



Merrily

Merrily

# My

# Requiem

Merrily

# Lullaby

Merrily

Life is but a...

Dream

Dream

Dream

Written By  
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“Wahh,Wahh,Wah,” the little itch cries out.

Shit would have been much easier if her mother didn't decide to go off herself. Now, well all hell is now. But, she left me with this.

“I can't take it anymore!” I yell at my brat, baby girl, lying in her crib.

I put my beer down, get up from my chair, and go check on the little agonizing piece of...nah she isn't shit but my little trash, dumpster, or brat, itch or, whatever hell mood I'm in I'll call her what I think of then. I'm a piece of shit anyway. And well she is part of her mom but also part of me, so trash is better than shit any day. For leverage I place one hand on the crib, the other at her heart.

“Hey, little piece of trash. Who is a piece of trash?” Saying as I tickle her belly. “You, you are my dumpster.”

She starts to laugh and settles down a bit. Folding my hands, I rest both arms on the crib I built for her. I start thinking about my own father. I don't remember much about him. He went to war and died in Nam. Moron. I got my trashiness from him, I guess. I never really understood that whole serving your country crap, and honour shit, because there sending you to your grave. I give off a sigh, just thinking about it. And at the end now, it doesn't matter anyway. But still, I really do think the whole world would be better off helping each other rather than killing on another. But now it isn't that way at all. Now it doesn't matter. The world is going to take us to shit, and nobody cares. It probably is better off that way anyway, for the world I mean.

I whisper, “Day is done, gone the sun. From the lakes, from the hills, from the sky. All is well, safely rest; God is... God is...”

My father use to sing that lullaby to me, The Day is Done<sup>1</sup>.

“And God is nowhere to be found,” I finish it how it really ought to be finished and walk back to my chair, my beer.

“Bart, what are you doing? You can't drink that,” My ma says entering my room.

“Ma, don't be so hysterical. I'm 17 and it's not like I'm going to be able to drink at a legal age anyway.”

“Whatever, I don't care. You're a horrible son and you never listen to me anyway....But never mind that, I came to ask if you wanted to go to school? I'm going to go to work now. So if you want a lift, I can drive you and Nicole,” She says angrily at me, more upset than angry though.

“Sure why the hell not, it's not like I got plans or something. And you don't obviously want to spend time with me.”

I chug the rest of my drink, grab the baby seat and try placing her comfortably in it.

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<sup>1</sup> Lullaby derived from <http://singyourfavoritelullaby.blogspot.com/2005/08/day-is-done.html> ( on the date of 2012-03-07)

“Shh,” I whisper to the brat, “don’t tell.”

“Ready,” My ma yells.

I follow my mom to the car. The car ride is quiet. The radio was playing, playing the same crap over and over. And they were broadcasting three channels. My mom after the course of the disastrous news got more and more hysterical. Like, she really doesn’t believe the world is coming to an end. She keeps saying the scientists will find something.

“See Bart, you hear the radio, the scientists say that there might be something they can do.”

Oh my God and shit, I think to myself.

“Listen ma they stopped having people report any more news. This is just a recording. The scientists just probably dug a big hole, and only for themselves and rich folks. Nobody gives two single shits about you, me, or even Nicole back there!”

I turn the station to the next.

Yup I was right, they’re playing the same song over and over, on what use to be my favourite radio station, Kiss FM. Kiss my ass is what it is now, pretty much with this shit song.

“God, not another duh duh duh duh, pause wait for it ma, duh duh duh duh.”

“It’s not a bad song.”

Beethoven's 5th Symphony, it wasn't bad. It wasn't a masterpiece or anything though. But put on something else. I mean the duh duh duh duh part screams out to a moment in life where something bad is going to happen. And well, no shit something bad is going to happen, but do I have to be reminded of it every time I turn on the radio. Never mind it's not even a decent song, it's a shit song, seriously shit. Whoever left this song on in the studio has a sick sense of humour. I mean...I don't know, maybe the song just got ruined for me because I heard it too many times. Another duh duh duh duh, shit the trash woke up, she's crying.

“Crap, the itch is up.”

“Hey, don’t call her that. She has a name. And she’s yours. You should love her and be nice.”

“Yeah right, kind of like you and me right ma,” I laugh a bit.

She doesn't look at me, just shrugs. She gave up on me a long time ago and I have no idea why the hell so. I guess I'm just everybody's bastard kid, kind of like my daughter. But still, I'm probably nicer to my kid than my mom is to me. Whatever, it's all crap. I'm just comparing horseshit to bullshit, who cares right? Shit.

“Well, aren’t you going to do anything, or are you going to let her keep crying?”

“Nope, she is good. She can keep crying.”

“Asshole,” my mom whispers.

“We are almost all there anyway ma. You can pull over here I can walk the rest.”

