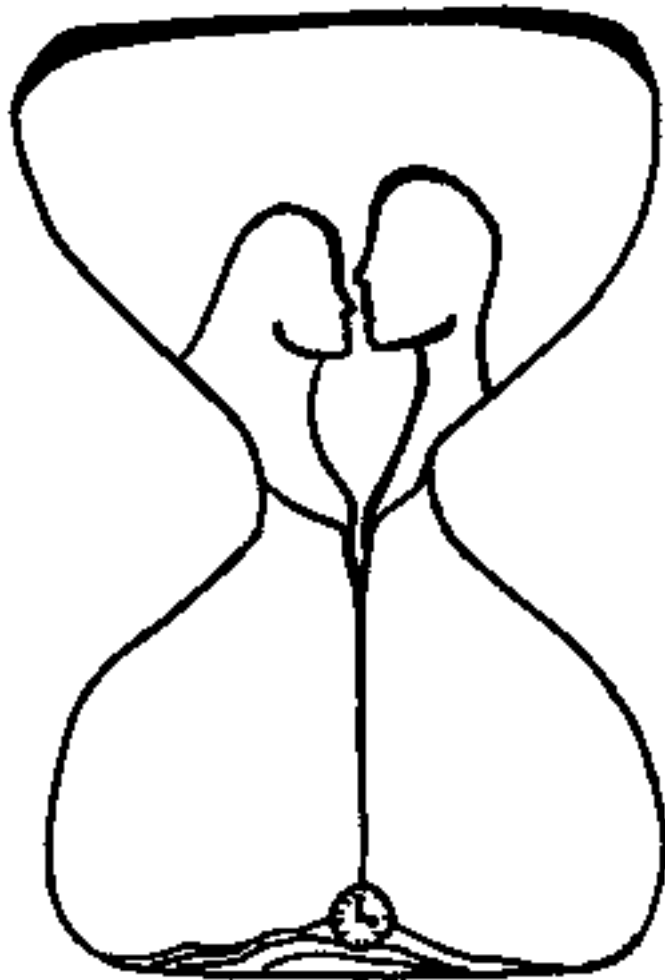


Time once loved
the familiar house of a strangers mind,
and where love can escape,
they may meet again



Elea-Maria Abisamra

Wednesday, February 26th, 2019

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Time : Draft 1

I met a man today, his name was time. I suppose I can't really say we met for that implies we interacted. We did not. I simply watched him all day, and the more I watched, the more I felt like I knew him.

His hair was young but grey, matching his complexion of a fifty year old. His eyes, blue. Competing with the depth of the ocean, and complementing the aura of the sky. He wore a white shirt under a light grey vest, or mid spectrum, to be exact, with six buttons paralleled down the lining of his stomach. Over them was his darker colored grey jacket, but still along the mid spectrum of the color. The slim fit suit jacket was decorated with a deep blue handkerchief on his left chest, matching the blue on his tie that pushed up against the beating pulse of his neck. His shoes were the darkest shade of black. Perhaps, it would be safer to say that they were beyond the shade and seemed to resemble the essence of black, itself, for they encaptured the beauty of darkness so pure it seemed too surreal to be but a mere color subjective to but another accessory. He did not wear the shoes, the shoes wore him. They had a Derby Dress, Italian, genuine black leather design, with articulate designs engraved all along the sides, so purposeful it was as if they were drawn by the wind.

He did not wear a watch on his wrist, but rather carried a pocket watch that dangled from a silver, iron chain. Roman numeral numbers danced around the inside of the case. The outer part of the case was consumed by the same designs of his shoes, also seeming to echo the language of the wind. He held the chain like it was a part of him. It moved as he moved. It breathed and he breathed. It roamed as he roamed with the same will of mind that captivated the world. He spun it around in circled rotations, and he and the clock never stopped moving. So there he was, in broad daylight, walking around the Seattle lake, with grey hair, blue eyes, a grey suit, silver watch and a glass heart. Or so, that is what appeared. For he was a being who showed no compassion to anyone or anything. Someone who never paused time for anyone. Wasn't he?

I watched him, but I also watched everyone around him. And no one stopped once for him, either. No person stopped to greet him, to understand him. To see beyond the glass heart their minds were prisoners to. They all murmured along the stringed line of the screaming silence that encircled his presence. *There's not enough time, it's not fair, or time is passing too slowly, or why can't I turn back time?* Everyone was judging someone they could not understand. If only they could imagine, that time showed compassion. And it took such a strong essence to stand tall and not let his emotions get in the way of his job.

Time once loved : Draft 2

I met a man today, his name was time. I suppose I can't really say we met for that implies we interacted. We did not. I simply watched him all day, and the more I watched, the more I felt like I knew him.

His hair was young but grey, matching his complexion of a fifty year old. His eyes, blue. Competing with the depth of the ocean, and complementing the aura of the sky. He wore a white shirt under a light grey vest, or mid spectrum, to be exact, with six buttons paralleled down the lining of his stomach. Over them was his darker colored grey jacket, but still along the mid spectrum of the color. The slim fit suit jacket was decorated with a deep blue handkerchief on his left chest, matching the blue on his tie that pushed up against the beating pulse of his neck. His shoes were the darkest shade of black. Perhaps, it would be safer to say that they were beyond the shade and seemed to resemble the essence of black, itself, for they encaptured the beauty of darkness so pure it seemed too surreal to be but a mere color subjective to but another accessory. He did not wear the shoes, the shoes wore him. They had a Derby Dress, Italian, genuine black leather design, with articulate designs engraved all along the sides, so purposeful it was as if they were drawn by the wind.

He did not wear a watch on his wrist, but rather carried a pocket watch that dangled from a silver, iron chain. Roman numeral numbers danced around the inside of the case. The outer part of the case was consumed by the same designs of his shoes, also seeming to echo the language of the wind. He held the chain like it was a part of him. It moved as he moved. It breathed and he breathed. It roamed as he roamed with the same will of mind that captivated the world. He spun it around in circled rotations, and he and the clock never stopped moving. So there he was, in broad daylight, walking around the Seattle lake, with grey hair, blue eyes, a grey suit, silver watch and a glass heart. Or so, that is what appeared. For he was a being who showed no compassion to anyone or anything. Someone who never paused a moment for anyone. Wasn't he?

I watched him, but I also watched everyone around him. And no one stopped once for him, either. No person stopped to greet him, to understand him. To see beyond the glass heart their minds were prisoners to. They all murmured along the stringed line of the screaming silence that encircled his presence. *There's not enough time, it's not fair, or time is passing too slowly, or why can't I turn back time and change things?* Everyone was judging someone they could not understand. If only they could imagine, that time showed compassion, and that that very compassion seemed to be the death of him. And it took such a strong essence to stand tall and not let his emotions get in the way of his job. If you stop every moment of time to fit every humans' need, the world would cease to go on. So how could he choose which requests to accept—which people to bend the rules for? Which mother could get another hour with her son. Or which man could go back in time to marry the right woman. Which situation to erase in time—which murder or battle fought in vain. How could he choose who had the *right* to control time? He did not. And so, his steps were as constant as the angry eyes that followed his path, but unlike what everyone seemed to believe, he saw everything. But even

in the pain he felt for everyone else's sadness, he kept walking. For he knew that he was one thing in such an imperfect world that must not fall into the trap of pleasing others, for he could not please everyone. So the only thing he could do was be an anchor, a baseline. A constant. And even though he was an anchor, he rose everyone up from the ashes they would have been limited to. For if time could go on through everything, they could too.

I watched people judge him and dwell and dwell. But I also watched people go on with their lives, walking towards their own paths. Never stopping. And there he was, a man with a glass heart, holding himself together, even though he was in pieces.

I went to see him again today, Time. He seemed limitless. The moments I saw him as I was standing alone, seemed to last forever, digging into my soul with every fragment of his being. Yet, it all passed in a blink. People judged him for their incapability of controlling time, but the truth is, they do. He did not stop walking, but the way everything around him met his touch was different. The ground beneath his feet endured the soft gliding against its touch, where as an ant roaming around heard him as a roar beating within its being, and ultimately was constantly crushed by his echoing step. The core of the earth may have sensed him, but he was too insignificant to its heart to feel his steps millions of miles away. I was there, watching him. But I did not feel him, not once. I felt one with him, but I did not feel him traveling through my veins. And so he and I were one as the day turned to night, and my stare did not leave his essence, once. Every single thing around him encountered him in a different way, so in a sense, controlling our interactions with time made him subjective to each of our minds. People can control time, it only depends on who they choose to be in respect towards him. The center of the earth, miles away, or the handkerchief that feels the constant beat of his heart, second after second, drowning in the music of his infinite movement.

Time once loved : Draft 3

I met a man today, his name was time. I suppose I can't really say we met for that implies we interacted. We did not. I simply watched him all day, and the more I watched, the more I felt like I knew him.

His hair was young but grey, matching his complexion of a fifty year old. His eyes, blue. Competing with the depth of the ocean, and complementing the aura of the sky. He wore a white shirt under a light grey vest, or mid spectrum, to be exact, with six buttons paralleled down the lining of his stomach. Over them was his darker colored grey jacket, but still along the mid spectrum of the color. The slim fit suit was decorated with a deep blue handkerchief on his left chest, matching the blue on his tie that pushed up against the beating pulse of his neck. His shoes were the darkest shade of black. Perhaps, it would be safer to say that they were beyond the shade and seemed to resemble the essence of the color, itself, for they encaptured the beauty of darkness so pure it seemed too surreal to be but a mere shade subjective to but another accessory. He did not wear the shoes, the shoes wore him. They had a Derby Dress, Italian, genuine black leather design, with articulate designs engraved all along the sides, so purposeful it was as if they were drawn by the wind.

He did not wear a watch on his wrist, but rather carried a pocket watch that dangled from a silver, iron chain. Roman numeral numbers danced around the inside of the case. The outer part of the case was consumed by the same designs of his shoes, also seeming to echo the language of the wind. He held the chain like it was a part of him. It moved as he moved. It breathed as he breathed. It roamed as he roamed with the same will of mind that captivated the world. He spun it around in circled rotations, and he and the clock never stopped moving. So there he was, in broad daylight, walking around a bench with a view of the Seattle lake, with grey hair, blue eyes, a grey suit, silver watch and a glass heart. Or so, that is what appeared. For he was a being who showed no compassion to anyone or anything. Someone who never paused a moment for anyone. Wasn't he?

