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The day ended with nothing exceptional in the air but a stale wind.
I walked into the night to see only pink.

It's like a nothing, this horrible sense of voidness, and I can't feel. It's terrifying. Sometimes, I get so overwhelmed by life that my body shuts down. There's nothing to me anymore but a hollow echo. I remember realizing once when I thought everything had upturned itself that if I didn't pull myself out from under this black waterfall, that I will live my life in fear of always hitting rocks. I never want to go back to that place right where the falls meet the water. The place where I can't surface. Recently, the sounds of water hitting the rocks has been coming back to my ears louder and louder, and I'm starting to wish I had prepared myself better and taken swimming lessons.

In all of my life, I had never seen a body of water that I could not see the other side of, and here I am staring across infinity to where the world drops off and ends. There are miles and miles of blue-green water everywhere I look, and I can't fathom crossing this in some overly glorified boat. I had better get at least two life preservers onboard. They can't expect someone seventy years old to be able to swim back to shore. After all, I'm not the active young lad I used to be. Ah, there's the horn to board the boat. What did I do with my luggage? Oh right, it was already stored in my room. I hope I don't get sea sick. The thought of rocking back and forth for four days on end still doesn't seem all that appealing, but I told Maria I would do this. There's just so much blue, and I can't help but wonder now if the ocean ate all of the green.

Pink night
was all I could find
myself walking into.
A stale wind
greeted me
at the end of a most
unexceptional day
obscuring the dull haze
around my glazed over
eyes.
Then,
the window opened,
and dusk fell out.

"I'm a bit surprised with daughter number two. I've never actually heard her talk that much," Sarah heard her cousin's husband saying to her mother during Thanksgiving. Why did everyone in her family feel it necessary to discuss her behind her back? She walked into the kitchen where the two of them were standing with some dirty plates from the dining room table and immediately went to the sink to start washing them. The hell with her family. Even if he hadn't actually insulted her, Sarah still didn't appreciate being discussed while she was five feet away. Half of the way through scraping stuffing off of a plate in the middle of her load of dishes she realized it wasn't worth being a bitch for the rest of the day just because she was holding a petty grudge; she would just suck it up and try to enjoy the rest of the day. This had actually been one of the better holidays she'd had in awhile. Maybe Dave had made a good point, she was talking more this year, and she'd gone into the day semi-looking forward to it instead of dreading it like she usually did. She sighed as she put the last plate in the drying rack and felt her grudge crumbling. Maybe she was just overreacting to the situation. Maybe her family wasn't so bad after all. In the middle of all of her maybes, Sarah heard her four year old little cousin squeal "Sarah, come read to us!" Sarah gave in and smiled, and went to join the little kids in the living room.

I remember looking down at my feet and noticing that I had one black boot on and one running sneaker. How I walked out the front door in such a way, I'll never know, but I had to get to the woods anyways— those great big hills covered in pine trees that wouldn't have held up to scrutiny during the daylight. There was just that little voice saying "You have to go now." So, I went. I ran like my sister would have during a cross country race and marvelled at how well I kept my pace even with the black boot making my left foot heavier. I was there. Somewhere in between midnight and a full moon I found myself staring into an infinity of branches. I wanted to go in, but the voice interrupted "You will not come out." I ignored it and went in anyways. The ashen branches glowed softly under the moon, and the bed of pine needles below me crunched softly as I passed. I still didn't know what I was doing here, but I knew that if I made it over the first large hill, I would find out. So, I ran again. Voices ran along side me, and their words were indecipherable. I made it to the base of the first hill and tried to guess the miles to the top, at least five I figured, so I ran. Up through the whipping branches the voices grew louder and louder, and suddenly, I didn't want to be there but kept running anyways. Spikes of branches were stinging my face and cutting across my bare arms. The first voice called out "Turn back!" But, I kept running. I was sprinting now and felt my breath catch with the height of the hill. The voices turned to wailing. I knew I was close, so very close now. I could make it if I just sprinted that last half mile, and I'd know what I came here for. So, I took off at the fastest pace I had left in me all of the while wishing I had two sneakers on. The air became thick with voices that had to be pushed through as I ran. The wailing turned its pitch on its head and became a deafening scream—I had made it to the top! I stopped to catch my breath and look before me, but the moon failed.

personal ad:

SWF looking for a M in his early 20's who has read The Lord of the Rings and the Harry Potter series at least twice and who also prefers candles over light bulbs and has an active imagination that he actually use for creative purposes someone with a brain in their head and a liking for radiohead and sarah slean would also be nice, but as long he likes real music i will be content

- 1.) Don't forget to eat the cookie.
- 2.) Your car keys are in your trunk.
- 3.) There was cat meat in the sesame chicken.