She pulls over to the side. It’s just another short street to the school. I open the car door.

“Wait,” I pause and sit back in my chair comfortably again, “I don’t hate you. I might not show it well enough. It’s just always been hard once your dad died.” She takes a long pause. “But, but when I saw your face for the first time I fell in love with you. When you were in my arms, your tiny arms,” She laughed a bit and wiped a tear coming from her eye, “and your dad, he held my hand and I remember him smiling... I loved you then as much as I love you now...And I’m sorry if you don’t think that to be true.”

I stare right into my mother’s eyes and can tell she is sincere. I pause, its silent, but an appreciated silence.

“I got to go ma,” I finally say.

I go to open the car door again. She leaps out quickly and hugs me.

I whisper in her ear, “I know ma, maybe I am just an asshole. I don’t blame you for anything.” My voice lowers or maybe I just think of it in my head. Either way, I miss my Jane, and say or think her name. And well, maybe that’s why I’m such an asshole.

“Thank you.”

I get out, open the back door, and take the trash.

“Goodbye ma...I’ll walk home. I’ll see you...sometime. And I do love you,” I say closing the door.

She takes off and I wait till I no longer see the Chevy pickup. My ma is a nurse, hysterical nurse now. I don’t know why she goes to work these days. Maybe it’s because she doesn’t want people to die alone. But, I’d like to think that she doesn’t want to see me die or think about it anyway. I look over at the crying dumpster.

“Shh,” I whisper.

I take out the beer bottle I covered up with the blanket she was snuggling with. Well, I did have to hide it from my ma. She would have thrown it out. And I couldn’t leave my last beer at home, besides today they’re saying is the last day. Hah, I am a bit tipsy. I never really drink. She stops crying. I guess the bottle was just poking her or something. I sit on the curb drinking my beer, baby by my side, and a nice view of all the rich houses on the street.

These couple shady guys, they sneak up into a house. I keep drinking, not caring, but one eyeballs me, but I still keep drinking. They bash in a window and creep inside. I walk towards the direction of the house and have a full frontal view of it. I sit back on the curb. They go into the fridge, they steal some stuff. I take another sip of my beer and remember that I still had two cigarettes left. Lighting it up releases allot of stress. God, I did need this drink and cigarette. I try as much as

possible not to blow the smoke on the little dumpster, but the wind takes it. She coughs. At the top floor I see a curtain getting ripped. There's a girl, her face gets pressed into the window glass. I recognize her, a girl from school. I could hear her yelling for help, and her boobs get exposed. Shit. I look at my kid. She's resting with her eyes halfway closed.

"I'll be back in a sec," I tell her, carefully rest my beer on the curb, and run into the house.

There's one guy downstairs but he just runs away. I rush upstairs. I take one last drag of my cigarette and throw it down on the carpet. I see them, the rape. I grab his shirt and throw him off of her. A piece of his shirt gets left in my grip. I get above his face and start bashing it in. His eyes close, he yells, but I keep bashing on him. When I stop I have a hard time lifting my arms. I stare quickly down at my own two hands, and even though they feel heavy, my heart pounding, and my face sweating, I keep beating him till he passes out. I don't know why but a sad feeling comes over me and it gets worse as I keep hitting him, I almost cry but I don't. It really is a shitty feeling.

"Stop! You're going to kill him!" She yells.

I turn over to her, her boobs exposed and she has her underwear pulled beneath her skirt. I turn away.

"Sorry...Um, you can go and fix yourself up now."

I check his pulse.

"You can look now."

I turn to her.

"Thank you," she says

There's a pause shared between us, it gets awkward. Probably more so because her cheeks start turning flush, embarrassed that I just her saw her naked.

"You know, I really like watermelon. I haven't had it in such a long time. Do you have any?"

She looks at me even more awkward, and then bursts out laughing.

"Was that an attempt to make light of the situation."

I look down at the ground, and look back into her eyes, "Yes, yes it was. Fail?"

"Epic, here let's go...Do you smell that?" She looks around, "Oh my, we got to get out of here."

"Why...?"

Before she even has to say anything else I start seeing smoke, and I turn around. There's a fire outside the room, it rose to about four to five feet high already.

I grab her by her hand.

“Listen, let’s go.”

“What about him?” she says pointing to the rapist.

“Were probably all dying today anyway, he’s just a little sooner.”

“I don’t agree let’s go help him out.”

“No! He isn’t coming back anyway.”

I tug hard on her arm that her body gets dragged with it. I didn’t mean to do it quite that hard actually, and she gave me an angry look. I grab hold for her hand softly this time and we rush to get outside.

“I’m sorry I didn’t mean to tug on your arm that hard.”

“Don’t do it again.”

By the time we got out of the house the roof was catching fire. While we watched, I looked down at my hand. She was gripping it tighter, and I just realized we still had been holding hands.