I watched him, but I also watched everyone around him. And no one stopped once for him, either. No person stopped to greet him, to understand him. To see beyond the glass heart their minds were prisoners to. They all murmured along the stringed line of the screaming silence that encircled his presence. *There's not enough time, it's not fair, or time is passing too slowly, or why can't I turn back time and change things?* Everyone was judging something they could not understand. If only they could imagine, that time showed compassion, and that that very compassion seemed to be the death of him. And it took such a strong essence to stand tall and not let his emotions get in the way of his job. If you stop every moment of time to fit every humans' need, the world would cease to go on. So how could he choose which requests to accept—which people to bend the rules for? Which mother could get another hour with her son. Or which man could go back in time to marry the right woman. Which situation to erase in time—which murder or battle fought in vain. How could he choose who had the *right* to bend the strings of time that were sewn and sewn to make his being? He did not. And so, his steps were as constant as the angry eyes that followed his path,

but unlike what everyone seemed to believe, he saw everything, felt everything. But even in the pain he felt for everyone else's sadness, he kept walking. For he knew that he was one thing in such an imperfect world that must not fall into the trap of pleasing others, for he could not please everyone. So the only thing he could do was be an anchor, a baseline. A constant. And even though he was an anchor, he rose everyone up from the ashes they would have been limited to. For if time could go on through everything, they could too.

I watched people judge him and dwell and dwell. But I also watched those people stop focusing on him, and walk away, going on with their lives, walking towards their own paths. Never stopping. And there he was, a man with a glass heart, holding the world together, even though he was in pieces.

I went to see him again today, Time. He seemed limitless. The moments I saw him as I was standing alone, seemed to last forever, digging into my soul with every fragment of his being. Yet, it all passed in a blink. People judged him for their incapability of controlling time, but the truth is, I seemed to discover that they do. He did not stop walking, but the way everything around him met his touch was different. The ground beneath his feet endured the soft gliding against its chest, where as an ant roaming around heard him as a roar beating within its being, and ultimately was constantly crushed by his echoing step. The core of the earth may have sensed him, but he was too insignificant to its heart to feel his steps millions of miles away. I was there, watching him. His every move and calculated steps. I felt one with him, and so he and I were one as the day turned to night, and my stare did not leave his essence, not once. Every single thing around him encountered him in a different way, so in a sense, controlling the interactions with time made him subjective to each mind.

There was a little child, running around the park behind the lake. About eight years old, with pigtails on either side of her curved ears, melting into her angelic being. Her pure heart fueled her laughter with a contagious type of happiness, as she was running around everywhere. She found herself admiring a sparrow bird, light brown at its core with golden stripes armouring its perfection. Its darkened black beak held by a yellow-golden border, flowing into the golden cheeks that differentiated him to her from all else. She walked towards the lake, with time pacing at her left, but she was so lost in beauty that she did not even acknowledge the man beside her. She allowed herself to get lost in time, controlling the world as she knew it.

But there was a young man in black, returning from the wedding that he should not have allowed to occur in the first place. His eyes, red, as if to show how his heart was bleeding. He walked on the trail near the park, and stopped to stare at Time, meters and meters away. The man in black was breathing heavily, but his world became a snail, walls of protection raised as the blood in his aortic veins pushed against their walls at the pace that Time walked. One, two, three... every single second was felt in a certain depth that made him feel dead. It was poison for his mind, for he kept thinking, beating himself up for letting a person he loved get away. So he was about a forth of a kilometer away from Time, but he felt him with every fiber of his hollow being. As the young, little girl, walked right next to Time and was so lost in her own world, she felt nothing.

People can control time, not in the sense that they turn him or push him forward, but they control their perception, and it only depends on who they choose to be in respect towards him. The center of the earth, miles away, or the handkerchief that feels the constant beat of his heart, second after second, drowning in the music of his infinite movement.

On the third day, I came back in the morning. And I also left at the same time. It was a very peculiar day, the sky was a painting. Clouds were encircling the blue like a baby, swaying back and forth through the realms of authenticity. You could make a circle with one hand, raised at the azure, and look through it as if seeing perfection. Surreal, perfection. That is what it felt to be a decoration on a masterpiece with fresh paint.

After a few hours, I could tell that Time was bothered by all the people that came his way, only looking for something to blame. Anything other than themselves. It was as if I could read their minds, they were all shouting. A woman who had been fired from her job earlier from arriving hours late, *What is wrong with you?* A broken hearted girl who rejected the one she wanted, *Why can't I get another chance?* A young boy who skipped class and got a suspension, *Why is the hour too long?* And a man who was walked in on by his partner that morning with another love, *If I could just go back everything would be different, even just for a moment.* Everyone was looking at him, but they weren't seeing him. They were seeing what they wanted to. And so, when he paused for a moment, looking their way, I was the only one who noticed. They were all frozen in their own minds. So when the world itself paused and he walked backwards, I was the only one who felt it all. Because I was the only one who saw him, and I mean really, truly, honestly saw him. I understood him in the way that everyone else chose not to. He paused for a split second, and walked backwards, retracing his steps as anger evaporated from the unraveling tears in his eyes. The sands of time fell back into the hourglass as it tipped sideways in the visions of my mind. I looked at the hour on my phone, as the frozen world peacefully caressed my eyes, and watched Time turned the clock from twelve, to eleven in the morning, to ten, to nine, to eight, to seven in the morning of the day before. And then he stopped. My hair ceased to fly all around my face. I looked up from my phone, only to find all of the people who were once staring at him, gone. They all went back to wherever they were in the morning, another chance to live a few hours. I suppose I did not travel back because I was awake as he turned the sands of time, until the hourglass had finally settled as before.

He paused, again, and began walking forward in his usual, oval-like routine. There were barely any people in the park, it was all adults running on the trail leading into the woods, individual and unconnected. Except for this one older couple, mid-70s as they walked hand in hand, smiling at each other. I sat on the bench near me, and watched. The painting in the sky unravelled for me during the hours that passed.

But as the minutes passed, and the hour turned to three in the afternoon, when I first came the previous day, nothing changed. The little girl still ran after the bird. The man in black still walked reluctantly, emptily, as he was carried by his broken, bloody heart that escaped into his eyes. I left, and came back the next day. But again, nothing changed. The

woman who was fired still came, screaming. The girl never told the person she loved them, still asking for a redo. The high school boy was still suspended. The man still cheated, pleading for another chance. But they all got another chance, and would never know it went to waste. Time blocked them out, I saw him with pitiless agony draining the heart in his eyes. He kept walking, going on. And the world would never know of his questions as he remained silent. *Why didn't you live up to your responsibilities and show up on time? Why couldn't you be honest with someone you loved when you had the chance? Why didn't you choose to take a course you liked? Why did you ruin everything with the one you loved for a momentarily feel-good moment? Why did any of you think that I am the reason why you fell short of having the life you wanted? You fell short because of your doing.* Time is a measure of choices, and reliving the same one did not seem to change anything, at all. I left at 12:30 in the afternoon. One hour and a half of me technically being there, was in its essence, two days.

Time once loved : Draft 4

I met a man today, his name was time. I suppose I can't really say we met for that implies we interacted. We did not. I simply watched him all day, and the more I watched, the more I felt like I knew him.

His hair was young but grey, an unusual complement to a fifty year old. His eyes, blue. Competing with the depth of the ocean, and complementing the aura of the sky. He wore a white shirt under a light grey vest, or mid spectrum, to be exact, with six buttons paralleled down the lining of his stomach. Over them was his darker colored grey jacket, but still along the mid spectrum of the color. The slim fit suit was decorated with a deep blue handkerchief on his left chest, matching the blue on his tie that pushed up against the beating pulse of his neck. His shoes were the darkest shade of black. Perhaps, it would be safer to say that they were beyond the shade and seemed to resemble the essence of the color, itself, for they encaptured the beauty of darkness so pure it seemed too surreal to be but a mere shade subjective to but another accessory. He did not wear the shoes, the shoes wore him. They had a Derby Dress, Italian, genuine black leather design, with articulate designs engraved all along the sides, so purposeful it was as if they were drawn by the wind.

He did not wear a watch on his wrist, but rather carried a pocket watch that dangled from a silver, iron chain. Roman numeral numbers danced around the inside of the case. The outer part of the case was consumed by the same designs of his shoes, also seeming to echo the language of the wind. He held the chain like it was a part of him. It moved as he moved. It breathed as he breathed. It roamed as he roamed with the same will of mind that captivated the world. He spun it around in circled rotations, and he and the clock never stopped moving. So there he was, in broad daylight, walking around a bench with a view of the Seattle lake, with grey hair, blue eyes, a grey suit, silver watch and a glass heart. Or so, that is what appeared. For he was a being who showed no compassion to anyone or anything. Someone who never paused a moment for anyone. Wasn't he?

I watched him, but I also watched everyone around him. And no one stopped once for him, either. No person stopped to greet him, to understand him. To see beyond the glass heart their perception were prisoners to. They all murmured along the stringed line of the screaming silence that encircled his presence. *There's not enough time, it's not fair, or time is passing too slowly, or why can't I turn back time and change things?* Everyone was judging something they could not understand. If only they could imagine, that time showed compassion, and that that very compassion seemed to be the death of him. And it took such a strong essence to stand tall and not let his emotions get in the way of his job. If you stop every moment of time to fit every humans' need, the world would cease to go on. So how could he choose which requests to accept—which people to bend the rules for? Which mother could get another hour with her son. Or which man could go back in time to marry the right woman. Which situation to erase in history—which murder or battle fought in vain. How could he choose who had the *right* to bend the strings of time that were sewn and sewn to make his being? He did not. And so, his steps were as constant as the angry eyes that

followed his path, but unlike what everyone seemed to believe, he saw everything, felt everything. But even in the pain he felt for everyone else's sadness, he kept walking. For he knew that he was one thing in such an imperfect world that must not fall into the trap of pleasing others, for he could not please everyone. So the only thing he could do was be an anchor, a baseline. A constant. And even though he was an anchor, he rose everyone up from the ashes they would have been limited to. For if time could go on through everything, they could too.