(**scene:** three middle aged sisters all named margaret are standing around a dead body in a field.)

Peg: Well, that's settled.

Marge: Certainly is. That's the last time he'll make whores out of us.

Maggie: He's still twitching though.

Marge: It's called rigor mortis dear. I think he's as stiff as he's going to get. Now what?

Peg: Best go get the shovels.

copper barrettes clip into place again and a plastic ponytail holder make me think of pink jelly shoes with glitter in them that i used to wear every summer and running through sprinklers in the backyard in a blue striped bathing suit with my sister while dad mowed the lawn and used to swear when he hit the hose and cut it open someone else gets paid to mow that lawn now since dad left and I can't remember the last time we had a working sprinkler but those cheap plastic shoes still haunt my feet in the summer when I slip through the wet grass in the mornings outside of my apartment on my way to work

Jareth sat musing idly over a splinter lodged into the tip of his index finger on his left hand. There was a small swell of blood just beneath the skin that intrigued him. He liked the concept of being able to bleed discretely and keeping hurts subdued under covers. What a curious thing, he thought, this hurting without hurting. He pinched with his thumbnail against the sliver trying to direct it up and out from under his skin far enough so he could grab it with a pair of tweezers and pull it out. As he proceeded to press on it, the swell of blood shifted towards the opening around the sliver. A little bead slowly formed just above the surface. It created yet another thing that sparked his curiosity. How does blood always form into a rounded bubble when it comes to the surface? He wiped it away with a tissue and continued trying to extract the little piece of wood. The blood slowly reformed and made grabbing the splinter with the tweezers difficult. He then decided to squeeze as much of the blood out as possible. After doing this, he quickly picked out the splinter. Whoever thought so much trouble could be caused over a piece of wood that didn't want to come out into the open?

"You give me that I just stepped out of the shower cleansed cathartic feeling that helps me keep going."

make it melt blue grey shades of sub-green roll over dandelions
and collect the heads of the yellow deaths littering green causeway
walkway lawns sacrifice them to midnight and dance then upon
the decapitated stems strewn across the road's black pavement
fettered down dreams and you should be sleeping naked between
the leaves of yesterday's last grace fall over restart this scientific
chaos don't you know but it's dawn's tomorrow leaking in through
the crack in the ceiling that rests idly above your sleep shhhhhhhh

Dear love,

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry.

It shouldn't have to be this way, but it is, and it's done.

All of the flaws that couldn't keep us together may keep us together with someone else. This is for the best. Neither of us had the strength to keep this mockery of emotions going. We both knew it. I can't keep waking up and telling myself today will be better when both of us stopped caring months ago. Why we let this drag on, I don't know.

It's better if we just stop this now.

I don't even care about my stuff that you have.

If you don't want it, burn it.

It's easier if this is quick.

I won't drag you around.

I don't want an emotional blood bath.

I just want this to be over.

I hope you understand.

I was never meant to have to hold onto others to sustain myself.

You couldn't keep me going at the end of all things,

and I was wrong for you.

Please don't think it's just your fault as it was equally both of ours.

This is the best that I can do. Forgive me for not telling you in person. We both know it would have dragged out this end and burned us both. It's easier for me in written words.

I

don't

have

much else to say.

I just want you to know that,

yes,

I am sorry.

and, some things feel disjointed and double hinged
and, regrets hang on branches that tremble in the wind
and, some things slipped on wet ice and slid away
and, holding onto pictures can make your fingers ache
and, some things should let cloud cover pass out of sight
and, somewhere someone is falling to bits of light
and, the end of this day will break into terrible night

black cinders lay cooling about the ruined foundations of last night's excuse to set fire to the sky

