

*THE VOICE OF A WHEELCHAIR

Elizabeth Smith poetry

Hi...

Um, I haven't had a chance to speak to anybody before, really.

I mean it.

Just to myself.

Right now, this very second, I hope somebody will listen to me.

Will you?

Just this once.

Let me tell you a little bit about myself.

I'm a navy blue wheelchair.

I've got some rips in my cushions.

I've got a great big wide seat with large, titanium wheels.

I could really go for a sip of WD40, just like Samantha.

She really wanted a chocolate milkshake with extra cherries
when she found out it was time to go home.

I'm not sure, but I'd love to tell you,

I've been a great help to loads of people at Theodore Roosevelt
Medical Center.

Well, actually, I have been a great help while working here, but to
me...

It's like I'm Johnny,

who came into the ER a few days ago,

from his twenty-mile bike ride,

Dr. Delarosa diagnosed him with DVTs: blood clots in his calves.

I've dead-ended into my last mile of work,

as if there were blood clots in my own calves.

I meant in my titanium wheels, of course.

Unfortunately, I overheard the nurses during rounds.

They've planned to get rid of me.

My life has been rejected,

as if I were Camile's new heart after her transplant.

There are dried-up tears that reside in my cushions leaving so many memories.
Countless times,
my wide seat was much too big for the youngsters like Timothy and Maria
whose feet dangled far off the hospital floor.

I wheeled them around for months,
next thing I knew their parents left.

Timothy and Maria, they...

They both died.

Timothy: February 6, 1989 at 4:23 A.M.

Maria: August 29, 1993 at 12:56 P.M.

I still miss Maria's drawings of her dog, Prince Philip.
I still miss Timothy's favorite purple little car he'd say zoom to as he played with
it on my arm rests.

I tell you what,

I can't forget Olivia.

She often came in
with bruises and broken bones.

Nobody but me saw her husband
who gave her an angry look and a talkin' to.

I was so glad to see Olivia left that cruel man.

It was my honor to wheel her across the hall
while she held her newborn son wrapped in mint green booties.

Olivia named him Simon.

He radiated a colossal of joy from that very first day.

Then Ester...

I must mention Ester.

She came in.

Her fear made my titanium wheels rock.

Her tears soaked my tattered cushions.

Her anger made me leave skid marks across the floor
that Jim just finished cleaning.

But I didn't blame her.

I still don't.

It was Ester's first day

a new altered life.

I'd tell you what the diagnosis was,
but every time somebody mentioned it,
Ester held a fist on my arm rest.

These are just a few of my memories.

I don't ask for sympathy,
but rather an epiphany,

Just for you.

Not one has heard my voice,
except for you and now...

The nurses are taking me,
to my final resting place,
the dump.

I heard it has red, toxic, waste bags
smelling worse than the diarrhea I've gotten on my seat before.

How do I,

Rest in Peace?

Since Timothy and Maria are,
I suppose, I can too,

Just for them.

**Content Warning: Descriptions of death, implied abuse*