I watched people judge him and dwell and dwell, but I also watched those people let it go, walk away, and go on with their lives. Never stopping. And there he was, a man with a glass heart, holding the world together, even though he was in pieces.

I went to see him again today, Time. He seemed limitless. The moments I saw him as I was standing alone, seemed to last forever, digging into my soul with every fragment of his being. Yet, it all passed in a blink. People judged him for their incapability to control a clock, but the truth is, I seemed to discover that they do, indeed, have control. The ground beneath his feet endured the soft gliding against its chest, where as an ant roaming around heard him as a roar beating within its being, and ultimately was constantly crushed by his echoing step. The core of the earth may have sensed him, but he was too insignificant to feel his steps millions of miles away. Everything encountered him in a different way, so in a sense, controlling the interactions with Time made him subjective to each mind.

There was a little child, running around the park behind the lake. About eight years old, with pigtails on either side of her curved ears, melting into her angelic being. Her pure heart fueled her laughter with a contagious type of happiness, as she was running around everywhere. She found herself admiring a sparrow bird, light brown at its core with golden stripes armouring its perfection. Its darkened black beak held by a yellow-golden border, flowing into the golden cheeks that differentiated him to her from all else. She walked towards the lake, with time pacing at her left, but she was so lost in beauty that she did not even acknowledge the man beside her. She allowed herself to get lost in time, controlling the world as she knew it.

But there was a young man in black, returning from the wedding that he should not have allowed to occur in the first place. His eyes, red, as if to show how his heart was bleeding. He walked on the trail near the park, and stopped to stare at Time, meters and meters away. The man in black was breathing heavily, but his world became a snail, walls of protection raised as the blood in his aortic veins pushed against their walls at the pace that Time walked. One, two, three... every single second was felt in a certain depth that made him feel dead. It was poison for his mind, for he kept thinking, beating himself up for letting a person he loved get away. So he was about a forth of a kilometer away from Time, but he felt him with every fiber of his hollow being. As the young, little girl, walked right next to Time and was so lost in her own world, she felt nothing.

People can control time, not in the sense that they rewind him or push him forward, but they control their perception, and it only depends on who they choose to be in respect

towards him. The center of the earth, miles away, or the handkerchief that feels the constant beat of his heart, second after second, drowning in the music of his infinite movement.

On the third day, I came back in the morning, a bit past eleven. After a few hours, I could tell that Time was bothered by all the people that came his way, only looking for something to blame. Anything other than themselves. It was as if I could read their minds, they were all shouting. A woman who had been fired from her job earlier from arriving hours late, *What is wrong with you?* A broken hearted girl who rejected the one she wanted, *Why can't I get another chance?* A young boy who skipped class and got a suspension, *Why is the hour too long?* And a man who was walked in on by his partner that morning with another love, *If I could just go back everything would be different, even just for a moment.* Everyone was looking, but they were seeing what they wanted to. And so, when he paused for a moment, looking their way, I was the only one who noticed. They were all frozen in their own minds. So when the world itself paused and he walked backwards, I was the only one who felt it all. Because I was the only one who saw him, and I mean really, truly, honestly saw him. I understood him in the way that everyone else chose not to. He paused for a split second, and walked backwards, retracing his steps as anger evaporated from the unraveling tears in his eyes. I could imagine it all in my mind—the sands of time falling back into the hourglass as it tipped sideways. I looked at the hour on my phone, as the frozen world peacefully caressed my eyes, and watched Time turned the clock from twelve, to eleven in the morning, to ten, to nine, to eight, to seven in the morning of the day before. And then he stopped. My hair ceased to fly all around my face. I looked up from my phone, only to find those who were once staring at him, gone. They all went back to wherever they were in the morning, another chance to live a few hours. I suppose I did not travel back because I was awake as he turned the sands of time, until the hourglass had finally settled as before.

He paused, again, and began walking forward in his usual, oval-like routine. There were barely any people in the park, it was all adults running on the trail leading into the woods, individual and unconnected. Except for this one older couple, mid-70s as they walked hand in hand, smiling at each other. I sat on the bench near me, and watched. The painting in the sky unravelled for me during the hours that passed.

But as the minutes passed, and the hour turned to three in the afternoon, when I first came the previous day, nothing changed. The little girl still ran after the bird. The man in black still walked reluctantly, carried by his broken, bloody heart that escaped into his eyes. I left, and came back the next day. But again, nothing changed. The woman was still fired and came, screaming. The girl never confessed her feelings, still asking for a redo. The boy was still suspended. The man still cheated, pleading for another chance. But they all got another chance, and would never know it went to waste. Time blocked them out, I saw him with pitiless agony draining the heart in his eyes. He kept walking, going on. And the world would never know of his questions as he remained silent. *Why didn't you show up when you were supposed to? Why couldn't you be honest with someone you loved when you had the chance? Why can't you learn patience? Why did you ruin everything with the one you loved for a momentary pleasure? Why did any of you think that I am the reason why you fell short of*

having the life you wanted? You fell short because of your doing. Time is a measure of choices, and reliving the same one did not seem to change anything, at all. I left at 12:30 in the afternoon. One hour and a half of me technically being there, was in its essence, two days.

Time once loved : Draft 5

I met a man today, his name was Time. I suppose I can't really say we met for that implies we interacted. We did not. I simply watched him all day, and the more I watched, the more I felt like I knew him.

His hair was young, thick and soft like honey, but grey, an unusual complement to a fifty year old. His eyes, blue. Competing with the depth of the ocean, and complementing the aura of the sky. He wore a white shirt under a light grey vest, or mid spectrum, to be exact, with six buttons paralleled down the lining of his stomach. Over them was his darker colored grey jacket, but still along the mid spectrum of the color. The slim fit suit was decorated with a deep blue handkerchief on his left chest, matching the blue on his tie that pushed up against the beating pulse of his neck. His shoes were the darkest shade of black. Perhaps, it would be safer to say that they were beyond the shade and seemed to resemble the essence of the color, itself, for they encaptured the beauty of darkness so pure it seemed too surreal to be but a mere shade subjective to but another accessory. He did not wear the shoes, the shoes wore him. They had a Derby Dress, Italian, genuine black leather design, with articulate designs engraved all along the sides, so purposeful it was as if they were drawn by the wind.

He did not wear a watch on his wrist, but rather carried a pocket watch that dangled from a silver, iron chain. Roman numeral numbers danced around the inside of the case. The outer part of the case was consumed by the same designs of his shoes, also seeming to echo the language of the wind. He held the chain like it was a part of him. It moved as he moved. It breathed as he breathed. It roamed as he roamed with the same will of mind that captivated the world. He spun it around in circled rotations, and he and the clock never stopped moving. So there he was, in broad daylight, walking around a bench with a view of the Seattle lake, with grey hair, blue eyes, a grey suit, silver watch and a glass heart. Or so, that is what appeared. For he was a being who showed no compassion to anyone or anything. Someone who never paused a moment for anyone. Wasn't he?

I watched him, but I also watched everyone around him. And no one stopped once for him, either. No person stopped to greet him, to understand him. To see beyond the glass heart their perception were prisoners to. They all murmured along the stringed line of the screaming silence that encircled his presence. *There's not enough Time, it's not fair, or Time is passing too slowly, or why can't I turn back Time and change things?* Everyone was judging something they could not understand. If only they could imagine, that Time showed compassion, and that that very compassion seemed to be the death of him. And it took such a strong essence to stand tall and not let his emotions get in the way of his job. If you stop every moment of Time to fit every humans' need, the world would cease to go on. So how could he choose which requests to accept—which people to bend the rules for? Which mother could get another hour with her son. Or which man could go back in Time to marry the right woman. Which situation to erase in history—which murder or battle fought in vain. How could he choose who had the *right* to bend the strings of Time that were sewn and sewn to make his being? He did not. And so, his steps were as constant as the angry eyes that

followed his path, but unlike what everyone seemed to believe, he saw everything, felt everything. But even in the pain he felt for everyone else's sadness, he kept walking. For he knew that he was one thing in such an imperfect world that must not fall into the trap of pleasing others, for he could not please everyone. So the only thing he could do was be an anchor, a baseline. A constant. And even though he was an anchor, he rose everyone up from the ashes they would have been limited to. For if Time could go on through everything, they could too.

I watched people judge him and dwell and dwell, but I also watched those people let it go, walk away, and go on with their lives. Never stopping. And there he was, a man with a glass heart, holding the world together, even though he was in pieces.

I went to see him again today, Time. He seemed limitless. The moments I saw him as I was standing alone, seemed to last forever, digging into my soul with every fragment of his being. Yet, it all passed in a blink. People judged him for their incapability to control a clock, but the truth is, I seemed to discover that they do, indeed, have control. The ground beneath his feet felt his steps to its core, where as the core of the earth may have sensed him, but Time was too insignificant to focus on the steps. Everything encountered him in a different way, so in a sense, controlling the interactions with Time made him subjective to each mind.

There was a little child, running around the park behind the lake. Past the twin set of swings, made of old metal that began to rust at the top. She ran past the pit of sand where kids were building castles, and over the hills where boys her age were playing soccer. She was about eight years old, with pigtails on either side of her curved ears, melting into her angelic being. Her pure heart fueled her laughter with a contagious type of happiness, as she was running around everywhere. She found herself admiring a sparrow, light brown at its core with golden stripes armouring its perfection. Its darkened black beak held by a yellow-golden border, flowing into the golden cheeks that differentiated him to her from all else. She walked towards the lake, with Time pacing at her left, but she was so lost in the moment that she did not even acknowledge the minutes passing by, and the whole concept of Time seemed to escape her mind.

But there was a young man in black, returning from a wedding that he should not have allowed to occur in the first place. His eyes, red, as if to show how his heart was bleeding. He walked on the trail near the park, and stopped to stare at Time, meters and meters away. The man in black was breathing heavily, but his world was passing as slow as ever, with the pressure against his arteries moving with the pace that Time walked. One, two, three... every single second was felt in a certain depth that made him feel dead. It was poison for his mind, for he kept thinking, beating himself up for letting a person he loved get away. He was meters away from Time, but he felt the moments pass by with every fiber of his hollow being. Whereas the young, little girl, walked right next to Time, but the minutes passed by without her feeling a moment of it.

