

Micromanaged Truth

by Jennifer Donnell

Dictate, to me, years one through three.
Let your father stay
through that dinner
when his mistress needed him
while your mother was on the verge.
Let her spill the drink that tipped the scale
when your sister was in her womb
and may she rest in peace,
the way you tried when drunk houseguests
with wandering hands slept over.
Strike through your years of twelve through twenty
and the part where you took off your clothes
while her clothes were off,
even if it was her idea.
Place that in category x and
don't as y, as it's one of the
unanswerable questions,
such as why coffee tastes good
or why god is so bad
at ensuring our happiness.
Or what's the point of any of this,
you morbidly ask me over the telephone,
gruff and alone, except for me.
I try to be cute
and rattle off reasons,
the way happy people do.
Yet, I could tell you about my years two through six
and would, except your sadness always wins.
Could explain how my mother left my father
with a house full of bills
but didn't just run as he helped her move

Available online at *«<http://fictionaut.com/stories/jennifer-donnell/micromanaged-truth>»*

Copyright © 2017 Jennifer Donnell. All rights reserved.

Though she drove the station wagon, it felt more like he left me.
We could fumble through my years of fifteen through nineteen,
which sure did a number on my self esteem,
when I couldn't master the anorexia
other girls seemed to,
considered myself a failed bulimic
and how I thought love was the only drug
a principled person
would ever need,

