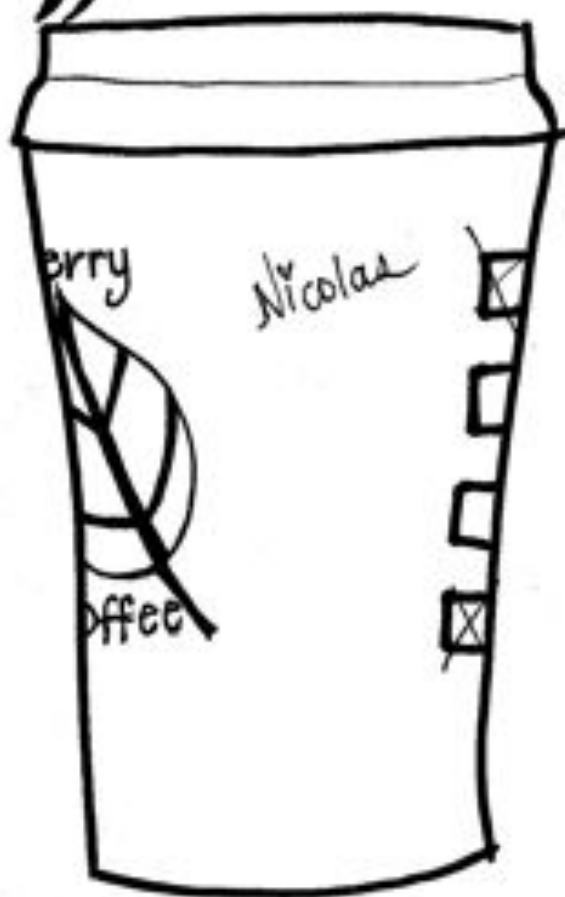


“Black Coffee”

Rachel O’Kelley

Black ☕ Coffee



by: Rachel O'Kelley

ELVIS COSTELLO ECHOES OFF THE WALLS OF A LITTLE CAFE ON THE CORNER OF PIKE AND STEWART. THE NONCHALANT NOTES DANCE AROUND THE FEW CUSTOMERS I HAVE.



DAYS LIKE THIS LEAD TO... PEOPLE WATCHING.



THIS ONE LIKES TO SLIP A LIL SOMETHING-SOMETHING IN HER COFFEE EACH DAY...

AND A COLLEGE STUDENT WHO IS VOLUNTARILY OVERWORKED AND HIGH ON A COFFEE BUZZ 15 HOURS A DAY.



IS HE OKAY?



NO ONE SPOKE. WERE THEY AFRAID TO BREAK THE SILENCE. OR DID THEY REALLY HAVE NO INTEREST IN ONE ANOTHER?

AND THE MUSIC PLAYED. AND LIFE WENT ON.

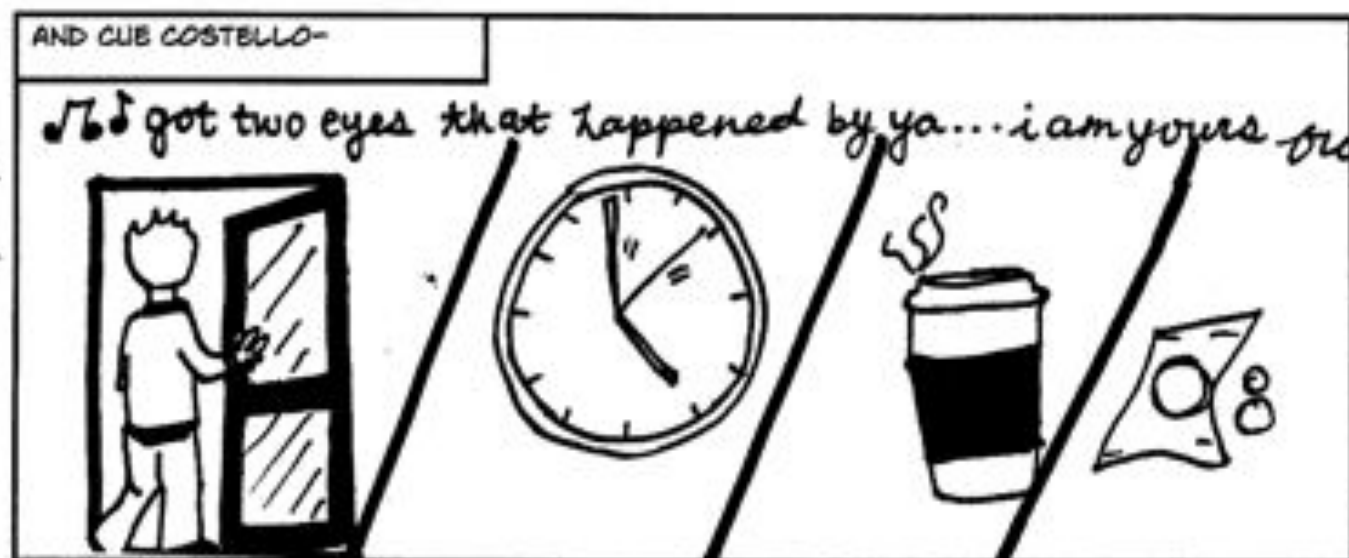


THE DOOR SLAMMED OPEN, WAKING MISS WHISKEY-IN-HER-COFFEE FROM A TIPSY DOZE.

that i am yours from head to toe...

CUE ANGELIC CHOIRS!





AND I JUST STOOD THERE, IGNORING MY BOSS' DEMANDS TO CLEAN THE TABLES, LETTING THE MUSIC SINK IN, HOPING IT WOULD SOMEHOW REFLECT MY FUTURE WITH YOU.

A FEW DAYS LATER I SEE YOU AGAIN. THIS TIME YOU'RE WITH SOMEONE ELSE.



I'M NOT WORRIED. SHE'S JUST THAT DUMB BLONDE WHO GAUKS AT YOU FROM ONE TABLE AWAY, RATHER SPASTICALLY I MIGHT ADD.

I MEAN SHE'S NOT YOUR TYPE, RIGHT?

DOES SHE EVEN KNOW HOW YOU LIKE YOUR COFFEE?

...I DO...

I SAW THE WAY YOU LOOKED AT HER. INSTEAD OF SEEING HER EMPTY EYES AND SLACK SMILE, YOU FELL FOR HER CHEAP TRICKS.