People can control Time, not in the sense that they rewind him or push him forward, but they control their perception, and it only depends on who they choose to be in respect

towards him. The center of the earth, miles away, or the handkerchief that feels the constant beat of his heart, second after second, drowning in the music of his infinite movement.

On the third day, I came back in the morning, a bit past eleven. After three hours, I could tell that Time was bothered by all the people that came his way, looking for something to blame. Anything other than themselves. They were all shouting. A woman who had been fired from her job earlier from arriving hours late, *What is wrong with you?* A broken hearted girl who rejected the one she wanted, *Why can't I get another chance?* A young boy who skipped class and got a suspension, *Why is the hour so long?* And a man who was walked in on by his partner that morning with another love, *If I could just go back everything would be different, even just for a moment.* Everyone was looking, but they were seeing what they wanted to. And so, when he paused for a moment, looking their way, I was the only one who noticed. They were all frozen in their own minds, so as he walked backwards, I was the only one who felt it all. Because I was the only one who saw him, and I mean really, truly, honestly saw him. I understood him in the way that everyone else chose not to, because I knew he was not to blame for silly mistakes. And he would prove that right before my eyes.

He paused for a split second, and walked backwards, retracing his steps as anger evaporated from the unraveling tears in his eyes. I could imagine it all in my mind—the sands of Time falling back into the hourglass as it tipped sideways. I looked at the hour on my watch, as the frozen world peacefully caressed my eyes, and watched Time turned the clock from twelve, to eleven in the morning, to ten, to nine, to eight, to seven-thirty in the morning, the time I supposedly woke up. And then, he stopped. My hair ceased to fly all around my face. I looked up from my wrist, only to find those who were once staring at him, gone. They all went back to wherever they were in the morning, another chance to live a few hours. I suppose I did not travel back because I was awake as he turned the sands of Time, until the hourglass had finally settled as before.

He paused, again, and began walking forward in his usual, oval-like routine. There were barely any people in the park, it was all adults running on the trail leading into the woods, individual and unconnected. Except for this one older couple, mid-70s as they walked hand in hand, smiling at each other. I sat on the bench near me, and watched. The painting in the sky unravelled for me during the hours that passed.

But as the minutes passed, and the hour turned to eleven, when I first arrived that morning, nothing changed. The woman was still fired and came, screaming. The girl never confessed her feelings, still asking for a redo. The boy was still suspended. The man still cheated, pleading for another chance. But they all got another chance, and would never know it went to waste. Time blocked them out, I saw him with pitiless agony draining the heart in his eyes. He kept walking, going on. And the world would never know of his questions as he remained silent, and thought *Why didn't you show up when you were supposed to? Why couldn't you be honest with someone you loved when you had the chance? Why can't you learn patience? Why did you ruin everything with the one you loved for a momentary pleasure? Why did any of you think that I am the reason why you fell short of having the life you wanted? You fell short because of your doing.* Time is a measure of choices, and reliving

the same one did not seem to change anything, at all. I left at 12:30 in the afternoon. One hour and a half of me technically being there, was in its essence, eight.

Time once loved : Final

Elizabeth

I met a man today, his name was Time. I suppose I can't really say we met for that implies we interacted. We did not. I simply watched him all day, and the more I watched, the more I felt like I knew him.

His hair was young, thick and soft like honey, but grey, an unusual complement to a twenty year old, but I suppose a man who has lived since the beginning, could choose the way he wanted to look. His eyes, blue. Competing with the depth and beauty of the ocean, and complementing the aura of the sky. He wore a white shirt under a light grey vest, or mid spectrum, to be exact, with six buttons paralleled down the lining of his stomach. Over them was his darker colored grey jacket, but still along the mid spectrum of the color. The slim fit suit was decorated with a deep blue handkerchief on his left chest, matching the blue on his tie that pushed up against the beating pulse of his neck. His shoes were the darkest shade of black. Perhaps, it would be safer to say that they were beyond the shade and seemed to resemble the essence of the color, itself, for they encaptured the beauty of darkness so pure it seemed too surreal to be but a mere shade subjective to but another accessory. He did not wear the shoes, the shoes wore him. They had a Derby Dress, Italian, genuine black leather design, with articulate designs engraved all along the sides, so purposeful it was as if they were drawn by the wind.

He did not wear a watch on his wrist, but rather carried a pocket watch that dangled from a silver, iron chain. Roman numeral numbers danced around the inside of the case. The outer part of the case was consumed by the same designs of his shoes, also seeming to echo the language of the wind. He held the chain like it was a part of him. It moved as he moved. It breathed as he breathed. It roamed as he roamed with the same will of mind that captivated the world. He spun it around in circled rotations, and he and the clock never stopped moving. So there he was, in broad daylight, walking around a bench with a view of the Seattle lake, with grey hair, blue eyes, a grey suit, silver watch and a glass heart. Or so, that is what appeared. For he was a being who showed no compassion to anyone or anything. Someone who never paused a moment for anyone. Wasn't he?

I watched him, but I also watched everyone around him. And no one stopped once for him, either. No person stopped to greet him, to understand him. To see beyond the glass heart their perception were prisoners to. They all murmured along the stringed line of the screaming silence that encircled his presence. *There's not enough Time, it's not fair, or Time is passing too slowly, or why can't I turn back Time and change things?* Everyone was judging something they could not understand. If only they could imagine, that Time showed compassion, and that that very compassion seemed to be the death of him. And it took such a strong essence to stand tall and not let his emotions get in the way of his job. If you stop every moment of Time to fit every humans' need, the world would cease to go on. So how could he choose which requests to accept—which people to bend the rules for? Which mother could get another hour with her son. Or which man could go back in Time to marry the right

woman. Which situation to erase in history—which murder or battle fought in vain. How could he choose who had the *right* to bend the strings of Time that were sewn and sewn to make his being? He did not. And so, his steps were as constant as the angry eyes that followed his path, but unlike what everyone seemed to believe, he saw everything, felt everything. But even in the pain he felt for everyone else's sadness, he kept walking. For he knew that he was one thing in such an imperfect world that must not fall into the trap of pleasing others, for he could not please everyone. So the only thing he could do was be an anchor, a baseline. A constant. And even though he was an anchor, he rose everyone up from the ashes they would have been limited to. For if Time could go on through everything, they could too.

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I looked at a young man in black, returning from a wedding that he should not have allowed to occur in the first place. His eyes, red, as if to show how his heart was bleeding. He walked on the trail near the park, and stopped to stare at Time, meters and meters away. The man in black was breathing heavily, but his world was passing as slow as ever, with the pressure against his arteries moving with the pace that Time walked. One, two, three... every single second was felt in a certain depth that made him feel dead. It was poison for his mind, for he kept thinking, beating himself up for letting a person he loved get away. He was meters

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On the third day, I came back in the morning, a bit past eleven. After three hours, I could tell that Time was bothered by all the people that came his way, looking for something to blame. Anything other than themselves. They were all shouting. A woman who had been fired from her job earlier from arriving hours late, *What is wrong with you?* A broken hearted girl who rejected the one she wanted, *Why can't I get another chance?* A young boy who skipped class and got a suspension, *Why is the hour so long?* And a man who was walked in on by his partner that morning with another love, *If I could just go back everything would be different, even just for a moment.* Everyone was looking, but they were seeing what they wanted to. And so, when he paused for a moment, looking their way, I was the only one who noticed. They were all frozen in their own minds, so as he walked backwards, I was the only one who felt it all. Because I was the only one who saw him, and I mean really, truly, honestly saw him. I understood him in the way that everyone else chose not to, because I knew he was not to blame for silly mistakes. And he would prove that right before my eyes.

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But as the minutes passed, and the hour turned to eleven, when I first arrived that morning, nothing changed. The woman was still fired and came, screaming. The girl never confessed her feelings, still asking for a redo. The boy was still suspended. The man still cheated, pleading for another chance. But they all got another chance, and would never know it went to waste. Time blocked them out, I saw him with pitiless agony draining the heart in his eyes. He kept walking, going on. And the world would never know of his questions as he

remained silent, and thought *Why didn't you show up when you were supposed to? Why couldn't you be honest with someone you loved when you had the chance? Why can't you learn patience? Why did you ruin everything with the one you loved for a momentary pleasure? Why did any of you think that I am the reason why you fell short of having the life you wanted? You fell short because of your doing.* Time is a measure of choices, and reliving the same one did not seem to change anything, at all. I kept watching him, until his eyes met mine, once more. The moment that happened, I panicked and left at 12:30 in the afternoon. One hour and a half of me technically being there, was in its essence, eight.

I did not go again the next day, nor the following. I could read his mind when he saw me, he was so confused. He knew I was awake for the hours he rewinded. I did not return to the park for another two weeks. When I finally came, he did not notice at first. He was focused on every step, calculated and confident. He did not listen to those screaming at him within their minds, nor did he care to. There was a bench right beside him, a few meters away, where no one dared to go. It was eleven in the morning, two after I first arrived, when I gathered the courage to enlighten myself and finally meet the man I had known more than any other. I walked deliberately to the bench, and looked at him. He kept walking in his circle that seemed larger today than all the rest, and the swans within the lake lowered their voices as his eyes met mine.

"Hello, Time," I said.

He did not reply, but I heard his thoughts, "What is she doing?"

"I am just saying hello, nothing more," I said. He looked at me, shocked. He analyzed my face in the moments his circling movements allowed his gaze to meet mine.

"How can you hear my thoughts?"

"I can hear everyone's thoughts. And I will tell you the answer when I find out, myself." He sighed, loudly.

"Well, tell me about yourself," he said to me.

"Don't pretend you can't read my mind, too," I said.

"I am not pretending," he looked at me from the corner of his eyes, as his hand kept swinging the chain in a circular motion.

"But I can read yours," I said. He did not say anything, nor look my way. "My name is Elizabeth."

And we kept talking for the rest of the day. I told him that I turned twenty-four a few weeks ago. He said his birthday would be in a few months, but the number of his age was too great for me to fathom. Hours passed as we spoke of the randomest of things.

