

Efil Ym

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That fact that you are reading this is a miracle. And, maybe, you can derive some interest or enjoyment out of the idea that your seeing eyes were never meant for this parchment. That being said, you should know that I did not write this story with you in mind. Honestly, I never wanted anyone to read this piece — it is not meant for an audience and, at the time I wrote it, I was unaware that there was an audience which was physically capable of reading it. I wrote this story for myself — to pass time in the eternity in which I now live. Thus, I hope you are not searching for an epiphany or surprise ending because I have none in store for you. I know my ending... Holding her in my arms. So if you are searching for a revelation about life you should just stop reading now, for it is not coming. As I said before, I am not writing for your interest. I write for myself — to go back to how things once were.

I died.

My eyes rolled out of the back of my head and gazed upward at the winter sky. In the sea of grey I saw nothing — how quickly the sun can hide away. There were no bright lights poking through, no friendly faces in the clouds, no comforting sounds from above. There was nothing; nothing. Just a despondent stretch of grey that, together with the snow-covered ground, created a bleak box in which I crawled between Heaven and Earth.

"...0...0...0..." I drowned in grey and empty sighs were all I could manage as my tears sunk backward into the ducts from which they came.

"Ok you are," asked a man who was applying pressure on my chest with his hand. My eyes rolled around in their sockets and the treetops spun in a motionless sky. I blinked a few times, calming my senses, and I saw that there were people standing all around me, gasping down at me with pity painted on their eyes. My eyes shifted downward toward my chest. Beads of sweat moved up my sides as I looked at the large lesion on the left side of my chest, which seemed to be absorbing blood out of the snow beneath me.

"Cold I'm." I shivered as I surveyed the sights of those around me. Finding no solace in their eyes, I glared upward and, for the first time, noticed the indifference of the grey sky. The sky was blind art — sheets of empty canvas, untouched sheets of clay, and all of it bathed in grey. I thought that I may not be in his painting, as she had never been in one of my paintings, and I wished I could have painted her for she was the night's sky personified, but I never knew where to start. Slowly, I closed my eyes and my mind went blank; grey.

When I opened my eyes there was no one around me. Silence and emptiness filled the park — a classroom on Sunday, the beach in the winter, or my studio where I used to paint. In the distance, a single voice yelled out, "Go... Run," but I was paralyzed in the grey snow and could not move. A siren sounded from an infinite distance away and my eyes shifted to a bouquet of flowers that lay in the snow beside me. The flowers were a radiant still life sitting on apathetic snow. At that moment, I realized how to paint her, but it was too late — I lacked the strength and the colors to carryout my vision. Suddenly, I could hear voices close to me.

"Run. Fuck," a loud deep voice exclaimed. I could hear the panting of at least two other people as their breath was compounded by the weight of the air creating a crashing sound of combusting winds. But a force kept me stuck in the snow like a dying summer tree. I coughed, spitting up some blood onto my chin.

"Hhhha," I groaned as I felt the cold metal deep inside my rib cage. It was a chilling sensation — an unclothed man in the artic, an abandoned child in the city, a deer on the side of a highway. I was writhing in the snow when a force lifted me from the ground back onto my feet. The bullet, which had burrowed deep inside the left half of my chest, shot out of my body, closing the wound behind it, and flew directly back into the barrel of a gun that was unmistakably ready to fire upon me. The bouquet of flowers that rested on the grey snow defied the laws of gravity and levitated up into my right hand. I grasped them tightly as I

watched the man with the gun.

"Wallet and keys." The gun seemed to talk for him as his face was entirely concealed by its barrel. I fixated on the eye of the gun – a circular canvas covered in black. In the darkness I saw everything – a black spot that revealed my life to me. I saw paintings - *Starry Night*, *Still Life with a Hare*, *Irises*, and *St. George and the Dragon*. I saw my father holding my mother on our red leather couch, his tiny cartoon figures strewn about on loose-leaf paper. But most of all, I saw her. She stood in a triangular room, surrounded by three walls which were painted with a sparkling 54 carrot gold paint that twinkled brighter than the stars as light washed over it. Her blue eyes led to her black pupils – binoculars to her heart – and I could see for certain what I already knew. How I wanted to step closer to her; to hold her there. But she was in the black of the barrel and could not be held. My hands shook beneath the clouds as I vanished, like a ghost, out of her life, into the grey metal of the gun.

Slowly, the tiny man lowered the gun back into his jacket – a falling black star in an expanding sky. The two men who had surrounded me backed away from my sides and I, without turning around, walked away from them. My hands, no longer trembling, grasped the bouquet of flowers and held them tightly against the left side of my chest. The air seemed to immediately warm up, as if I had moved outside in, and tiny beams of light poked through the sheet of grey. Walking backwards, I watched as the men faded into the horizon, into nonexistence, and I smelled the bouquet of flowers.

The bouquet was a heavenly mixture of the freshest yellow roses, hypericum berries, orange carnations, and faux mini apples. She would have loved them, but I could not bring them back with me, for I had not had them when I left. As I walked backward through the streets, I passed the same sidewalk flower vendor and returned the incandescent bouquet. Then I walked backward all the way home.

Standing at my front door, my eyes shifted toward the sky. The clouds had split apart, making the sky an impressionist painting of unmixed primary colors – blue in the backdrop, red in the clouds, and yellow in the tiny beams of small strokes that simulated actual reflected light. I gasped at the perfection in the painting as it filled me with reds, oranges, and yellows until I could no longer restrain myself. Turning around and walking forward, I opened my front door.

The sizzling of bacon on a frying pan and soft hums resonated from the kitchen as I stood in the main hall surrounded by vivid watercolors that obscured the grey walls. I moved toward the sound; walking through my studio I passed the half drawn figures, clumps of clay, and the full cans of paint. When I arrived at the kitchen I saw her.

She was wrapped in a dress of tertiary colors standing in front of a manila stove. She turned and focused her eyes on me. The presence in her black pupils made my heart skip a beat. I moved toward her with my arms out.

"Goodbye," she whispered as she took a step closer to me. Her eyes flashing like a beacon as I moved closer and closer.

"Goodbye," I managed as I draped my arms over her shoulders. "You love," she whispered in my ear as I held her tightly against my chest - her dress bathing me in impossible shades of green, yellow, violet, and red. And that is my ending; that is my life. Happiness in a tragic tale; the way things once were – an impossible painting forever etched onto a timeless canvas, which I keep with me in eternity.