

### **The Dark Storm**

And with watery, unfocused eyes mirroring the dark and tumultuous sky, he clasped onto the can. It clicked and crackled as the liquid burned through his throat.

The window outside portrayed inky blackness, undoubtedly rising to swallow him whole, reminding him of his situation.

Music blasted in his ears, something hollowing, filled with anger and screams.

He submitted; he was unsavable; he was gone.

Lightning shot through the sky, and he saw his eyes, ghostly and luminous in the window. All anger gone, despite the ruins around him.

There was no way to salvage this, he was sure. He was alone. He was defeated.

They'd told him to kill himself.

So, he did.

No, not really. Not yet. But surely, he was already dead inside or dying since long ago, and tonight was the final straw.

But, still he knew that true death was not the answer, that maybe it was more true for it to be inner death rather than physical. So, although he toyed with the idea and became close friends with death, he dared not join in its ruthless brigade.

Because then he'd be just like them.

Deep within the earth something shook as the wind sliced through the air and rain began pelting down violently all around-- as if someone else had also felt the deep sorrow of regret in the unforgiving night.

**The Reaper**

I walk down the hallway and pass a door, my face manifesting within the window.

I hurry on past, uncomfortable with seeing my own face suspended there in front of me.

I hastily think of how bad it would be to run into him in the hallway.

Anxiety thrums through me.

And then silence--a twang low in my stomach, nearly imperceptible.

I turn before I know why.

He shuffles quietly behind me, his tall, skeletal frame a harsh, sickly pale,

His dark hair and darker eyes contrasting, like raven-black shadows on a frigid winter night.

His eyes bore into my soul. They always do.

I turn before I know why.

But he is so much a part of me now I can *feel* his presence.

I turn. I know why.

### Thoughtful Silence

We walk down the wooden preface, rocks and gravel tumbling down, darkness masking where  
they landed.

It is dark. It is lonely.

We say nothing as we continue on, the cool summer evening sending moonlight to reflect off the  
path. Our path.

We say nothing as the preface turns into a flat shore, and I think of how we ended up here. We  
say nothing as the rocky ground gives way to soft, spongy grass, and I think of how you're still  
disappointed with me.

We say nothing as the breeze pulls us closer to the stormy lake, and I think of how I might still  
be disappointed with you.

We say nothing as our feet skim another sharp preface that you decided we wouldn't follow, and  
I think back to when I decided not to answer your calls.

We say nothing as the waves lap along the shore and crash there, and I think about how we  
have so much to say and no words with which to say it. And I wonder why.

You say nothing when I call out your name and we proceed on, plodding into the forest, and you  
think to a time when we used to speak every day. And you wonder why.

I say nothing as the forest that was once protective and inviting turned dark and damp as my  
feet sink into the soft cool moss- turned- decay, and I think to a time when your eyes were the  
prettiest I've ever seen and when there was once something here more than decomposed  
roses.

We say nothing,  
And that says everything.