TWO COFFEES IN AND YOU'RE PRACTICALLY PICKING A DATE FOR THE WEDDING.



I GUESS THAT'S ALL IT EVER WAS.

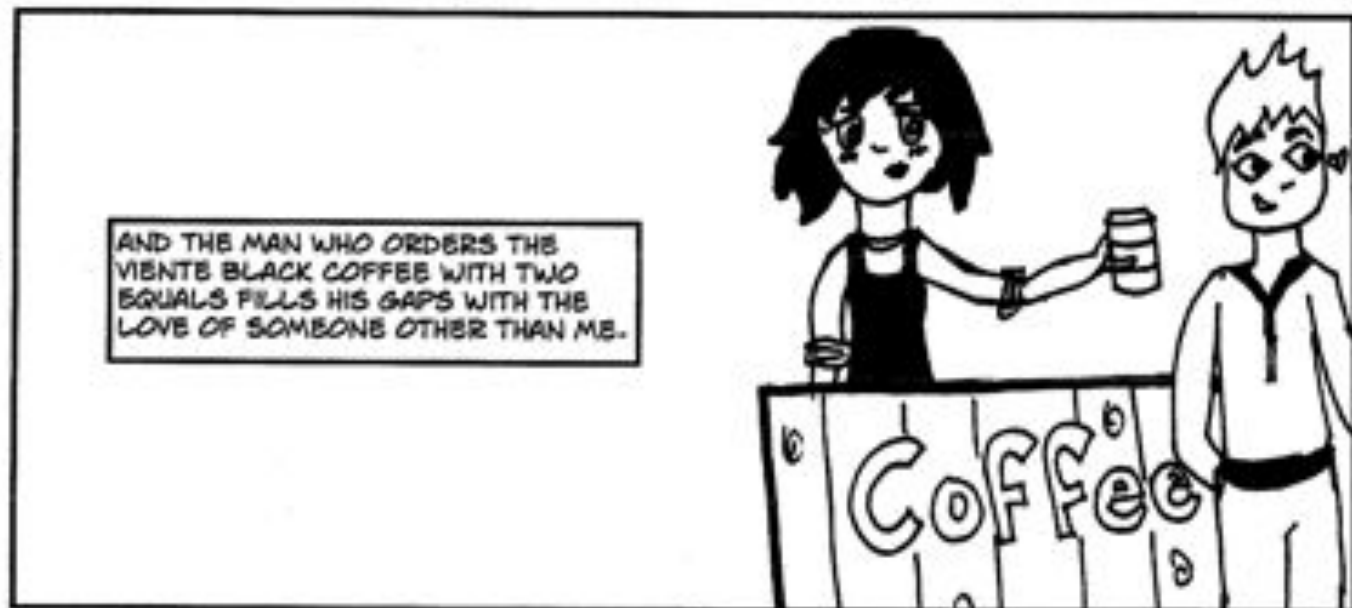
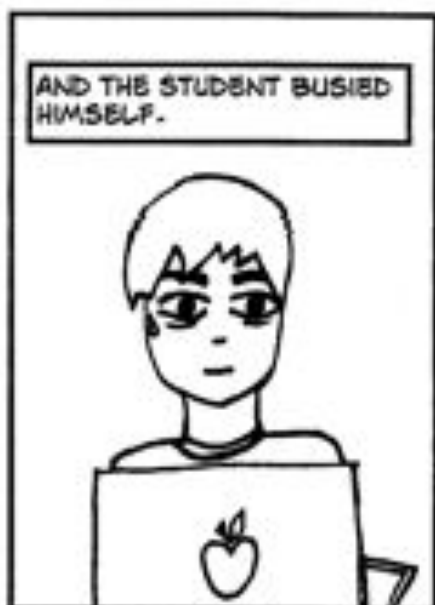
DID YOU EVEN THINK BACK TO ALL I'VE DONE?



WHEN I BROKE A \$50 BILL FOR A \$2 COFFEE?



WHEN I DOTTED YOUR NAME WITH HEARTS?



“The Hollow Men”

Aubrey Cain

(from T.S. Eliot's Poem)



“The Shadow of Turning”

Hannah Charlton

(from Hannah Hall’s Poem)

*The
Shadow
of
Turning*



words by Hannah Hall

art by Hannah Charlton

the SKIDNIP & TURNING



*The sharp sweetness of the
bread and the wine*



*throw me back to a time before
habit*



*I wonder if this is the true taste of
human flesh.*

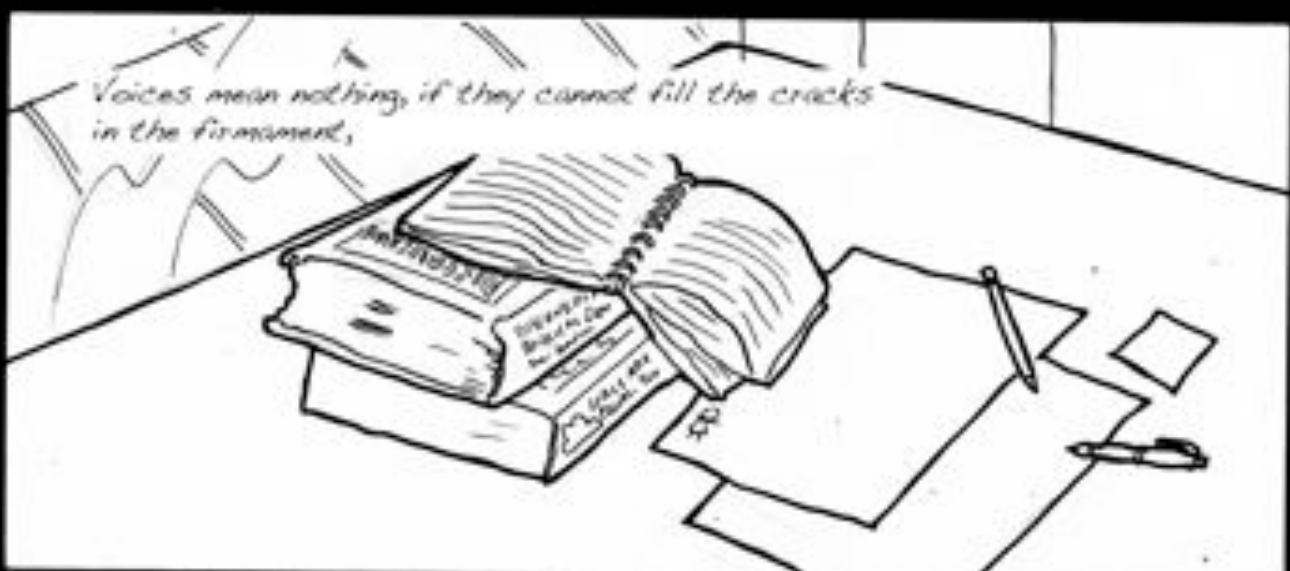
But it is later, in the
heart of the night,
that the

depression

inside me awakens--



I look for it in vain.

