

The Missing Stair

Creator Commentary:

This poem frames the myth of Sisyphus in the context of the Penrose Steps (the infinite staircase). Specifically, this piece is a symbolic representation of trauma -being "stuck" in the same place and with the same patterns of thoughts and behavior. I use the term "missing stair" to represent this struggle. Our society teaches us to avoid the problem, rather than to fix it. It's only when someone "trips" and gets hurt, that we are forced to address the issue head on. In this poem, the missing stair has become a familiar part of the trauma experience: the individual has been "down this road" so many times before that it's become second nature to avoid it.

The form of the poem also reflects this. The lines are short with a step-like cadence, but there is a blank space every 12 lines. The first time the reader encounters it, it's jarring and seems like a mistake. By the second time, it's a pattern, and by the third, the reader stops attending to it. The last few lines are much more spaced out and show the breaking of the cycle. The subject takes the first few steps towards a new way of being and finds a way off the infinite staircase.

Category: Mind

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Take my hand

And walk me through

Your paradox:

A mind trapped

On Penrose steps.

You wander,

Lost in the closed loop

Of racing thoughts

And endless memory

And wonder

When you stopped tripping

On the missing

stair.

Your reckless soul

Wrecked on the shores

Of the Painful Past

And anchored

By the Fear-Filled Future:

A shadowy Someday

That keeps you paralyzed

And the path worn smooth

From constant worrying.

Convince me

Of the lies you've told yourself:

That movement is progress,

That time alone brings healing,

And that you're doing

Just fine.

Maybe then you'll hear it:

Myth, madness, and memory

Stories that no longer serve you

And footsteps.

Tired of running,

Tired of fighting,

Finally

Slowing

To a

Stop.

Maybe then

You'll take my hand

And realize

I've

Been

There

Too.