“I lived there all my life. I wonder how it caught fire.”

“Shit. I just remembered I threw my burning cigarette down at the carpet, I’m sorry.”

“Thanks for telling me but I’m not holding any grudges today.”

She looks down at her hand, realizing it had been holding mine, and let’s go gracefully. I walk back to the curb, grab the rest of my beer, and walk back.

“Cheers.”

When I leaned closer to see her, she was crying.

“My parents got murdered recently and my best friend, Tom, is dead as well. You would think seeing all the stuff that we’ve seen that you would get use to it. You would think that after all the crying already done, you would grow immune to it. Instead, it just keeps getting harder.

“It’s good that your crying, it means you really loved them.” I say to try comforting her somehow.

“Yeah and how about you, did you lose anybody?”

“Shit,” I turn around my daughter isn’t there.

“Oh my God.”

“What?”

“She’s gone, my little dumpster is gone.”

“What?”

“My little girl, my daughter, isn’t there!”

I start panicking, I look around the street. I start running. Passing houses, right and left as fast as I can. I stop and see her being carried by someone into a house.

“Hey stop that’s my kid.”

It’s an old lady, she turns around.

“Oh, I’m sorry I just thought it was an abandoned baby. She is a beautiful little thing.”

I walk quickly up the steps of her house, “No, she will always have me. It’s one of the few promises I ever made and intend to keep.”

I look inside her crib and see her smiling back at me.

The girl I saved comes running down.

“Oh hi Miss Jacobs.”

“Oh hi Catherine, I’m just going to go inside it’s getting too cold for me. I’m really sorry about the misunderstanding.”

“Thank you,” I tell the old lady going inside the house.

I walk back to the curb.

“I’m Bart by the way.”

“Catherine, so what she’s yours?” She says surprised.

“Yeah, just had her delivered just over a month ago. I had her mailed, express. Picked the good one, right out of the catalogue.”

“That’s an awful thing to say.”

“I don’t care. I’d trade her in for her mother, Jane, any day.” I gulp.

I didn’t intend to say that. I really do miss her mother though. Jane, she was a real good human being. I sigh. Shit, I do miss her.

“I mean it’s not what I meant.” I gulp again.

Catherine doesn’t say a word she waits for me to explain.

“I dropped my beer while I was running, shit,” I say just because I don’t really feel like getting into it right now at all.

For some reason Catherine pats my back and starts rubbing it. I just look at the ground, at the little trash. She never did anything wrong, she is just a baby. She really does take after her mother, maybe that's why I find it hard to look at her. Maybe that's why I call her trash. Maybe I don't want her to be human. I don't want my baby to mean something to me. Not in these circumstances anyway. I keep looking into her eyes, finding it hard to do so. She looks back at me not with hate, but with a smile. I don't hate her, I do want her, and she is mine. But maybe I just don't want her to be a human being, a dog or pet would be better. It would be easier for me to let go of something like that.

"You know, she probably looks up to you like you're her hero. You are a good guy, you did save me. I'm sure she loves you, just by seeing her smile back at you," She says to comfort me.

"Yeah well, she did make me drop my beer. And that was the last one I had. Shit."

"Here, let's go. I got an ingenious idea."

Catherine starts running. I pick up the brat and follow at a slower pace.

"Why are we going here?"

"Trust me, I'll be fun."

She leads us to the school. At the football field, you could see donut shapes imprinted in the grass from a pick up's tires, which lay abandoned in the middle of the donuts.

"Hurry up," Catherine yells out to me holding the entrance door to the school wide open.

When we get in, everything is a mess. There are piss stains on some walls, toilet paper rolls unrolled in the hallway. I follow her upstairs, and all the classrooms were destroyed as well. I pause and look inside one because there are people inside. It's a girl I know. She's having sex with a teacher. I kind of think it's funny at first. But then I think it could be rape. But, then I see her kissing him passionately and figure it's what she wants.

"God, you're slow," Catherine says ahead of me.

"Yes, but not retarded," I say kind of laughing at my own joke and continue walking at my own pace.

"And an ass to," She says trying not to laugh.

"Yes, but not just any ass, a funny ass."

"Do you always have to have a cocky remark for everything?"

"Well I do have a cock."

"That didn't even make sense."

Even though I was talking nonsense, she was smiling. So was I, I haven't really smiled nor had a light conversation like this with anybody for a while.



“Were here, sit.”

“Where is here?”

“This use to be my old locker. Now give me your lighter.”

“How do you know I got a lighter?”

“Because you set my house on fire with your cigarette.”

“True,” I say and hand over my lighter.

She takes a joint out of a pocket in her skirt and lights it up. We sit down with our backs to her old locker and I put the little trash a little further away so she doesn't breathe any in. She takes the first drag and passes. I inhale deep as I can.