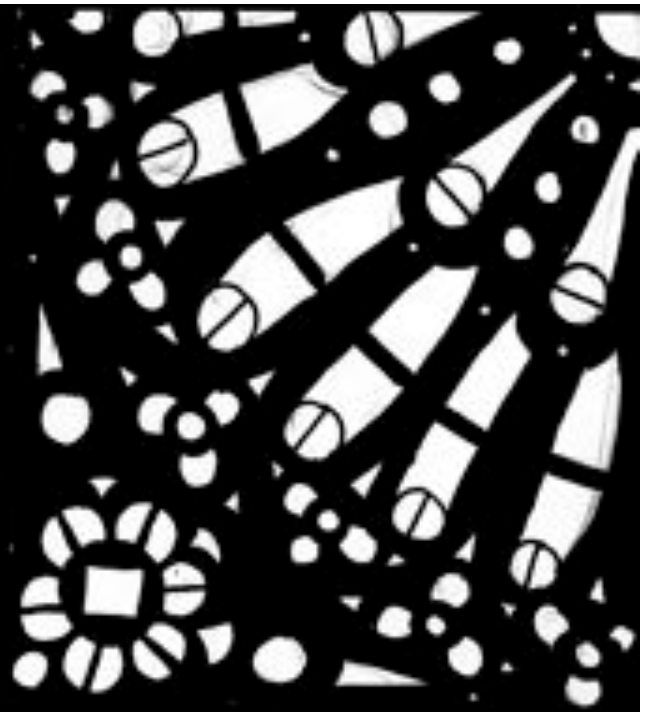




The wind wave around me,

caressing me like her child as I

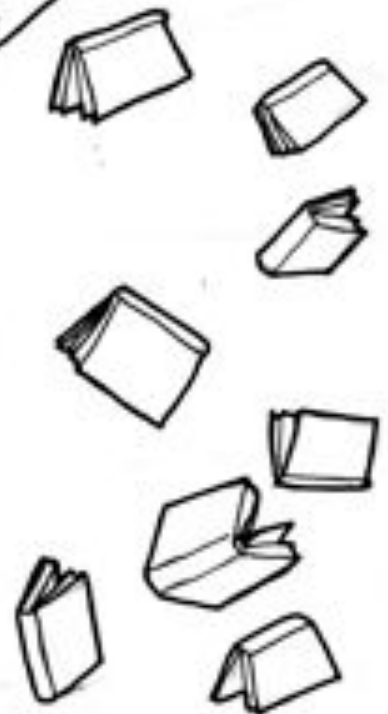
fought on, ignoring the pain.



*My time with You is full of questions
and the brief silences which foreshadow my fear
of ignorance*

And again, even later, the voice that
tells me to

arrange for You—
is that what You want? what I want?





*I could, if it was true,
pour my sins into little jars,
close them tight
arrange the fruit in a bowl
on the table
while You sit at the counter
and watch
not bothering to correct me,
even gently
But this kitchen
isn't big enough for both of us.*



*I ask You
if it's true that men are a lie.*



I could try, if You needed me to,



*to do it right, to caulk my soul with
only You—*

*but ever beckoning is the question
of worth—*



is there really nothing new under the sun?



it's new to me, but



i am young.

*They say there is no shadow of turning with
thee*



but there is the shadow of my turning to consider

*whether it, like the rain, is swallowed up by the
ocean*



*or if it flies away on the wings of an eagle and
sheds my spirit*



*over the farthest reaches of the seas, where men
fear to tread*



and women



creep



along,



hollow,



writing.



“Dusk’s Secrets”

Andrew Gjefle

Dusk's Secrets

a flaking group of
comic art by Andrew Siff



“This is Phillip Best”

Lucas Kok



It seems that every night these pills take longer and longer to kick in...



THIS IS PHILLIP BEST.



BUT IF YOU EVER MEET HIM, BE SURE TO CALL HIM SIMPLY. 'PHILLIP!'



ALTHOUGH IT IS UNLIKELY THAT YOU WILL



YET GET A CHANCE TO MEET THIS PECULIAR MAN.



PHILLIP HAS LIVED HIS ENTIRE LIFE THIS WAY- A VICTIM OF AN EXTREME CASE OF OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER.



HIS CONSTANT, NAGGING NEED FOR BALANCE AND ORDER IN HIS MOST PARTICULAR MIND HAS TOTAL CONTROL OF HIS LIFE.



IT EVEN LED HIM TO ADD AN EXTRA 'H' TO HIS FIRST NAME, AS HIS IDENTIFICATION BY SOMETHING SO BARELY ASYMMETRICAL HAD PLAGUED HIM.



HIS INCURABLE IRRITABILITY PREVENTED HIM FROM FORMING ANY MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS. HE HAS JOURNEYED FIFTY YEARS WITH ONLY HIS DISEASE AS A COMPANION.



HIS PARENTS HAD DIED MANY YEARS AGO, BUT THEY NEVER UNDERSTOOD HIM OR HIS CONDITION ANYWAY. HE REMAINED THEIR ONLY CHILD, BUT HE WAS GRATEFUL NOT TO HAVE THE BURDEN OF SIBLINGS.

AS MUCH AS HIS DISEASE HAD RUINED HIS LIFE THE HOMICIDE DIVISION OF THE BALTIMORE POLICE OWED IT A GREAT DEBT - IT CREATED FOR THEM THE MOST EFFICIENT AND CAPABLE FILES CLERK THEY COULD ASK FOR.



PHILLIP'S OBSSIVE ORGANIZATION AND SYSTEMATIC WAYS LEAVE NO NEED FOR ANOTHER EMPLOYEE IN THE RECORDS DEPARTMENT. HE IS GRATEFUL FOR THE SOLITUDE. HE FEELS A

CERTAIN CLOSENESS TO THE HOMICIDE VICTIMS IN HIS FILE CABINET. DEATH ALWAYS INTRIGUED HIM AND HE ENVIES THESE DEAD AND LONGS FOR THE COURAGE TO JOIN THEM. HE DREADS THE MOMENTS IN HIS SHIFT WHEN ONE OF THE LIVING DESCENDS THE STAIRS INTO HIS PRIVATE UNDERWORLD TO TAKE ONE OF HIS FRIENDS. CONVERSATION NAUSEATES HIM.