"Do you always walk in circles?"

"It is part of the job, if I stop, the world freezes." He paused before continuing, "What is your job, Elizabeth?"

"I own a library on Middletown Street," I said. "It's big with purple walls and books to fill its soul three stories high. My father left it for me when he died."

"My apologies for your loss. I assume you have a liking for reading?"

"That I do," I said.

“As do I.”

I smiled a warm, graceful smile as I fiddled with my hands, examining my own palm. There were so many questions circling my mind, “and your suit—must it always be grey?” My gaze went back down, tracing an ant walking away from my feet. But once I looked up, he was in a velvet violet suit with a black shirt and tie. I was shocked, and he smiled.

“No, to answer your question.” He chuckled. I never imagined Time to have a sense of humor.

After a few hours, the sun set, and it was time for me to go home. “I have to go feed my dog,” I said. “It was nice to finally meet you, Time.”

“Likewise, Elizabeth.

I went everyday for five years, stopping by the Seattle lake, even if it were just for an hour or two. We would talk about everything, until we knew each other inside and out. I rearranged my work hours at the library to fit our daily meetings. I went one day to tell him of the arranged wedding my parents planned with Oliver DiAlgo, a family friend, since I was born.

It was a very peculiar day, the sky was a painting. Clouds were encircling the blue like a baby, swaying back and forth through the realms of authenticity. You could make a circle with one hand, raised at the azure, and look through it as if seeing perfection. Surreal, perfection. That is what it felt to be a decoration on a masterpiece with fresh paint.

“The sky is very beautiful today, isn’t it?” I asked him.

He looked upwards as he kept walking, “Yes. Almost like a painting,” he said with his calm, warming voice.

I chuckled, “Are you sure you can not read my mind, Time?”

“Trust me, I’ve tried.” He smiled as I ate my raisin morning bagel, moving my wavy, darkened red hair as the bangs reached the top of my eyebrows.

“You fixed up your hair today, Beth.”

“Do you mean to say it does not always look good?”

“Do not put words into my mouth, you know how I hate that,” I immediately felt guilty, people always blamed him for things he could not control. He continued, “I just meant that you look particularly beautiful, today.” A smile escaped his face, and I felt reassured.

People were being especially annoying that morning. It was as if they were all blaming him for something wrong with their lives. A young girl, in her early twenties, walked beside her boyfriend, Red, and kept complaining to him, “It’s all because of Time. I don’t have Time for a relationship.” Meanwhile, I could hear her thoughts, *Thank God I’m doing this now. I let it get too far. This boy loves me and I feel nothing at all.* I could see Time lowering his head, again. Aggravated for being blamed for yet another thing that was out of his control. I stood up, yelled in the direction of the girl, “No, it’s not because of time. If you don’t like the boy, just say it.”

“Elizabeth!” Time yelled. I turned around only to see his frustrated face staring into my soul as he walked backwards for a moment, turning back the clock to the minute before I

yelled at the inconsiderate girl blaming him for her incapability to face her own problems. I walked back towards him angrily.

“You can’t do that, Beth,” he said in a calmer voice.

“Well someone has to stand up for you!”

“I don’t need anyone to stand up for me.” I stood in the way of his path. “Stop, Beth.” He flicked his fingers, and my feet were pushed away from him, moving me to the bench.

We were silent for the next twenty minutes, until I finally said what I had to say. “My parents made an arranged marriage for me since I was born. With Oliver DiAlgo.”

“The doctor?”

“Yes, how do you know him?”

“I know everyone,” he said as he looked at the ground. “Today is your wedding day. I could hear him repeating your name in his mind constantly for the past month.”

I could not say anything, so I stood up and walked in his path, backwards, as he walked forwards, towards me. “What are you thinking?”

“Move,” he demanded. But I suddenly planted my feet and stood still. He looked to the ground as he flickered his hands, pushing my feet with his force, once more. But his judgement was clouded, and calculations misguided, so I tripped on a rock, falling backwards. Time caught the pocket watch from the chain in the air, holding it in his hands as the other pulled around me.

And then, the whole world froze. Time stopped to catch me. “I told you to move,” he said in a sad whisper. I was speechless, looking around me with everyone frozen in their own worlds. A boy’s ice cream falling to the ground from the cone, stuck in the air. A couple’s gaze frozen on each other. The clouds in the sky set in their paused motion, like a true painting.

He stopped the day for hours and hours. It was just us talking as the rest of the world faded away. I married Oliver DiAlgo that day, but who would have thought it was possible to have an affair of the heart with Time?

The familiar house of a stranger's mind :

Draft 1

He was in a stranger's house. With rooms he understood. And the entrance staircases he was already accustomed to, like walking through a wall. The cement stairs, that once was purely white became tainted with every step he took. They were in almost perfect shape, he could tell that not a lot of people entered this home before. Careful with every stride, he still failed to protect its innocence, with every fallen pebble on the sides of the slightly crumbling staircase. A knock on the red wooden door, no one answered. But he knew she was far from emotionless, so he waited. And waited. And again, walked through walls as he had done many times before. No hand turned the knob on the other side, but the door succumbed to his charm as it swayed with the wind, inwards to the house, leaving a slight crack for him to enter through. It was perfectly clean in the entrance hall. No sign of flaws anywhere his eyes could reach. With every step he took inwards on the blue marble blue floor, he could tell the house was detesting its vulnerability, painfully wincing in the echoing silence that screamed within the aura. The marble floor was blue, but the air had a tint of grey. Such a peculiar place, and he loved every ounce of it. There was only one room, so he walked to his left, slowly and vigilantly. There were pictures coloring the wall so wholely you could not see any color of the wall, or even tell if there were one at all. And on the ceiling was mirrored a video of her life. Starting from the beginning and onwards. But he acknowledged the fact that there were only good memories. A light flickered through a small hole on the opposing side of the wall from him. He walked, and the more he walked, the farther it seemed away from him. He paused, sighed. And ran. Looking closely at the wall he had reached, he noticed that it was not a regular hole at all, but a keyhole. And that part of the wall was a door hidden by more and more pictures. He reached his hand towards the handle that seemed to be engraved into the wall his mind clung so hard to. Pushing down, stronger and concentrated, but it was locked and would not budge. So he walked backwards, towards the sound of the sweet memories playing. Paused, again. And ran as fast as he could, pushing his right shoulder side into the door as he hit the wall that wanted to remain untouched. It collapsed, and he was sure he was the first to ever enter this realm of a pure reality. But what he saw was not light at all, it was a piercing darkness of pain that drowned him in his own thoughts, ironically. Looking to his left, then right, all he saw was darkness. *But why was that such a bad thing*, he thought. Why was darkness so strongly associated with horror? He had darkness, and everyone he knew had darkness. And instead of drowning in fear, he ran across the waters of her insecurities with admiration. Running and running through pictures of her screaming and crying and wincing in pain all and all until he reached another door. He turned around, but the entrance of this room was far gone, it was clear he went far deeper than he realized. With every step he took, he noticed she was not in pain anymore, but propelled him forward with all that he was. Pushing down on the door knob, he looked at the fiery red that encompassed her soul. A puppeteer with her face, but it was clear that she seemed to be completely and

utterly undelighted in what she was doing. The being was floating in a circle, pulling strings that fell below her hands. Happiness had fallen at the bottom, and lies rose up. Another string of insecurity was climbing up the wire as confidence triddled down the way. He walked in awe, and sadness for what he saw. He ran to the strings of lies and insecurities and sadness and pain, pulling them lower and lower. The being, growing larger and larger opened her eyes, confusingly, looking down at this small being taking her control. But he pulled and pulled. A guest in this house, a guest that became so invested so much, it was his home too. He pulled until they lowered themselves, and then a smirk released itself until his face. Sometimes, letting someone into your mind is not such a bad thing.

The familiar house of a stranger's mind :

Draft 2

He was walking towards a stranger's house. With rooms he understood. And entrance staircases leading to a door of walls he was already accustomed to. The cement stairs that once were purely white became tainted with every step he took. They were in almost perfect condition, and he could tell that he would be the first guest in this home. Even though he moved slowly with every stride, one step after the other, there were still falling pebbles on the sides of the slightly crumbling staircase. His hands knocked against the red wooden door; no one answered. But he knew she was far from emotionless, so he waited. And waited. And again, when she was ready, he walked through her walls as he had done many times before with others.

No hand turned the knob on the other side, but the door succumbed to his charm as it swayed with the wind, inwards to the house, leaving a slight crack for him to enter through. It was perfectly clean in the entrance hall. No sign of flaws anywhere his eyes could reach. With every step he took on the marble blue floor, he could hear the ground painfully wincing in the echoing silence that screamed within the aura. The marble floor was blue, but the air had a tint of grey. Such a peculiar place, and he loved every ounce of it. It was special, different from the other homes he visited.

He only saw one room, so he walked to it on his left, slowly and vigilantly. There were pictures decorating every piece of the walls so completely you could not see any sign of the original color of the wall, or even tell if there were one at all. And on the ceiling was mirrored a video of her life. Starting from the beginning and onwards. But he acknowledged the fact that everything he was were only good memories. He stared up as a light flickered to his right, on the opposite side of the door. He glared at a small hole the light escaped from, so he attempted to walk, but the more he walked, the further away it seemed. He paused, sighed. And ran.

Looking closely at the wall he had come to reach, he noticed that it was not a regular hole at all, but a keyhole. Tracing the pictures on the wall more and more, he realized it was actually a hidden door. His hand reached the keyhole, but there was no handle. No way to enter the latent room. He stopped and bent down, feeling the marble floor with his hand, and whispered, "it's okay, just let me in." The home sighed, and the door collapsed. But what he saw was not light at all, it was a piercing darkness of pain that drowned him in his own thoughts, ironically. This room was larger than the prior, but the dimensions were undefined, and it seemed to end with shadows on every corner, fading away into obscurity. Everywhere he looked, all he saw was darkness. *But why was that such a bad thing*, he thought. Why was darkness so strongly associated with horror? There were moving pictures on the walls, but they were all but happy memories. Vulnerability and pain and broken hearts and arguments and mistakes were all painted across the walls that she so strongly feared. But he did all but fear them, and loved even the darkest parts that he encountered. She saw insecurities, and he

saw beauty. The ground did not quietly crumble under him anymore, nor did it wince in pain at his touch. With every step he took, he was propelled forward with all that he was by her eagerness for him to know all she was.

