

Low Frustration Tolerance

by
Nicole Kubulis

I wish I was the bomb
The way people say, “Damn, you’re
awesome!”
Instead, I am the type made of gunpowder
Contained in a solid sphere

I have no idea
How long my fuse is
Or when I will explode
But I know that the time varies

One day, it is a spark
Methodically eating away at rope
While frantic cartoon characters
Try to blow it out

Other times, my pin is extracted
I am tossed aside
And the second I hit the ground
Everything bursts into smithereens

There is no timer in my amygdala
Flashing a warning to others
That countdown to detonation has started
No red or blue wires for them to cut

Not that anyone has the correct snippers
Knows where my wires are located
Or how my wires function at all
Though they’re invisible to me too

My frustration to an eruption
A firework show
That no one was eager to see
Loud, spacious, destructive

Fiery, colorful, liberated
From the stress, anger, and fear
Weighing me down
Like a landmine installed in the ground

Can a cannonball think for itself
Face the soldiers in my mind
Say: "I don't want to burst and harm people"
No. A cannonball cannot control itself

I try to master that fire in me
Picture it as a flame
Slowly consuming a candle wick
As an anchor for meditation

Easier said than done
When the ember is untethered
Impossible to tame
Running rampant through mind and body

It is not an easy feat
To dissuade the rage
When I snuffed out the spark
My perseverance dies with it

I truly believe
That just like Zuko
I am a fire bender, capable
Of self-mastery and good deeds

I need a mentor to train my flame
Ignite it into a guiding light
Instead of heat that's fight or flight
Exhausting and extinguishing my might

Kindled Spirit

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Did you know that your wildfire can be controlled?
Cause when you burn, you rebuild your boundaries

The ash of anger is really fertilizer
For your growth mindset

And it is also the territory that you mark
So your spirit doesn't diminish

When you have met your match
Let that adversity become your matchstick

That sparks the gnarled sandpaper strip
Of the trauma and stigma you're fed up with

It's okay that something incinerates
When social shit frustrates you

Your fire is what kindles your frozen heart
Hardened by the blizzard of alienation

It is the candle that you hold at your vigil
For the phoenix of your resilience to die, and be reborn

It is the distress flare signaling for support
When you feel deserted in the darkness

It is the fireplace that warms the soul
The campfire that your community gathers around

And it is the sun that burns the bigot's eyes
Even though they can't look away

Fiery frustration is fierce
A force to be reckoned with

You're the one with the onus
To wield it responsibly