



ALL THE
HORRIBLE THINGS
WE DO TO
OURSELVES

THE BIRD

The bird who fell into the water didn't have a name. (well, Albus, maybe) The bird had been flying out over the water through the entire night, he had set off right before the sun went down and hadn't stopped since. There was a sickness inside of him, and even though he didn't know he was sick, it wasn't as if he couldn't feel it. There was soreness in his wings that ached with every beat and a need to sleep that was never satisfied. There was some crust under his eyes. (how does a bird wipe crust from it's eyes?) He carried on flying as long as he could, flapping his sore wings a few times then gliding for a little while. He looked ahead of him at the water, and at the sky. A fish jumped out of the water a little ways ahead of the bird and twisted in the air, just touching the bottom of the horizon with it's upturned belly. The fish and the lake met the sky at a flat blue line. (the fish glistened as sun hit the water and brown scales on its rounding body.) When they met, the bird began to turn and descend, floating on gentle breeze and the horizon tilted and he was going toward the water. Then just before he would have hit he began to flap his wings very hard and rose up above the lake very high and very quick. He floated there, at what was the peak of his sprint, noticing the land off in the distance. (he had turned, unknowingly, back in his mad dash for...) The sickness took hold. He was still unaware, but his wings stopped. Then he fell, out of the sky and into the water. He didn't make much of a smack, or a splash, or anything. He floated on top. He had floated on top. The land had looked closer. There had been a piece of paper floating next to him. The bird's eyes got water splashed into them, and the crust came free.

The lady came in with another lady. One of them was in a wheel chair and the other was pushing. I said hello when they came in, and the walking lady said it back. She pushed the other lady over to a table full of 'on sale' items, then left her there. If I can help you with anything, I said to them. Thank you, said the walking lady, who was now walking over to some clothes racks near the back. I looked at the wheel chair lady, sitting in her wheel chair next to the sale rack, not moving. She picked up a pair of purple shorts and held them in the air and looked at them. The walking lady slid through clothes on a rack and I could hear the slide of metal hanger on metal the hanging bar, but I kept looking at the lady in the wheelchair as she set the shorts down on her lap. After the walking lady paid for her dress she walked over to the other lady and the other lady held up the shorts toward her. The other lady took them smiling and folded them and put them back on the sale table, and then they left.

Max The Wonder Kid

The teacher told Max to stand in front of the class, and he did. Max always did as he was told because he was a good kid and was very proud of that fact. He dressed nice, in striped sweaters and khakis. He made smart conversations about his favorite things (which were cookies and video games) but was a good listener too and was always open for new topics to discuss. Max did everything right and it wasn't fair because Max didn't have any friends.

Lunch was a time of nutrition and possible socializing. Max sat at the picnic table and unpacked his brown bag as he looked over at the other students who sat directly on the grass and ate directly from chip bags and soda cans. Max removed the saran from his sandwich and started into it and continued to wait for someone to join him. Max then had his cookies and thought of something clever to say if anyone mentioned the crumbs collected on the stripes of his sweater. "Those are the bits I saved for you."

Back in class, Max listened to his teacher talk and only hardly heard all the whispers behind him. The teacher talked about dogs and about conditioning. He said how dogs brains learn things by repetition and training and how dogs grow to expect food from their master. Max thought about his dog Trixie at home and how she would nip at his heels when she was hungry, and how he would give her food.

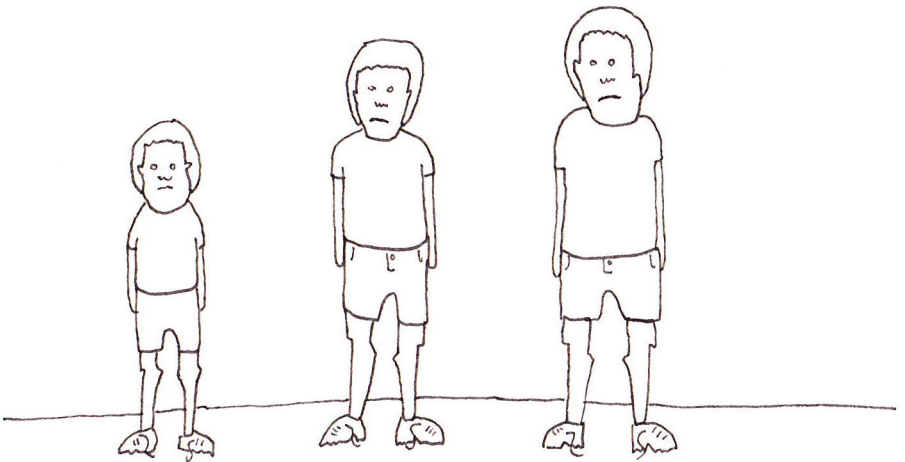
Later Max got home from class. His dad went upstairs to smoke his cigarette's, where Max wouldn't have to breathe it in. Trixie came up to Max and starting nipping at his heels, and Max started to walk to the pantry. After he poured her food, he got a pack of cookies for himself. He ate some on the way to the couch where he spent some time watching T.V. and smiling.

