

The Saddest Moment Ever

The Saddest Moment Ever

or

A Year of Heartbreak in Condensed Form



Bleh:

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ca·thar·sis

/kə'θɑrsɪs/ [kuh-thahr-sis] (kə-thär'sis)
—noun, plural -ses /-siz/ [-seez]

1. the purging of the emotions or relieving of emotional tensions, esp. through certain kinds of art, as tragedy or music.
2. A release of emotional tension, as after an overwhelming experience, that restores or refreshes the spirit.

Origin:

1795–1805; < NL < Gk kátharsis a cleansing, equiv. to kathar- (var. s. of kathaírein to cleanse, deriv. of katharós pure) + -sis -sis

A little background.

I'll be sparse.

A little over a year ago, my wife of a year and half, previously my girlfriend of 6 years, turned to me one evening, and said, "I think we should split up."

I did not react well.

I loved that girl. It doesn't matter what anyone says. I loved her.

When we got married, I really put myself into it. I took it seriously. I committed myself to her for the rest of my life. And I was happy to do it.

So when she said she wanted to split up, I naturally was a tad shaken. That's a bit of an understatement. More accurately... I fell apart.

The next few months were pretty much awful, as we lived out the rest of our lease, barely speaking, me drinking, her trying not to be home. I pleaded, I cried, I tried to understand what went wrong. Turns out there was someone else. Sort of anyway. She lied about it. I called her on it. She lied again. I drank some more, slept less. I started smoking. I drank a lot more.

It's not nearly as simple as all that, but you get the idea. In broad strokes, that was life for the first half of 2008. It was not fun. The second half involved me moving hundreds of miles away, trying to reinvent myself as a human being. Start fresh. I left the world I had started to create for myself, my job, my friends, my dogs, my life. I left it all to try and be something new, something better, something not the wreck I had suddenly and unexpectedly become. I arrived in a new place, actually, an old place. A place where I had support, friends, family, and a familiarity with the landscape. Sort of like coming home, except it wasn't my home anymore. It was new in the sense that I was there to be someone new. Life went slightly better, but really, only marginally. I still drank. A lot. A lot a lot. Several times a week, I would be very very drunk. My mood when drunk or sober was unreliable to say the least. I would find myself crying in random places at random times, often times for no reason whatsoever. Well...that's right. The massive amounts of depression. Yeah, that's why. Though on a plus, I now appreciate wine on a higher level, and can recognize that certain beers are really better than others, and also...that whiskey and I can't hang out without knowing something somewhere is going to get thrown. Often glass. Often hard. And sadly, it often happened when I would break free of whichever one of my friends were keeping watch over me that night, giving me the reputation of being a bit of a sullen drunk, and a bit of a pain in the ass.

Well... more of...

I was on suicide watch.

Again, only sort of. Nothing's that straightforward. It was almost a joke. That's the thing about really hitting the bottom. It's kinda funny. Since nothing is sacred, you can laugh at everything. At least, I did. And at least, if you're laughing, you're not crying.

Keep that in mind.

After all, what's more tragic than a comedy?

Or funnier than a tragedy?

Fuck.

This is a collection of anything I wrote, drew, painted, thought, or whatever... during this past year. Some of the works are sad, some are really sad. Some don't make any sense. Some are irrelevant. Some are downright stupid.

But some are hopeful.

There's sort of an order, but it's only slightly chronological. Deal with it.

This is also going to be as honest as anything could ever be. Sometimes uncomfortably so.

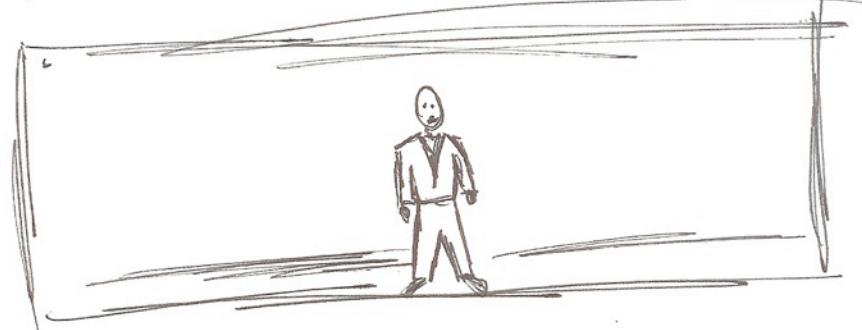
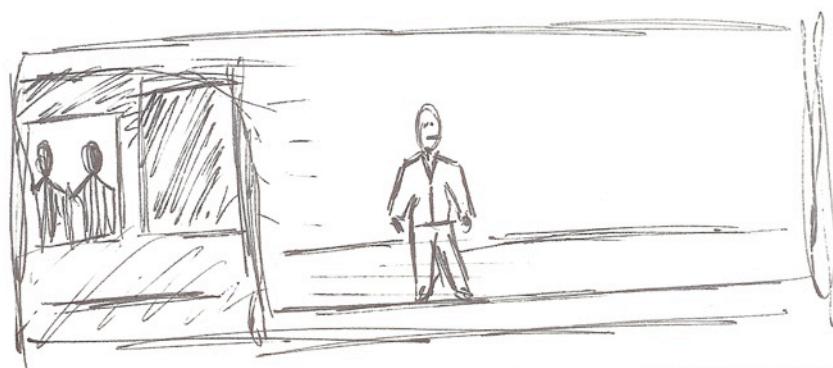
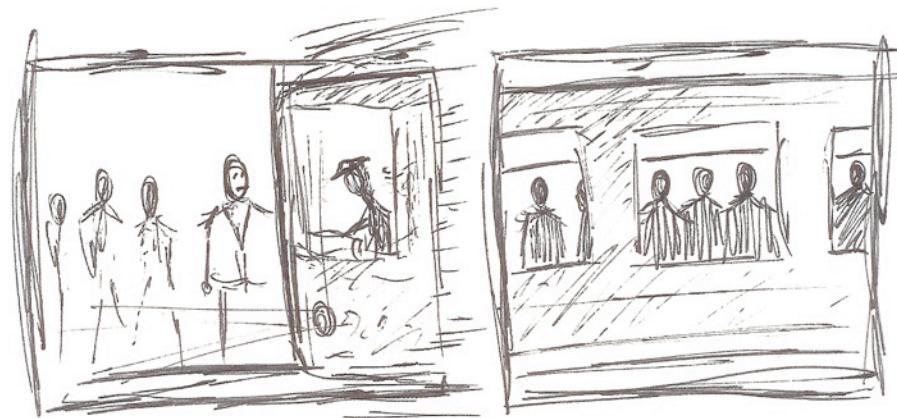
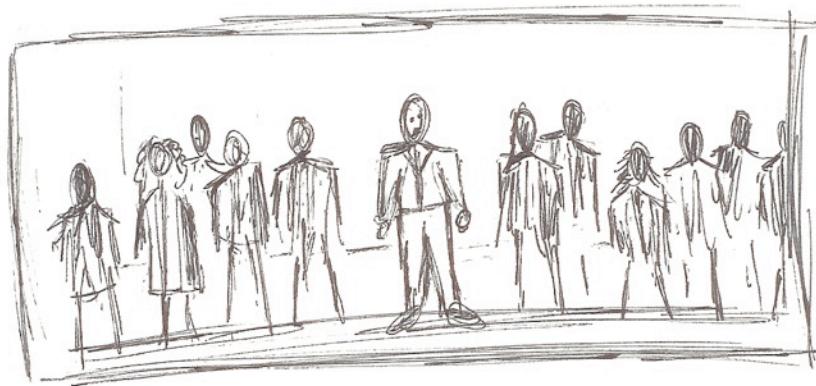
I know that I'm not even remotely the same person I was a year ago...

...but I feel better already.

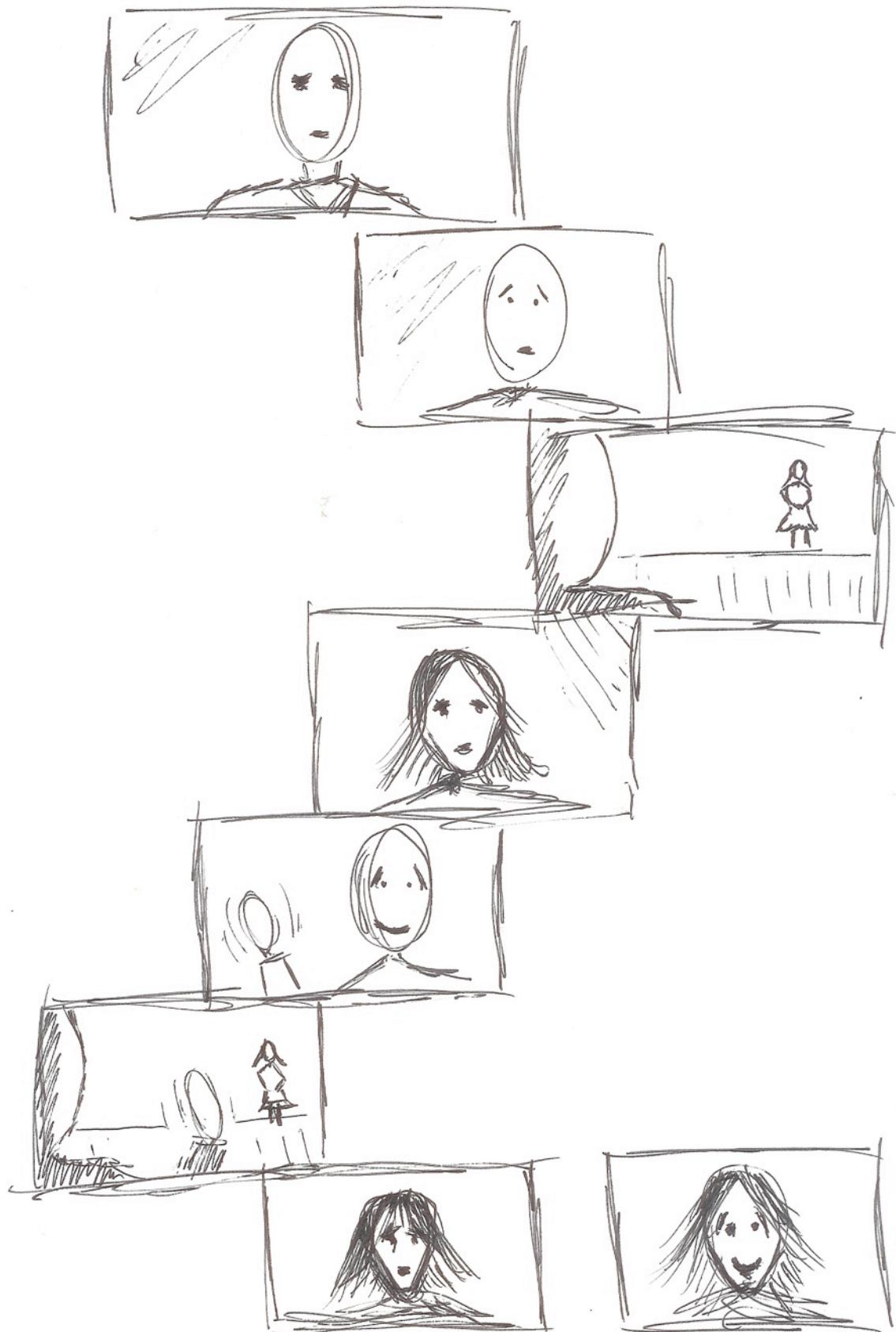
quote #1

“Can everyone please stop asking me if I’m OK?
I’m just going to lie to you.”
- me

