

# Love the Life You Live

by Gráinne Hamill, aged 16

‘One good thing about music, when it hits you, you feel no pain.’  
– Bob Marley

Bob Marley plays in her ears as she walks towards her locker. Seeing heads turn, she doesn’t bother reading their lips – knowing the words being thrown her way, ‘Freak, fat, ugly.’ She can feel the snigger’s from all those that judged her the very first moment they saw her. She fumbles with the key to open her locker. Trying to erase her thoughts and letting the music overtake her soul.

Music gets her through her days; from the moment she wakes to the moment she falls asleep each night. There is a song out there for every emotion she ever feels. Music is there for her even when no one is. She doesn’t feel alone when the music plays inside her ears, she feels like someone out there gets her, understands her, someone out there isn’t judging her.

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‘You never know how strong you are – until being strong is your only choice’ – Bob Marley

The razor is held between her sweaty fingers, as her heart race picks up – the same thought, gnawing at the back of her brain ‘Do it, Do it, Do it’ and that’s when she screams, throwing the razor into the darkest corner of the room.

She can never press the razor to her skin – well that’s a lie – She does press it to her skin, every single day, but she has yet to let it press so deep it hurts, it bleeds or it might even kill her.

She is afraid of death and that is what stops her every time, she’s afraid of pain – emotionally and physically. Her heart aches each time she tries to smile. She is weak. And weak people like her don’t get to have it easy.

But life is too precious to throw away, and she realizes in that moment that sometimes your only option is to be strong, one day it will all be easier.

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‘Some people feel the rain. Others just get wet.’ – Bob Marley

The rain skims against the hard gravel, as she walks to her next class. She watches the students running to get away from the rain, and a light smile crosses her face as her eyes land on a boy with long brown dreads resting on his shoulders. His light blue eyes shine as he walks slowly to class. She can see it in his face as he lets the rain hit against him. He isn’t just getting wet, he is feeling the rain.

She has always loved the rain, and watching someone else love it too; it brings light to dark parts of her heart. Some people out there really do appreciate the simple things in life, the things that don’t cost a penny – the things that you don’t have to search too much for. As the rain hits her skin, she finds herself thinking about that boy, thinking about how beautiful he was, how alike they must be.

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‘Herb is the healing of a nation, alcohol is the destruction.’ – Bob Marley

She smells the smoke before she sees where it is coming from. She is sitting beneath an old oak tree around the corner of the school as she sits writing about her day so far. When she looks up that’s when she sees him. The boy who had been walking in the rain the day before, not paying any attention to how other students were running to hide from it, he cared only about feeling it hit against his skin.

His eyes rest on hers and she quickly looks down at her notepad, a blush crossing her cheeks. She hears his footsteps approach her, her heart rate picked up.

‘Want some?’ She hears his deep Irish accent mutter, as she looks up into his beautiful eyes.

‘Never tried weed before,’ she mumbles, a small smile playing on her face.

‘Weed is good for the system, much better than alcohol, promise!’ He replies his face lighting up as she takes the joint from him.

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‘Who are you to judge the life I live? I know I’m not perfect – and I don’t live to be – but before you start pointing fingers... make sure your hands are clean!’ – Bob Marley

She sat at the back of the class – the bell ringing out as she packed up her stuff – not bothering a soul. A girl walking by banged into her; but as the girl turned to say sorry, her face quickly changed a look of realisation spread over her. An evil smile spread across her face as she laughed, turning to walk away.

‘What’s your problem?’ She found the words had left her lips before she could stop them.

‘Excuse me?’ the girl asked, turning in shock. She never spoke, and when she did, it wasn’t to question another on why they always treated her badly.

A hush descended on the room and she could feel eyes now upon her. She wished she had kept her mouth shut, but now she had started she had to finish.

‘Who said you had the right to judge me? All of you think you’re something special because you fit within society, but you know something I’m ten times the person you are.’ She spat, as she scanned the room, glaring into the eyes of those she had avoided until now.

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‘The greatness of a man is not in how much wealth he acquires, but in his integrity and his ability to affect those around him positively’ – Bob Marley

She stood in the art room, painting a picture. It was an image that had just come to her mind that morning. Two figures, one female, the other male; stood in a black forest, darkness

surrounded them, yet they looked like angels. A torchlight in the dark, the good within the evil.

