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A Morning

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skeleton, a shadow. She was beyond beautiful. She was more exquisite than all the stars of Heaven. Leaning down to kiss her cheek, I breathed in the distinct baby smell. A smell of white lilies – pure, innocent, angelic sweetness.

“Arabella.”
“Arabella. Her name is Arabella.”
“Arabella. Her name is Arabella.”
“I found it in my heart, where she will be for all my days.”

There were tears in her eyes. I hadn’t meant to make her cry. I had never meant to hurt anyone. Nurse Linda’s chocolate-brown eyes were filled with sadness, but it would never be anywhere near as deep as mine. My sadness and shame were buried in the deepest caverns of the ocean. Never to be removed.

The heart monitor began to beat faster, a race against time for my little lily. Faster and faster.

Beep. Beep. BEEP BEEP BEEP!!!!

She was fighting a tiny little fight. One she had no chance of winning. She arrived much too early with no strength in her muscles. Her heart seemed to be battling as though she was sprinting to the finish line. It was her first and last race to home.


There was no sound left. No sound, but the dull moan of the flat line. I cradled her close to my heart one last time.

“I am so sorry little one. This is not goodbye, my sweet Arabella. This is a bientôt, until we meet again.”

A Morning

Anonymous

I force open my eyes and gaze out the 6:00 am window. The dense fog outside creeps in through my nostrils, into my lung tissue, my blood cells, bone marrow. I feel lifeless and numb within my dad’s old goose-down sleeping bag; my thoughts utterly separate from my exhausted body. My soul hovers above, beholding a depleted bag of bones with bloodshot bagged eyes clenched closed below a retreating hairline.

My mind continues trying to transport me into another world.

Cursing under my breath, I sit up and rub my swollen eyes. My bag slips from my shoulders and the December breeze takes its place, affectionately stroking my back and neck with its sharp, icy nails. I shiver, swearing.

My soul is awake yet physically paralyzed within my body.

I stand; my comfort and warmth drop to the floor. I inspect the dirty spider-webbed mirror on the wall, confused. Who is this shaggy, slit-eyed disgrace that looks back at me? I make a few faces trying to recognize myself again. I look old; sentimentally I wonder where the years went. Then I realize I will be thinking that for the rest of my life. I pick some brown dead skin off my face, brush my teeth and try to spit the filthy pink mixture in the sink.

Mom always told me to keep a clean mouth.

In a second, I am in the kitchen pouring some foul-smelling Maxwell into my cup. Coffee is wintertime cocaine; my only weapon to protect myself from sideways rain and frozen knuckles. Imagine it, black, burning hot within my empty turning stomach, caffeine seeps into my blood and jumpstarts a dormant heart.
A heart that struggles to beat on its own.

I slide outside, the bitter wind wraps around my face and stings my eyes resulting in tears. I am not crying. I swear. My irises twitch with the passing cars, crawling pedestrians, swaying skeleton trees, and the stirring scene around me. I keep my head down, weaving, and turning my shoulders, maneuvering to my bus stop. As I walk, I study the weathered cracks on the pavement, and relate with them. They are weathered; soon, they would have to be replaced.

I feel that way sometimes.

Seattle's masculinity is obscured by deathly gray this December morning. The buildings look like the ancient tombstones of some primordial breed of megatherium. The prided city of the Northwest bustles with so many Asians, defeated Juggalos, white white-collared businessmen (where do they go home to?).

Seattle in the morning is something I have never loved.

I wait for my bus on a bench, invisibly observing everyone around me. I sometimes feel as if they all feel me inspecting them, knowing something I do not, some secret information that I have just missed. I like to look at their solemn eyes. Look into their glazed eyes. I never have to speak to anyone that way.

I stab into their eyes and I have their tender souls in my hands.

I do not have to wait long. My bus crawls out of the fog and hisses to a stop, the hiss bringing me back to reality. The beast opens its doors with an earsplitting pop. As I load my bike, I overhear a father making his goodbyes to his college son. I smile.

I wish I could say goodbye to my dad again.

And then the bus jolts forward, and my life jolts forward, and that morning is behind me.