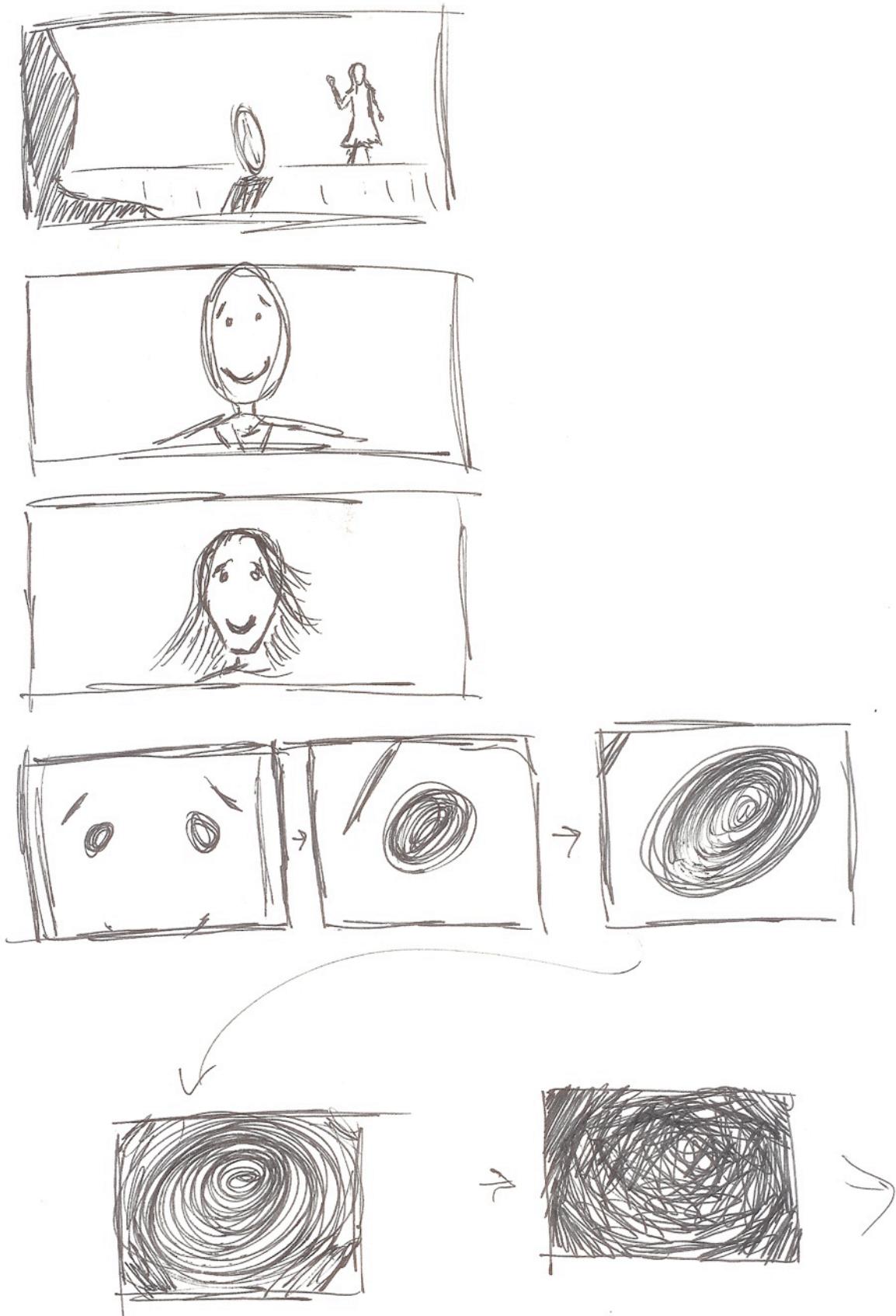
The Train Station



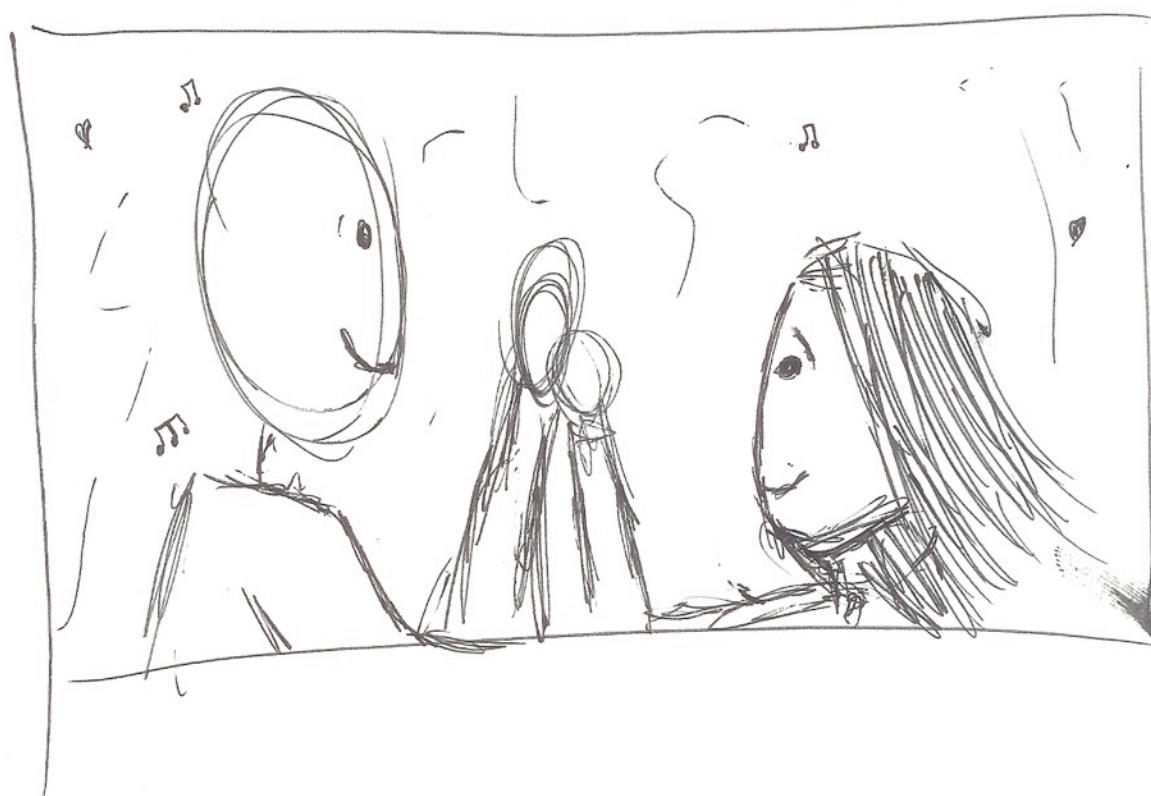
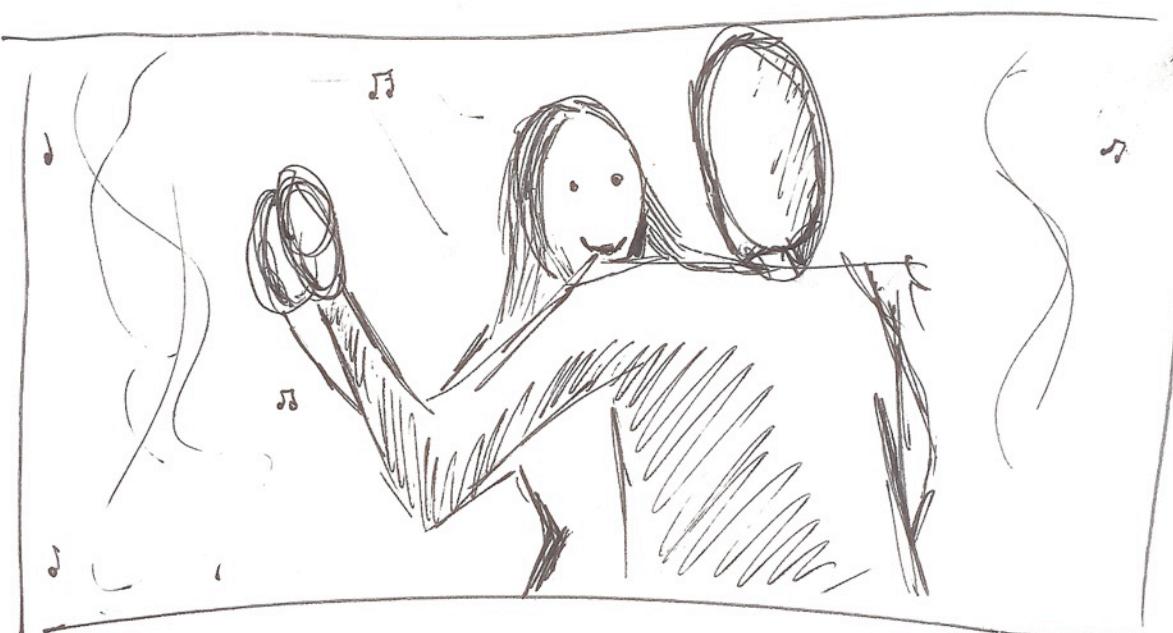
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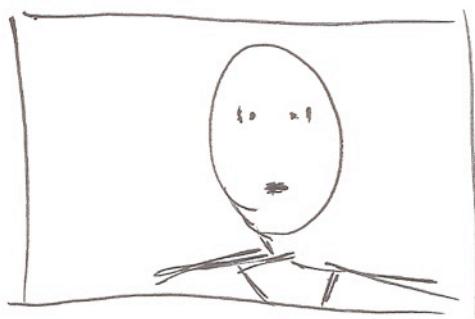
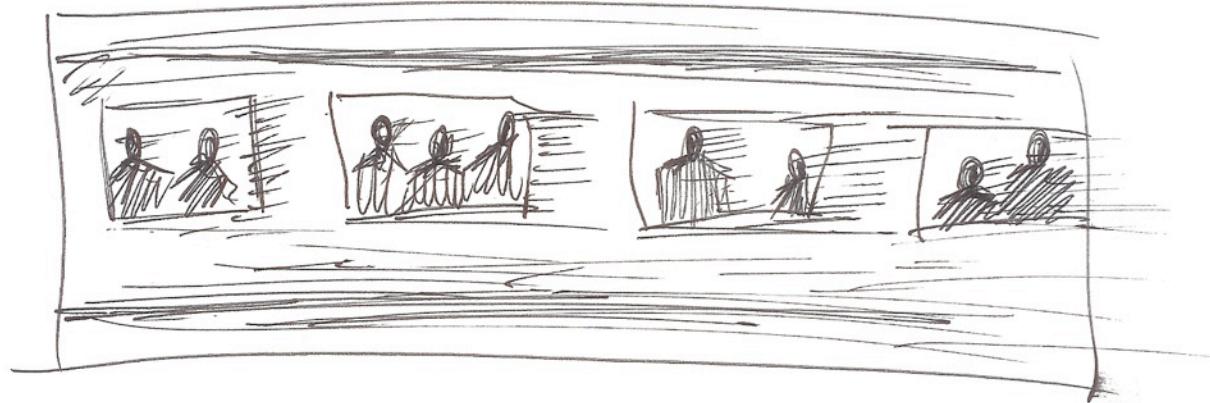
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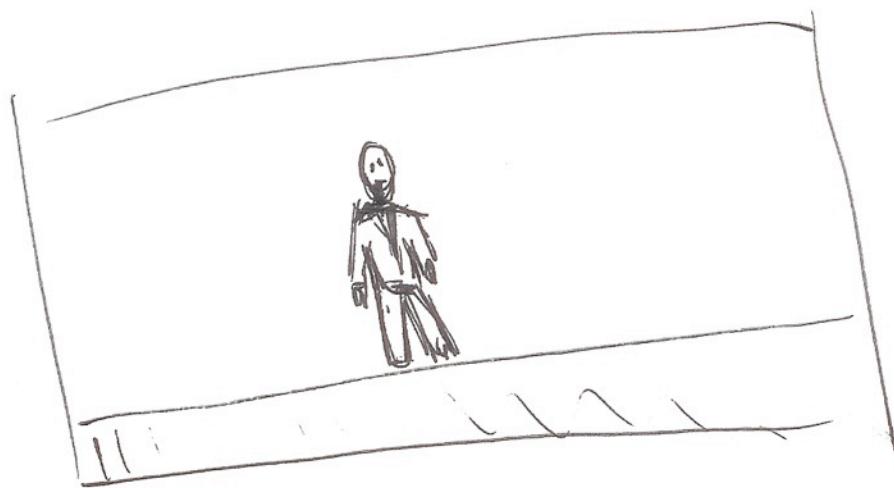