“Hey not all of it.”

“Sorry,” I say allowing the puff to expose through the sides of my mouth.

Not much is said, and it's just a puff pass until it gets all burned out.

“Get up,” She says and I do, “I just...I don't want to sound weird, but I have a favourite song and I never really. Well I just want to,”

“Yes sure, but what about the music?”

She grabs my hands and leans into me.

“That's all right I know it by heart.”

We start swaying back and forth and she feels comfortable enough that she lays her head against my clavicle bone. I start getting comfortable with her and I put my arm on her back, and lean my head so it rests against hers.

She sings softly into my ear,

“Real a human being  
And a real hero  
Back against the wall and odds  
With the strength of a will and a cause  
Your pursuits are called outstanding  
You're emotionally complex  
Against the grain of dystopic claims  
Not the thoughts your actions entertain  
And you, have proved, to be  
A real human being, and a real hero  
Real human being, and a real hero

A pilot on a cold, cold morn'  
One hundred fifty-five people on board  
All safe and all rescued  
From the slowly sinking ship  
Water warmer than  
His head so cool  
In that tight bind knew what to do  
And you, have proved, to be  
A real human being, and a real hero  
Real a human being"

She looks up into my eyes and says, "A real human being." <sup>2</sup>

She actually has a good voice. She looks like she wants to kiss. I look at the ground and I can feel her backing away. I look up .She leans on a locker with one foot against it, while looking at me. I stare into her eyes. It's hard when you have feelings for somebody else. I go in and kiss her passionately, grabbing at her brown hair. She puts her hands around my neck. Then I start going down, kissing at her neck, while rubbing her back underneath her shirt. She moans.

"Do it," She whispers.

I keep kissing back to her lips with our open mouths and tongues.

"I got to stop" I whisper in her ear.

I look down but not into her eyes. She does try staring into mine. She lifts my chin with her hand and she stares hard into my eyes searching for someone.

"You loved her."

"I did."

I back away and sit, leaning against a locker.

"What happened? I mean is she dead or something?" She asks.

"You know what, it's getting late. I want to go somewhere. I mean... I knew where I wanted to be when it happens. Would you like to join me?"

"Where?"

"Somewhere worth dying and I promise you won't regret it. I'd enjoy your company. Nicole would to," I say standing up.

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<sup>2</sup> Song by: College: A real hero. No Copyright Infringement Intended. Lyrics derived from <http://www.metrolyrics.com/a-real-hero-lyrics-college.html> ( on the date of 2012-03-07)

“Wow that is the first time I heard you actually use her name.... Sure, I as well enjoy your company. Let’s go.”

She walks up to me and kisses me on the cheek and continues walking towards the hallway to the exit. I grabbed the brat and followed.

“Oh my,” Catherine whispers covering at her mouth. “Did you see Mr Manisfel? I knew that girl, heard she got around.”

“Yeah, I saw on the way coming in. It isn’t really that big of a deal.”

We walked past the two sex addicts. Seriously, I can’t believe there still going at it, it’s been already an hour. We get outside. I still think it’s funny though, he taught me chemistry when I was a junior. I almost feel like going back and just joke about it, maybe say something. It would probably be something like: hey sir you never taught us that one before or which pole you taking in her now, the positive. Hah, I know that was crap but still I felt as if I should have said something. Actually, I didn’t really like him. He was an asshole to me. But these days you tend to forget those kinds things, bad memories.

“All right,” I say, “We need to find something with wheels and keys.”

We look around in the parking lot. Most of the car doors were already open, but none had keys.

“Hold on, I think I found one.” I say and start walking towards the direction of the football field.

“It’s pretty muddy can’t you just check and come back for me.”

“Don’t be such a girl.”

“I am a girl,” She yells back to me and I could hear her voice lower but still make out that she calls me, “asshole.”

Girls, seriously they want to have fun but don’t want to do the work that makes it good and fun. How the hell can anyone live with a wife or understand one? Hah, I guess I won’t know. It’s actually sad and sucks that I won’t. I open the pickup door and fortunately it does have keys. I place the little trash in the back car seat. I try starting it up but stop, the glove department is open. I look inside and there is a gun, I close it up and try starting up the car again. It doesn’t turn. I press on the gas and keep turning the key.

“Come on you piece of shit.”

It turns over.

“Yes, hah ha. I am the car God,” I chuckle to myself and start driving to Catherine.

She opens the door for herself and gets in.

“What’s that smell?”

I look around. It's just an old burger bag, with probably an old disgusting burger. But, it really isn't that bad, the smell.

"I had people smell worse, its okay. You don't have to worry about your foul stench here." I say trying to be serious and make her feel bad.

She opens her mouth in a surprise that I actually said that.