COOKIE



cookie.

I started writing a short story. It began “Up in heaven the man cried because no one he loved had died in the fire.” I stopped with that line and laughed. I decided that was done and went upstairs to my bathroom. At the sink I coughed. Something inside of me didn’t feel right.



IN THE SMALL

It was hot in the small, upstairs room of the church. John sat in the far back and quietly sweated it out. From his plastic seat in the back he could see the shut door and the shut window. Next to the window was a poster of a waterfall, with words that were too light for him to read. He only tried for a second and, really, he probably could have if he tried a little harder. At the front of the room was a youth pastor who was talking to everyone about god. John couldn't see the youth pastors too well, a girl in front of him obstructed his view, but he could hear the pastor's voice very clearly. He spoke loud and his voice was deep, and easily filled the tiny room. On the back of her chair someone had written "God rules." John looked at the door for a while, then over at the girl's head again. He tried to find her scalp. He wiped sweat from his forehead, which was very hot. Then, at some point, he fell asleep.

John woke up; there was heavy sweat on his forehead and under his arms. The door was open. People in the rows ahead were filing out. All the chairs to his left were empty, the one boy to the right was waiting quietly. He looked up at John meekly and looked back to the head of the class. John stretched, stood up, and let him out, then followed everyone toward the hall. Everyone was waiting in a line for the water fountain and he stood near the end. From there, the pastor called him over.

"Hey John," he said. John walked over to where he stood, by the door.

"How are you doing?"

"I'm okay," John said. Another boy walked over.

"Pastor Tom, I have to leave early to go to a doctor's appointment."

"Alright buddy." He waived to the kid and said, "see you next week." The kid went down the stairs and the youth pastor looked back to John.

"I'm here to talk if you ever have any worries, okay buddy?" He set his hand on John's shoulder and smiled down at him.

"Okay," John said. "I'm—"

"Let's get back to our seats," said the youth pastor to everyone. John walked in after everyone else, and took his seat in the back, alone; the boy, who was next to him before, had taken a seat at the front. The blonde girl sat in front of John and he couldn't see that boy anymore. The door was shut again and the youth pastor started talking. Eventually John was asleep again, dreaming that his dad drove him in the car. They pulled up to the driveway of their house.

Except, it was their old house. John's dad said something that John normally wouldn't have laughed at. He laughed at it, in his dream.

"John"

"What?" He said, coming back.

"I said, I know it is sometimes hard to understand God's plan, John," said the youth pastor.

Everyone in the room was turned back, looking at John. He felt sick.

"But you mustn't lose direction." It was very hot, and John felt so sick. Some of the people looking back looked annoyed, some concerned. A few looked sad, and knowing.

The youth pastor looked at John like that as he said,

"God always has a reason for everything."

"I don't believe in god," said John, the sickness filled his head. Everyone there looked uncomfortable then.

Uncomfortableness had gained converts.

"John, I'm—"

"I don't believe in god." John said again. The youth pastor breathed in like he was about to say something, but then he was silent like that, for a couple seconds. John felt the sweat on his back. The room was hot. John's face felt like it was burning. Queasiness flooded his stomach. He was sick with it. He was sick with nerves, he was sick with everything. No one had looked away from him, still. Then, everyone looked away when the door opened up and the nurse walked in, carrying cookies on a tray. They all looked hungrily at such a distraction. John kept his eyes on the side of the youth pastor's head. The nurse walked over to the youth pastor

and handed him the cookies, then said something to him too quiet to hear. The youth pastor looked back at John. "The nurse wants you to come down with her," he said. John stood up and went through the door ahead of the nurse. As she shut it behind him, there was talking and then laughter.