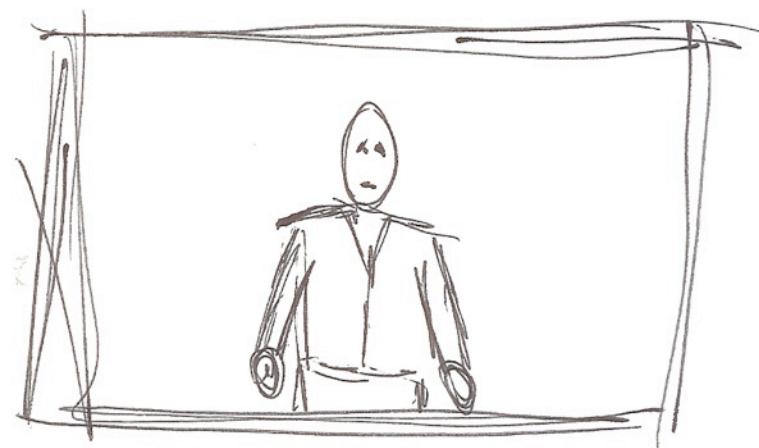
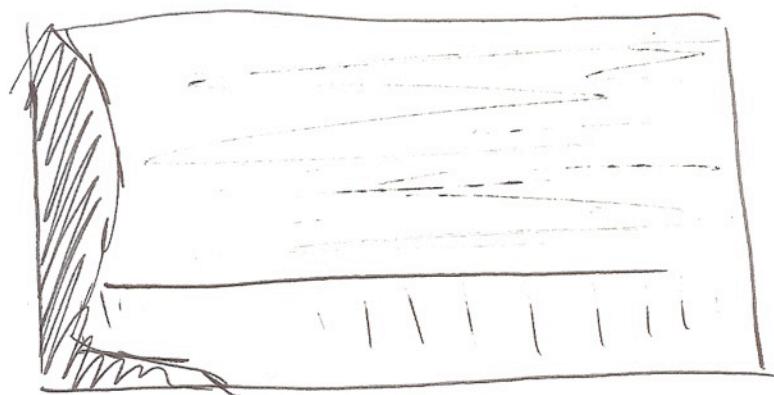
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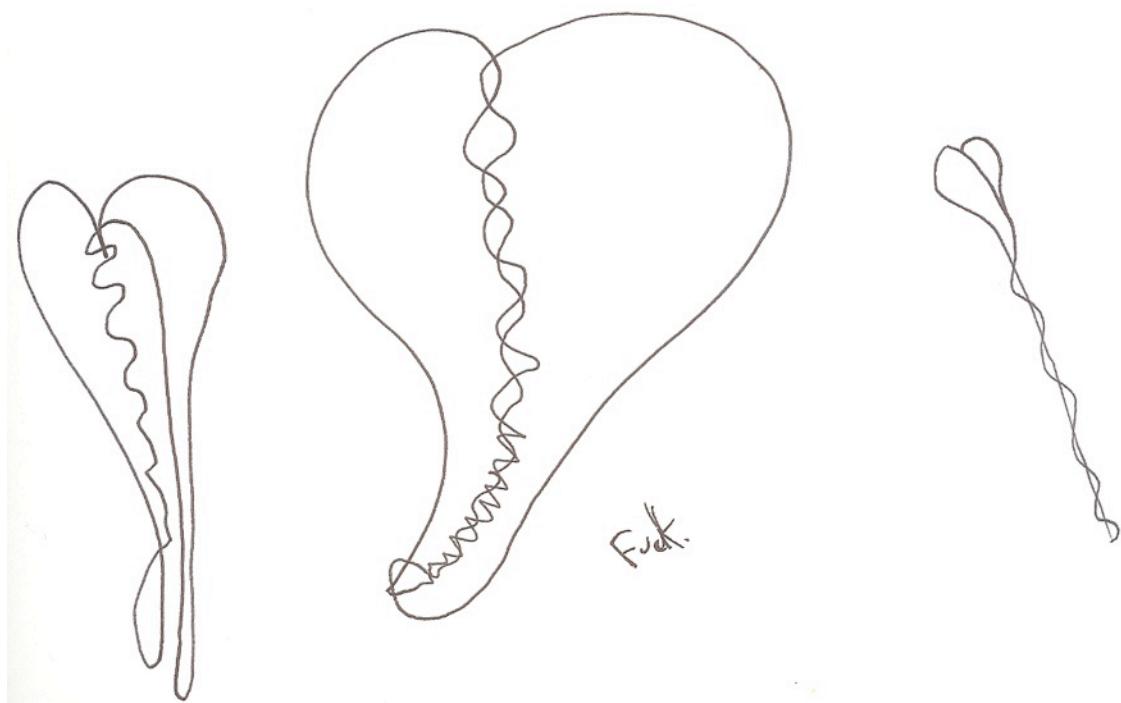
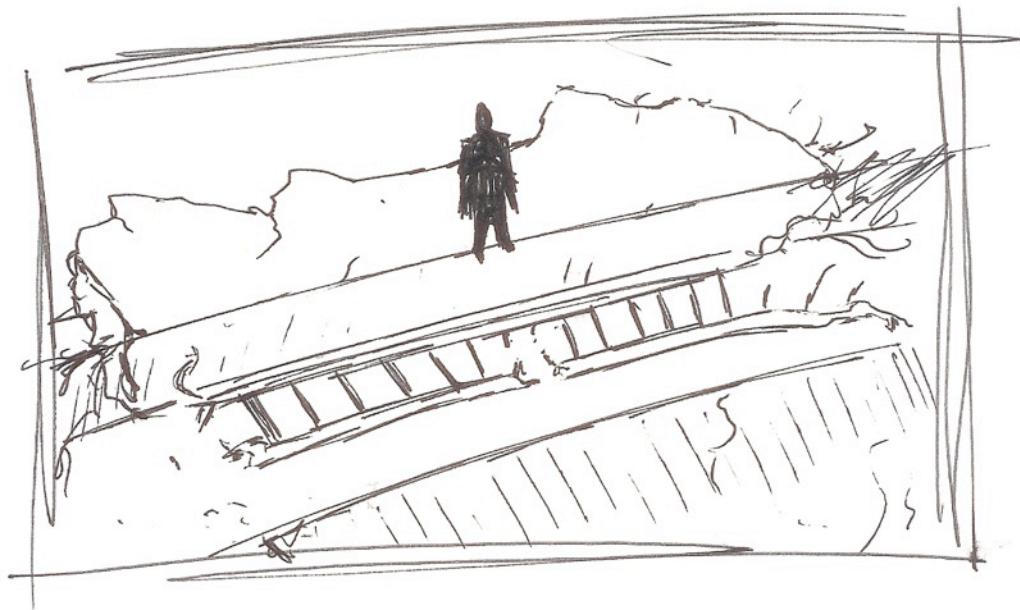
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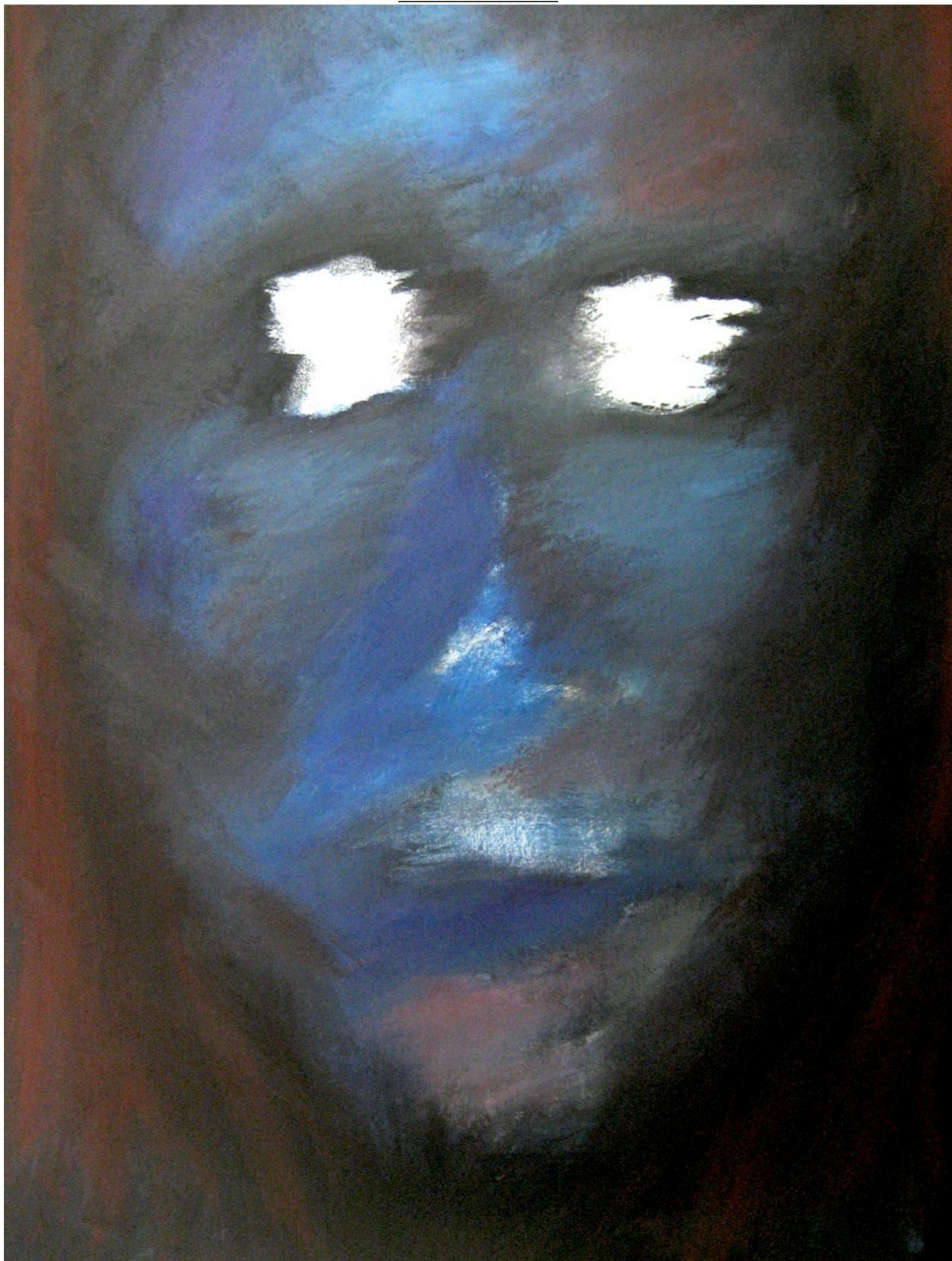
quote #2