"RARRGGAAAR"

"Hey, Phil. Um... So I need the files on the Baltimore Butcher... you - you know I can see you, right?"



HOWEVER, HE DID HAVE ONE FRIEND WHO WAS ALIVE...



OTTO, HIS
TABBY CAT.

PHILLIP ALWAYS
FEARED ANIMALS
AND THEIR GERMS...



SO WHEN OTTO MADE HIS
WAY INTO PHILLIP'S LIFE...



...HE WAS, UNDERSTANDABLY,
REPULSED.

BUT THIS CAT SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND
PHILLIP AND HIS CONDITION. HE WENT
ABOUT HIS LIFE IN A VERY ORDERLY WAY.



EVEN FOR A CAT HE WAS AN
ANADAMANT BATHER.

HE MAINTAINED
A REGULAR
SLEEP SCHEDULE.



BEST OF ALL, HE
PREFERRED TO DO
HIS BUSINESS OUTSIDE,
THUS LEAVING NO
UNIMAGINABLE LITTER
DUTY FOR PHILLIP



OTTO DID NOT CARE FOR KITTENISH
ACTIVITIES LIKE PLAYING OR AFFECTION.
LIKE PHILLIP, HE SIMPLY WISHED
TO
BE.



UNDISTURBED.
UNALITATED.



THEY WERE TRULY KINDRED
SPIRITS, AND PHILLIP EVEN
BEGAN TO ENJOY HIS LIFE
WITH OTTO.



BUT NOW HE'S DEAD.



AFTER SIX YEARS OF BEING PHILLIP'S ONLY OUTLET FOR HUMAN INTERACTION (IN THE SENSE THAT PHILLIP IS A HUMAN AND WAS INTERACTING) OTTO LEFT.

HE LEFT WITHOUT A 'GOODBYE.' HE SIMPLY LEFT HIS DEAD LITTLE CAT SELF ON PHILLIP'S BED FOR HIM TO WAKE UP TO ONE MORNING.

THAT WAS ALMOST A YEAR AGO...

AND THE LONELINESS PHILLIP HAS FELT SINCE THEN HAS BEEN DEVASTATING.



Sometimes I wish I'd never known you, Otto.

BUT HE COULDN'T WHOLE-HEARTEDLY WISH THAT UPON HIS LIFE.

BUT WHERE WAS HE TO GO FROM HERE?



HE REALLY DID ENJOY KNOWING FRIENDSHIP FOR ONCE.

I have to be up for work in less than 3 hours...

... and I've barely started filing those cases...



HE COULD NOT IMAGINE GOING ON WITH HIS LIFE.

...THAT SAME GRINDING WORK IN THAT SAME FLUORESCENTLY-LIT HOLE.

MORE THAN EVER, HE COULD NOT IMAGINE GOING BACK TO THAT PLACE.





NO ONE COULD EVER KNOW HIS CURRENT SENSE OF FREEDOM, AS NO ONE HAS EVER FELT A BURDEN OF SUCH GRAVITY AS HIS, ONLY TO HAVE IT SUDDENLY VANISH.



WHERE HE WAS GOING, HE DID NOT KNOW.

HE WAS READY FOR ANYTHING, AS HE HAD JUST ESCAPED HELL.

HE WONDERED IF, ONCE HE ARRIVED, OTTO WOULD BE THERE, WAITING FOR HIM. HE'D LIKE TO SEE HIS FELINE FRIEND AGAIN. HIS FRIEND... Otto...



“The Emperor of Ice Cream”

Elliott Santos

(from Wallace Stevens’s Poem)



The Emperor of Ice cream
Elliott S. Santos
Visual Narratives

(Rick -
- Found this in Mom's closet, thought
we might want it.
- Marshall S.S.)

Why does everyone always dress in black? I think it's kind of an unoriginal way of showing grief. I mean of course I dressed in black that's what mom would've wanted. I wore my three piece suit she bought me for my last birthday. We never had that much money but she took me to the Italian suit shop downtown. The suit was custom fit and Italian silk with Egyptian cotton lining, the shoes were real Italian leather as well. It was a two button suit so that it would go well for casual outings or formal meetings as well. The fit was traditional and clean and looked somewhat like a secret service suit but that was ok I guess. Mom told me afterwards what she always did when talking about clothes. "The quickest way to someone's hear, or pocket, Marshall, is through their eyes." So I wore my suit.



Dad wasn't there, I didn't expect him to be. I figured he would rather pay respects to a cold bottle of beer than some cold ex flame of his. Mom's boyfriend Rick showed up. He didn't have a problem being original in what he wore, cutoffs, big sunglasses and an Ed Hardy t-shirt. He always called me "kid" which kind of bothered me seeing as he was only four years older than me. Mom always had this



One can never step into the same river twice, said the ancient Heracleitus . . . the water flows on . . . though it may appear to be the same, it is in reality different. [REDACTED] . . . days of work and of play that will remain forever unique [REDACTED]

But time erases all things . . . it remains for the pen to vivify and the camera to capture the places, names and faces that we know so well . . . [REDACTED]

It was no ordinary year . . . [REDACTED]

habit of picking boyfriends that made her look like a pedophile. She might as well have dated my entire senior class back in high school, God knows my buddies would've been okay with it. But getting back to Rick, he always loved to act like my buddy and friend, not thinking that all I saw was the guy who was screwing my mom. "Hey Kid why so down? Haha just fuckin' with ya" Like I didn't know that he was.

Maybe that was the problem though. Maybe I didn't know why it was so bad. Mom's other girlfriends showed up as well as her ex-boyfriends, who of course instantly gravitated toward each other. Nowhere better to get some ass than a funeral right? Mom always did pick classy friends. "Don't associate with weak people Marshall. People who let their emotions get the best of them are too much trouble, They'll slow you down. Better live fast because this is all there is." I swear to God if this was all there was I may just end myself right now."