"Did you really just say that?"

"Say what?"

I keep quiet and start driving out of the school.

"You are such an asshole," She says it to be serious but I could tell she is hiding her laughter.

"Maybe, but I do know what makes you laugh. And I like to see you smile."

She looks at me and I quickly glance at her and she gives a quick smile at me and turns away.

We pass Catherine's house, there was not much of it left and the flames started attacking the other house on the left side. When we drove passed it, she didn't even look at it, and she was so quiet that I thought she stopped breathing.

"I'm glad to have met you," I say honestly.

She didn't say anything but kept starring out the car window. We get to a stop sign. I could see a car in the ditch up ahead. I drive further. It actually had been two cars and one was rolled over further deep in the ditch. I drive slowly past it and stop a little bit ahead, taking the keys with me.

"Why are you stopping?" Catherine asks.

I get out of the car and walk closer to the scene. There were two teenagers in the first car. One had his head partially cut off. The other, his legs had been crushed. I didn't have to check, both were dead. But I recognized the other car, deeper in the ditch. It had to have caught fire, the paint had been burned on the hood and it was an ash black colour. I look at the licence plate and am too scared to see if there is a body. I move down inch by inch. And I see what is left of a burnt sleeve, burnt arm. Some parts of the arm were bubbling white. Some skin was ripping apart exposing vein. It's hard starring at that lifeless arm coming from the broken window. I turn around and Catherine sees me make my way up the ditch.

"Did you know them?" She asks

"No, its fine we should keep going."

We both get back in the car. She stares at me and I just stare out in the distance for a little bit.

"We can talk about it if you want."

"I don't," I quickly reply.

I keep staring into the distance. She doesn't say anything and is smart enough not to. I take a deep sigh. I think I probably would have liked to see her for the last time when we had that conversation earlier, when she drove me to school and said that she loved me. Yeah, that would have been a better time to see her for the last time. Not like this, my ma. I put the keys in the ignition, it starts smoothly this time. I keep driving.

"I'm glad I have met you to, even if for a little while," Catherine says.

We drive past a lot of broken in and damaged houses. And a church, but the church is in good shape. There are many people outside the church and a priest, kneeling and praying. Catherine turns on the radio.

"That is the same thing right? What they're broadcasting right?" Catherine asks.

"Yeah, it is. The rosary," I say with a gulp at the end for some reason, "But I don't really want to hear it right now, if you don't mind."

She turns the station. It's the scientists speaking about what they're going to do.

"What do you think?"

"Listen, a while back I actually went to where they were broadcasting this. I got there, the main room where they got the people and DJ talking. The guy in the control room had it set as a recording set to play over and over. It's just them talking for twelve hours and then repeats, repeat, repeat, and shit."

"What did the guy in the control room say about it?"

"He didn't say anything. There was a hole in his head. Blood spilled all over the chair, and a gun that lay close by."

Catherine turns quiet. Up ahead, I see some kids, teenagers and their shooting guns up in the air. There is a car in the middle of them doing donuts. When I drive closer I see blood on their faces. They're dressed like a tribal gang from a different era.

"What the shit?" I say kind of with a laugh.

Catherine looks up and says, "I hope there won't be trouble."

I start driving past them, with an eye on the rear-view mirror. The car stops doing donuts, reverses, and starts to follow us.

"Open up the glove department and give me what's inside," I say demandingly.

She opens it up and says, "No, don't."

"I won't, I just want to scare them is all."

I stop the car, leave it running, realizing they will catch up to me anyway. I take the gun from her and open it up, four bullets left.

“Get in the driver’s seat, duck down, and look in the rear view mirror. If anything happens to me, leave me and spend the rest of time you have left with my daughter.”

“I will,” She says staring into my eyes as if a promise just had been made.

I put the gun in the back of my pants and open the car door. I see Catherine shuffling to get to the driver’s seat. I walk at the back end of the car, making sure I’m still in view of the rear-view mirror. They catch up to me, stopping close by. They get out.

“Well hello their boss man,” One says cock eyed at me, approaching to my face.

The other, his friend is laughing. They’re both shorter than I am, and I find it funny that they’re that young trying to act that tough to me.

“We just want that girl we saw in that truck of yours then you can leave quietly. Unless you want to start some trouble,” He says looking straight into my eyes, and reveals his gun to me.

“Fine,” I start backing up.

I open up the driver side door, while being behind it. And, I take the gun from the back of my pants and yell, “Stay inside!”

I see Catherine ducking in her seat, and I start shooting. It took two bullets to get one kid down. He only managed to get a single shot at the door, but didn’t pierce through. The other, the one that didn’t say much hides at the side of their car. I carefully walk to the other side of our car, to the side where the kid is hiding. He doesn’t see me and has his gun out. I aim perfectly and shoot at his chest. It’s a hit. From afar a distance, I can see that their friends are running towards us, with their guns in the air, screaming. Fortunately they didn’t have a car. It looks like both kids are dead and I walk to their car, taking their keys and throwing them as far as I can into a bush. I look at my gun and throw it into the bush as well. And, I go back to our car.

