If a vase is easily destroyed it is beautiful. But, ironically, if a person is easily crushed, they are weak. I don't believe, however, that we as humans are momentarily fragile or that only specific people are weak. Put simply, I think we are forever fragile and always delicate, there are just certain times that we notice it more.

I believe in being fragile because I don't know what I'd believe if I wasn't.