

Almost

I've tried to be the rising sun
The stronger spine, the kinder one.
I've swallowed storms and stitched my seams,
Bled through silence, chased their dreams.

I've softened words they'd call too sharp,
Held my breath to spare their hearts.
Rewrote myself in lighter tones,
Smiled through days that cracked my bones.

But still, I fall just out of grace
Too much, too little, out of place.
A step behind their moving goal,
Forever chasing, never whole.

"Be patient," "better," "not so loud."
"Be humble, grateful, make us proud."
Each word a law I never chose,
Each glance a judge, each nod a pose.

I've climbed the rungs of self-control,
Tried to hand them something whole.
But every gift they left unopened,
Every win felt barely spoken.

And yet I wake, and still I try
Though failure clings like smoke and sky.
Though effort turns to quiet shame,
And love still feels like earning blame.

What more to give when I am bare?
What song to sing they'll know is there?
Is being "better" just disguise
A softer way to apologize?

But maybe "better" isn't theirs
Not made from guilt or unmet stares.
Maybe it's the breath I claim,
When no one cheers and no one names.

Maybe it's the trying still,

Despite the silence, pain, and chill.
Maybe it's not reaching them
But finally being me again.