“I’ve never shaved my head before.
I feel like I’m not here.
I feel like a ghost.

This sucks.”
- me

The Saddest Moment Ever

Self Portrait #2



Haunted

She was perfect. The kind of girl who was quiet, but still very much alive inside. She was no supermodel, but still pretty enough that I could stare at her for days and still be captivated. A little smile here, a sideways glance there, and I was smitten. She was sensitive too. Almost too sensitive. She was the kind of girl who you knew if you yelled at, would apologize for making you yell. So I did my best to never ever be mad at her. She just wanted to be happy, and it was so easy to see that. I tried my best to make her happy. And in return, she made me happy whenever I was around her. She would never ask for much, but would willingly give anything. And in return, I would try and give her everything.

She was perfect.

...well...

...almost.

She never wanted to talk about her past. I never tried to press it either. But I'd get the impression she was carrying it with her always. Her past wasn't just a series of events that had happened to her, but rather events that were still occurring inside her. I knew that her parents had both died when she was young. I didn't know how, though. I gathered from what little she would say that her Father was not a good man. Was she abused?

Molested?

Raped?

None of that would have surprised me.

As for me, and my past...

I would be lying if I said I was much of a ladies man. I was just too nervous. Even as a teenager, I could tell that girls had a different kind of energy in them. Something I didn't have and wouldn't be able to understand. Maybe if I could ball it up, it would be something I would be able to fathom.

The long soft hair...

...the mysterious eyes that never let you know what they were really seeing...

...or thinking...

...the soft skin...

...the delicate frame...

...it all held something more powerful than it should have been able to.

Guys and girls are backwards like that. Guys have an image of being like a brick wall on the outside, but can be needy little wimps and sensitive on the inside. Girls are the opposite. They look and act so soft, but inside...

...they are all poetry of fire and ice...

...they could have the power to melt steel and create stars if they set their minds to it...

...it was that power, that essence...

...it drew me in...

...and I could never get enough.

By that same token, I almost pitied all girls. They have life much harder than men. That have to walk around and deal with perverted leers and sexual advances 24 hours a day. I myself am guilty. What guy hasn't seen a beautiful girl and had just the dirtiest and most vile thoughts? Then going back to the actual form, a guy could simply overpower a girl and do whatever he wanted. It's sad that it can happen so easily, and even sadder that it does. In a sense, it's an odd unspoken trust that things don't go that way. Girls have that power to control the world just by being. It's a weird symbiotic relationship. Yin & Yang, light and dark. Complete opposites, yet somehow, we're supposed to come together and live in harmony? It makes more sense that it's less a union, more a collision. Sparks flying in every direction.

That, at least, was how I saw things. My reaction to the thought of that nameless, faceless energy called girls. Like holding a small bird, that even though you could crush it in your hands, it's irrelevant, since it can fly, and you never will.

So now it's me and her...her and I. We both have issues.

Sadly they are those issues that we can never truly explain to the other.

I loved her.

I needed her.

But somehow I felt I could never measure up to what she was. It seemed like she loved me, maybe even needed me. But I could never be sure. I'll never know what she saw through her eyes.

I would occasionally wake up in the middle of the night, just to see her staring into the darkness. She was terrified. Breathing heavily. On the verge of tears. I would ask her what was wrong, and I could see her bottle it all up. All that anxiety and fear would vanish back, deep down inside of her where it lived, only to come out at night. She never told me what she was thinking, or what it was she saw there when she was alone at night...

....just herself and the dark.

It went on this way for a long time. Then when things started to look up...

...it all went to hell.

We had gone camping with this other couple. Friends of ours. There had been some alcohol. Too much probably. But spirits were loose. As the night wore on, and the campfire burned down, my girl got quiet. She seemed lost in the embers, as is so easy to happen. I let her be. I thought she needed time to think, time to address whatever ghosts were roaming in her head. Then, she started breathing heavily, trembling. Shaking. Her muscles tensing, her eyes tearing.

Something was very very wrong.

Before I could speak her name, she took off.

She sprang from the warmth of the fire and went racing into the dark of the forest.

I ran after her...

...but she was running like something other than me was chasing her.

When I finally caught up to her, she collapsed to the ground. I looked at her, and saw tears streaming from her eyes. She was shaking and breathing so deeply. I was panicking. What the hell happened?

I asked her what was wrong.

But she wasn't there anymore. She wasn't looking at me, but through me.

She was alive...

...but she was gone.

At the hospital, the doctors would tell me she was in a state of shock. The same kind of shock that people who have survived wars go through. Total system shutdown. She was awake, but completely unable to process anything. Nothing would register.

I sat with her. I tried to get the sweet quiet girl I had come to love to come back for weeks on end.

But nothing happened.

The other couple from the campfire would visit occasionally. She and he. She had told me a story about that night that didn't make any sense.

She told me that as the night went on, another man came to sit at our campfire. She admitted to being pretty drunk, and since neither her boy nor I had done or said anything out of the ordinary, she just assumed it was someone we knew. Her boy says that he never saw anyone there. Neither had I, but she insisted another man was there that night. He just sat. He didn't cause any trouble, but would just stare at my girl. I didn't believe her, but she insisted it was true. There was a man at our campfire. He arrived during the night and just sat there. When my girl went off running and I went chasing after her, the couple went after us. When they got back to the campfire, this other man, he was gone.

As the weeks went by, my girl did not recuperate. She remained in a state of waking, but completely not acknowledging the world around her.

I felt myself disappearing with her.

Then one night, I awoke to her voice. She was looking at me!

She was speaking to me!

I was overjoyed, but my happiness was premature.

“Kill me,” she said.

“Please.”

I froze. How could she say such a thing? How could she ask me to do such a thing. But she repeated.

“Kill me.”

I tried to talk to her. Ask her why. But she gave no reason. Only trying to convince me that I should do as she asked.

I resisted. I couldn't destroy the one thing that meant more to me than anything. I wanted her to get better, to recover. I would help her, because I wanted her in my life.

I needed her.

I needed her?

As it went on, I started to feel selfish. That somehow, my wants and needs were more important than hers. I knew that was wrong of me.

That's not what love is. Right?

The Saddest Moment Ever

My heart was breaking.

My hands were trembling.

My eyes blurred with tears.

I did the one thing that I knew would help her...

...ease her fears and suffering.

Because I couldn't stand to see her in such agony. Because I wanted her to feel peace and happiness.

Because I loved her.

I did it.

I killed her.

I slit her wrists while she lay so helpless in that hospital bed.

As she drifted away...as the tears rolled down her face...she looked at me...

...said all she could say...

...“I’m sorry...”

...and smiled.

She smiled like I didn’t know she could.

Then she was gone.

The Saddest Moment Ever

To this day, I still wonder what fears she saw, what terrors she lived through to create the person she was. But it matters less now.

I have my own memories to live with...

