

Myla.

I knew I shouldn't have been doing this.

I shouldn't have been filling up my bag as if I was packing a suitcase for a vacation.

I shouldn't have been putting on my socks with the energy of an athlete who was about to run a marathon.

But I wasn't one to overthink.

And right then, all I could think about was how for the life of me, I couldn't *sleep*.

The stuffiness in my room felt like a sweaty hand refusing to let go of my throat.

And though it was an unrelenting grip, the sweat made it slippery at the same time.

I hated sweat.

It was way too hot in here and I had to get *out*.

So what did I decide to do about it?

I decided to go for a drive despite the time being two in the morning, with the risk of my parents hearing me lingering in the air.

Though the risk's presence wasn't menacing. I wasn't worried.

Because I knew they'd just coolly chide me to head to bed, fully knowing how that was the farthest from my intention.

I knew that. Because my parents didn't hold me on a pedestal. And even if they did, that pedestal would've been bought at a garage sale.

My parents saw me as a kid that messed around sometimes, because that's what kids did.

But even though they knew I'd mess up, I was always enough for them.

Not perfect, but always enough.

I guess I liked it that way.

Now, all that was left was to do a final check of everything.

Phone? Check.

Phone *charger*? Check.

My driver's license so I wouldn't risk ending up in trouble with the police because of *one* short drive? Check.

My one and only comfort hoodie? Check.

A flashlight with an importance that was constantly stressed by my dad? Check.

A pocket knife because I "never knew what or who I'd run into", which I'd also brought because of my dad? Check.

Yeah, I was definitely good to go.

So, slinging my bag over my shoulder, I poked my head out of my room. I could still hear my parents' snoring, an obnoxious sign that they were still in deep sleep. They wouldn't come out of their dreamlands until about six thirty.

That was a little more than four hours away.

It suddenly dawned on me how little sleep I was going to get tonight.

I almost felt bad for not caring.

Almost.

Because like I told you, I'm *really* not one to overthink.

So I'd wake up feeling like I had come out of a coma after having been shot in the head.

Another way of saying I'd wake up tired with a killing headache.

Been there, done that, I thought.

With that in mind, I took the first step out of my room, coming out of old walls to be met with new ones.

I looked left to the closed door of my mom's room.

Then right to my dad's.

And then left again.

And after crossing an imaginary street in my own house, I was making my trek to escape these confining walls.

Any noise they could've made having been silenced by my socks, my feet were just a bit lighter on the floor than they would've been without the soft fabric that hugged my feet.

I was nearly halfway down the stairs. I'd managed to tiptoe down the first flight of stairs in total, complete and absolute silence.

Curse that second flight of stairs.

Curse it for being there.

Curse it for having to be just a little bit less illuminated by my phone's flashlight.

And curse it for being just enough of a difference to make me trip.

I'd shone my flashlight on the first flight of stairs, memorizing each identical step before I even thought of beginning my daring descent of those taunting stairs.

Getting too giddy about my success just had to make me think I wouldn't need to be so careful.

And even though it was no earthquake, the trip shook me up just enough to make me stumble over a couple of steps, gritting my teeth as if destroying what my mom referred to as my "money makers" would help me.

But I finally steadied myself.

I must have prayed to every god ever known to exist in those few seconds I spent still, hoping for my parents not to have woken.

It seemed the gods were on my side.

Because now that my senses weren't overwhelmed by paranoia, my ears tuned in on the snoring of my parents, just as thunderous as ever.

I'd never been so relieved to hear that snoring, the bane of my sleep at night.

I smiled at the irony of that.

It was time to get out of here.

Making it out of the house, the coast was still clear of my parents, as clear as the sky had been some hours ago.

Feeling lighter now that I'd made it out of the house, the night's breeze carried my feet to my car.

Though my mind still anxiously traveled back to when I'd stumbled over my own two feet like an idiot.

I really thought it was going to be over.

I thought that my few minutes of freedom would be over once my parents caught me suspiciously frozen in place at the bottom of the stairs.

I thought it'd be all over, and I'd have no choice but to retreat to my suffocating room, drowning in my regret until it forced me to sleep.

But I made it.

My plan wasn't going to end.

That wave of paranoia from thinking it was going to be over had fully washed away, and I felt weightless as I tossed my bag on the passenger seat of my car.

Not weightless like the way you feel right before you're about to faint.

But weightless in the best way.

I put the key in the ignition.

I turned it, and the engine howled to life like a wolf in the night.

I released my grip on the key.

And before my mind could even think to make me imagine seeing a light turn on in my house or anything that could make me call this off, I was out of the driveway.

I didn't spend too much time looking back at my house, but I was still able to see as it got smaller and smaller the farther away I became, now as distant as the stars in the night sky.

Or technically morning.

Same thing.

And as I drove away, heading for the open road, I had to admit that sneaking out for a two AM drive probably wouldn't get me to sleep, muchless be perfect.

But maybe it'd be enough.

In that search for something that would be just enough, I found myself driving down daring streets. I wasn't going very fast, still within the fifty kilometer per hour speed limit. And so the streets were still, wordlessly asking me if I was sure I wanted to go on.

And I knew my answer.

I wasn't going anywhere but forward.

Okay, so maybe this drive *definitely* wouldn't get me to sleep. Because with the way my heart raced, the total opposite of what I'd need to sleep, this was definitely backfiring.

The road and everything around it was a person of its own.

Every small crack in the pavement, illuminated against my car's headlights, each one looking like a drawn out tiny bolt of lightning.

The way the wind brought the still trees to life.

