

Who "We" Really Are



Who are "we" really?

We are the ones who fall through cracks everyone insists should not exist.

The ones denied services because we "don't look homeless enough."

The same people quietly followed around stores because we "look too homeless."

Nobody says it directly.

They do not have to.

We know.

We are the people left behind because we are "hard to get ahold of," as if instability itself is not part of the condition.

The ones made to feel like lesser parents.

Lesser children.

Lesser human beings.

All because our lives stopped resembling what society considers stable enough to respect.

We are constantly made to feel ashamed for wounds we did not create alone.

Society treats chronic instability like a personal moral failure instead of what it actually is: circumstance, chance, trauma, bad luck, impossible costs, untreated illness, public-system collapse, housing shortages, discrimination, abandonment, grief, and survival stretched far beyond human limits.

We are victims of systems that demand perfect stability from people actively living through instability every single day.

We are a society within your society, but so far removed from it that most people only notice us when we become impossible to ignore.

We are the people sitting on the ground.

The people carrying everything we own in bags that rip faster than our lives do.

The people with almost nothing who would still split their last cigarette, last meal, last blanket, or last five dollars with somebody having an even worse night.

Misunderstood.

Misrepresented.

Most certainly mistreated.

We are the broke, hungry, exhausted, traumatized, addicted, mentally ill, wandering, ground-sitting degenerates people pretend not to look at while staring directly at us.

We are the chronically unstably housed.

Unstably loved.

Unstably medicated.

Unstably surviving.

Every single person on the street carries enough hardship to break most people permanently.

And somehow they are still expected to wake up smiling for appointments, paperwork, interviews, curfews, treatment plans, housing workers, security guards, police interactions, medication schedules, public judgment, and impossible expectations.

People criticize us for not having the exact tools required to survive the conditions destroying us.

Every injustice committed against people on the street fuels something inside me that refuses to die.

A fire that grows every time I hear another story.

And there are endless stories.

Every person experiencing homelessness, housing instability, addiction, poverty, or displacement carries one.

Different details.

Same gravity.

Hardship. Pain. Heartache. Fear. Exposure. Isolation. Hope. Survival. Chaos. Instability. Stigma.

Loss. Bad luck. Constant battles.

The story changes names and faces but the emotional architecture stays painfully familiar.

You can see the streets written directly onto people's bodies long before you ever hear their story.

The exhaustion in somebody's eyes.

The survival posture.

The constant alertness.

The wear and tear.

The nervous system damage.

The way somebody flinches when approached too quickly.

But what most people still do not see is the invisible part of the struggle.

The mental warfare.

The constant calculations.

The humiliation.

The loneliness.

The separation from family.

The fear of winter.

The loss of privacy.

The loss of safety.

The loss of dignity.

The loss of hope slowly happening in real time.

All while society insists we should somehow feel guilty for struggling underneath conditions most people would not survive themselves.

Cast out by our own communities exactly when we need community the most.

And still, somehow, people on the street continue finding ways to laugh.

Continue finding ways to protect each other.

Continue finding ways to survive another day.

Continue smiling at strangers walking past them on the sidewalk.

Did you smile back at a homeless person today?

Reality: homelessness is not the absence of humanity. It is the result of systems deciding whose humanity is worth protecting.

We are still here.