"Ahem. I'm so glad that I could be here today to get the chance to thank you. To be accepted into St. Bernard's Institution for the Critically Insane has always been a life long dream of mine I'd never thought would come true. Even when I used to run head first at the walls as a child with your encouragement, I never thought I'd be considered to be an equal of the rest of the gifted individuals at the institution. Sitting here today in this wheelchair with this straight jacket on is the best I could ever have hoped for. I wish the doctors would make the straps tighter, so it would hurt more, but they won't. It's too bad my parents couldn't be here today to see this. As soon as Johnny tells me where they are, I'll let everyone know. I haven't heard Johnny talk in several days. I think he's taking a nap in my ear canal. He said I have bits and pieces of my parents in me, but the rest of them had to be refrigerated, but I think he's crazy. Anyways, I'm kind of tired now. I get shots in my arm every hour. I love the feeling of the needles sliding under my skin. And, just now my eyes are getting cloudy. Thank you again for getting me here. Good night Johnny."

echo

Sarah Slean is sitting there now, nibbling on the end of a calligraphy pen deciding which words should go first. Should she write a poem today or write a song? Her piano is next to her begging her to come over and caress its keys into song. She looks from the blank page to the piano and puts her pen down. She takes a sip of green tea and ponders silently. Words are burden and a blessing in the most wonderful of ways. She looks at the page again and sees a few familiar words "armies and ice and dirty green..." She had started writing the lyrics for Eliot down. That would never do. So, she went to her piano to work the song out of her, so she could write something fresh. The song came out in its traditional emotional course. She sang loudly putting added emphasis on words that meant more. "And, somebody's suffering infected my dreams, and don't they know, it's my old soul?" The moody feelings left her fingers, and she's able to pick up her pen again. The words tumble in short lines and bursts of expressions not everyone would understand, and she would never want everyone to understand. But, to those who do, she sends her love.

Dear Carrie,

It's been a long time since we really sat down and talked, and I realized recently how much I miss you. Where did you go? We used to camp out in my backyard in your tent and talk about the world was wrong and how we couldn't stand it. There was something in the fact that all we had to do was lay there in our sleeping bags talking and be content that was so simple. We lost that somewhere. You changed. I felt you moving farther and farther away until I didn't know for sure who you were anymore. I don't know you anymore. I see you now and don't know who I'm talking to. You've got a spaced out look to your eyes and feel to your voice that's unsettling. I guess years of smoking up several times a day will do that to you. You used to be the one that held our group of friends together in high school, and now, we've all scattered into uncaring. We don't talk, and it's as if none of us ever knew each other— it's as if we never made all of those memories. It's tragic really. I don't know if you think about it at all. I don't even know if you still think. I miss the way you used to be. You were always one of my favorite people. You were so spontaneous and unique. And, now...the Carrie I grew up with since fifth grade has been beaten into unbeing. Maybe you need to read this, so that you'll see that someone does still care. I know I don't have the power to directly change you, but maybe I can help you wake up and come back to us.

Molly a.k.a. Junior

Linda stood there laughing with her long horse-like face, and I couldn't help thinking that she looks like Tom Petty. She starts laughing again at a volume far above what is reasonable. I want to tell her to shut up, but I can't. My lips are glued together with sticky tack. If I stretched my lips, I could probably get them far enough apart to produce some words. But, it would seem too forced. She's quieted down her "I have nothing important to say, but I'll keep babbling anyways" mouth now anyways. The endless drone of inane conversation- what a patience-fraying sound. She started up again, those big teeth flashing in the lamp light. I like to envision her chomping on grass in a field, and I have to keep myself from laughing. But, I can't. My lips have come undone and the sound pours forward only to be lost in the din of everybody else's laughter. I close my mouth again and let the tack harden. I can't let it happen again. I don't want to ruin the evening with my oddities. She's still talking though. How can no one else realize how half-witted she is? I want to dangle her upside down until all of her faults come out. Then, just drop her onto the heap of her own inadequacies right here in front of everyone. I can't bring myself to move. The glued-sensation has me confined to the chair as well. I want to get out of here- I scream in frustration. Or, wait, was that out loud? Very slowly now all of the heads turn, and Linda stopped.

She's silent now in her curled up ball, so scrawny, so pale. She rocks back and forth with her headphones on trying to block out the horrible feeling of being alone. Her curly blond hair falls past her frail shoulders and blends softly with her pallid skin. The strap of her burgundy tank top falls off of her shoulder, and her shorts ride up on her thighs as she starts to uncurl from her ball. The bright hazel eyes open and perceive the room around her.

She feels small here she realizes, slightly out of place. Being alone is something she treasures as well as loathes. These dull moments are overwhelming. She could speak out, but her quiet voice would be lost in the overtones of the others around her. If she really wanted to, she could make them all listen... But, that would require so much effort.