...my own past to haunt me.

I'll never know what she saw there in the dark.

But I know that every night....

...I'll wake up...

...and I'll see her.

Forest



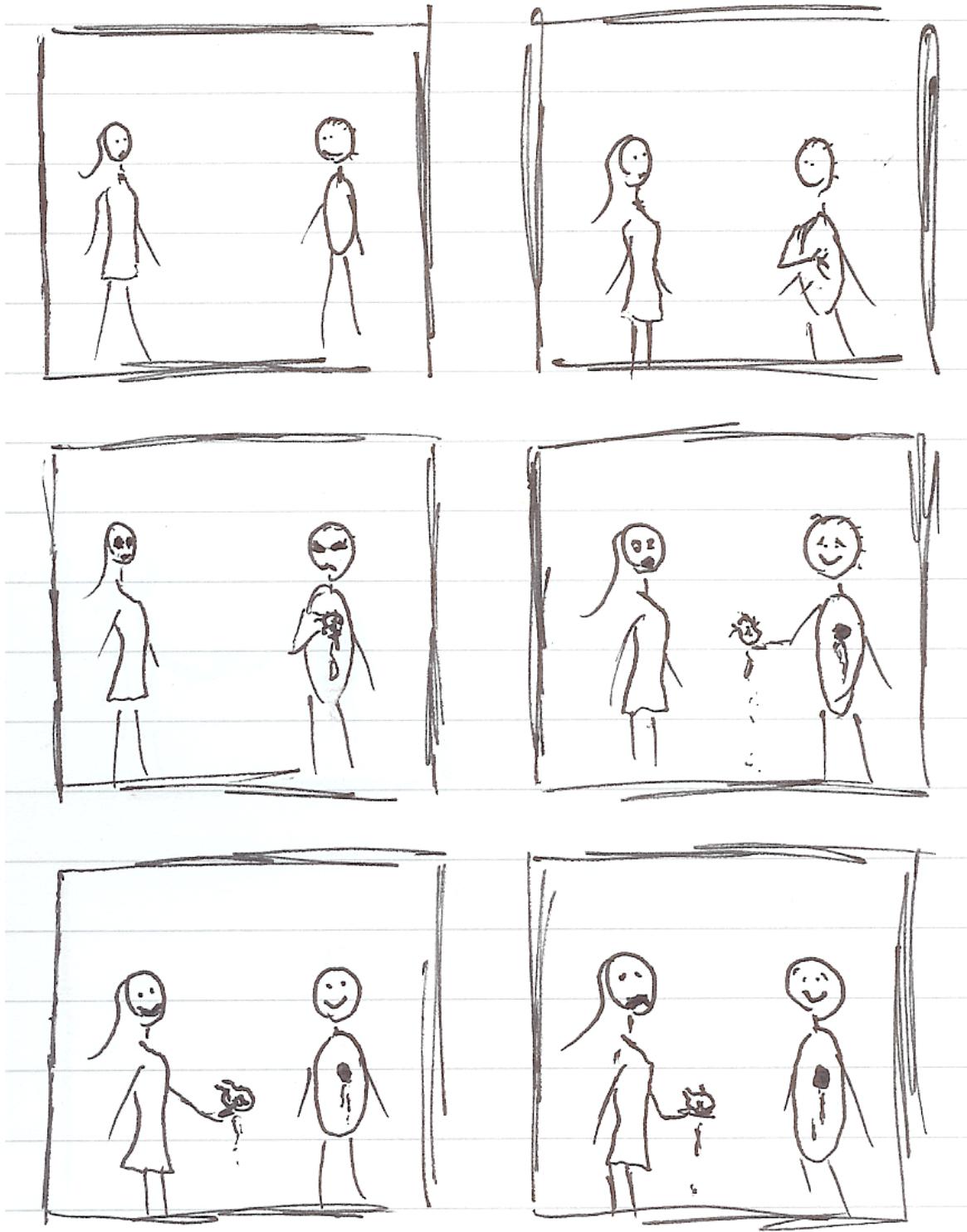
4am Self Portrait
...after much alcohol...



quote #3

“It’s weird, whenever I’m out of a relationship, I just want to be in one.
But whenever I’m in a relationship, I just want to kill myself.”
-Ryan

"Love" (in 12 panels)



The Saddest Moment Ever



two dialogs

“Get your shit together? What if I can’t?
What if I’m like permanently broken inside?
What if this never goes away?”

“It was hard to hear you over the sound of you being a bitch.
Some emo band out there needs some of their pussy angst back.
Stop being stupid.
You got hurt. You’ll heal.
You will.”

.....

(via Facebook Messaging to my roommate in the next room)

Me
can you hear my music?
i'm still trying to figure out what's too loud at night

Him
no but I hear your crying :(

Me
you can hear the future?
fuk

Him
haha
oh man
depressing

Songs Played During Sadness

The most played songs, in some particular order:

To Be In Love : Android Ethic
4am : Our Lady Peace
Ruby Tuesday : Rolling Stones
Nocturnes in E Flat Major : Frederic Chopin
La Mer : Nine Inch Nails
Naked as we Came : Iron and Wine
Pavane pour une Infante Defunte : Ravel
Pigs on the Wing : Pink Floyd
Cataracts : Andrew Bird
Pathetique : Beethoven
Space Oddity : David Bowie
You Got No Right : Velvet Revolver
Bother : Stone Sour
Roads : Portishead
Don't Be Scared : Andrew Bird
I Will Survive : Cake
How Low : Jose Gonzalez
Where Did You Sleep Last Night : Nirvana's version
Jimmy Carter : Electric Six
Worst Day Since Yesterday : Flogging Molly
Mirrors Reflection : Taproot
Down in a Hole : Alice in Chains
A Long December : Counting Crows
Needle in the Hay : Elliott Smith
Here Comes the Sun : The Beatles
Swing Life Away : Rise Against
If I Ever Leave This World Alive : Flogging Molly
I'll Be Seein' You : Billie Holiday
Live Fast Diarrhea : The Vandals
How it Ends : Devotchka
Terrible Lie : Nine Inch Nails
Imitosis : Andrew Bird
No Surprises : Radiohead

The Blower's Daughter : Damien Rice
You're Worth : Issue Ten
I Don't Wanna Grow Up : Tom Waits
The Edge of the World : Faith No More
Wish You Were Here : Pink Floyd
Hurt : Nine Inch Nails
3 Libra's : A Perfect Circle
Blackbird : The Beatles
Ballad of Big Nothing : Elliott Smith
Burning Red : Machine Head
Ordinary World : Duran Duran
Muscle Museum : Muse
Ruin My Day : Jon Brion
Something I Can Never Have : Nine Inch Nails
The Great Southern Trendkill : Pantera
Roses and Razorblades : Far From Finished
In the End : Scott Matthew / Justin Bond
People = Shit : Slipknot
Everything Ends : Slipknot
10,000 Days : Tool
The End : Twisted Method
Change : Blind Melon
Passenger : Deftones
Timelessness : Fear Factory
The Bleeding : Five Finger Death Punch
Everything Will Be Alright : The Killers
My Last Serenade : Killswitch Engage
Love Me Dead : Ludo
The Decline : NOFX
Victim : Nonpoint
Murder is Masturbation : Nothingface
Bohemian Rhapsody : Queen
Give it All - Rise Against
Right in Two : Tool
Gone Daddy Gone : Violent Femmes
The Rainbow Connection : Kermit the Frog

quote #4

“Girls are like baby monkeys,
they won’t let go of one branch
until they’ve got another one in the other hand.”
-Mike

4/13/08

~~4/13/08~~ 4/13/08

I'm kind of drunk. But
still Angy. You Are Bullshit.
You don't know what logic is.
You're in a situation where you
have been happy, then suddenly
have a reaction to the situation
where suddenly you now feel
negative. So, what do you do?
Do you examine my reaction
occurred? Why you feel the way
you do? No.
You decide not trusting a
bullshit stupid reaction is smarter
than trusting the situation, which
for 6 years has made you happier than
anything ever has. What kind of person
would throw away a great relationship,
a great life, a comfortable apartment and
six years of your life where you've

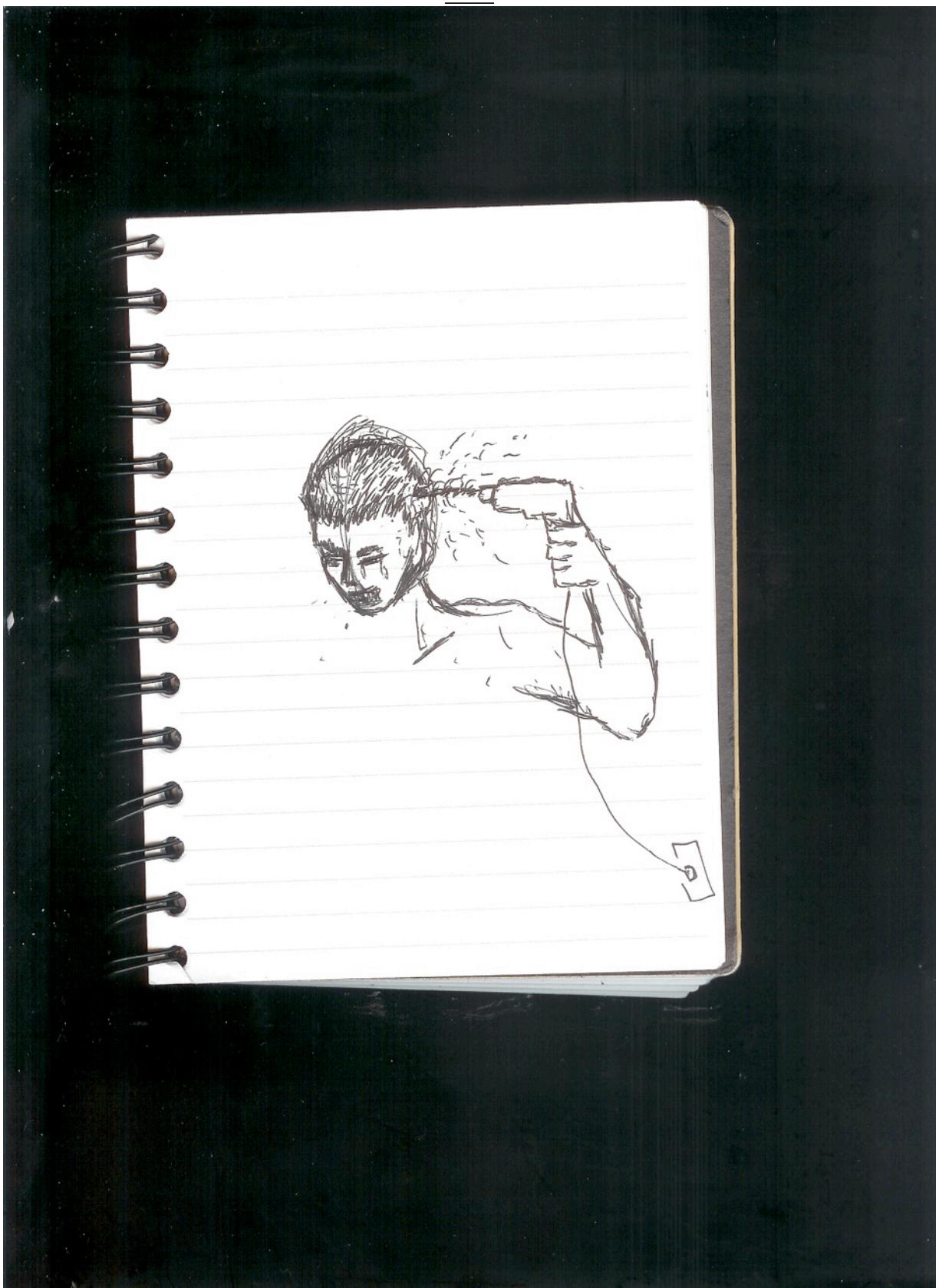
actually been building something positive
out of a life that has had so
much negative. What kind
of person would push away
someone so loving and dedicated and
can I consider just as often
a selfish personal objection?

