

# The End Is Better Than the Journey

I've spent countless days in the mirror  
Telling myself I'm worth it  
Telling myself I deserve it  
That I'm beautiful  
And that I can change the world  
But once I hit the pillow  
The tears start flowing  
And the only thing I can change is the face mask I use  
Because I gotta get rid of these tears before school tomorrow

See they tell us that we can do it together  
But how can I be anything?  
When the friends around me are only in my imagination?  
How can I go anywhere?  
Do anything  
When my family doesn't trust me anymore  
Tallying up my points  
Day  
After day, after day, after day  
Knowing  
That no matter how sorry I am  
And no matter how hard I try  
It'll never go away

And that pain haunts me  
As I put on a fake smile and pretend like everything's alright  
As I walk through the halls  
I'm thinking day and night  
That I don't wanna be alive anymore  
Things get worse at home, worse at school  
Worse everywhere my feet touch  
And you all, you all stay keeping score  
Stay keeping score while acting like you "love" me  
Acting like I matter  
And little did you know, that because of you  
I sit in the bathroom in between each class period  
Marking off new reasons to kill myself  
And that's how the countdown began

10

That's how old I am  
I just entered the 5th grade  
Everyone tells me I look about 14  
And even though I'm young, I've been through a lot

9

That's how many days are left in school  
I've been waiting for this moment all my life!  
Not because I don't like learning.  
But there are other reasons too

8

That's how many schools I've been to  
I never really liked school, but I've always learned from it  
Never eat the food, never talk to the people  
And whatever you do  
NEVER talk back to a bully  
I've been beaten up too many times  
To have that kinda courage anyway

7

That's how many times I cried myself to sleep last week  
That's right  
Every. Single. Night.  
I used to cry until my face turned red and blue  
I guess I'm a new species  
I didn't know black people could turn those colors

6

That's how many friends I have  
They're all fake anyway, but they don't mind keeping me around

5

That's how many times I've been raped  
Not just by strangers, but family too  
Uncle Thomas, Uncle Charles....  
I guess I have a reason to hate home to

4

That's how many stars I see at night  
Everyone always tells me to "shoot for the stars"  
And "You can do anything"  
But you can't shoot for them  
If there aren't any left

3

That's how many pills I take every day  
Two in the morning and one at night  
I mean with all the stuff happening in my life right now  
I thought about taking more...

2

That's how many mental illnesses I have  
Depression and anxiety  
They keep me up late at night  
And drive me crazy in the morning

1

That's how many times I've tried it  
I didn't think I'd make it this far  
But life sucks too much to keep going...

0

That's how many breaths I took today  
I don't even love me  
Other people don't even love me, right?  
I mean, what is love anyway?  
To me, it's just another word for broken

*—Esrael Nykea Bennett*