

Unfixable/Unbroken

I do not need fixing.

My legs might shake, but there is grace in letting them dance, in finding glory in their lack of rhythm. My limbs might be more scar than skin, but they, too, are beautiful. There is joy in every pink or silver mark, every testament to my survival. My thoughts might run faster than my legs ever could, but fear is the body's way of saying, "stay alive," and, by Shakespeare, I will.

My anxiety does not need fixing. It needs managing, yes, with therapy and medication and sleep. But having an overactive mind does not make me broken.

My disability does not need fixing. It needs managing too, with physio and warmth and food. But having a body with physical limitations does not make me broken.

Last year, someone I love pointed out my limp. They laughed as they noted that I looked like "Frankenstein, or something out of a Seinfeld episode." Perhaps they used humour to deflect from something uncomfortable, whereas I did not - do not. They walked ahead, and I tried to keep up, but shame makes my movements slow and effortful - even slower and more laborious than they are without it.

I said, "It's fine."

I thought: *there is something wrong with me.*

I've changed between this year and last. I've joined and embraced the vibrant, supportive disability community in which I belong.

Now, when someone mentions my limp, I don't laugh it off. I am defiant. I am brave and I am proud.

"It's called Cerebral Palsy," I say.

And it gives me empathy and resilience that you will never understand.

Two years ago, someone I loved let me go. They said, perhaps unaware of the sting in their words, that being around my mental health challenges was not something they could do to themselves.

I said, "If I'm such a burden, you're better off without me."

I thought: *Please tell me I matter enough for you to stay.*

I've changed in the last two years. I've journalled and talked and learned to find balance amidst the chaos of my emotions. I'm still journaling and talking and learning.

Now, when my anxiety flares, I try to be honest about it. I rely on the people who've seen me at my worst and love me anyway.

"I'm feeling a lot today," I say.

And I am grateful, for the intensity of my sorrow gives me equally powerful joy.

I do not need fixing.

And if you think otherwise, I've got no time for you. I'm too busy marvelling at my dancing limbs. I'm too busy turning my racing thoughts into healing words, too busy soaking up the love that I deserve from the ones who deserve me.