“Are you okay Catherine?”

I could hear her singing softly, “Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream,” while facing my little dumpster.

She turns to me, “Yeah.”

And she moves over to the passenger side. I get in the car and start driving off.

Looking out the car window, she sings, “Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a dream.”

“Who came up with that anyway? The lullaby I mean,” I ask.

“I don’t know, but I don’t think anyone really knows. I think whoever wrote it, never really wanted to be known.”

“What do you mean? Why the hell not?”

“I don’t think he or she really wanted to feel responsible for the hard decisions people have to make, row. I think they just wanted people to sing it themselves and be the composer of their own dreams and problems that arise from it, their own hard truths, lies, and consequences.”

Truthfully, I didn’t really know what she was talking about. But if that’s what she feels about the song, than that’s fine with me.

“Yeah, I guess that makes sense. I didn’t really think about it that deeply.”

“Did you kill them?” She asks, “They looked like kids.”

I gulp and know what answer she wants to hear. I have told allot of lies in my life and done allot worse since the news about the world. The world went havoc, complete shit. But maybe it didn’t, forget it. The people, and myself, everybody changed so quickly. All I do is what I think is right, and that probably is all wrong anyway. I’ve been called trash all my life, but I still want to make Catherine happy for some reason. Even if I have to destroy any moral I think I have. I am my own worst enemy.

“No, I just injured them. After I grabbed handcuffs they had on them, and I tied them to the steering wheel. They won’t follow us either, I took their keys.”

“Good,” She says with a frown.

She probably knows I’m lying anyway, too many gunshots went off. She’s pretty quiet and we approach the power plant. Toxic green gases get released from these big roof pipes. Shit, I drive quickly past it and we arrive at the parking lot.

“The beach,” Catherine asks almost as a question.

“Yeah, I just figured it be nice....This was the last place my dad took me before he went to Nam. He said goodbye and sent me out to get ice-cream for two. He said my ma didn’t want one. When I came back, he was gone. He and his friend drove from here to the base. My mom and I, we were just left standing there looking at the beach. And that’s when I realized he sent me to get ice cream for me and my ma, not him. I think he was kind of telling me to take care of my ma, well that’s how I saw it anyways.”

“Allot of bad things just happen, I guess. We can’t really change them.”

“No,” I say and I get the trash from the back seat.

“Can I hold her for a while?” Catherine asks.

“Yeah, just be careful.”

She lifts her from the baby seat and carries her in her hands.

"She's so soft, and beautiful. I wish I was lucky to have a beautiful daughter. Just to look at her, know that she's mine. And when she looks at me, I would know that she would love me. By her warmth, smile, and kindness, someone would love me and I would know. It would be nice for a change."

"Nice would be nice for a change," I say.

We walk towards the ocean and sit not too far from the water.

"So," I begin to ask, "If... If you could just let me ask. If you could just tell God, and if he existed, and you knew that he would hear you, what would you say from all of this."

Catherine takes Nicole from her arms and places her back into her seat.

"I...I guess. I don't really know."

She turns quiet for a while staring into the distance of the water.

She says her words slowly and calmly, thinking about each one, "...He stripped me of all my possessions, took away my dreams and ambitions. I look at life and it doesn't seem real, it's so awful it almost can't be real. And then my parents, the only people that loved me, gone in a terrible way. I break away from the rules. He keeps feeding us hell, making us die a little more, leaving me with nothing." She takes a short pause and her words get louder and angrier, "You are the one person to blame all my problems on. Yet, at the same time you're the one person that can take them all way... You are a true God, meddling in our existence. When we are happy and content, you take away love where it is most needed. You break hearts and at the same time you make them. You make life one precious gift. But, then you have the nerve to take that and more. You just may be worse than any man that has ever lived but maybe the greatest God for the world, and not just mankind.... Tears have lost its meaning, and it's a pity to cry." She takes a really long pause and I almost begin to say something but she does instead, "What would you ask or say to him?"

I think about it for a while. Her answer to me seemed very complex, kind of like the person I see her as.

"It wouldn't be much. I'd ask what is this all worth for and why? And I'd want to know what earth really is: a hell, a middle ground, or a paradise that we ruined. And I guess I would just ask if I could just see her again, Jane, at least for a little while. To tell the truth, before I met you, she was the only person who understood me. And it seemed, to me anyways, well that she was the only girl that loved me. Well the only person, the only thing that ever loved me. The only thing I was good at, it was being with her. I never really knew why."

"I do."