"How are you doing?" The nurse asked, outside the door. "I'm okay."

She opened the door and he followed her in. She gestured him into a back room. Sitting on a chair by the wall and wearing a shirt and a towel was John's young brother, Max. John sat down next to him.

"Hey Johnny." He said. He made big eyes and pulled his lips in, to make his mouth a line, and he swung his legs under the towel, they didn't reach the ground.

"What's going on?" John asked Max.

"I pooped my pants." He said. "I was bored and I didn't care. The nurse won't turn the radio on." He gestured over to a radio next to a closed window. John smiled at his little brother, who loved the radio.

"Maybe next week I'll be sick, and I won't have to go to church. That would rule," said Max.

The two brothers sat in the nurse's office until the main congregation was finished. They left the nurses office together and went to find their mom. Max was wearing a pair of donated gym shorts; they went all the way down to his sneakers. He held John's hand and they walked over to where their mom was standing, outside of the main doors

of the church. She was wiping her eyes. The lady she was talking to had a big hat on. A lot of the ladies walking by had big hats on too.

“You and the boys coming to the church cookout next Sunday? I think it would be good for them.”

“I can’t,” she said, the Max and John walked up next to her and she looked at them, lovingly then sadly.

“We have things to take care of.” The lady smiled at them.

“Okay, you take care.” In the car, Max said he didn’t feel well, so their mom took the boys to go get ice cream.

There was a pigeon hopping around on one leg, it's other leg ended in a stump. Me and the pigeon were near each other on a train platform, waiting for the train. He looked at me sometimes, and I looked at him, longingly. I wanted to pick up the pigeon and take it home, but every time I approached him, he would hop away. Eventually I gave up, and just watched him. A crumpled up wrapper blew over to us, from next to a trash can, and stopped between me and the pigeon. He hopped over to it, on his one good leg, and started picking at the inside of the wrapper. He pecked down at the corners of the bag, then he would look up at me, and then around. Sometimes he would have to hop around on his one leg, and readjust himself. How much longer does that pigeon have to live, jesus christ.



On the train there was a woman with one hook where each of her hands should have been. She had two hooks for hands. One hook was shiny and metallic, and it came out of her sleeve where a hand was supposed to come from. The other hook was exactly the same, but on the other arm, from the other sleeve. She had one of her arms laying across the other, one wrist on top of the other wrist, and the hooks didn't touch. When I walked by and saw her hands, I only looked for a second, but jesus christ, two of them.

You Don't Know

'Fine, I'll meet you there at seven thirty.'

'Thank you I just want to talk.'

But she had already hung up. He got to the diner at 6, and sat outside on the bench, looking outward to the parking lot. The bench was really cold, even through the tail of his jacket and his jeans. The air bit at his face, tightening his cheeks. He licked his lips a lot, and they grew chapped, then he would bite the dead skin off. He was nervous his lips would be unsuited for kissing. He was nervous and he was delusional. Lots of people walked by and into the lobby and he smiled at all of them. At 7 he put his hands into his pockets. At 7:15 he stood up and walked around in a small circle, then looked into his reflection in one of the bright windows before setting back down. The lower half of his body shook, but he pretended not to notice, because maybe she would see how disturbed his entire foundation had become. And it surely had. At 7:45 he called her.

'I'm coming, geez. You have no patience.'

'No I was just seeing where you. Were.' He slid his phone into his pocket, then stood up and followed a couple inside.

'This way', said the hostess, and she led him to a booth near the back.

'I have another coming.' He smiled.

'Okay.' She walked back toward her post. 'How are you doing?' She asked a party of three back down the way. The

waitress comes over, in a pink apron. She has brown hair
She looks at him and doesn't think a thing.

'What can I get for you?'

'I have another coming.'

'Okay.'

'Umm... Can I have a water?'

'Sure. I'll be right back with that.'

The phone says 8, he puts it away. 8:04. His eyes go from the door, to his hands, out the window, back to the door. The waitress comes over with a napkin and a water and a straw. He takes a small sip. His phone says 8:10. At 8:15 she shows up. He sees her out the window and follows her in. She walks in and stops by the hostess, says something and laughs. He stands up, smiling, and waves at her, she who gives him a half smile and walks over.

'Hi.' He says.

'Hi...'

'How was cleaning?'