She felt a hand touch her back, her heart rate raced as she spun around the paintbrush held out as if it were going to protect her against any evil. She heard his laugh her heart rate slowed, her arm coming to rest calmly by her side.

‘You okay?’ he laughed, as his eyes rested on her painting, studying it.

‘Um, fine, what about you?’ she awkwardly turned towards her painting, dipping her paintbrush in the paint, and shading some more.

His hand came to rest upon hers, and she turned her head – looking into his beautiful blue eyes, as he shook his head and a smile came to his face, making his eyes shine bright.

‘It’s perfect don’t do anything else to it,’ his voice making her nerves calm, and she nodded yet she was confused as to why she had listened to him.

It made her smile. Crazy; how short of a time you could know someone, how little you could know about them, yet they could make you feel better than anyone had made you feel in years.

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‘Overcome the devils with a thing called love.’ – Bob Marley

Even though the devils overtook her soul each night as she fell asleep, something had changed inside her, something beyond explanation. He was constantly on her mind. His blue eyes were engraved in her memory; she could feel his hands touch her lightly – as if she were breakable. Even though she hardly ever spoke to him, she fell asleep thinking up conversations that they’d have between each other the following day – in her mind at least.

Some might not believe in love, but she was starting to become one of those who did believe in that four-letter word.

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'You can fool some people sometimes but you can't fool all the people all the time' – Bob Marley

'You can act like you're tough, you can fool others, but I can see it in your eyes every time you smile – that you are close to tears, close to breaking,' he mumbled as she sat on her bed, he made his way closer to her, her breath catching in her throat.

'Okay, okay that's enough. We can quit with the play, it's boring me,' she smiled, it was a weak smile – hoping to get away from the pain she could feel in her heart, from the thought of him knowing how messed up she was deep down.

He placed his body down on the bottom of the bed, just by her feet.

'You know you can talk to me right? You know I get you. I see you in ways most of the fools in this world don't?' He expressed, his lips turning up into a warm smile; a reassuring smile, a smile that said 'I'm here' no matter what.

She understood in that moment she could fool most people, but she couldn't fool him.

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'To love is to risk, not being loved in return. To hope is to risk pain. To try is to risk failure, but risk must be taken because the greatest hazard in my life is to risk nothing.' – Bob Marley

She walks towards him; he is standing beneath the tree where she smoked her first joint. His eyes come up to meet hers, and he smiles at her, a smile she returns.

Without saying anything, she quickly grabs his face lightly between her two small hands. She places a small kiss on his lips before pulling away, looking into his eyes to make sure it's okay, and before she knows it they are passionately kissing, exploring each other.

The risk she has taken has paid off, and for once she feels accepted and not denied.

All the things she has dreamt up in her mind were suddenly coming through. The way he held her close like he wanted her, but far enough apart for her to feel like she was also could fly free at any moment – the way his lips met hers; soft yet hard enough for it to be full of passion.

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‘Just because you are happy it does not mean that the day is perfect but that you have looked beyond its imperfections’ – Bob Marley

She awakes with a smile on her face, her eyes looking like another dark cloud has left them, and even though there are many more beneath them she feels like one weight has been lifted from her shoulders today.

Life is not perfect, and she has come to realise that over the last couple of months, but in life we all have a story to create and you can’t always let the negative things rule your life. Nothing and no one is perfect, but sometimes you must live life to its fullest, looking past the imperfections.

We must see each day as a fresh start – we must grab hold of the chances in which are offered to us – we must be positive.

She has learnt so much from one boy that’s life isn’t perfect, but who lives each day knowing that if he just smiles, he may change another person’s day. That lives each moment like it is his last.

How you live your life – well it’s up to you. But we all get to make our own destiny, while we should also never forget our past. Our past makes us, but does not own us. Our destiny is who we will be, but it is never written in stone what we should be, should do.

She walks to the mirror and instead of seeing someone that is ugly, overweight, freaky. She sees a beautiful girl with all the best years of her life still to come. She smiles and for once she looks forward to the day ahead of her.