"Here get up," I say standing up, "I want to show you something."

Catherine picks up the baby seat and we walk down by the shore and it keeps sloping higher and higher.

"There's a cave down there, where the rocks are."

"What do you want to do with Nicole?" Catherine asks.



I start climbing down the rocks.

“Here pass her to me.”

I grab her and place her on a rock. I slowly go rock by rock, placing the seat on every rock I just came from. Catherine starts climbing down, and I look up at her skirt.

“Hah,” I laugh.

“What she yells?”

“Nothing, I’ll tell you later it’s just a stupid joke I heard.”

She’s much slower than I am and I get all the way down to the last rock. Catherine grips on to every rock taking her time. The winds start hitting harder and harder. Her skirt gets pushed up, revealing her underwear. She screams.

“Hey so, listen I know it might be tempting. But, can you not stare at my ass?” She looks down meeting me with my eyes, “Kind of like what you’re doing now.”

“Come on now, don’t be embarrassed. You actually have a nice bum. And, red, red is actually my favourite colour. For some reason, really unexpected, I’m starting to appreciate the colour more and more.”

“Asshole,” She yells out loud.

I laugh and wait till she gets to where I am. A wave hits the rock were standing on, and a mist blows in our faces. Catherine loses balance. I quickly grab her shirt and hold her till she regains composure.

“Thanks,” She says.

“Listen, sorry about that I didn’t mean to look. It just was there when I glimpsed. I mean I didn’t mean to, sorry.”

“You didn’t,” She says searching my eyes and smirking, “you sure... Don’t worry about it pervert.”

She laughs and her laugh makes me laugh. We make our way down to the cave. There is a foot of water we walk through with our shoes.

“We should have taken off our shoes.”

“It’s actually really slippery. I didn’t want you to fall or hurt yourself,” I say raising the seat higher, so Nicole doesn’t get wet.

“Aww, you’re always thinking of me.”

“Sure, were all that we got till the end.” I say.

We get higher above ground in the cave where there is sand and I place the crib beside us. We both sit on the sand and take off our shoes.

“Well this place is cool. I never knew about it.”

“I know right. Not all of people do. And anybody who does doesn’t tell anybody about it.”

“This is like the exact kind of place a guy would take a girl, if he would want to make out,” Catherine says laughing.

“Maybe, Jane told me about it. It was a really good place and I haven’t been here in quite a while.”

“Tell me what happened it would be easier on you to share.” Catherine says with empathy.

“I mean, it only happened the second week after the horrible news.”

“Right, that was probably the worst week. At first people didn’t believe it and just continued as normal. Then that week people went crazy. That’s when bad stuff started happening to me. Nobody went to work and jails went unguarded. My parents got killed by a con still wearing jail clothing, all because he wanted my mom’s purse.”

“I’m sorry,” I say with empathy to her.

“Yeah, I cried all my tears already though... I’m sorry how did she die?”

“No, I mean its okay you don’t have to apologize for anything.”

She didn’t mean any offence that I heard, she didn’t have to apologize.

“Her story is similar to yours. I mean her parents died and she really broke down. Her ma, she went hysterical. She really went crazy. You see, she umm. Somehow her ma obtained a gun. And her dad well. Her ma tried to kill herself and her dad begged her not to. Jane was just getting home and she begged her ma not to do it also. Then she pointed the gun at her dad. He tried to grab it from her. He tried to save her. The gun went off and it almost hit Jane. It went right through her dad. He fell to the floor and started bleeding. Jane’s ma then brought the gun to Jane. Jane started to cry so I guess her ma felt sympathy for her or something. Her ma brought it to the temple of her head and shot herself. Jane rushed to her dad. He had been faintly breathing. She really tried to save his life. Jane told me that the last words her father said were to never give up. Never to give up on people you love, regardless of what happens. To tell the truth I think he wanted Jane to keep going. When I got to her house I saw her eyes. She looked dead, like she had enough. She was lying on top of her dad, her head on his torso. I came in because the door had been wide open. I mean I was in shock and she told me what happened. But as I was listening to her I always saw that she had that gun in her hands. I kept always telling her to give it to me. Then she actually put the gun down and I was relieved. She took something out of her jean pocket, a pill, and swallowed it. She then took the gun and said to follow her to the couch. The pill she took was poison and she said she had fifteen to thirty minutes, depending on how strong her immune system was. She told me that Nicole was upstairs. She told me she would have wanted a life, a family with us three. I mean a real loving

family, something I never really had. I told her I loved her and she said it didn't matter. But she did love me to. She said she couldn't bear the circumstances we were given, it was too much of something not worth it. She had been planning on killing herself, and her parent's death set her off. And, she wanted to take Nicole's life. She wanted me to come also. She said we would be a happier family, but not here. I couldn't let her take Nicole's life, I just couldn't. I promised her I would take care of Nicole, till the end. And I would make her feel loved. She started shaking and I grabbed her in my hands. She told me she loved me and would see me soon, as a family. Then I kissed her on the lips and she died." I take a deep sigh. "And now, I think I broke that promise to Nicole. It really is hard loving her in these circumstances. Maybe we should of all just oft ourselves together. I don't know."