'Shitty. I couldn't find my favorite shirt.'

"I'm sorry."

'Did you order already?'

'No... I was waiting for you.'

'Why didn't you order? I ate already.'

'I was waiting for you... I thought we were having dinner.'

'Well I already had dinner.'

'I thought we we're going to have dinner. Will you get something?'

'I'm not hungry.'

'Well, me neither. I thought we were eating together.'

'Yes you are. Get something.'

'No I'm not.'

'Yes you are. What have you had to eat today?'

'Nothing. I'm not hungry.'

She looked at him, sadly for a second.

'Please get something...'

The waitress steps up to their table, he is biting the skin off of his lips again.

'Hey, what can I get for you guys?'

'Um... Just a water for me.'

'If I got eggs, would you eat some?'

'No.'

'Well then I don't-'

'He'll have the eggs.'

'Okay.' The waitress smiled a little, then walked away.

They sat then, quietly for a minute or so. She looked around at the other people in the diner. The loud groups mainly, the talking couples. He looked at her. She broke the silence.

'What?'

'Nothing. I was just looking'

'I thought you wanted to talk. So talk.'

'I don't know... I just thought you would get food with me... I just don't like where we are.'

'You chose the diner.'

'I mean... I don't like where we are.'

'We aren't anywhere. I'm not-'

'I don't mean. I mean as friends.'

'Well maybe if you could just have a conversation with me, instead of just sitting there.'

'I'm trying! I'm trying.'

'Don't yell.'

'I'm. Not yelling. ' He picked up his water, and took a sip, looking into it. Looking at his distorted fingers through it. He set his glass down back on the napkin, trying to keep it exactly on top of the watering from before, but some stuck out anyways. He looked at her again, she was looking off again, and he felt the sadness rise.

'No...' She said gently to him. 'No no...'

'I'm not. Let's just talk. Let's just talk. How- How was dinner?'

'Don't stutter.'

'I'm not. How was dinner?'

'Fine.'

"What did you have?"

'I got... that chicken salad at Bruch's.'

'You went to Bruch's? I didn't really like it when we went.'

'I remember.'

'Did your mom take you?'

'No, I went with friends.'

'Like who?'

'Stop interrogating me.'

'I'm not. I'm just talking, Mar. Who did you go with?'

'Like... Steve. And some of his friends.'

'You had dinner with Steve?'

'We're just friends.'

He rubs his face unconsciously. She keeps looking around.

'Look I don't really want to talk about it...'

'Well that doesn't make me feel any better.'

'I didn't come here to go through this, okay? I don't want to do any of this. That's the whole point.'

'If we just talk about it I'll feel better.'

'Well I don't want to talk.'

'I get it. I get that you can't be with me right now. But while I'm around, why can't we just be close.'

'You don't get it.'

'I do get it!'

He just looked at her, still searching. She caught his eye for a second and then looked away, out the window. The muscles in his face tensed up. She kept breathing out hard breaths. He tried to figure out what she was thinking.

'You think you know exactly what I'm thinking....' She said and she was shaking her head.

'I didn't say that! Why do you do this?'

'Why do I do this? Jesus, John. I don't want to be here... I'm going home. It's late.'

'Please, I haven't.' But she was up and walking away. He pulled out his phone and dialed her number.

'Come back please.'

'I'm sorry, I have to go home.'

'Can we talk later tonight?'

'Maybe I need sleep though.'

'Okay.'

'Okay Bye.'

'Sorry.' He put his phone on the table. Eight thirty. The waitress came out and gave him his eggs.

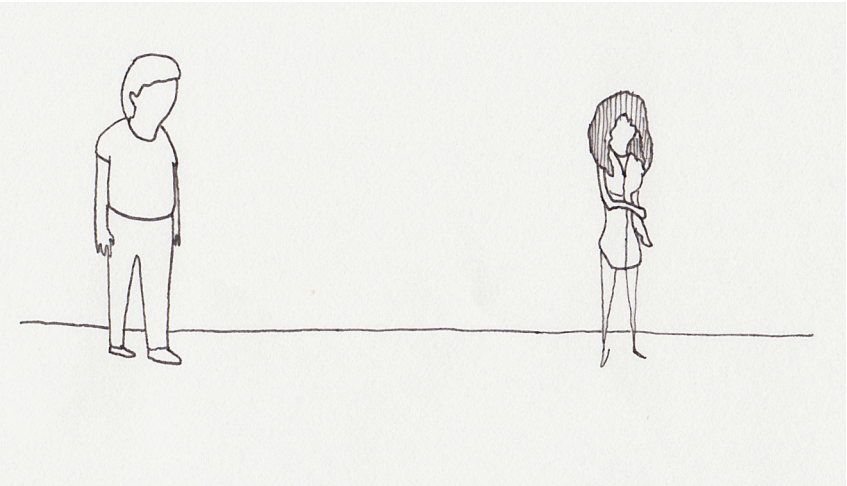
'Thank you,' he said. 'Can I have the check?'