I walked over to the casket and looked inside. She looked better dead than last time I saw her alive. No bags, no too tight clothes, and no makeup line under her chin. Maybe the undertaker should think about being a plastic surgeon. I set the flowers down next to the others, they were already almost dead, remind me to never go back to that flower shop. "People are always going to try and screw you Marshall, and not in a good way. Be strong, even if you aren't

impression is reality, deep things are for weak people Marshall. Weak people.."



As I walked back down the aisle people kept giving me these wide eyed looks. Like they thought I was going to fall apart of flip the casket over. I didn't have too many of these emotions seeing as last time I was with my mother I was holder her hair back while she threw up. Two weeks ago seems like two years. There's a bigger difference between being alone and feeling alone than I thought there'd be.

I'm a big dumb
Jock!! I trick girls
for fun!!

Anyway, I went and sat in the back where people couldn't stare. The sooner this was over the better. "When I die Marshall, no funeral, save your money and just let me burn." I guess Ann would be pissed off if she knew I didn't do what she wanted but I couldn't give two shits. Rick came up to me after the service. Drink? No. Girlfriends came up. Bite to eat? No. everyone wanted to give something after Ann died but who really wanted to give when she was alive? People just wanted to take and mom thought this meant more about herself than if she received. Dumb. "Your mom was so nice" they all said, "it's a shame that all her good taste is gone".

Small
penis



Handwritten scribbles in black ink.

Sexist

Pigs

Handwritten scribbles in black ink.



Small Dennis

CAPTAIN AL DEANSTORA



CAPTAIN OER

Handwritten scribbles in black ink.



Two days ago I would've given anything to be alone. Two days ago I bought a suit. Two days ago I ate dinner at Chiles and watched Conan [redacted] Two days ago I woke up in the middle of the night and went to pick up my mom at LaSalles. And two days ago I sat

OUR





by her bed and watched her sleep for the last time. Watched her breathe slowly in and out for the last time. At least when she was sleeping she wasn't talking about clothes or Rick or me. Always talked but never really said anything. Too bad really. Because now I would like to hear something from a weak person, just to hear something permanent.



Marshall
↓

↖
♡
↘

Let be be finale of seem
Let seem be finale of be
All that she was
None that she's not

Let the lamp affix its beam
So shortly dancing in it's
Gleam and falling out
Into dark to face
Reflections

You loved the clean
white, smell of soap
In the shower
Hell you used to stay
In the bathroom
For hours

What seemed, what was,
What is, is not, finale

And clean under you.
And behind your ears
and don't be weak
weak is small
small is bad

And you let seem be finale of seem,
Waiting for nothing
All the time.



. Pl

ay ... Play ... Play ... Play

“Halftime Show”

Peter Labberton

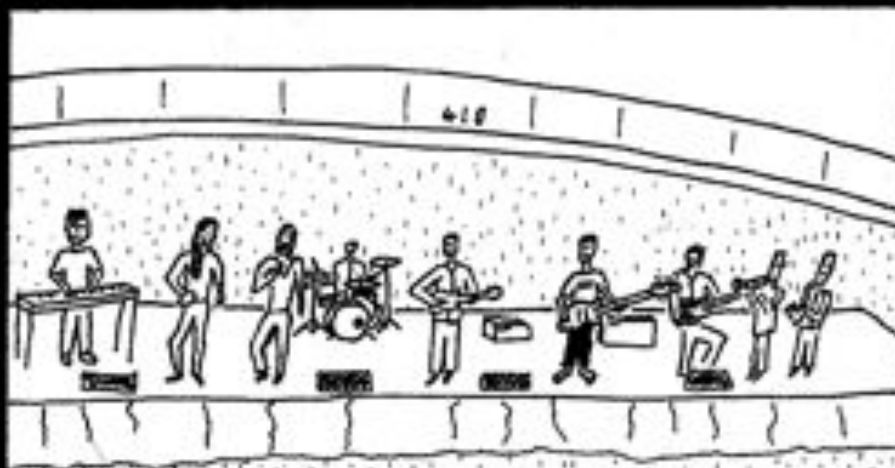
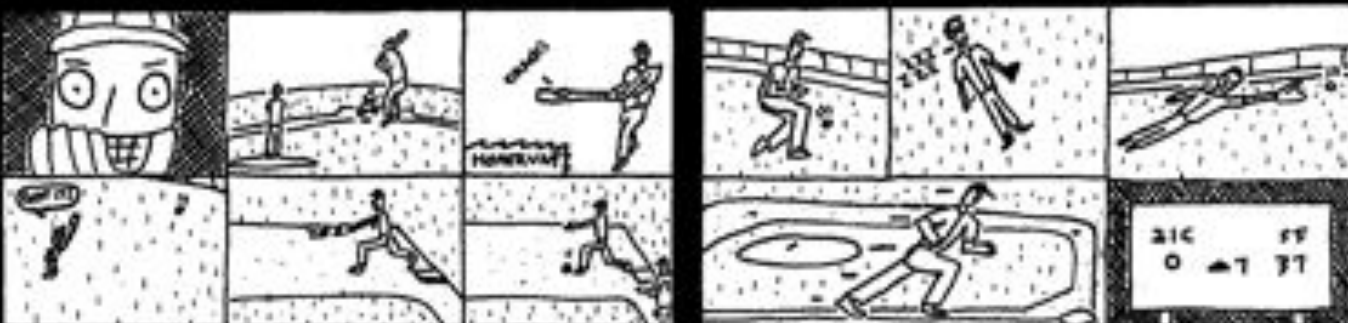
HALFTIME SHOW

Peter Lubbertin

SO, I'VE GOT SOME GOOD NEWS. WE'VE BEEN ASKED TO PLAY THE HALFTIME SHOW AT THE WORLD SERIES! THERE'S JUST ONE CATCH...