Fuck you. Someone called
me bitter tonight because they
assume I've been hurt.
You're NOT dealing with the bullshit
this is causing your reaction. Instead
letting the bullshit dictate your life
And that is fucking up my life.
Figure out who your fucking problems are.
I know it's not me. And fix it.
I don't want to suffer because you
are selfish. & irresponsible

I love you
to the moon

The Saddest Moment Ever

Drill



quote with a related dialog

“I’m about to do something stupid.
I’m about to do something regrettable.
I find at least a little consolation in being aware of that.”

.....

“We’re leaving. Walk out the front door very quickly.”

“Why?”

“Uh, because apparently you trashed the bathroom
and news spreads fast at a bar. Come on, they know it was you.”

“Whatever, fuck ‘em. I tip well.”

The Saddest Moment Ever



another true to life dialog

“I told her to tell him I hope he dies.”

“Did she tell him?”

“She says she did.”

“What’d he say back?”

“That I was being too harsh.”

“Pfff.”

“That was a few months ago. Wanna hear the crazy part?”

“What?”

“He’s gonna die. He just found out he has cancer, and it’s terminal. He’s gonna die.”

“Wow.”

“Yeah. But now the weird thing is, I almost feel a little responsible. I mean, I know I’m not, but I’ve never wanted for someone to die so badly and then have it turn out true.”

“You’re not responsible. That is kind of a crazy coincidence, but...well...no. You’re not.”

“I told some other friends of mine about this, and they said we should go out drinking to celebrate.”

“Fuuun.”

“I said I couldn’t go out and drink to someone’s death. So that’s when this other guy said we wouldn’t drink to his death, but to the birth and life of all these new cancer cells.”

“Ouch. That’s harsh.”

“Yeah, that was....but uh...I know I’m not responsible for this. I know I’m not. But, the other thing I’m a little surprised by, is how unsure I am if I feel bad or not.”

“If you feel bad about whether or not he’s gonna die?”

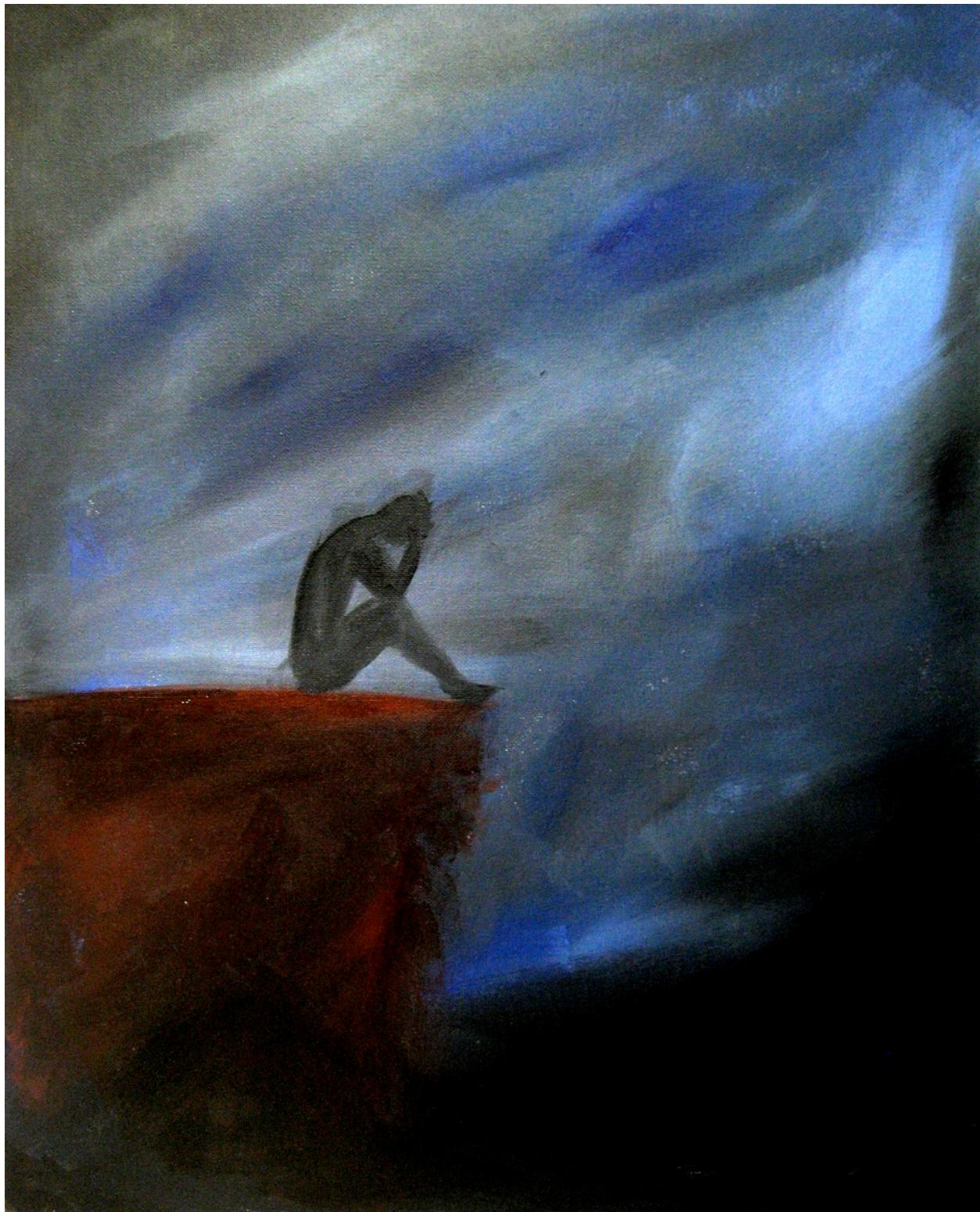
“Yeah, I can’t tell if I do or not.”

“I think that just makes you human.”

“Well that makes me uncomfortable.”

The Saddest Moment Ever

Cliffside



The Speck

He woke up one morning to discover a small black speck floating in the middle of his bedroom. It was just below the ceiling, and just out of reach. At first, it looked like a fly, just a little larger than your average housefly. But it didn't move. So he thought to himself, that maybe it was some random bug caught in a little spider's web. He really didn't care, it wasn't bothering him, so he let it be.

He got up, he went to work.

It was uneventful.

He got home, opened a bottle of wine, drank most of it, then fell asleep on the couch. Halfway through the night, he woke up, then drug himself to bed.

The next morning, he awoke with a start, realizing he was already late for work. He noticed the black speck in his room again, but was in too much of a hurry to do anything about it. He thought to himself that he would have to take care of it when he got home.

He got to work late, but it didn't matter. His position was only important enough for his boss to tell him he was late. It didn't matter to him what he did for a living. It was a job.

That night he went out. He drank, he smoked. He caused a spot of trouble, broke a few bottles, and got blisteringly drunk.

The following morning, with a hangover telling him what an awful person he was and him not caring to hear, he noticed the little black speck again. Perhaps it was the residual bit of night left in his blood messing with him, but the speck looked just a little bit larger. Since it was finally Saturday again, he didn't have to get up for work. He did however, need to get up for other reasons. He stumbled to the bathroom, and quickly realized how badly he needed to throw up. It was easy by now. He had gotten good at it. The muscles in his body responded readily to the purging that was taking place. Muscle memory. No big deal.

He felt better now. Just empty. He ambled back to his bedroom, and noticed the black speck again. For sure, it looked bigger. Maybe even a little bigger than it was just even a few minutes before. It was definitely not a fly, that was easy to see at this point. But what was it?

He grabbed a flyswatter, thinking maybe it was a beetle caught in a web. He aimed his swing, and sliced the flyswatter through the air. It made a terrific little 'whoosh,' but it failed to fell the speck. He was still a little dizzy, so he thought that there's a good chance he missed it. He steadied himself and tried again. This time he was sure he hit it, but it didn't seem to move at all. He took another swing, sure he was going to get it this time. But no dice. The black speck remained unmoved. He reached up with the flyswatter, attempting to maybe nudge it, maybe knock it out of place. But when he touched the edge

of the flyswatter to the black speck, something peculiar happened. Instead of the black speck being pushed, the flyswatter seemed to slide right through. Like it wasn't really there.

He pulled the flyswatter back down. That's when he noticed what had happened. The edge had become misshapen, almost melted, but in the exact shape of the speck. He also noticed two small holes in the flyswatter, also about the same size as the irregularity in the edge.

This only annoyed him.

This meant the black speck would be there a while.

The next day was Sunday.

He didn't do anything.

At work on Monday, he spent as long as possible without turning on his computer. He just stared at a blank screen. It took 47 minutes for someone to notice.

On his way home, he picked up a bottle of red wine.