'Sure.'

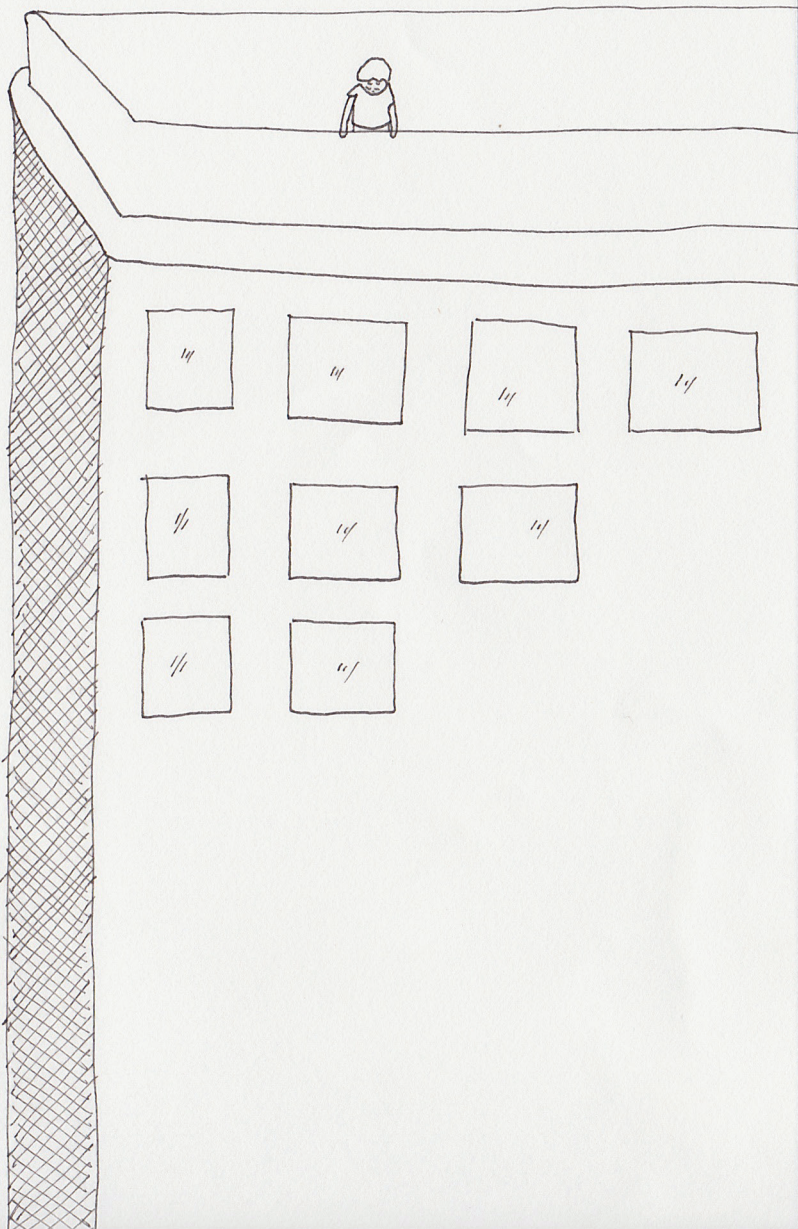
He took a few bites into his eggs. They were dry. He didn't have an appetite anyway, but they were. The waitress came back with the bill and smiled at him. He smiled back. She walked away. He took a big swallow of his

water and then set it on the table. A big sob got caught in his throat, his eyes closed tight, and water gathered. But then he opened them and breathed.

At 8:45 he opened up the bill. It was six dollars and twenty cents. On top of the bill he laid down a ten, then walked out to his car and called her again. Inside the diner, the waitress picked up the ten and looked around for the customer who had left it. He was a pretty nice guy, she thought.



