

**Frida Kahlo**

*'The patient will walk again?'*

*'Chances are slim...'*

They don't make the effort to ensure I don't hear.

But, I've never been one for self-pity,

Let me tell you that.

That wallowing state of mind,

Never did anyone any good.

And I sustained that notion, even after

That appalling event.

Crushed.

Fractured. Broken. Punctured.

Dislocated... Shall I go on?

All deemed me bedridden.

Not a lot can be done,

whilst flat on your back,

or so the less notorious may agree.

Smother yourself

and others in your self-pity? Not me

Conclusion, Doctor? *'Nothing else can be done.'*

Left to rot.

Not I.

I observe my reflection for the first time.

A failing and distorted body.

I trace the fresh, open wounds.

It reflects nothing familiar. Hideous.

*'Cause — auto motion.'*

Perceptions of one's self are bound to change.

Must you comment on my so-called 'mania'?

My apparent obsession with self-portraits.

*'Maybe it's her vanity,'* some may have snorted.

No.

Well maybe a little...

Why flounder in self-pity, when your repression can be

Released?

Art.

My therapy.

On canvas, I could remain beautiful, and anguish could

disappear...  
Paint brushes wither like  
the marrow of broken bones.  
My studio, an empty crevice,  
Sleepless without me —  
Dark like catacombs.

Relapse.  
Yet another invasion of my body; operation after operation.  
I swallow thoughts which may arise as self-pity,  
in the sweet form of medication, nicotine, alcohol...  
the fierce burn in my chest an ironic method,  
to forget other sources of pain.  
Fractures. Punctures. Relapse.

‘A miraculous recovery, it would appear,’  
yet one which led to another disaster.  
Diego, my dearest Diego: the one  
with which it *was* love.  
‘The elephant and the dove.’  
That simple summing up of such a complex pair.  
It began somewhat sugary sweet; a creative bond,  
which was soon to turn bitter, from the sour taste  
of other love affairs on your lips.  
And whose lipstick on your collar tonight, sweetheart?  
An unfamiliar scent clinging to your conscience.

Me? A hypocrite?  
Well, yes. You make a fair point. I too  
indulged in may...dealings.  
Nickolas, Isamu, Georgia, Dolores...  
Trotsky.  
A red dress, as a gift.  
How fitting.  
Yet with you, Diego, my dear, it *was* love.

I endured emotional relapses, and the continuation of  
deteriorating health.  
The fierce burn of alcohol most likely didn't help,  
yet in a way, it did.  
Still, no need for self-pity. Express it on the page,  
then attempt to forget.

But after a year,  
Scalpel. Suture. Stitch,  
And young lovers send no flowers

To a wounded widow,  
Desolate with pain,  
Like Purgatory, suspended in  
The direst constraints —  
Bandage. Cast. Wired jaw.  
Fingers crippled like an old brush.  
Gone before its time.  
My piteous feelings — undeniable —  
Tears in my hollow eyes.