

What Happened with Jacob

by Brent C Dill

We never really talked about it, but Jacob and I broke up for good that day. I sat on the ground outside his apartment, red-eyed, sniffing and barefoot. An older Asian man was walking by on the way to his apartment, holding his granddaughter's hand. He leaned down a little as he passed and silently mouthed, "It's going to be okay."

I held back my English Bulldog, Arthur, by his collar as he tried to greet the passersby. His leash was still inside, along with my flip-flops.

Most of that day is blurry to me, like a closeup of a watercolor painting, but certain moments are sharper than I can stand. The Asian man's reassurance, his words, might as well have been written on a piece of paper, rolled up, placed in a bottle and thrown into the ocean. That message wasn't for me. But his face stuck in my mind. The granddaughter didn't look at me at all.

One of the two police officers came out of Jacob's apartment carrying some shirts on hangers in crinkly dry cleaning bags. I stood up halfway, keeping my hand looped into Arthur's collar so he couldn't run away.

"Here are your clothes," the officer said without making eye contact. "You should probably go home."

"Sure," I said, my patience long gone. "Still gonna need my shoes and the leash, though. Can't walk home like this." He remained stoic, but nodded. There was no indication of whose story he believed—mine or Jacob's. I struggled to take the clothes, and he disappeared back into the apartment.