I coughed. It was uncomfortable. Everything was silent and uncomfortable. I coughed again. Neither me or him said anything. Then, I was all alone. Then I wasn't. The other person in the room had a look on his face. What is that look? Then I, myself, made a face I would have been embarrassed of, if I could have been embarrassed by anything anymore.



Jerry

Jerry got to school next, when he wasn't sick at home. He was sick a lot and believably so, because he was very pale all of the time and had sunken like eyes. He talked through his nose, the few times he talked. He seemed self-conscious about his own voice, even though no one ever told him he talked weird before. Jerry wanted to be a scientist when he grew up. He really liked watching the model volcanoes erupt, and that was science class. Maybe he would grow up to be a chemist. Or a geologist. Or a radio guy. Jerry didn't really think about that though. He thought more about whether anyone thought his voice was strange sounding. He also wished he had black hair, instead of brown. Sometimes at his grandparents he would stare at his self in the full-length mirror after a shower and enjoy the temporary darkness of his damp hair. When Jerry got to school he would sit on the wood bench next to Max's, with the water fountain between them. He would sit down first, always, than stand back up a little later to get a drink of water. Then it would just be Jerry and Max for a little while. Jerry took out a book from his backpack, and started reading, Max continued rubbing the bench, and both of them waited.

Me and my girlfriend were walking along a sidewalk in town, when one of the retarded people she worked with came running out of a café to greet her. He hugged my girlfriend, rocking her back and forth. Behind him came out one of the girls my girlfriend worked with, and one of our close friends. She said hi to me, and to my girlfriend, and then smiled at the retarded guy. He looked back at the girl and said that my girlfriend was his girlfriend, and that they were going to get married. The girl smiled more and laughed, so did my girlfriend, her arms around him. Then they all said good-bye. Bye I said. We walked on past the café, turned the corner, and were passing the library when my girlfriend said 'What's wrong with you?' I looked at her and she was looking at me.

Max Wasn't Very Smart

Max wasn't very smart. He didn't know that, he couldn't tell. He looked in his mirror at nighttime and stuck his tongue out at himself and the reflection never spoke up and revealed upon him stupidity, it just stuck its tongue out too. Nobody ever told him, either, so there was just no way he would know. Actually somebody did tell him once, the year before, when he was in third grade.

"Max. You just aren't the sharpest knife in the drawer, are you?" said Max's teacher Ms. Werner. She had strait black hair that framed her face and Max liked her haircut very much. He liked her very much.

"Yes, Ms. Werner, I'm not a very sharp knife." And he laughed and sometimes he would say to himself, "Max, you are not a very sharp knife."

He lived in a two-story house with his dad only. It was an old house with chipping green paint and purple siding squared around the windows. A black asphalt driveway curved around the side of the house and to an out-of-sight garage door. On the other side of the house a cement patio jutted out with a couple fold up chairs on it and a large orange ceramic pot, for a plant but without one in it. On the corner of the patio there was a written engraving that said, in sloppy child's writing,

"Max and Dad. 2000."

Max's dad worked at the mill. He worked from seven in the morning until three in the afternoon, so he would have to drop Max off a little early to school, and pick him up a little late. Max didn't mind, they always listened to the same radio station on the way, and Max thought the DJ was a riot.

"Six-forty-five in the a-m. I feel sorry for all the suckers up, listening to me." Max and his dad laughed together at him a lot.

"Dad, we're suckers huh?"

"I guess so, Max."

"What if I could be a radio guy when I'm grown up."