He stepped into his apartment and discovered the speck had grown. Considerably. It was now more a black baseball just floating in his bedroom. He could reach it now, but wasn't sure if he should touch it. He grabbed a book and tried to poke it. As the book touched the edge of the strange floating blackness, it passed right through, like there was nothing there. When he pulled the book back, he realized that the part of the book that had passed through the blackness, remained in the blackness. The book looked eaten, and what was more, was that the ball seemed to have grown. It actually seemed to be growing very slowly the more he watched it.

Very quickly he got bored and went to go do something else.

He popped the bottle of wine and sat thinking about his ex. He wondered what she was up to, then quickly decided he didn't care. If anything, he hoped she was miserable, and alone, and regretful. Mostly regretful.

He watched the first hour of "Man Bites Dog", then fell asleep on the couch again.

When he woke up in the middle of the night, as had become a custom, to get up and and go to bed, he discovered much to his frustration, that the ball had grown some more. So much so, that when he opened his bedroom door, part of it vanished into the blackness. He could even hear it now. A low pitched hum emanated from the blackness, filling the apartment.

He tried to shut the door, but half was now missing, taken in by the black bleakness. He tried to go back to sleep on the couch, but peace was impossible. The ball of blackness seemed to be peering out at him from his room, and the hum forced a constant reminder of its presence.

The daylight came.

He had not slept.

At work, he was miserable, but faked it like a pro. He feigned a smile whenever anyone would approach. He appeared open, even chatty to anyone who came by his desk. He almost enjoyed lying so successfully. It made it easier to have so much disdain, knowing how phony he was acting. His boss even commented on how much his demeanor seemed to have improved. He smiled and gave a generic response. He hated these people.

At lunch, he got drunk. No one noticed.

Back at home again, the ball was bigger. It now engulfed his entire bedroom. He took small amounts of pleasure tossing in mementos of his ex. Then when those ran out, he started tossing in other random objects. Plates, old food from the fridge, empty beer bottles... They disappeared into the blackness in silence. It was so big now it must be growing through the floor in the apartment above him, and probably the ceiling of the apartment below. It seemed to just grow and grow, slowly enveloping the world.

He carried a gun to work the next day.

He wasn't even sure why. The thought of shooting at his co-workers brought something strange. He suddenly felt something he hadn't in a while. What was that feeling? He couldn't be sure. He decided to fake being sick and go home early.

On his way home, he cried. He cried nonstop. He cried uncontrollably. He decided to try something. He decided he would put the gas pedal all the way to the floor, close his eyes and let go of the wheel, and count to ten. If he didn't crash...well...

1....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

6.....

7.....

8.....

9.....

.....IO.

He opened his eyes and put his hand back on the wheel. Somehow he hadn't crashed.

Somehow he was still alive.

He got home.

As he stood in the hallway of his apartment building, he wondered how big the ball would be now. He opened his door.

There it was.

It had completely taken over his entire apartment. There was nothing else there.

Just blackness.

Like his door opened to oblivion... to nothing.

He couldn't just stand in the hallway forever. He imagined how easy it would be to walk right in, have the darkness envelop him in its inviting cold void. It would make everything so much simpler. He could disappear in there, be gone, be done. No more work, no more drinking, no more tears, no more nothing.

But something was stopping him.

What was it? It was that same feeling he had had at work. He suddenly felt like he had a choice. There was the obvious, what felt like the inevitable choice, which was walk right in. It was his home after all. This was the life he had made. This was the existence he had created, or found himself in. This was who he was.

He paused, staring into the big ball of nothing that had taken over everything he knew. He stared deep into it, seeing himself reflected back. Or at least, someone that looked like him.

He took a deep breath....

...and closed the door.

He stood in the hallway a while, not sure where to go. There really was no plan anymore. Whatever was going to happen was going to happen.

He turned, and he left.

a dream

“I had a dream last night.
I dreamt that I saw her again,
and I told her I had forgiven her.
I was just so happy to see her again,
I cried and cried.
I hugged her so hard,
then we just went to lay down.
We were laying there on my bed,
arm in arm,
holding onto each other.

I was so happy.

Then I woke up.

She wasn’t there.

I just started crying.

I never felt more alone.”



yet another dialog

“My knuckles hurt this morning.
I feel like I was punching something all night.”

“That’s so funny, because my jaw really hurts this morning and I don’t know why.”

“That was pretty good.”

“Was that a smile?”

“No. Maybe.”

“I’m in shock.”

“What? That was funny.”

“You don’t have to make excuses to smile every now and then.”

“Then don’t point out it’s a rarity.”

The Sad Secret

“I need you to do me a favor.”

She whispered in my ear, waking me up. It was dark, just after midnight. I was completely disoriented.

“We’re not where we are,” I muttered.

“What?” She replied.

It took a moment to adjust, wake up, remember where I was. I was on the couch at our parents’ house. I hadn’t slept there in years.

“Oh wait. Yes we are,” I managed to say.

“I need you to do me a favor,” she repeated.

The quiet stillness of the night caught me off guard, especially combined with the fervor in her voice and the intensity in her eyes. It carried a severity to the situation that quickly brought me to full attention.

“What?”

I sat up.

She looked at me, put her hand on mine. She was my younger sister. Younger by a fair bit. 8 years. She could get away with the same level of intimacy all women could. Something simple, like human contact, that men don’t understand that makes a situation just that much more personal and meaningful. Honest is the word.

It was with that simple gesture, I knew I would do anything she needed from me.

“I need you to help me with something.”

“What?”

She’d been crying. We’d all been crying. It had been a sad day.

We buried her fiance that afternoon.

“I need you to come with me to the cemetery right now.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes.”

She didn’t need to say anything more. I stood, went to get dressed, then met her at the car. She stopped me at the door.

“There’s something else.”

“What?”

“I need you to help me dig him up.”

“What?!”

“Shhhh!”

It was still so quiet outside. My outburst was out of place for our surroundings.

“I need you to help me dig him up.”

“No.”

“I need this.”

“This is too much.”

“No, I need this.”

“Kristen.”

For some unknown reason, using names always felt a little weird. Like it was somehow too personal. It was her name, not mine to just use whenever.

“I NEED you to help me dig him up,” she pleaded.

“Kristen,” I repeated, hoping that one simple word would say everything it had to.

“He knows something.” It sounded like a confession crossed with a sales pitch.

“What do you mean?”

“He knows something. A secret.”

“What do you mean? What does he know?”

“I don’t know. It’s a secret. That’s what I have to find out.”

“Kristen.” The third time would not be a charm.

“Dean.”

She pleaded and retorted. So simple but so clear.

I was suddenly aware how the rest of my night would be spent.

We gathered some shovels, then got in the car. Neither of us spoke. The roads were empty.

We arrived, parked, gathered our tools, and marched solemnly, if not a bit clumsily to his grave. Neither of us had thought to bring a flashlight.

We arrived, set the tools down, and just stood.

“What’s this going to accomplish?” I asked her.

“I don’t know. He has a secret. I just want to find out what it is.”

“How do you know for sure he has a secret?”

“Because I know.”

She kneeled in front of his gravestone, then touched the name etched there, as if touching the stone words was the same as touching his face.

They had been perfect together. If there was ever a person I'd been not just OK with dating my little sister, but proud of it, it was him. Being a guy and knowing what little honor there lies in hearts of most men, I had been very protective of her. She was too sweet than to have to deal with all that bullshit. But he was different. He had a softness, a maturity beyond his years, an understanding. It seemed like he did know things, and what little he spoke seemed like but a fraction of what he might know. He seemed to see the world in a way that I wish I could've. So when she said to me that he knew a secret, there was a part of me that truly believed her. It was that part that stopped me from calling her crazy with grief. That part of me that almost made me anxious with curiosity. Even as he was now, could he tell us a secret? And if so, what could it be?

She turned after running her hands over the stone, then nodded to me. I picked up a shovel and started to dig.

The soil was soft, not packed, so the digging wasn't hard. For some reason, the cemetery on this night wasn't the least bit scary. The stillness of it gave the impression that all the other people buried there were watching with anticipation, hoping for us to find something, something we didn't know how to look for in any other way. The sunken eyes of hundreds giving us the encouragement to keep digging, keep looking for...

It wasn't long before we finally hit the coffin. That thud was like an explosion in the night, like an explosion in our souls.

We were there.

Wherever there was.

Like the hundreds buried nearby caught their non-existent breath.

We cleared off the coffin, then looked at each other.

Her eyes were destroyed. Like she had been railing against the universe in agony. Crying, screaming, fighting against the immensity of heartbreak in its purest. Loss in all forms all wrapped into one day. She had been defeated. She had to admit that despite all her valiant efforts to change the universe, she couldn't. And the universe was there to remind her of that. Despite giving her all, the overpoweringly huge and uncaring reality of the situation had in a way asked her...

"Is that all you got?"

And in her weakest and saddest moment, had to admit that, yes, that was all.

We prepared ourselves as well as we could, then pried open the lid.

There he was.

Still in a suit, like he was ready to go somewhere important.

But here he was, just as we left him.

I had no words, neither did she. We just sat looking at him, him not looking back.

I imagined him opening his eyes, him opening his mouth to confess some hidden truth to us. The sun was starting to rise. The sky not so dark anymore. Not one of the three of us moved an inch.

Then something happened.

It hit both of us at the same time. We grasped something nebulous, but quiet, the quiet truth that somehow speaks the loudest. Like a whisper screamed in your ear. But it wasn't something we could say in words. There just aren't words to convey some things.

This secret he told us in silence, and our sudden clarity when we understood, was like all the other deceased were nodding in silent approval. Both glad we knew, but sorry we had to learn.

So as the sun rose slowly, breaking the darkness, we sat. Arm in arm now, looking down at him, him still not looking back.

She started to cry again, then so did I. We did that until we were both empty of tears, at least, for that moment. Part of what we learned was that we'd never be completely empty. There would always be tears.

But for that moment, we were there, sitting arm in arm.

And that was all we could do.

So that's what we did.

almost the last one
this really happened

“Man, I think it’s time for you to move on. Just find a new girl to focus on, even if it’s only for a little while.”

“Well...there’s this girl at work.”

“Nice.”

“Yeah, and she’s really cute and smart and seems kinda cool. But uh....she’s kinda...”

“Fat.”

“No.”

“Bitchy, smelly, snatchy. What?”

“No. She’s just... I kinda get the feeling she’s only impressed by like, a fancy restaurant, a nice car. That kind of thing.”

“So snatchy.”

“Sure.”

“So hit on her. What if you’re wrong?”

