

Suicide Note by Janice Mirikitani

. . . An Asian American college student was reported to have jumped to her death from her dormitory window. Her body was found two days later under a deep cover of snow. Her suicide note contained an apology to her parents for having received less than a perfect four point grade average. . .

**How many notes written . . .
ink smeared like birdprints in snow.
not good enough not pretty enough not smart enough
dear mother and father.
I apologize
for disappointing you.
I've worked very hard,
not good enough
harder, perhaps to please you.
If only I were a son, shoulders broad
as the sunset threading through pine,
I would see the light in my mother's
eyes, or the golden pride reflected
in my father's dream
of my wide, male hands worthy of work
and comfort.
I would swagger through life
muscled and bold and assured,
drawing praises to me
like currents in the bed of wind, virile
with confidence.
not good enough not strong enough not good enough**

**I apologize.
Tasks do not come easily.
Each failure, a glacier.
Each disapproval, a footprint.
Each disappointment,
ice above my river.
So I have worked hard.
not good enough.
My sacrifice I will drop
bone by bone, perched
on the ledge of my womanhood,
fragile as wings.
not strong enough
It is snowing steadily
surely not good weather
for flying - this sparrow
sillied and dizzied by the wind
on the edge.
not smart enough.
I make this ledge my altar
to offer penance.
This air will not hold me,
the snow burdens my crippled wings,
my tears drop like bitter cloth
softly into the gutter below.
not good enough not strong enough not smart enough**

**Choices thin as shaved
ice. Notes shredded
drift like snow
on my broken body,
covers me like whispers
of sorries.
Perhaps when they find me
they will bury
my bird bones beneath
a sturdy pine

and scatter my feathers like

unspoken song

over this white and cold and silent

breast of earth.**