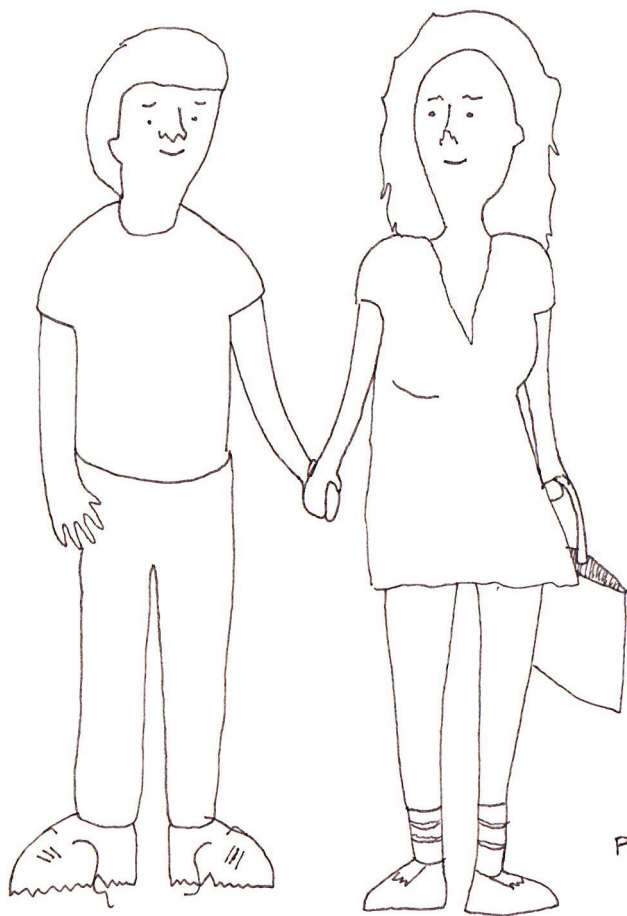
"You wanna be a radio guy, huh?"

"Well. If I can't get a job at the mill." Max's dad smiled and he drove the car, and they got closer and closer to the school. Max without really thinking said,

"I wonder if the radio guy listens to the radio when he drives to work." And Max's dad, without really thinking, smiled.

"Have a good one," said Max's dad. Max got out of the car and then opened the rear door and grabbed his backpack. He said bye to his dad and slammed the door. The car drove off and Max turned and walked. Just inside the front doors there were some wooden benches where Max sat everyday. They were very smooth and Max liked to run his hand across them a lot and he did most days before school. Maybe it wasn't even that he liked to do it, he didn't think about it much, but he still did it almost every time he sat there.

I had a lot on my mind when my mom called. She wanted to know how I was feeling. You can tell your mom anything. My mom said my sister was having some troubles with school. I said oh no. She said yeah. I said I loved her. She said she loved me too. After I hung up, I looked down. My hand, the one not holding the phone, had moved to my inner thigh, and was grasping at something. Nothing felt okay.



picture.

Maybe, Robert

We were at the beach, and he had laid out a towel for us to use. I was sitting leaned up against him. He had set his hands behind us, and was holding us both propped up. I could feel his breath go in and out, and I matched mine to his. I hoped he was thinking about it too, how we breathed in unison. We were on top of a beach blanket that he had laid out for us to sit on, edges of it fell swooped under sand and our feet hung off the side. The waves hit the beach slowly and rhythmically. If only our breathing had matched the waves, it would have been perfect. The sun crept slowly down, under the horizon and I watched it. The air was cool on my bare legs. Then I turned, and continued to watch it but in the reflection of his eyes. It was a very small sunset, in his eyes. I was writing the poem in my head. The poem was practically writing itself. Then the sunset was gone as he noticed me looking and bent down to kiss me. I turned my face coyly, and he kissed my neck only.

'You're so coy,' he said. Or.

'I like kissing your neck just as much as your face.' He kissed my neck again, then my ear, then my cheek. Then I let him kiss my mouth. Let him, yes. Sure Sara, let him. His hands were in my hair and rubbing my head, I moaned. It was a reflexive moan. I couldn't control it. I took my hand and pressed it against his chest. I pressed harder until he fell off of my face.

'Robert...' I said. 'I love you.'

Robert said, 'I love you too.' But that didn't make sense. He would have to say something else. Too... Is that what people say. He kissed her again, she was lost in thought. The kiss came as a surprise, I was thinking about love. The kiss brought back the world, the waves sounds, the sand as I pressed my heel into it. This time I reached for his face and rubbed and pulled it a little with my fingers. We kissed in time, slightly opening each others mouths then closing again. I bit down on his lip a little, hot breath from his nose rushed down onto my face. I opened my eyes and saw his eyelids. I closed my eyes again and we did kiss for a little longer, then I pulled back and just looked at him. He smiled at me and I smiled back and didn't feel self-conscious about it either.

The sunset was gone. And the stars had come out, so many shining bright against the dark blue of infinity and some covered by low hanging wispy clouds. The moon was behind some of those clouds, or new. Robert said new. Robert knew. He stood up and looked out across the water and said,

'I want to sail someday...'