“I try, but every time I try to be flirty, I get that Billy Joel song ‘Uptown Girl’ stuck in my head. Is that weird?”

“No. That’s gay. That girl is making you gay. Stay away from her. Stop worrying so much. Something’ll come along.”

“You just told me I’ve got to move on. Just find some random chick. Then a minute later, you tell me not to worry about anything.”

“Yeah, but you can’t listen to me. I’m stupid.”

Punctuation

There are moments in life that act as punctuation. Moments that define. Moments that give structure to what meandering run on sentences our lives can often feel like.

Question marks.

They can be both wonderful and horrible. Mostly horrible.

“Why did this happen?”
“Why did she leave me?”

Or -

“Where is this leading me?”
“What the fuck am I doing with my life?”

Intrigue or despair, but really mostly confusion, that's the question mark.

Periods.

The periods are often sad. Insert your favorite menstruation joke here. You have a favorite menstruation joke? Gross.

The periods, again, are often sad.

“She left me.”
“He died.”

The trick about periods is that they can occasionally turn a...

Comma.

Not an end of a sentence, but a meeting of two moments in time.

“I lost my job, but I found a better one.”
“I lost my job, but that shit hole burned down the next week anyway. I swear I wasn't involved.”
“She left me, but then I met someone better.”

The trick is to keep open to the idea that nothing is infinite. Era's end. Things change, just be open to that possibility. Periods can turn into commas so easily, it just can take time for it to become apparent. The really good ones though are the...

Exclamation Points.

These are the moments that punctuate like no other. These can be bad, as in:

“That fucker cheated on me!”

But thankfully, the most common kinds of exclamation points are the good kind.

“I got a raise!”

“She said she loves me!”

Those are the big exclamation points. Life changing ones. The little ones can be just as fun because they’re more everyday.

“She smiled at me!”

“I got her number!”

They’re victories, little ones, but victories nonetheless. These moments are more common, and can even be just little things that happen everyday. Just be open.

They may be the smallest part of your day, they could be a real rarity, just be prepared for something small to change everything in a big way.

a pair of quotes

“Am I happier depressed?
Wouldn’t that be fucked up?
I’m good at this, being miserable.
It’s familiar,
it’s comfortable.”
- me

&

“I’m gonna stab you with a knife made of happiness.”
- Sean

Self Portrait #1



one last freestanding quote

For those who cannot bear grief, and desire but to bathe in bliss,
the ambrosial potion of this greatest gift of life is a drink too strong.

- Joseph Campbell

-

The Saddest Moment Ever

I was sitting on the floor in my bathroom. I had been performing what I can now look back upon and call “experiments in mortality.” A belt was wrapped around my neck with the end suspended from the window above. It wasn’t enough to truly strangle me, but it definitely caused a fair amount of gagging. I tried to imagine what it would be like if the window were just a bit higher, high enough to keep me off balance, high enough to stop me from having anything to grab onto. But since that wasn’t the case, I needed something more.

I looked around and what I discovered closest to me, was my razor. Electric shavers had always irritated the hell out of me skin, so I always had blades handy.

That irony is almost perfect, beautiful even.

I broke it into a few pieces, the head of the razor now free of its stupid little handle that the manufacturers so carefully assemble. I wanted to make sure I had direct control over what was about to take place and not worry about making sure I had the handle at the right angle for “maximum whatever.”

I peered down at my wrists, examining them for the largest and most prominent veins. The phrase “down the road, not across the street” rang in my ears. Since anyone who was ever serious about suicide knows that slices across the wrist will bleed, but not very profusely. The wound has a good chance of scabbing over before you bleed to death. People with scars going across their wrists were never serious about doing the job right. More of a cry for help. Or maybe they’re just stupid. Either way, “across the road, not down the street” was a new mantra. I might have even spoken it aloud a few times, who knows.

I took a few moments to envision where I would make my move, sliding the blade through the air, like a golfer doing a few practice swings before stepping up to the tee. I had always thought I would never try slitting my wrists, that it would be just too slow, and possibly too painful. You might start, get one good cut in, and the stupid physical pain would stop you from going further. In a sense, I think I’d be afraid that after one slice, I’d bitch out. There’s realizing that what you’re doing is stupid and you don’t really want to kill yourself, and then there’s FAILING at it. That’s the last thing someone wants on their mind. There’s nothing more embarrassing than fucking up when you’re already at the bottom. For some reason, hanging had always been my preferred mode of suicide. Something about it is poetry. You die, but you die floating. Almost like drowning, but in the air, more like flying. Also, it’s pretty much a one way road. You try it, and the odds are, you succeed. Bitching out isn’t an option. I suppose that’s why I played with that idea first, as a test to see how serious I might be. But now here I was, on to option two. Now with the blade in hand, and a few “practice swings” under my belt (ha), I decided to give my wrist a test run. I placed the blade against my skin and slid it up towards my hand.

Now sadly, almost to my chagrin, it didn't cut, just scratched. So I reset myself for another go. At this point, I really wasn't sure what I was doing. Real true depression and sadness kind of blinds your intentions. Did I really want to die? The opportunity was there, the motives were clear, the "murder weapon" was in hand. I pressed down. Hard. Then slid up. This time it cut, and started to bleed right away. But anyone who's ever used a disposable razor knows that the little row of 3 blades are so tightly packed, it's really difficult to do anything very deep. You get a nick shaving and it'll bleed for most a few minutes. Well when you're genuinely trying to do some damage, it's actually quite difficult. So now I look at my wrist and realize that it's not one hard line that I expected, but 3 very thin lines with the blood kind of just meeting in the middle, making it look a lot worse than it was. It hurt, but really, not that bad. So I thought, (or didn't think, either way) "what the fuck, let's go again."

I proceeded to do a few rapid fire attacks. Now it started to hurt a lot more, and bleed in some random places. The damn razors had caught and cleared off any and all the hairs on the inside of my arm, which then stopped it from working as efficiently as it could have, which admittedly, wasn't all that much to begin with. My wrist at this point was awash in mostly ugly scrapes with a few good deep slashes. The weird part was that the scrapes hurt a hell of a lot more than the gashes did. Razor burn. Shitty. I quickly realized this wasn't going to be as dramatic as my aspirations had lead me to believe. Though again, I don't recall having a really clear objective. When you stay awake for 20 hours a day, things start to lose focus. Especially when you spend most of those 20 hours either drinking or crying. Sometimes both at the same time, it's more efficient that way.

Looking back, I'd say my objective was to feel something else. Something different. Something not misery. Physical pain is so much different than emotional pain. Externalizing what was internal. Getting something out of me, even if it was still on me. This was also right around the time I shaved my head for no apparent reason.

Mind fucks can show.

I figured at this point, I'd switch to the other wrist. I had started with my left hand on my right wrist, which is the weaker and more retarded hand, as all righties know. But at this point, the stupid fucking blade had accumulated so much hair, that all I could get out of it were a few decent strikes before realizing this was going nowhere slowly. I thought about washing the hairs off the blade and trying again, but I still had the damn belt around my neck and suspended from the window a foot above my head. Reaching the sink was impossible. And besides, this was stupid. I tossed the razor in the trash, undid the belt from my neck, and got up.

I stood in front of the mirror, my face an absolute mess. I started to think that my face would have permanent tear marks, like rivulets, allowing for more efficient balling. In this awful little moment, I thought that was hilarious. I really can't explain why.

I looked down at my wrists, the left one having a few tiny little slices here and there, but mostly just more razor burn. The right one being fairly bloody, but nothing life ending. I washed off what I could, then walked out of the bathroom. The only consolation I felt was that I hadn't bitched out, I had just gone in unprepared. Or maybe I accomplished what I set out to do. Feel something new. At least I was still alive.

I could feel it. Or at least, I felt something, whatever it was.

Looking back now, about a year later, I can name what the saddest moment ever really is. That title goes to the moment, the split second, that one instant that someone committing to suicide has when they suddenly realize that really, truly, sincerely, and genuinely... that's that. That moment goes on for an eternity. In it, the thoughts that run through your mind are everywhere all at once. You think, yes, my pain will go away here shortly. But also, and the real sadness comes in here, you realize that you'll never do anything, anything ever again.

In this little moment, stillness finds you. You kick the chair out from under you to dangle from a rope, you make those deep gashes on your wrists, you swallow those pills, you take that leap...and just for a second, quite possibly one of the last seconds you'll ever know, you'll experience the saddest moment ever. There really are some wonderfully beautiful things to experience in the world. But you'll never get there. You're here, in this moment, your last. You'll feel something you didn't anticipate when you made that plan.

Regret.

The worst regret anyone could ever know.

That feeling is you knowing quite suddenly, that regardless of how much pain you were in before, you just fucked up. And in the worst way, you want to take it back.

But you can't.

You're done, kid. All she wrote. You're just a set of dates, birth and death.

So now what?

Heartbreak straight fucks with a person like nothing. You break a leg, and it'll be some time before you walk again. You break your heart, it'll be some time before you do anything again.

You can drown in sorrow. But try to breath. It may be dark where you are, but you'll see the sun again. And now, the sun will be so much brighter because of how it contrasts with that darkness.

You went sailing, and fucking hell, your boat sunk. It sucks, and I'm sorry. Truly I am. You may spend some time down at the bottom of the ocean, feeling lost, seeing nothing, feeling nothing but the coldness that only exists at the bottom of the ocean, struggling with the isolation it forces, but eventually, you'll float to the surface. You'll go sailing again. Maybe the waters will look more troubled to you, but you'll get your sea legs back. You will.

An important last note to make:

Don't be afraid to be sad. Don't be afraid to miserable sometimes. Don't be afraid to be crazy. The more honest you are with yourself, how you are, how you feel, the better you'll be. Don't pretend you can take it, don't pretend everything is OK when it obviously isn't. You're not doing yourself any favors. If you're hurt, be hurt for a while. Eventually you might get sick of feeling like shit, and you'll want to be better, be ready for something new, but you just won't be. You may want to let it go, but really, it's holding onto you.

Make sure though that you are willing to let the hurt go. Being comfortable in misery is entirely too easy. I got really good at it. Be aware that after a while, the only thing stopping you from moving on is you.

I'm still kicking a year later. The scars on my wrist still show, but they stopped bleeding long ago.

I'll end with a simple quote from something that kept me alive even when I was experiencing the saddest year of my life.

“With all its sham, drudgery, and broken dreams,
it is still a beautiful world.

Be careful.

Strive to be happy.”
- Desiderata

In a Field