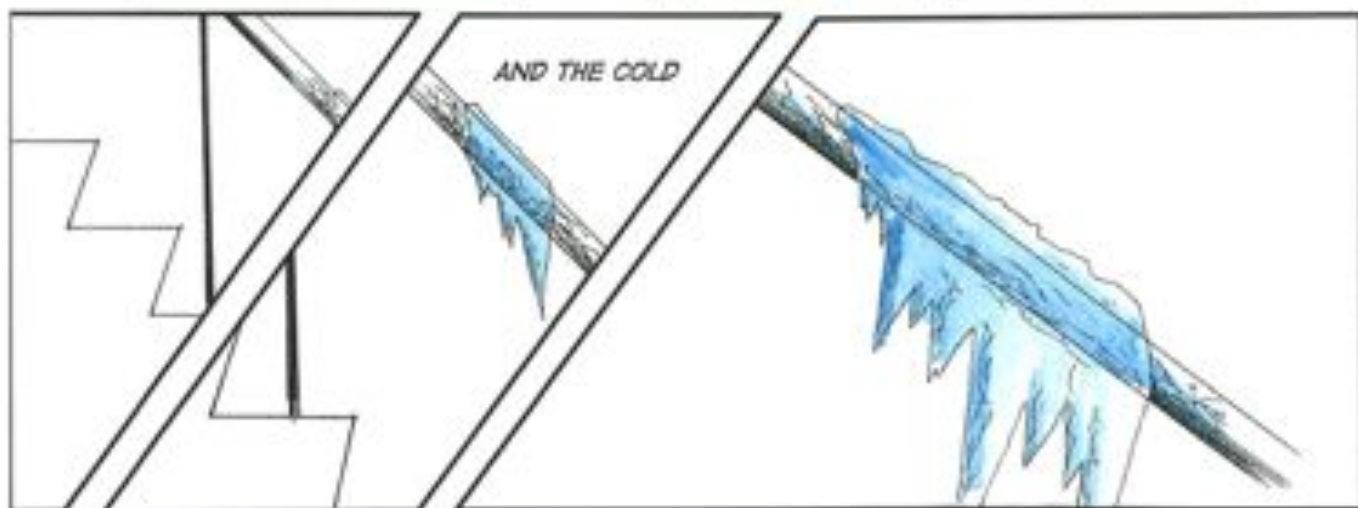
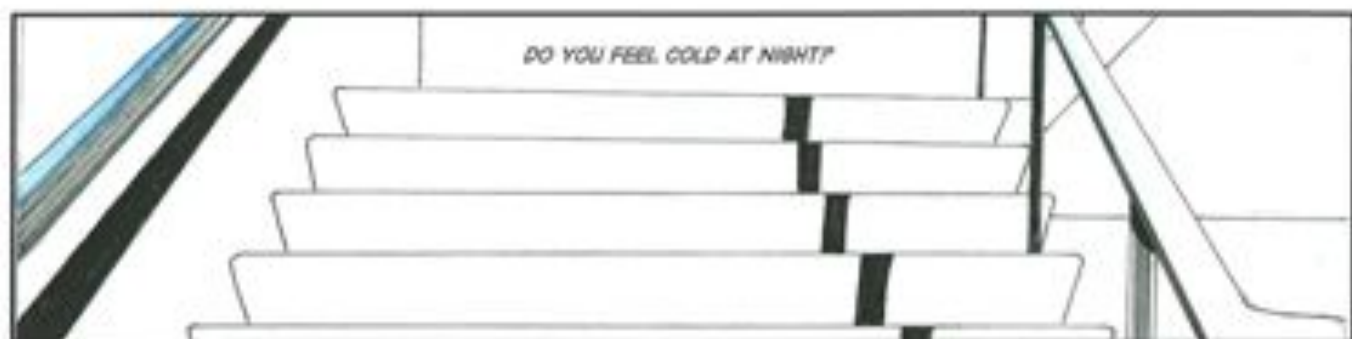
WE HAVE TO PLAY IN THE GAME.



Read on a dream by Deven Herbelian

“Cold”

Mitch Harris





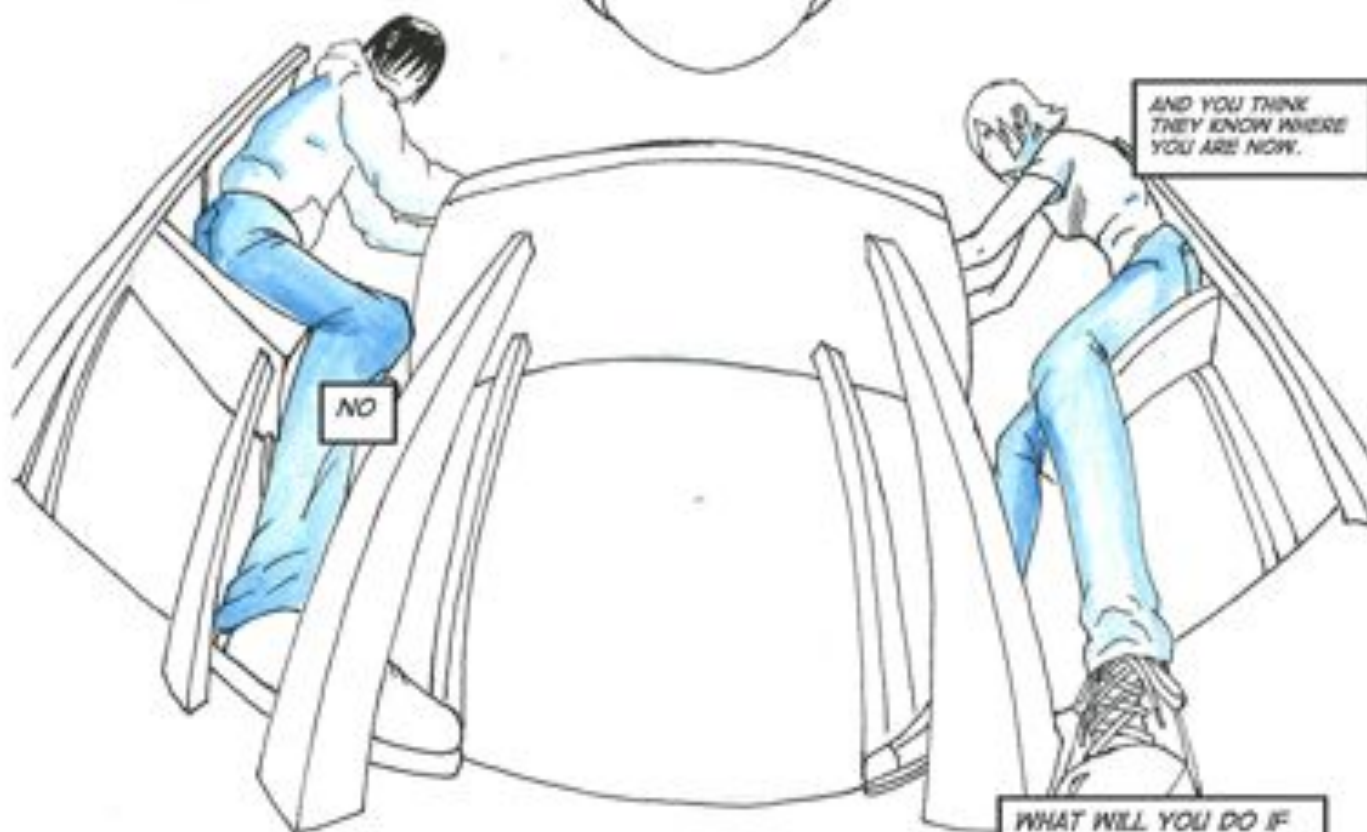
IT WAS WHEN I WAS FIFTEEN.