Calli left the room and headed downstairs towards the study. Though most avoided her, Darren was always there and maybe he had left her some e-mail saying he would rescue her from this two-story prison. He was all she had now that Charles had left for the week on some business trip. Without Charles, she felt more orphaned than ever. But, Darren managed to fill the gaps in her time with laughter that she needed to get through day after day.

I was sitting on the suede green sofa in the basement again. It reeks down here of damp earth, and the leaking pipe was playing music for me. Drip. Drip, drop. Drip. It tampers with my thinking. I was thinking about him today. He hasn't talked to me in two weeks, and I believe I hate him now. I finally told him some truths and this is how he thanks me, bastard. Drip. Drip. Drop. Drip, drop. The last light bulb hanging from the ceiling blew. So, here I sit, on the sofa in the corner of the basement in the dark. The light coming in through the basement door is setting a glare on the pipes above me. I see the water dripping now. I wonder what will happen when my roommate finds out I haven't been to classes all day... She's too nosy. Why does it matter to her if I sit down here trying to confuse myself? I like the silent blackness; it quiets the corners of my mind from my everyday mental stumblings. And, there's always the white noise. Drip. Drip, drop. Drip. Drip. Drip. Drip...

Little black fingers cling to the drain of the bath tub. The water turned on hot to drown that hand that would otherwise come crawling up my leg while I'm naked and defenseless in the blinded shower state that I assume every morning.

My sister is asleep in a world of yellow lilies in the grass. She has petals in her brown hair and stems of green resting in her open palms. She claims the world is flat today and refuses to see the curve of the sky overhead. She smiles faintly as a leaf falls past her eyes staring forward into the garden she has claimed as a bedroom. She's waiting for summer in the middle of spring and believes the flowers will bloom if she's sitting there with them. The wind is whispering silent promises through her hair, and a single petal falls into her lap from above. The air trembles lightly as the yellow begins to curl when the night angles in about her. And, her waiting drifts off to sleep about the leaves she's laying within.

My sister is late in her breathing, and she stops to catch her breath. Zeus's sudden arrival has her quailing in the furious onslaught of sound forcing her into a shadowed corner. A little black lab curls about her feet as a source of protection against the rain falling into the windows and leaking in through the cracks. Waters dribbles down the wall above her head where she sits waiting for the rage to end. But, Zeus has other plans this evening and stops to knock at the front door blowing it off of its hinges as he steps through the threshold of her security. No amount of towels will absorb the river he's trailing behind him to submerge her within. She had one chance to open her palm to him, but was loyal to the dog instead.

My sister won't stop to hold your hand anymore broken night. She's climbed out of that canyon and promised herself elsewhere. The breeze took a glance at her and shied away as she spoke a word of command. No noise could interfere with her voice once it had been emitted. A chaos erupted in the form of vocal dissonance. She's screaming at the top of her lungs in off-key pitches shattering door frames and cement foundations. Something faltered as she fell down the stairs into the waiting dark of someone else's basement. Her voice quenched itself with silence and refused to step forward again once the broken fragments held her pinned to the floor.

she had some pebbles

she had pebbles weathered by the rain and worn
she had pebbles that were gray and tired
she had pebbles as heavy as boulders in her pockets
she had pebbles that poured from her fists when she was angry

she had some pebbles

she had pebbles of rose quartz and jagged edges
she had pebbles that cut layers of glass
she had pebbles walking under her foundations
she had pebbles stuck in the corners of her eyes

she had some pebbles

she had pebbles falling all around her as she wept
she had pebbles that filled her shoes and kept her from walking
she had pebbles glued to the walls in a scattered mosaic
she had pebbles lodged in her heart that made her ache

she had some pebbles

she had pebbles that disappeared from her bed in the mornings
she had pebbles lingering like haze from last night's fire
she had pebbles spreading lies to the wind
she had pebbles sleeping so close that they were far away

she had some pebbles

and all of these little rounds stones made her footsteps audible

he had some demons

he had demons wearing halos
he had demons that went on picnics with him
he had demons smiling back at him from the mirror

he had some demons

he had demons who were red and wore black goatees
he had demons that liked to burn sunflowers
he had demons sleeping in his bed at night

he had some demons

he had demons writing obscenities on chalkboards
he had demons who called themselves siblings
he had demons that scorched his skin with blisters

he had some demons

these demons still linger in his small spaces