Breathe. In. Out. Open your eyes. Get it together. Stand up. Head back. Shoulders straight. Keep walking. Almost there. *I can do this*, I tell myself as I shakily take my next step, ignoring the piercing stares of those around me, feeling them prickling against my spine ready to swallow me who-stop it. You need to stay calm. No need to make it worse.

I can barely see, and whatever I can see is spinning. I see the door to the compound open. I stagger forward, still not completely recovered. I make it in and turn around just long enough to see the judging looks on the people's faces. *You're not like us*, they say. *Crazy*, some whisper. The door to the compound slams shut and the all to familiar sign stares me in the face in their places. ASYLUM.

"Hey! What have we said about leaving?" I turn and lift my head to meet the caretaker's screaming face, just in time to catch his flinch as he meets my eyes. "To not do it?" I reply. He flinches again at the sound of my voice. "Go to the medical center. The doctor will set you straight soon enough." I bite back what I want to say to his repulsed face. The one that tells me that I'm crazy. It's not my fault I'm a zombie, I want to scream.

Instead I turn and start walking. I feel the jagged points of my mind slowly start to smooth themselves, refusing to break into the darkness. I'll be okay. I will be helped, I tell myself. The world stops spinning, and I start walking not staggering forward. I take in the compound noticing the dismal setting filled with pale, green skinned zombies like me like I do everyday. We're supposed to be healed here. If they can't even take care of the place how will they take care of us zombies?

The doctor's door appears in my line of sight and I walk in hands in my pocket, or at least what's left of them. The doc isn't even in the room. I sigh and look around cursing myself for expecting more and start reading his posters. One warns about the attacks and how they turn us violent. Ha. If only they really knew. Only 5% of all zombies go killer, but all of us get the attacks. But all because of those 5%, the rest of us are forced to spend the rest of our lives in these centers, until we're "normal". My eyes continue to roam his wall, when I notice the edge of a poster starting to peel.

And that's when I see it. Behind the peeled edge of the poster. *His papers*. The very things keeping us here. If I could just see those I'd know if I'd be oka- "Hi Emilie." My eyes snap up at once. Can't let him know I see his papers.

"Hey doc. What's up today? Here to tell me that I can't have an attack out in public, otherwise they might destroy these stupid facilities? Or wait I know, it's that my attacks have gotten worse, right?"

"Glad to see you haven't lost your edge Emilie," the doc replies. I roll my eyes at the attempted humor. I see right past it, the smile is too tight, his shoulders tensed, and he won't even meet my eyes. My eyes. The ones that are black and ringed with the sunken green skin. He

flinches just like everyone else. "Well let's get this over with, yes I've been keeping a journal documenting the attacks, the last round of medicine was slightly helpful, but not really and yes I know it's working for everyone else." I spit out. The doc isn't even looking at his paper. He's simply staring at his watch like he does every time. Suddenly all I want to do is leave. I feel the weight of tears behind my eyes. Am I not worth the help? The doc sighs and simply says, "Okay, well keep up the medicine, and please try not to leave the compound. People don't need anymore ideas." *That you're crazy*, I finish in my head, saying what's left unsaid.

I brush the dust off my tattered clothes, and get up. I look up and the doc is already gone. Figures. Well, now I don't even have to try to discreetly take the papers. I walk over to the poster and grab the papers from behind the poster. It only takes one hard tug and it's loose. I stuff it into the remains of my pocket and hurry out of the compound. I head to our quarters, and kick open the door.

No one's there as per usual. I sit down on our sorry excuse for a bed and I fish out the papers from my pocket and set them neatly down on the bed. The first thing I notice is the bright red stamp on a couple. CLEARED.

I look at those papers a bit clearly, and I recognize a lot of them. They're the people who were released. I remember the joy on their faces, as they left. And then the harsh reality that they had nowhere to go and they were the same as when they entered. They're not much better off than us, in reality. There's a status for each of us as well. Some say *progress noted*, or soon to be released. But what's shocking is what most of them say. Incurable. I look closer and there's notes saying not responding to treatment, or cut further effort. The rest of the papers are just our accounts, I'm just brushing through them looki- and there it is. Mine.

My hands are shaking as I start to read. And when I see it the world blurs. *Incurable*. The attack I've recovered from starts again. I start to break out into a cold sweat. The line between reality and imagination is undefinable. My vision shakes and I can't remember my name, my choices, who I am. My essence is gone I'm left with nothing. Nothing. Even I've abandoned myself. A darkness falls over me pulling me under, and I can't breathe. The piercing stares return in my head, except as knifes ready to tear me apart. "Help," I softly stutter out. And that's when I truly realize it. Alone. I'm alone. I break into sobs as my mind screams in pain. *Stop*, my brain screams.

I lay like that for seconds, minutes, hours, maybe even days, who knows. Breathe. In. Out. Open your eyes. Get it together. And then it's back. That single word. *Incurable*. Beyond hope. And that's when I finally feel my jagged edges break. The darkness threatens to overwhelm me. *If I can't be helped why am I even here*, I ask myself. *I don't deserve this*. I stumble about, my hands finally closing in on the box. I fumble with lid, my vision still shaking. I finally open it and and the medicine comes into view.

This is it. The stuff that'll help me. The incurable. *I'm not worth the help. I can't be helped.* Shaking I lift the entire box up to my mouth. This is it. *I can't be helped*, rings through my brain again. I tip the entire thing into not my mouth, and swallow. *I'm not worth it*, is my last thought. This time I don't even fight it. And the darkness finally wins.