IT WAS AN ACCIDENT



AND THAT'S WHEN YOU FOUND THEM.

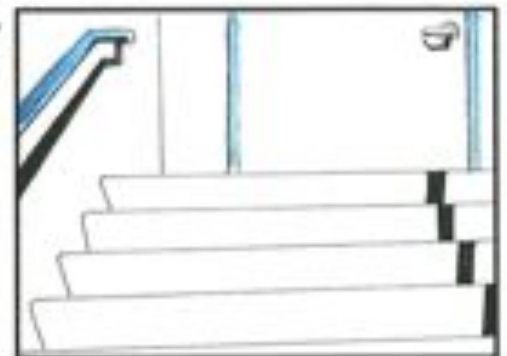
I WOULD SAY THE OPPOSITE.



NO

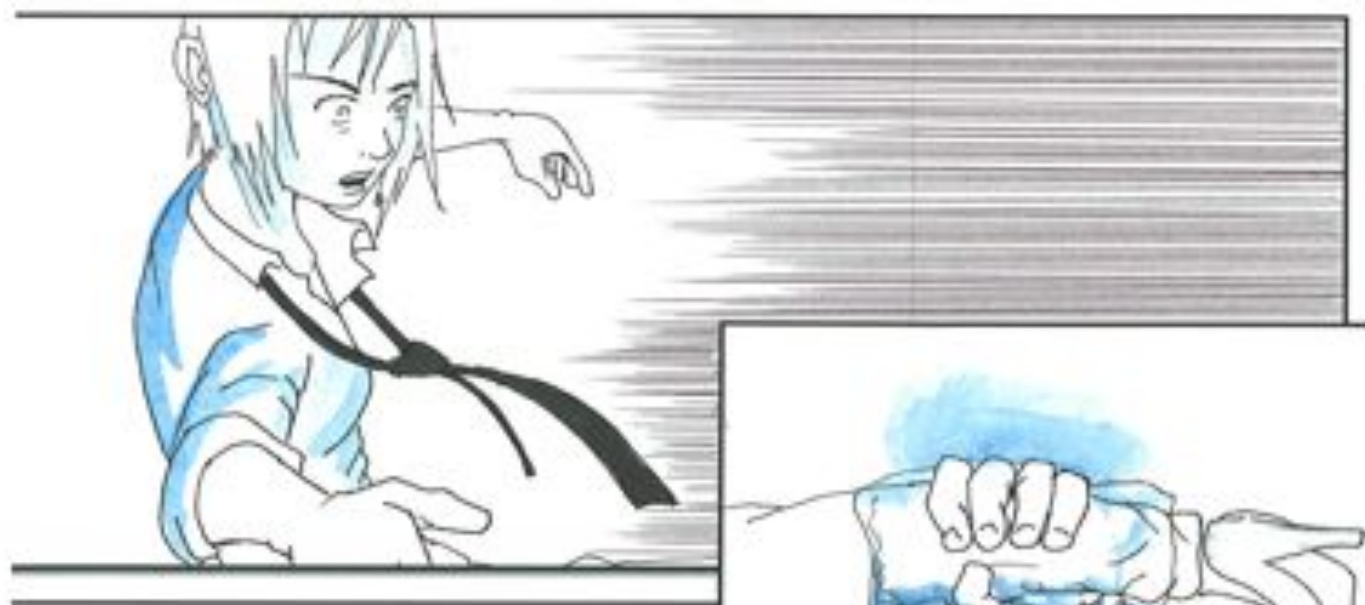
AND YOU THINK THEY KNOW WHERE YOU ARE NOW.

WHAT WILL YOU DO IF THEY FIND YOU AGAIN?









I'M SORRY





...



I DON'T FEEL THE COLD



I DON'T FEEL FEAR

AND I SEE IN THE DARK



*SOMEHOW, THOSE WHO
KNEW ME BEST FAILED TO
REALIZE THIS*



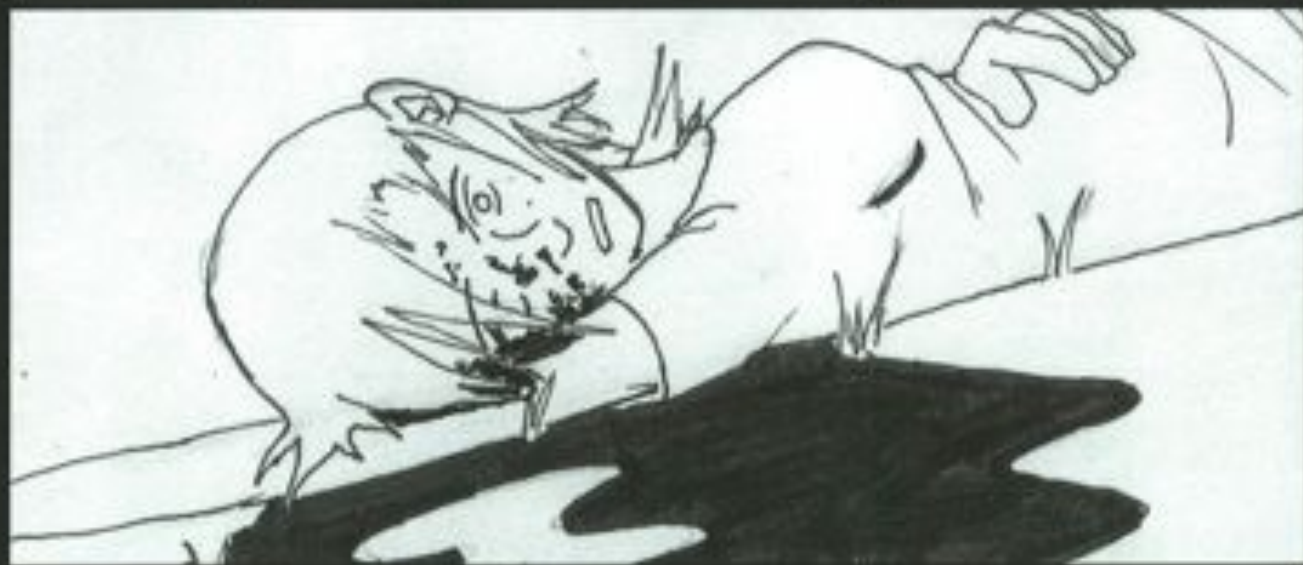
*AND IN THEIR IGNORANCE
MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE*