"No, don't say that," Catherine says starring at me in wonderment, "You did the right thing. You might not have been the best father. But, I bet if Nicole was older. She would not say she hated you, but loved you for what you did. I'm sure she loves you. No matter how bad of a human being you think you are. And even though you might not think it, you really are a great human being. I mean allot of other people would have gave up, you didn't...I don't know how or why, but I feel like I understand you. You might think low of yourself and that nobody cares about you. You might even think that she killed herself because of you, but don't. I could understand why she did it. Don't think that way where you think nobody cares about you. Your mom, Nicole, even your girlfriend, they all love you. Even me, I only spend almost a full day with you, and... I am starting to fall in love with you. I truly care about you, and..."

"Thank you," I say starring at her seriously.

I lie down on the sand and look up. I see the beams supporting the cave and the glistening of the rocks. Catherine lays her head down on the sand to. And it's pretty quiet, just the sound of the small waves raising and lowering the water level in the cave. The sound of it creates a small echo bouncing from the walls.

"I do love you to," I tell Catherine. "I really do, but..."

"That's fine, I get it," Catherine says and she gets closer to me, resting her head right beneath mine, on my chest.

"I'm fine with your answer, and I knew. But, I still wanted you to know how I feel."

I kiss her head and smell her hair.

And the three of us just stare up at the ceiling of the cave. It's kind of funny, but this could have been a good family. Nicole, Catherine, and me, I really do wish the world wasn't coming to an end.

"This is all really nice, but I really would like to see the sun setting one last time."

"Okay," I say. "Let's go out of this cave. Let's see your sunset."

She gets up first and I follow. We stare right into each other's eyes. She gulps and hugs me.

“Today feels like it’s going to be the day. Something actually good came out of it, meeting you. It just had to be today,” Catherine says.

“It’s going to be okay, will have each other.”

I break away from the hug and kiss her on the forehead. She bites on her lip and I kiss her on the lips. It’s just one kiss, but it’s long and slow without any tongue.

We break apart and I say, “Let’s see your sunset.”

“Okay.”

I grab the baby seat and I could see Nicole just waking up. We start heading out of the cave. The waves get higher and I lift the seat really high so she doesn’t even feel the mist. We get to the rocks and I climb up first all the way. I wait for Catherine and give her a hand when she gets closer to the top. We walk to the beach, close enough to the water so it just doesn’t reach us, and sit on the sand. We both take off our soaked shoes. Nothing is really said and her head keeps resting on my collarbone. The sun comes down and it turns dark. It looks like it gets misty, but with a weird smell.

Catherine starts to sing, “Row, row, row, row your boat gently down the stream. Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is one big dream.”

She keeps singing over and over and my eyes almost close. Her head falls down on my lap. My eyes are closing. The smell gets stronger. My eyes fully open and I turn around, and even though it’s dark, I stare and make out Nicole’s face. I touch right beneath her nose. It’s bleeding. I get her pulse. She’s gone. I hope it was painless. The smell, it’s the same smell as when we drove quickly past the power plant. It’s killing us. I slap Catherine’s face, and could just make out her singing the lullaby.

“Catherine!” I yell.

I look up at the sky.

“It’s okay Catherine, I’ll see you soon. Go to sleep.”

I stop talking, thinking of something to say to Nicole, “I’m sorry Nicole. I really am. I loved you. I really did love you. I’m so sorry. Your mother loved you as much as she could, she’s sorry to.”

I stare up again and the sky brightens up a bit. It’s the weirdest sight ever, if only you could be here and just see how beautiful it really is. The water is glistening and at the same time it’s very calm, like it doesn’t care if it’s going to die anyway.

I start to sing, “Row, row, row, row your boat gently down the stream. Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily, life is but a big dream.”

My eyes begin to cry, and breathing begins to become much harder on my lungs. I lift my hands from Catherine’s head close to my face, blood. I look down and see Catherine. Her eyes, nose, ears, everywhere, every open orifice, she was bleeding. I manage to lift my hands to touch my face. Shit.

I'm bleeding everywhere to. I look up and suddenly a loud noise, and then silence. It was so loud and I don't hear anything now, I'm deaf.

I keep singing "Row, row, row, row your boat gently down the stream. Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily..." I sing

But, I can't hear my own words. I could feel the ground tremble and the shells on the ground and rocks begin to shake. It gets really bright. I go blind.

"Life is but a dream."