He walked further down the halls of the room that seemed to never end. A puppeteer emerged to his sight, and he directed himself towards her. It was her, floating above a circle, pulling strings that fell below her hands. Strings of happiness had fallen at the bottom, and those of insecurities rose. He looked in awe and sadness for what he saw. He ran to the strings of insecurities and sadness and pain, pulling them lower and lower. Darkness was not a thing to be ashamed of. He pulled and pulled, until she finally surrendered to his touch. A guest in this house, a guest that became so invested, it was his home too. Sometimes, letting someone into your mind is not such a bad thing.

The familiar house of a stranger's mind :

Draft 3

He was walking towards a stranger's house. With rooms he understood. And entrance staircases leading to the door of her walls, which he was already accustomed to. The cement stairs that were once purely white before his presence, became tainted with every step he took. They were in almost perfect condition, and he could tell that he would be the first guest in this home. Even though he moved slowly with every stride, one step after the other, there were still pebbles slightly crumbling on the staircase. His hands knocked against the red wooden door; no one answered. But he knew she was far from emotionless, so he waited. And waited. And again, when she was ready, he walked through her walls as he had done many times before with others.

No hand turned the knob on the other side, but the door succumbed to his charm as it swayed with the wind, inwards to the house, leaving a slight crack for him to enter through. It was perfectly clean in the entrance hall, with no sign of flaws anywhere his eyes could reach. With every step he took on the marble blue floor, again, he felt a slight crumble beneath his feet. He could hear the ground painfully wincing in the echoing silence that screamed within the aura of the house. The marble floor was blue, but the air had a tint of grey. Such a peculiar place, and he loved every ounce of it. It was special, different from the other homes he visited.

He only saw one room, so he walked left, towards it, slowly and vigilantly. There were pictures decorating every piece of the walls so completely, he could not even guess the original color of the wall, or even tell if there were one at all. And on the ceiling was mirrored a video of her life. Starting from the beginning and onwards. Her as a baby, her at a six year old birthday party, her at a high school graduation. It took him a moment to acknowledge the fact that everything he saw were only good memories. He stared up as a light flickered to his right, on the opposite side of the door. He examined the small hole the light escaped from, so he attempted to walk, but the more he walked, the further away it seemed. He paused, sighed. And ran.

Looking closely at the wall he had come to reach, he noticed that it was not a regular hole at all, but a keyhole of a hidden door. His hand touched the door, but there was no handle. No way to enter the latent room. He stopped and bent down, feeling the marble floor with his hand, and whispered, "it's okay, just let me in." The home sighed, and the door collapsed. But what he saw was not light at all, it was a piercing darkness of pain that drowned him in his thoughts. This room was larger than the prior, but the dimensions were undefined, and it seemed to end with shadows on every corner, fading away into obscurity. Everywhere he looked, all he saw was darkness. *But why was that such a bad thing*, he thought. Why was darkness so strongly associated with horror? There were moving pictures on the walls, but they were all but happy memories. Vulnerability and pain and broken hearts and arguments and mistakes were all painted across the walls that he knew, she so strongly

feared. But he did all but fear them, and loved even the darkest parts that he encountered. She saw insecurities, and he saw beauty underestimated. The ground did not quietly crumble under him anymore, nor did it wince in pain at his touch. With every step he took, he was propelled forward with all that he was, by her eagerness for him to know all she was.

He walked further down the halls of the room that seemed to never end. A puppeteer emerged to his sight, and he directed himself towards her. It was her, floating above a circle, pulling strings that fell below her hands. Strings of happiness had fallen at the bottom, and those of insecurities rose. He looked in awe and sadness for what he saw, running to the strings of insecurities and sadness and pain, and instead of ridding them as she expected, he held them with her. Hand in hand. "Darkness is not a thing to be ashamed of," he said. He pulled and pulled, until she finally surrendered to his touch, allowing him to carry the weight of her world with her. A guest in this house, a guest that became so invested, it was his home too. Sometimes, letting someone into your mind is not such a bad thing.

The familiar house of a stranger's mind :

Final

Time

He was walking towards a stranger's house. With rooms he understood. And entrance staircases leading to the door of her walls, which he was already accustomed to. The cement stairs that were once purely white before his presence, became tainted with every step he took. They were in almost perfect condition, and he could tell that he would be the first guest in this home. Even though he moved slowly with every stride, one step after the other, there were still pebbles slightly crumbling on the staircase. His hands knocked against the red wooden door; no one answered. But he knew she was far from emotionless, so he waited. And waited. And again, when she was ready, he walked through her walls as he had done many times before with others.

No hand turned the knob on the other side, but the door succumbed to his charm as it swayed with the wind, inwards to the house, leaving a slight crack for him to enter through. It was perfectly clean in the entrance hall, with no sign of flaws anywhere his eyes could reach. With every step he took on the marble blue floor, again, he felt a slight crumble beneath his feet. He could hear the ground painfully wincing in the echoing silence that screamed within the aura of the house. The marble floor was blue, but the air had a tint of grey. Such a peculiar place, and he loved every ounce of it. It was special, different from the other homes he visited.

He only saw one room, so he walked left, towards it, slowly and vigilantly. There were pictures decorating every piece of the walls so completely, he could not even guess the original color of the wall, or even tell if there were one at all. And on the ceiling was a mirrored video of her life. Starting from the beginning and onwards. Her as a baby, her at a six year old birthday party, her at a high school graduation, the Seattle lake they had become so accustomed to. It took him a moment to acknowledge the fact that everything he saw were only good memories. He stared up as a light flickered to his right, on the opposite side of the door. He examined the small hole the light escaped from, so he attempted to walk, but the more he walked, the further away it seemed. He paused, sighed. And ran.

Looking closely at the wall he had come to reach, he noticed that it was not a regular hole at all, but a keyhole of a hidden door. His hand touched the door, but there was no handle. No way to enter the latent room. He stopped and bent down, feeling the marble floor with his hand, and whispered, "It's okay, just let me in." The home sighed, and the door collapsed. But what he saw was not light at all, it was a piercing darkness of pain that drowned him in his thoughts. This room was larger than the prior, but the dimensions were undefined, and it seemed to end with shadows on every corner, fading away into obscurity. Everywhere he looked, all he saw was darkness. But why was that such a bad thing, he thought. Why was darkness so strongly associated with horror? There were moving pictures on the walls, but they were all but happy memories. Vulnerability and pain and broken hearts

and arguments and mistakes were all painted across the walls that he knew, she so strongly feared. But he did all but fear them, and loved even the darkest parts that he encountered. She saw insecurities, and he saw beauty underestimated. The ground did not quietly crumble under him anymore, nor did it wince in pain at his touch. With every step he took, he was propelled forward with all that he was, by her eagerness for him to know all she was.

He walked further down the halls of the room that seemed to never end. A puppeteer emerged to his sight, and he directed himself towards her. It was her, floating above a circle, pulling strings that fell below her hands. Strings of happiness had fallen at the bottom, and those of insecurities rose. He looked in awe and sadness for what he saw, running to the strings of insecurities and sadness and pain, and instead of ridding them as she expected, he held them with her. Hand in hand. "Darkness is not a thing to be ashamed of," he said, calmly. He pulled and pulled, until she finally surrendered to his touch, allowing him to carry the weight of her world with her. A guest in this house, a guest that became so invested, it was his home, too. Sometimes, letting someone into your mind is not such a bad thing.

And where love can escape : Draft 1

There is something of great beauty in fire. It is the only thing that does not fall into constraints of time. It is where all the lost lovers meet to find their match. What if every person ever to have lived and ever to live were alive in the same moment and all allowed a single dance? A single moment holding an infinity of forever, all to themselves, and then they escape from the flames, back into their lives. There is a reason people fall out of love. There is a reason some loves don't last forever. And there is a reason for the phrase, *our flame burned out*. People fall out of love and don't last forever and have their flame burn out all because they are not right for each other.

Each person has one person that they fit with perfectly, their 100% match. However, that person is one from all in the world, and in history along with the future, not specifically their lifetime. But when people fall in love, it means there is at least 1% of a match. The stronger the love is and lasts, the higher the percentage. But rarely does it ever exceed fifty percent. Those lovers who find each other and remain together for the rest of their lives are the lucky ones who border on the lines of 70 and 80%. However, if their love was given infinity, they would not last forever. And of course, there are always the exceptions. Those who are extremely lucky, the rare fires. The soul mates who find each other in the same time frame. But those stories only happen once in billions of years, for in order for flames like those to occur, every single odd must be in their favor.

When the world first started, the first love was *that*. The one in the billions. They were the sun and the moon. But it was too strong for the universe to handle, for if they had each other, they did not need anything else. And the rest of the universe was rendered useless, helpless, simple accessories. And so the universe chose to form constraints. Time. Timing. Death. Time—*Everything would be measured with time. Limited. Beings would have to grow up in order to gain a mind capable of love, and then they would have to search with a limited time. And then love with this constrained amount of time with their so little choices.*

Timing—*The day and night would be formed, forever ridding the sun and the moon from meeting again. Suddenly, duties were created for every creation, and fulfilling those duties would almost always get in the way of falling in love. Also, there is age. So even if soul mates are born in the same lifetime, all odds point to the fact that they would be about 70 or 80 years apart.* Death—*Each being from then on would be born with an expiration date. And no two beings belonging together would never be born at the same time, and almost never in the same lifetime.* And never again would two soul mates meet at the perfect moment, again.

Well, almost.

Nature always needs a balance. So with these three casualties, came fire. And in fire, no ounce of time can enter its fortress. And in dreams, all beings can escape into fire.

And where love can escape : Draft 2

There is something of great beauty in fire. It is the only thing that does not fall into constraints of time. It is where all the lost lovers meet to find their match. What if every person ever to have lived and ever to live were alive in the same moment and all allowed a single dance? A single moment holding an infinity of forever, all to themselves, and then they escape from the flames, back into their lives. There is a reason people fall out of love. There is a reason some loves don't last forever. And there is a reason for the phrase, *our flame burned out*. People fall out of love and don't last forever and have their flame burn out all because they are not right for each other.