*AND NOW THERE IS
ONLY ONE DOOR LEFT*



*UNTIL THEY FEEL
JUST AS COLD*



“Let Me Tell You About Jack”

Shane Polley

Let Me Tell You about

Jack

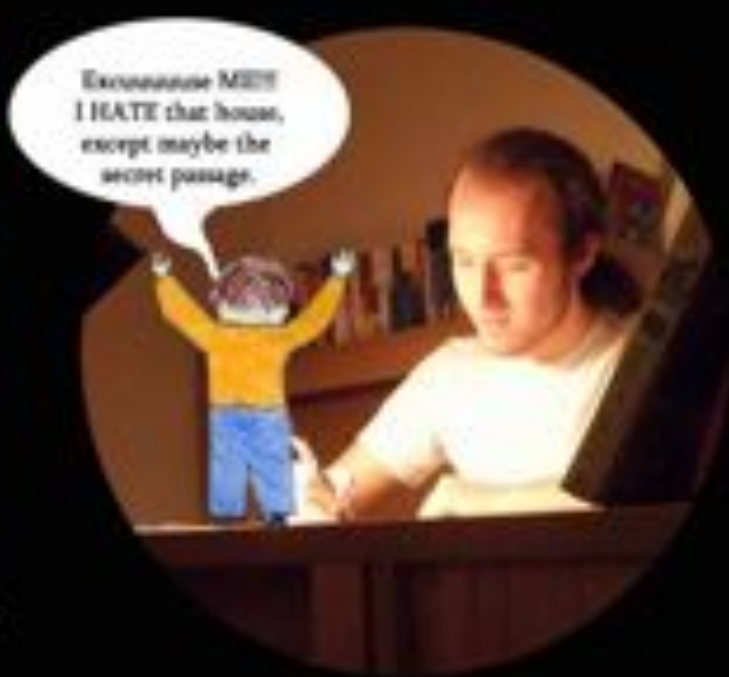








Let me tell you about Jack. He was a reasonable boy of thirteen years of age. He lived with his mother and sister in a nice blue house on Third Street. He loved every minute of...





Let me tell you about Jack. He was a reasonable boy of thirteen years of age. He lived with his mother and sister in a big brick house that had been built by his great-grandfather just before the war. Jack hated it, except the secret passage that wound from the roof to the cellar. He had stumbled upon it quite by accident as a child while playing hide and go seek. The game itself scared Jack, but when he fell through the trapdoor in the upper bedroom he was terrified.





Did not! I'm not a crybaby.
And I wasn't scared when I found the secret
passage way. I fell into a pile of dirt and it
got in my eyes and made them water.
Fix it! You can't misrepresent me!

Tears came to his eyes
and he began to cry





12 year old Jack



Let me tell you about Jack. He was a reasonable boy of about twelve years of age. A quiet lad, he was born with a birth defect that rendered his vocal chords useless. He lived with his mother and sister in a nice blue house on Third Street. He loved every minute of it, especially the secret passage that wound from the roof to the cellar. He had stumbled upon it quite by accident while playing hide and go seek. The game itself scared Jack, but when he fell through the trapdoor in the upper bedroom he was terrified.





Today I tell the story of how Jack came to understand and appreciate his birth defect.



Fin...

“Goodbye”

Justin Scott



I FEEL YOU FALL AWAY FROM ME
YOUR TIME IS AT ITS END
IN THE MORN'G YOU LOOK
EYES AND SAY I'LL ALWAYS BE
AND THESE WORDS STAY
AND INSIDE I START TO
DIE I SHUT MY RUMBLE
SO I WENT TO AS YOU PULL AWAY
PLEASE GOD HELP ME
THE STRANGER YOU ALMOST
WASB THEY EVAPORATE I'LL
WHICH THE MORN'G
I'D BE SURE IT WOULD BE
BUT I CAN'T DREAM
PLEASE HELP
ME TO BE STRONGER
95

ERON	GRANDPA
RUSSEL	JOHN
MOM	ROSTE
DADDY	BROTHER

I FEEL YOU FALL AWAY FROM ME
YOUR TIME IS AT ITS END
IN THE MORN'G YOU LOOK
EYES AND SAY I'LL ALWAYS BE
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I'D BE SURE IT WOULD BE
BUT I CAN'T DREAM
PLEASE HELP
ME TO BE STRONGER
95

PLEASE JUST LET ME STAY I'LL ONLY BE
A MINUTE YOU'RE
GOING SO FAR BUT I'M H
AWAY AND I CAN'T DEAL WITH IT GOING TO A
I JUST CAN'T DEAL WITH IT GOING TO A
TO TRY AND SOMEHOW I'LL GET BY I E
CAN'T KEEP PLEASE JUST LET ME
I'M SORRY THAT LEAVE MY FEELINGS YOUR
MY TEARS AND ENJOY THIS ON
SORRY I DON'T KNOW JUST BE YOUR
YOU WON'T EVER KNOW JUST BE YOUR
HURTS TO MAKE MY FEARS
TELL YOU GOODBYE BUT I'M
PART OF ME I MIGHT DROWN IN ALL MY
TO DIE SO SORRY FOR MY
TEARS

I FEEL YOU PULL AWAY FROM ME
OUR TIME IS AT ITS END
IN THE EYES AND SAY YOU LOOK
ME
BUT THOSE WORDS STING YOUR FRIENDS
AND INSIDE I START TO DIE I SHOT MY RUMORS
SO I WON'T SEE AS YOU PULL AWAY
PLEASE GOD HELP ME TO BE STRONGER
DRY UP ALL MY TEARS
MAYBE THEY'D EVAPORATE IF I KNEW
WHEN THE MORNING COMES
I'D BE SURE IT WOULD BE ALL RIGHT
BUT THIS DREAM CAN'T LAST ANY LONGER
PLEASE HELP ME TO BE STRONGER
GOD



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