

Moon

I look out at the city lights below me. From this peaceful seat on a grassy hill, even the stars seem closer through the sky. The view is gorgeous. As I look up at the moon, the faint glimmer of a tear rolls down my cheek. My mother used to love the moon. She loved the way it reflects the light of the sun and the way it tenderly billows the seas. I close my eyes, reliving the end of her time yet again.

There is a faint ringing in my ears as I crouch at the hospital bed.

Beep.

Beep.

Beep.

The beeps align with my heartbeats, every small blip for every extra second my mother lives.

I clutch her hand, trying to breathe warmth into it, skin to skin. The eyes that proudly watched me graduate high school and the mouth that smiled so widely in the photos would never see me become a complete adult. I'd spent the last few months running around the country, searching desperately for another option, another chance at a painless life for her.

Every hospital had turned me away, refusing treatment for a patient so far gone.

All of a sudden, I feel a squeeze in my hand. A twitch in my mother's face shows the faint crowfeet at her eyes I long to see once more. I remember this as the moment a body serves its soul a final blessing before departure.

And so, my eyes train on the screen drawing her heartbeat, watching the thin line grow flatter by the second. It becomes harder and harder to breathe.

Gradually, the line comes to a still. Although it had been a daily fear for the past month or so, in this moment, my heart stops beating. The world comes crashing down upon my shoulders as I feel the life seep out of her skin and the tense wrinkles smooth out into bumpy lines on my mother's face. I no longer register the wails of my brothers and sisters around me, drowning in the same grief.

Time of death: 14:39.

A doctor records the small numbers onto a piece of paper. Small numbers, encapsulating a lifetime of laughter, tears, love. I feel his pitying eyes on my back, feel the glances the nurses throw each other, full of remorse and sorrow. I feel all too many feelings in that white, white room.

Eventually, a haze clouds my head, and my vision turns off. The careful, gloved hands wheeling out my mother's body no longer register. I collapse on the ground beside the hospital bed. As this riptide crashes down on me, pulling me deeper, my final wish is for a gentle wave to arrive and wash me ashore.

The nearby chirp of crickets brings me back to my seat on the hill. In the distance, the twinkling light of a ferry winks at me from the water on the harbour, joining the glimmers of the city like a troop of fireflies. At such a late hour, it is still alive. I realise since that day, I've remembered every single birthday, admired every single sunset, treasured every single picture. Not a single moment has gone to waste.

The gentle wave I wished for comes now, calming the loneliness and desperation in my life. Special memories I'd taken for granted in my youth glimmer all the more preciously now.

Truly, I think. I feel reborn.

Somehow, the moon glows even more beautiful tonight.