

When you don't know how it all ends, isn't everything more beautiful?

I stumbled from one dream into another last night, but didn't know it until I realized you weren't lying there beside me in the dark.

I was walking down the streets of a city that felt lost and I remember there were notes in my pockets and I didn't write them and I don't know how they got there.

One said, I am you and you are me, but there was a single line through it and above said, We are Us.

It was raining, getting heavier as I went along and I remember the cold but I don't think I was wearing a jacket. I turned down an alley and I could make out a crowd of people through thick smoke and I didn't feel fear.

Another note in my pocket said, bury me with a bottle of whiskey, something cheap.

The buildings on either side of the alley were lined with a wallpaper that hooded figures were clawing at, exposing words on the brick underneath, but I couldn't make out what they said. The crowd of people stood in silence and they were all facing me, but not looking at me, and some cried and some spit and some had blood dripping from their noses but didn't seem to notice. They all had name tags, big name tags, white lettering on black. I became aware that I had a tag on too and I looked down and mine was just blank, black. They parted and turned towards the opening to what looked to be an old diner. You know, the ones that you find on the side of a nowhere highway after 3 or 4 hours on the road and you just can't hold it anymore and maybe they have good coffee? The door opened for me. It was bright. Sterile bright, so bright that nothing left a shadow, like there was nowhere left to hide or something, you know? A woman whose name tag said War took my hand and led me to a booth where another woman was already seated, her name tag said Goddess. I remember another note in my pocket said, tell them all I tried, and I remember that everything was vibrating. I sat down and heard the rain get heavier outside now and could see the crowd of people lining the windows of the diner and their clothes were on fire and the rain had no effect. None of them flinched. They kept crying and they kept spitting and the blood kept dripping from their noses. The Goddess poured coffee into the cup in front of me and when she looked up there was nothing where her eyes should have been. She put a cigarette in my mouth and lit it and I took a long deep drag and she held up that picture of you and I, the one that sits on our daughter's night stand, the one that slips a little in its frame each day and she situates it back in place. You're looking up at me smiling the way you did before you got sick and I'm smiling the way I always did around you. I'm wearing my favorite cap and we young love cling to each other and we started our family a few weeks later, remember?

I thought I woke up then, thought I sat up in our bed, thought I turned to you to tell you all of this, but you weren't lying beside me in the dark.

Another note in my pocket said, don't forget the good stuff and I could see the crowd now standing around me, alone, in our bed. Their name tags were all blank, black, like mine and I could hear the song we first danced to, you remember the one, but it was distant.

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So, you didn't hear me call out for my mother and you didn't hear me say please again and again. You hear the song we first danced to and you see the picture that sits on our daughter's night stand, the one that slips a little in its frame each day and she situates it back in place. You're looking up at me smiling the way you did before you got sick and I'm smiling the way I always did around you. I'm wearing my favorite cap and we young love cling to each other and we started our family a few weeks later, remember?