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When the world first started, the first love was *that*. The one in the billions. They were the sun and the moon. But it was too strong for the universe to handle, for if they had each other, they did not need anything else. And the rest of the universe was rendered useless, helpless, simple accessories. And so the universe chose to form constraints. Time. Timing. Death. Time—*Everything would be measured with time. Limited. Beings would have to grow up in order to gain a mind capable of love, and then they would have to search with a limited time. And then love with this constrained amount of time with their so little choices.* Timing—*The day and night would be formed, forever ridding the sun and the moon from meeting again. Suddenly, duties were created for every creation, and fulfilling those duties would almost always get in the way of falling in love. Also, there is age. So even if soul mates are born in the same lifetime, all odds point to the fact that they would be about 70 or 80 years apart.* Death—*Each being from then on would be born with an expiration date. And no two beings belonging together would never be born at the same time, and almost never in the same lifetime.* And never again would two soul mates meet at the perfect moment, again.

Well, almost.

Nature always needs a balance. So with these three casualties, came fire. And in fire, no ounce of time can enter its fortress. And in dreams, all beings can escape into fire.

Those who are living have access to dreams when they sleep. And those who have passed, along with those who are yet to be, have a piece of their soul that lives forever in their dreams. And there, all of the cards are laid on the table. Every soul mate has their chance to

meet. But since time does not exist in this realm, when anyone exits, the moments technically did not exist in any fragment of tangible seconds, so it is erased from their minds.

You can see it in a photo of a campfire, or a snapshot of a chimney fire, or any fire really. Pause. Look. And there they will be, the two lovers dancing in the flames. Two lions, circling around each other, strangers who know each other to the core. As if they have never met, but know the creases to the sides of the others eyes, or the feel of the lover's mane against their fur. Or another match, a lion and tiger. One staring at the golden eyes of the other, souls collapsing together beyond measure. And everything connecting all at once. To humans, in a standard, ballroom dancing position. Moving with the wind of their flames. Bittersweet love entangles them in spins of speed that they collide into. Infinity in a moment.

Until, the setting is all out of wood to tend to the fire. Or an alarm rings to wake one up from sleep. For the moment is over, and the two soulmates must part once more. And there they are, the majority of everyone and anyone, going on with their lives with a pain they will never know of losing their love to time.

And where love can escape : Draft 3

There is something of great beauty in fire. It is the only thing that does not fall into constraints of time. It is where all the lost lovers meet to find their true match. What if every person ever to have lived and ever to live were alive in the same moment, and all allowed a dance in the flames? A single moment holding an infinity of forever, all to themselves, and then, they are stolen from the fire, back into their prisoner lives. There is a reason people fall out of love. There is a reason some loves don't last forever. And there is a reason for the phrase, *our flame burned out*. And the reason is that they are simply not right for each other.

Each person has one person that they fit with perfectly, their 100% match. However, that person is but one from all in the universe, history and the future; the match is usually not specifically from their lifetime. But in one's lifetime, when they fall in love, it means there is at least 1% of a match. The stronger the love is, the higher the percentage. But rarely does it ever exceed fifty percent. Those lovers who find each other and remain together for the rest of their lives are the lucky ones, who border on the lines of 70 and 80%. However, if their love was given infinity, they would not last even a fragment of it. And of course, there are always the exceptions. Those who are extremely lucky, the fires that are so rare, they are only found in legends. The soul mates who find each other in the perfect time frame. But those stories only happen once in billions of years, for in order for flames like those to occur, every single odd must be in their favor. The *one* in an infinity of possibilities, and for the rest of humanity, the chances are not in their liking.

When the world first started, the first love was *that*. The one in the billions. But that was before there were limitations. They were the sun and the moon. But it was too strong for the universe to handle, for if they had each other, they did not need anything else. And the rest of the galaxy was rendered useless, helpless, simple accessories. And so, the universe chose to form constraints. Time. Timing. Death.

Time—*Everything would be measured with time. Limited. Beings would have to grow up in order to gain a mind capable of love, wasting so much time, and then, they would have to search with that limited time. And, of course, then they would have to love with this unfair, constrained amount of time with their so little choices.*

Timing—*The day and night would be formed, forever ridding the sun and the moon from meeting again. Suddenly, duties were created for every creation, and fulfilling those duties would almost always get in the way of falling in love. Also, there was age. So even if soul mates were born in the same lifetime, all odds would point to the fact that they would be about 70 or 80 years apart.*

Death—*Each being from then on would be born with an expiration date. And no two beings belonging together would never be born at the same instance, and almost never in the same lifetime.*

And never again would two soul mates meet at the perfect moment, again.

Well, almost.

Nature always needs a balance. So with these three casualties, came fire. And in fire, no ounce of time can enter its fortress. And in dreams, all beings can escape into the world of fire.

Those who are living have access to dreams when they sleep. And those who have passed, along with those who are yet to be, have a piece of their soul that exits and enters, as the universe allows, into the realm of their dreams. And there, all of the cards are laid on the table. Every soul mate has their chance to meet. But since time does not exist in this realm, when any living person leaves, the moments technically did not exist in any fragment of tangible seconds, so it is erased from their minds.

You can see it in a photo of a campfire, or a snapshot of a chimney fire, or any fire, really. Pause. Look. And there they will be, the two lovers dancing in the flames. It could be two lions, circling around each other, strangers who know each other to the core. As if they have never met, but know the creases to the sides of the others eyes, or the feel of the lover's mane against their fur. Or another match, a lion and tiger. One staring at the golden eyes of the other, souls collapsing together beyond measure. And everything connecting all at once. To humans, in a standard, ballroom dancing position. Moving with the wind of their flames. Bittersweet love would entangle them in twirls of speed that they collide into. Infinity in a moment.

Until, the setting is all out of wood to tend to the fire. Or an alarm rings to wake one up from sleep. For the moment is over, and the two soulmates must part once more. And there they are, the majority of everyone and anyone, going on with their lives with a pain they will never know of losing their love to time.

And where love can escape : Final

Elizabeth

There is something of great beauty in fire. It is the only thing that does not fall into constraints to the concept of Time. It is where all the lost lovers meet to find their true match. What if every person ever to have lived and ever to live were alive in the same moment, and all allowed a dance in the flames? A single moment holding an infinity of forever, all to themselves, and then, they are stolen from the fire, back into their prisoner lives. There is a reason people fall out of love. There is a reason some loves don't last forever. And there is a reason for the phrase, our flame burned out. And the reason is that they are simply not right for each other.

Each person has one person that they fit with perfectly, their 100% match. However, that person is but one from all in the universe, history and the future; the match is usually not specifically from their lifetime. But in one's lifetime, when they fall in love, it means there is at least 1% of a match. The stronger the love is, the higher the percentage. But rarely does it ever exceed fifty percent. Those lovers who find each other and remain together for the rest of their lives are the lucky ones, who border on the lines of 70 and 80%. However, if their love was given infinity, they would not last even a fragment of it. And of course, there are always the exceptions. Those who are extremely lucky, the fires that are so rare, they are only found in legends. The soul mates who find each other in the perfect time frame. But those stories only happen once in billions of years, for in order for flames like those to occur, every single odd must be in their favor. The one in an infinity of possibilities, and for the rest of humanity, the chances are not in their liking.

When the world first started, the first love was that. The one in the billions. But that was before there were limitations. They were the sun and the moon. But it was too strong for the universe to handle, for if they had each other, they did not need anything else. And the rest of the galaxy was rendered useless, helpless, simple accessories. And so, the universe chose to form constraints. And so the Universe tied to a person the concept of Time, and made him control the beats of the world for the rest of infinity. Limitations were created. Time. Timing. Death.

Time—Everything would be measured with time. Limited. Beings would have to grow up in order to gain a mind capable of love, wasting so much time, and then, they would have to search with that limited time. And, of course, then they would have to love with this unfair, constrained amount of time with their so little choices.

Timing—The day and night would be formed, forever ridding the sun and the moon from meeting again. Suddenly, duties were created for every creation, and fulfilling those duties would almost always get in the way of falling in love. Also, there was age. So even if soul mates were born in the same lifetime, all odds would point to the fact that they would be about 70 or 80 years apart.

Death—Each being from then on would be born with an expiration date. And no two beings

belonging together would never be born at the same instance, and almost never in the same lifetime.

And never again would two soul mates meet at the perfect moment, again.

Well, almost.

Nature always needs a balance. So with these three casualties, came fire. And in fire, no ounce of the powers of Time can enter its fortress. And in dreams, all beings can escape into the world of fire.

Those who are living have access to dreams when they sleep. And those who have passed, along with those who are yet to be, have a piece of their soul that exits and enters, as the universe allows, into the realm of their dreams. And there, all of the cards are laid on the table. Every soul mate has their chance to meet. But since the concept of Time does not exist in this realm, when any living person leaves, the moments technically did not exist in any fragment of tangible seconds, so it is erased from their minds.

You can see it in a photo of a campfire, or a snapshot of a chimney fire, or any fire, really. Pause. Look. And there they will be, the two lovers dancing in the flames. It could be two lions, circling around each other, strangers who know each other to the core. As if they have never met, but know the creases to the sides of the others eyes, or the feel of the lover's mane against their fur. Or another match, a lion and tiger. One staring at the golden eyes of the other, souls collapsing together beyond measure. And everything connects all at once. To humans, in a standard, ballroom dancing position. Moving with the wind of their flames. Bittersweet love would entangle them in twirls of speed that they collide into. Infinity in a moment.

Until, the setting is all out of wood to tend to the fire. Or an alarm rings to wake one up from sleep. For the moment is over, and the two soulmates must part once more. And there they are, the majority of everyone and anyone, going on with their lives with a pain they will never know of losing their love to Time.

But it is not really *Time's* fault, is it? It is the concept of Time. The powers of limitations that he holds. For it is such a beautiful idea, escaping from limitations into fire. And he, as a being, not as the holder of the clock, may enter the fortress in his own mind. After all, that is the only place I could meet him as the years went by. Even with Oliver DiAlgo, the only one I ever dreamt of in the realm of fire, was Time. But of course, those memories would be erased from my mind, along with his. For the Universe we live in is not an advocate for love.