'I can teach you' I said. He looked down at me, and extended his hands, then pulled me up into embrace. He twirled me and asked me to promise to teach him. I promised, of course.

'Of course...'

Then he let go and picked up the towel and folded it and it under one arm, and me under another, we walked back to his car. Walking toward the next sunrise. Then he let go and

picked up the towel and folded it and it under one arm, and me under another, we walked back to his car, walking toward the next sunrise.

I stuck my hand out the window as we drove and let the wind press against it. A lot of times Robert turned away from the road to look at me, and I looked at him and didn't turn away really. The wind pressed on my arm. Robert pressed on my arm. I looked down, he'd rested his hand below my elbow and was gently moving his fingers on my forearm. He looked forward, I fell for him. Again. I laid my head down, like I was trying to sleep on a desk, except there were three arms crossed to together. I was breathing out of my nose, and smelling his arm with every inhale. He drove smoothly and quietly, the music on softly, a woman's voice lulling me out of the car and into the heavens with Robert's arm. I didn't notice when the car stopped.

Robert pulled his arm free from me and for a moment we weren't touching. He said to me,

'Here we are.'

'I don't want to go.'

'I know,' he said and touched my jaw with his fingertips. I felt like crying, like it was good bye forever. I didn't want him so say good bye. But he had to.

'Good bye,' he said. He leaned in, towards his fingers and my face and kissed me softly on the lips. I reached for the handle without looking, hoping for delay, but it was right where my hand went. I climbed out of the seat, we never broke eye contact. The doors slam was final, Robert looked at me one last time and smiled very nicely. I smiled too, but only with my lips. Robert drove off and I watched the

taillights of his car until they were gone, which wasn't very long. Then I said, 'Goodbye Robert,' to myself.

I walked up the path to my front door and stopped at the front door. The air felt real-cold. I needed my key to unlock the door... It was in my jeans pocket and was hard to get out, my jeans were so tight. My two fingers fought for space as they tried to work together to grab it. The door opened and I pulled once or twice to get my key out, it stuck sometimes. Most times. I pulled my shoes off and stumbled backwards and almost fell all the way over. The entryway was dark, but I didn't turn the lights on I just felt blindly along the walls and found my bedroom. I flipped on the light and saw Amor, one of my cats. He blinked lazily at me and set his head back down on the afghan blanket we was sleeping on.

'Hi Amor,' I said. He stayed laying the same way. I sat down to pet him for a little while, he rolled on his back and purred, then stood up and left. To get food I bet. He had been laying in the same spot when I left. I leaned to my bedside table and picked up my laptop. Checked my e-mail, looked at weblog of animal pictures. I had a poem open, I read through it then saved it, and moved it to the folder named 'poems.' I sighed and walked over to turn off the light, and walked back to bed. I turned on the t.v. with the remote. There was a movie on, it was a man sitting at a table with a girl. He told her a joke, and she laughed and smiled really big. His voice narrated over the event. He said how she had bad teeth, and no wonder she didn't smile very often. I turned the t.v. off, and grabbed my computer.

I checked my e-mail again. In the other room, I heard one of the cats make a noise. A different one, I think, chased it. I shut my laptop. With my eyes closed, I brought the back beach. She thought about how lucky she was to have Robert, and went to bed.

The Beach

We were walking along the beach, the girlfriend and me, and it was beautiful. I thought everything was so beautiful. The sun was low in the sky, hovering above the water, watching her and me walk hand in hand. It was big and orange and it gave a little more light to us as we went along, parallel to the water. We walked on wet sand and when a wave would come in, it would slide under our feet and soak down into the sand more. I thought that was wonderful. I thought it was a wonderful feeling to have the water rush over my toes. I breathed in the clean air.

"The air is so clean," I said.

'Gross," she said, and pointed to a dead bird that had washed up onto the shore. Every wave pushed it on to the sand, then pulled it back out again. I thought the dead bird looked beautiful. I thought it was the most wonderful thing I had ever seen. I wanted to kiss it. I knew that if I kissed it, it would come back to life. Instead, I pulled the girl in close, to my face. As we kissed, Jesus Christ just as, the sun hit the horizon. I opened my eyes a little as we were kissing, and I looked at the dead bird. The sun was glistening in its open eyes. I pretended that it winked at me, then I winked back. We kissed the entire sunset, then it was dark and we kissed a little more.



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