

The Bonsai

By: Brandon Fries

It was a warm Saturday morning when I walked into my house; I just returned from a run. I entered my studio and shuffled through the host of bills when horror gripped me. A leaf from my beloved, yet dehydrated, bonsai tree was spewed on the floor. I received this luscious bonsai eleven years, eight months, ten days ago. It was a symbol that my ex gave me on at our wedding; representing our love. That day, its leaves were lush and green. It stood tall and proud, ready to live its life. I thought it was the perfect gift, and for the first couple of years, I had high hopes that this tree would fill my home with beauty.

Seasons recently changed, and the leaves were slowly turning brown. I wondered what was going on with my evergreen tree—leaves only turn brown if it's dying. I touched the soil, and it was apparent that I hadn't given this damn tree water for a while, so naturally, I flooded the little bastard with water so it would come alive again. I waited for a day with no change. I waited a week, and that damn little plant continued to die. Maybe it was conspiring against me. It despised my practices and my lack of attention, and this is how it was getting back at me—the little shit. I watered it every day, knowing full well that all it was trying to do was to get my attention, but the fucker kept dying. If this damn plant died, I couldn't invite people over. There could be no idle conversations, dinner parties, worse yet how would I get laid?

I had to take drastic measures. I stopped going out at night so I could care for my little bonsai- that stupid mother-fucking plant, but I never yelled at it. I talked to the plant- softly for 30 minutes a day. I gently cut off all the

dead leaves, hoping fresh ones would sprout out and give it life. I completely changed my world, to bring life to this plant- but my greatest fear was that I was caring for something that was already dead. I was trying to give life to a lifeless object. For two long years, I meticulously tended this cock-blocking plant. I put my life on hold to care for it—but it didn't work. After two years of intense plant therapy, the stupid shit was still dead.

I had hoped that even though it was dead on the outside, that inside—through the veins of the plant—may be a slight amount of life still breathed within. I prayed and tried and cared, but in the end—there was no life inside.

Finally, I knew it was time to throw the plant out. At first, there was a tremendous amount of guilt and shame. I had finally given up. I couldn't do it. I couldn't bring life to this plant. This plant that I once had loved, that I had cared for and manicured—but that was in the beginning. Eventually, I put the plant on the shelf—like a trophy, and just sat there without me giving any attention or care to it. Death was inevitable. And it died. And I couldn't fix that.

I'm a good fixer. I can spin and fix all kinds of things- but not this one. This plant was my most significant defeat, and once I could move through the pain of that, I finally accept myself wholly. It's incredible how this little mother-fucking piece of shit, dead little plant taught me so much about myself. In my effort to fix the plant, to revive the dead plant, I smothered it and killed any life in it. It wasn't until after I let go of the plant that I could grow. The life that I so desperately wanted the plant to experience ended up being the life that I wanted to live for myself, and the first step was letting go of the plant so I could finally live freely and wholly.