

So the first time she realizes that Wonder Woman isn't coming, I'll make sure she knows she doesn't have to wear the cape all by herself, because no matter how wide you stretch your fingers, your hands will always be too small to catch all the pain you want to heal. Believe me, I've tried. "And, baby," I'll tell her, don't keep your nose up in the air like that. I know that trick; I've done it a million times. You're just smelling for smoke so you can follow the trail back to a burning house, so you can find the boy who lost everything in the fire to see if you can save him. Or else find the boy who lit the fire in the first place, to see if you can change him. But I know she will anyway, so instead I'll always keep an extra supply of chocolate and rain boots nearby, because there is no heartbreak that chocolate can't fix. Okay, there's a few that chocolate can't fix.

But that's what the rain boots are for, because rain will wash away everything, if you let it. I want her to look at the world through the underside of a glass-bottom boat, to look through a microscope at the galaxies that exist on the pinpoint of a human mind, because that's the way my mom taught me. That there'll be days like this.

There'll be days like this, my momma said. When you open your hands to catch and wind up with only blisters and bruises; when you step out of the phone booth and try to fly and the very people you want to save are the ones standing on your cape; when your boots will fill with rain, and you'll be up to your knees in disappointment. And those are the very days you have all the more reason to say thank you.

Because there's nothing more beautiful than the way the ocean refuses to stop kissing the shoreline, no matter how many times it's sent away. You will put the wind in win some, lose some. You will put the star in starting over, and over. And no matter how many land mines erupt in a minute, be sure your mind lands on the beauty of this funny place called life. And yes, on a scale from one to over-trusting, I am pretty damn naive. But I want her to know that this world is made out of sugar. It can crumble so easily, but don't be afraid to stick your tongue out and taste it.

"Baby," I'll tell her, "remember, your momma is a worrier, and your poppa is a warrior, and you are the girl with small hands and big eyes who never stops asking for more." Remember that good things come in threes and so do bad things. Always apologize when you've done something wrong, but don't you ever apologize for the way your eyes refuse to stop shining. Your voice is small, but don't ever stop singing. And when they finally hand you heartache, when they slip war and hatred under your door and offer you handouts on street-corners of cynicism and defeat, you tell them that they really ought to meet your mother.