They may meet again : Draft 1

There was a crack in the curtain, and suddenly a ray of light was emitted to her eyes. It appeared as though nothing has changed. But if you looked at her—and I mean truly looked at her, you would see the true light was the one that shown deeply within her eyes, now. She attempted to talk, walk, anything. But she couldn't move. And no one noticed. Her niece, 15, sat at the foot of the bed knitting. Her nephew, George, 7, sat on the floor, against the wall, facing her bed as he played on his ipad. Her daughter was inside another room, screaming at the doctor on the phone; "there's nothing left to do," he said. She walked into the room and, as the rest, noticed nothing.

George got up and ran to her bedside, "Look grandmother, I got to the next level!"

"She can't hear you, George," Chelsea, his older sister, said.

But something funny happened at that moment. He looked at Amy and felt someone looking back. His grandmother's eyebrows raised and she smiled a smile that seemed foreign to him for the sole reason that he hadn't seen a smile so pure for years. And in that moment, he knew his sister was wrong. She could hear them all along.

They may meet again : Draft 2

There was a crack in the curtain, and suddenly a ray of light was emitted to her eyes. It appeared as though nothing had changed. But if you looked at her—and I mean truly looked at her, you would see the true light that claimed the deep within her eyes. Her glance wandered to the edge of the room where confusion held her stare. The last thing she recalled was her 80th birthday at their home in Malibu. Smiles and marble eyes all around. Faces glossed over with the ‘everything will be okay’ thought. She sighed with her warm, graceful smile. And then it all went black. But this wasn’t there. So then where was she?

As she turned her neck to look around the room, she immediately felt a sharp pain up her spine. ‘Okay, so we’ll stay seated,’ she thought. She saw past the curtain and glass window, looking at towers and towers of buildings. New York. There was once a home for sick people in New York that her younger brother mentioned, but she could only recall bits and pieces of that memory. She moved her head directly onto the curtain crack. One of the buildings read: ‘Get the best attorney for 2020!’ She nearly fainted in her place. 4 years. 4 years had passed. Through four years, her niece, Chelsea would have finished middle school already. Chelsea’s little brother, Tom, would’ve gone from three years old to seven! Who knows who got married or divorced or, worst of all, died. What new findings were made? Obviously not a cure to Alzheimer’s. Or maybe so, without them knowing. For she was awake, wasn’t she? But if she were awake, it’d be either because her body beat the disease, or was too weak to keep carrying it.

What happened to her husband? Her brother? Her friends who were trying the Dementia trial? She started remembering more and more pieces of the past for years, but nothing felt concrete. It all seemed like a blur. Like watching a movie through a reflection: true, but surreal. They felt like the memories of a passenger, someone at the scene but not involved in anything. Bits and pieces of years that could’ve been so much more. She remembered the little things, like washing her hands or hugging her family.

And then someone came into the room. She tried to speak. ‘Hello, hello!’ She was screaming within her mind, but suddenly her mind did not connect with her mouth anymore. The person got closer, it was a nurse there to check her temperature. She tried to move, perhaps she could write what was happening. But as she thought for her hands to move, they stayed still. She still felt them there, but she could not control them. Another person came, there was still hope. “Hello, mother,” her younger son said as he entered the small room. She smiled, but again, nothing showed.

She kept trying to move. But again and again, nothing. “It’s the last stage,” the nurse said. “Can she still hear me?” her son asked. “It’s possible, but by this phase it’s most likely just the disease within her mind,” the nurse stated.

She looked straight at her son, “I’m here, I’m listening. I’m here.” But nothing came out. Suddenly, he smiled. There it was again, smiles and marble eyes. Coated over with a layer of tears that were too stubborn to succumb to pain and fall.

They may meet again : Draft 3

There was a crack between the curtains suffocating the window, and suddenly, a ray of light was emitted to her eyes. It appeared as though nothing had changed. But if you looked at her—and I mean truly looked at her, you would have seen the true light that awakened the deepest parts of her eyes. Her glance wandered to the edge of the room where confusion held her stare. The last thing she recalled was her 80th birthday at her family home in Malibu. Smiles and marble eyes all around. Faces glossed over with the ‘everything will be okay’ lie. She remembered sighing with her warm, graceful smile, taking it all in. Then it all went black. And if she wasn’t there, then where was she?

As she turned her neck to look around the room, she immediately felt a sharp pain crawl up her spine. ‘Okay, so I’ll stay seated,’ she thought to herself. She saw past the curtain and glass window, looking at towers and towers of buildings. It had to be New York. There was once a home for sick people in New York that her younger brother kept mentioning, but she could only recall bits and pieces of that moment. She moved her head directly onto the curtain crack. One of the buildings read: ‘Get the best attorney for 2020!’ She nearly fainted in her place. 4 years. 4 years had passed. Through four years, her niece, Chelsea, would have finished middle school already. Chelsea’s little brother, Tom, would’ve gone from three years old to seven! Who knows who got married or divorced or, worst of all, died. What new findings were made? Obviously not a cure to Alzheimer’s. Or maybe that did happen, without them knowing. For she was awake, wasn’t she? But if she were awake, it’d be either because her body beat the disease, or was too weak to keep carrying it.

What happened to her husband? Her little brother? Her friends who were trying the Dementia trial? She started remembering more and more pieces of the past four years, but nothing felt concrete. It all seemed like a blur. Like remembering the life of a stranger, a ghost. They felt like the memories of a passenger, someone at the scene but not involved in anything. Bits and pieces of years that could’ve been so much more. She remembered the little things, like washing her hands or nodding to things she did not understand.

And then, someone came into the room. She tried to speak. ‘Hello, hello!’ She was screaming within her mind, but suddenly, her mind did not connect with her mouth anymore. The person got closer, it was a nurse there to check her temperature. She tried to move, her eyes stared into the woman, but nothing happened. Perhaps, she could write what was happening. But as she thought for her hands to move, they stayed still. She felt them there, but she could not control them. Another person came, there was still hope. “Hello, mother,” her younger son said as he entered the small room. He was 50, now. She smiled, but again, nothing showed.

She kept trying to move. To twitch. To do anything. But again and again, nothing. “It’s the last stage,” the nurse said. “Can she still hear me?” her son asked. “It’s possible, but by this phase, it’s most likely just the disease within her mind,” the nurse stated.

Kara looked straight at her son, “I’m here, I’m listening. I’m here.” But nothing came out. Suddenly, he smiled. There it was again, smiles and marble eyes. Coated over with a layer of tears that were too stubborn to succumb to pain and fall. She looked again, with that warm, graceful smile of hers, taking it all in, before it all went black, once more.

They may meet again : Draft 4

Universe

There was a crack between the curtains suffocating the window, and suddenly, a ray of light was emitted to her eyes. It appeared as though nothing had changed. But if you looked at her—and I mean truly looked at her, you would have seen the true light that awakened the deepest parts of her eyes. Her glance wandered to the edge of the room where confusion held her stare. The last thing she recalled was her 80th birthday at her family home in Washington. Smiles and marble eyes all around. Faces glossed over with the ‘everything will be okay’ lie. She remembered sighing with her warm, graceful smile, taking it all in. Then it all went black. And if she wasn’t there, then where was she? All that she wanted was Time.

As she turned her neck to look around the room, she immediately felt a sharp pain crawl up her spine. ‘Okay, so I’ll stay seated,’ she thought to herself. She saw past the curtain and glass window, looking at towers and towers of buildings. It had to be New York. There was once a home for sick people in New York that her younger brother kept mentioning, but she could only recall bits and pieces of that moment. She moved her head directly onto the curtain crack. One of the buildings read: ‘Get the best attorney for 2020!’ She nearly fainted in her place. 4 years. 4 years had passed. Through four years, her niece, Chelsea, would have finished middle school already. Chelsea’s little brother, Tom, would’ve gone from three years old to seven! Who knows who got married or divorced or, worst of all, died. What new findings were made? Obviously not a cure to Alzheimer’s. Or maybe that did happen, without them knowing. For she was awake, wasn’t she? But if she were awake, it’d be either because her body beat the disease, or was too weak to keep carrying it.

I knew her enough to know the questions that were probably emerging within her mind. What happened to her husband, DeAlgo? Her son? Her friends who were trying the Dementia trial? She started remembering more and more pieces of the past four years, but nothing felt concrete. It all seemed like a blur. Like remembering the life of a stranger, a ghost. They felt like the memories of a passenger, someone at the scene but not involved in anything. Bits and pieces of years that could’ve been so much more. She remembered the little things, like washing her hands or nodding to things she did not understand.

And then, someone came into the room. She tried to speak. ‘Hello, hello!’ She was screaming within her mind, but suddenly, her mind did not connect with her mouth anymore. The person got closer, it was a nurse there to check her temperature. She tried to move, her eyes stared into the woman, but nothing happened. Perhaps, she could write what was happening. But as she thought for her hands to move, they stayed still. She felt them there, but she could not control them. Another person came, there was still hope. “Hello, mother,” her son, Emit, said as he entered the small room. He was 50, now. She smiled, but again, nothing showed.

She kept trying to move. To twitch. To do anything. But again and again, nothing. “It’s the last stage,” the nurse said. “Can she still hear me?” her son asked.

“It’s possible, but by this phase, it’s most likely just the disease within her mind,” the nurse stated.

Memories of her life kept flashing before her—especially those at the Seattle lake. She kept visiting Time for years, until she had Emit. She remembered that day like it was then, feeling the hours lagging on and on, slowly, enduring every moment of them. And she remembered how she knew it was Time calling out to her, tugging at the threads of her heart, but of course, she was not the type of person who liked goodbyes.

Elizabeth looked straight at her son, “I’m here, I’m listening. I’m here.” But nothing came out. Suddenly, he smiled. There it was again, smiles and marble eyes. Coated over with a layer of tears that were too stubborn to succumb to pain and fall. She looked again, with that warm, graceful smile of hers, taking it all in, the paintings in the skies, the chain of a pocket watch, the velvet and grey suits, Emit’s birth, the emptiness without the Seattle lake. Until, finally, it all went black, once more, only for her to escape into the fire where she would live forever with the one man who could never die.