The whisper of their leaves rustling against each other, now beginning to awake, chattering amongst themselves. I'd never noticed before how the road stretched on, refusing to end no matter how far you tried to push it.

Okay, I'd probably noticed that at my road test.

But it had been daunting then.

Now, the unpredictable road, chattering leaves, and the tall, silent storms that were the trees were letting me into their world.

How could I not feel alive?

It was time to take this night to the next level.

Pulling over by the side of the road, I fished my phone out of my bag, my fingertips against the cold surface of it stinging with an almost scary excitement.

Searching among the many playlists I had, I finally settled on one called, "Like There's No Tomorrow, Because There Probably Won't Be One".

Yeah, I'd definitely made that one while I was depressed.

Either way, I hit play.

It really was amazing how everything became all the more breathtaking when the wind wasn't the only thing singing sweet melodies to you.

And it was even more amazing how the same songs that used to let you drown in your own hopelessness could then hold your hand as you got lost in the mysterious world that was the night.

Fifteen minutes later, I was still on a drive that should've ended by now.

I'd been alone for most of the night, occasionally passing by a lone car.

Some were probably people with night jobs.

And maybe some were like me: nightowls behind steering wheels.

But it was nearing the day, and owls had to sleep at some point.

And yet no part in my nocturnal body wanted to.

Not even when it started to rain.

It started to fall, gently, like each drop was trying its best not to break me. Though there was a sharpness to its pattern. It seemed that even though it didn't want to hurt me, the rain still wanted my attention. The wind, on the other hand, was less subtle. It had grown stronger, whipping the leaves of the trees, making those silent storms look shaken, but *alive*.

And the farther I drove, the deeper I fell for the serenade of the nature's storm, everything screaming at me to turn back yet luring me farther in all the same.

I wasn't one to overthink, but the way the world around me had made me not think *at all*, was new, and maybe a little terrifying.

I had to turn back.

Myla, the rain. You're gonna get sick.

Maybe I should've.

Two AM, Myla. It's two AM.

But even as I heard my mom telling me of how I'd get sick with the rain, and my dad reminding me of the ungodly hour I was out at, I still couldn't help but not be sure if I should turn back.

Should I?

How could I see the danger when all I could feel was the warmth inside the car, not suffocating me like stuffiness of my room, but keeping me company as I felt the music that had been all I'd known at my lowest point, when my expectations had been in the pits of hell.

Now they were too high for the heavens to claim.

The car was my little haven, and I wasn't ready to leave.

I wasn't ready to part with the stare of the stars in the sky that would've been void without them, and the way they held me hostage in their gaze from worlds away.

Just enough: that's what it *all* always seemed to be. I always wondered endlessly when it'd be more.

It turned out the answer to that was right then.

Because right then was enough and so much more.

But as a Chuck E Cheese building came into view, I realized it might be *too* much.

The memories that came flooding in, the once charming rain now crying tears of itself, the song that played giving me the final push into the sea of souvenirs that meant more to me than my heart could handle to admit.

Reddened faces, guilty laughter, and a warm blanket of white quickly being dusted in frantic footsteps as three dumb ten year olds run from a Chuck E Cheese employee who's not too happy about the snowball, a terribly aimed ball of innocence, splat on the window.

Feeling a bittersweet tug at my heart, I turned a corner into two years later, to be taken back to those same kids sitting in what was blazing sunlight for two of them, yet still not warm enough for the boy shivering in the hoodies of *both* his friends. Maybe it was the cold, creamy bundle of youth they were savouring under the shadow of a friendly tree that prevented him from warming up in the middle of summer.

I could even remember the flavour.

Chocolate.

Maybe I really did need to go.

Maybe if I did, I wouldn't be feeling a burning in my eyes as I saw two kids crush their friend into a hug so tight, it wouldn't be a stretch to say you could hear the sound of his bones crushing as his friends held onto him for dear life. They said nothing to him, their bone-crushing hold being more than enough for him to know how overwhelmingly happy they were that he was still in this world with them. How happy they were that he hadn't been able to let the pain they knew all too well carry him out of their reach. He would've been too young, at only sixteen.

I'd never held anyone that tightly before.

That was only one year ago.

"See You Again" was playing, *still* playing. I had to turn it off, and I had to go home, because I *couldn't* see them again. Not like the way I saw them in mind.

And it wasn't safe to drive with blurry eyes.

But my mind was too distracted by wandering to the parts of itself it missed most. It couldn't stop wondering along with the song.

I wonder if you look both ways,

When you cross my mind.

Did I unknowingly wander their minds the same way they did mine?

They were *everywhere* I turned.

I heard their laughter at every park.

I saw their different expressions at every theatre.

I felt their peace by every lake.

They intruded my mind, one memory after the other, making me think even more hopeless thoughts of my old friends.

I'd stumbled upon Memory Lane Street, the last destination of my night trip, and I was trapped in open streets.

They were all I could see, no matter where I had turned, even as I was parked in the driveway of my house.

Elijah and Adam.

And why was being reminded of the days I spent with them causing such a dull ache in my chest that I wasn't even sure I was feeling? I couldn't physically feel the pain, and yet it was still there, as if my heart was crying out, and its wails were only bouncing lightly against my ears. Did it hurt so much because I still saw them every day at school, and would inevitably see them in a few hours?

I couldn't tell if I missed *them* or if I missed the *person* I was with them.

Maybe it was an aching mix of both.

And as I thought of those days, the kind of days that I would find myself longing for, to make my life something more than just *enough*, I couldn't help but wonder:

Have I really gone anywhere at all?