

**Your Smile Never Ceases to Exist as Part of Who You Are**  
**By Bryan Franco**

Remember way back when your smile was your calling card?  
When you smiled for more than happy?  
When you smiled when were embarrassed?  
When you smiled through a lie?  
When you liked to smile?  
When you used your teeth for more than chewing?

Remember when you were always on?  
Then, you wanted to dim the lights a little.  
Attention felt like unattainable high expectations.  
Then, you reverted back to wallflower.  
You were on vacation when you were present,  
and no one knew but you.  
Silence was a place of comfort.

Then, you crossed a threshold  
when people started ending sentences  
in conversations with you with question marks  
that would never have had question marks in writing.  
Then, you stopped going barefoot around family  
due to the myriad broken eggshells  
they left on the ground  
because it became mandatory  
to walk on eggshells in your presence.

You felt hobbled by the unwritten rule that  
everyone else is allowed to stand up for themselves  
but you must sit in the corner like Dennis The Menace  
as punishment for breathing.

But, when you breathed you existed.  
Sometimes, the act of existence  
is a form of standing up for yourself  
even if you are unaware.  
Unwritten rules are unwritten  
and thusly incapable of being set in stone.  
The only things that are truly set in stone  
is that every human is composed of blood skin and bones,  
and every single person decides how to use their teeth.