

# Conversations with my brother

*by* Emily Sparkles

***What is actually said:***

me: Do you remember that time when...?

him: No.

***What I wish I could say:***

That he doesn't have the power to hold onto all of those memories  
Those awful, awful memories

While I do.

Although

Maybe it is more powerful to be able to forget

Maybe I am the weak one for the memories on loop

The wide-awake nightmares where

I can hear myself scream NO

While the blows fall

And the words draw blood

Maybe it takes as much fortitude

To forget

As it does

To remember.

To relive and learn how to be safe

In my

Own

Skin

I cannot blame him for his quick and concise judgments of me then  
Or now  
It is how we were raised

**In this house we  
Criticize Emily  
We  
Dump our unexpressed emotions onto her  
And devour their forced release  
At whipping time**

I did it, too  
When the blows stopped  
When 18 arrived  
I stopped eating  
I took all of my emotions that were too big  
Finally, I knew they were too big  
*I learned it, Daddy! I see it now!*  
I took  
All of my fears about the future  
The unplanned future  
This problem child can't have much of a future  
And punished them  
By  
Punishing  
Me.

**In this house we  
Hurt Emily  
We  
Break her body and  
Drink her tears  
But**

WAIT

This isn't working anymore  
And dying on the floor  
Finally reaching that  
Pit of despair  
Losing my hair  
And my mind  
Is next

It's worth saving.

It's worth saving.

I'm worth saving.

What if I'm not  
Just a pile of rot  
What if I wasn't a manipulative mastermind at the  
Age of three  
Using tears and fears  
To control my parents' behavior  
What if I wasn't a spoiled brat at the  
Age of twelve  
Wanting answers to questions like why  
Are you talking about others like that  
Why are you talking to me like that  
When your job is to preach about Jesus why  
Can't you be more like  
Jesus?

Jesus.

Why were the people in the psych ward softer  
Kinder  
More

Understanding  
Than the people in the pews  
And the pulpit?  
Why did I think they weren't people?  
When clearly this IS where I belong?

Why are we all being treated as less than for trying to heal what is  
both more and less broken than society will allow?

**In this house we**  
**Heal Emily**  
**We**  
**honor emotions and her**  
**Ability to hold them and her**  
**Ability to feel them with us, too**

Jordan,  
I'm here.  
I'm still here.

