I spend far too much time staring out windows in the middle of the night, watching and listening instead of sleeping.

At least I’m not alone. Tonight, my favorite fox is next to me. His scent is comforting. but I miss the scent of my favorite snow leopard. I’d brought his pillow but hugging it just isn’t the same as hugging him.

Trading my husband for a friend, even a one I haven’t seen all year, isn’t a fair trade—for any of us. Alex doesn’t mind being my emotional support fox, bless his heart, but I feel so clingy and lost. He’d just tell me I’m borrowing guilt, which only makes me borrow more.

So I lay on my stomach, chin resting on my husband’s pillow, nose against the glass of the attic window, and watch the snow fall. The flakes glitter in the moonlight. Like the ornaments sparkle on the Christmas tree downstairs.

Alex is sprawled next to me on top of the blankets. The attic is warm and his winter fur is thicker than mine. I’m a tiny southern wolf and he is an average northern fox.

We would have stayed at June and Reese’s place but the otter they are fostering had fun pulling my tail and I had a panic attack. Medication and a supportive family can only do so much. Instead, we’re in Alex’s bedroom. Which is fine. I’m just as comfortable here as I would have been at back home in Evan’s Bay.

I want to call Donovan, but Alex forced me to leave my phone on the kitchen counter. It wouldn’t be a good idea anyway. My husband is either sleeping or half-drunk in an attempt to tolerate his family—possibly both.

The thought of my husband getting drunk to deal with his problems bothers me. My uncle taught me to do that and it had been a difficult habit to break. It’s still difficult after five years of sobriety, if you skip that one manic episode I will forever regret.

Before my thoughts start to spiral, I close my eyes and remember the good times. A tractor engine stripped down to the block in the barn. All of the silver on the black fur of my arms hidden under oil and grease. A sheared bolt and learning all kinds of new profanity from Alex’s dad. My uncle’s vocabulary paled in comparison to an ex-chief petty officer.

I manage a smile and my tail tries to wag under the blankets.

“What time is it?” Alex asks, stretching out.

“About O’ three hundred,” I mutter. “Give or take three hours..”

He rolls over to look at me, ears flopped to one side. “You okay?”

“Yeah. Just thinkin’ I suppose.”

He crosses his arms and lays next to me, looking out the window. “I think I understand how you feel now. I miss you a lot since moving away.”

“S’okay. Not a big a deal as it were. I have other friends now.” I bury my nose into Donovan’s pillow and breathe in his scent.

“It’s not really the same.” Alex said softly. “I’ve always had a lot of friends, but you’re special.”

“Yup. That’s why my therapist’s therapist needs a therapist.”

He playfully swipes my muzzle. “You know what I mean.” Then he smiles at me. “You’re the only person I’d share my bed with.”

I look over at him with a grin.

He gives me a blank stare. “No.”

I bury my nose in the pillow and snort. “Donovan said I could.”

Alex pokes me in the side. “And if he says that again, I’m going to kill him before you do.”

I let out my breath slowly and look out the window. The snow is getting heavier and I’m starting to feel tired again. I crawl back under the blankets.

“I miss Donovan,” I whisper, as Alex tucks the blankets around me.

“I know. Just a few more days.”

This was incredibly sweet, gosh! I really like the little bits of memory, whether it was recalling the tree downstairs, the foster-otter, or the sheared bolt, as they help give a better picture of the main character's mindset. (Connor, I think? I don't remember, sorry! ;.;)

I think the most success is seen during the conversation with Alex. We get the best sense of who these people are - even Donovan despite his absence - through these interactions. Much as I love the whole snippet, I think that focusing on the strengths of social interactions would better serve that sense of lacking than talking about being missed. The text obviously needs that as a framework in there, and the pillow plus "favorite fox vs favorite snep" bit does a good job of that, but should this turn into a longer piece, I think that having more dialogue would help shape the reader's understanding of just how the main character misses his husband will give you permission to set aside things like "I want to call Donovan" to show that.

This was really lovely, all told! I know you've all but rewritten it, but as it is, it's a beautiful piece of flash fiction, and I wouldn't complain one bit if you decide to flesh it out into a longer story.