

Commento

14 ago 2007

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Im Gone!

Umore: ☺ sveglio

ciao! tschuss! im gone! today im heading out, and for starters i want to thank seliber, chris, brett, alex, dj, andrew cheung, stefani and ben for showing me an awesome time last night and suffering through rush hour 3. you all are troopers! just to let you guys know, i got teary-eyed the minute i walked out the door because im really going to miss you guys a lot, my crew.

alright, enough of that sincere sorority girl high school yearbook bullshit. peace out suckers. loves, amanda

8:16 - 3 Commenti - 2 Kudos - Aggiungi Commento

11 dic 2006

Baby Brother (short story, Dec. 2006)

Umore: ☺ artistico

Categoria: Writing and Poetry

Baby Brother

Edgar told himself to breathe. It was hard. His chest kept pulling tight on the breaths he was trying to make bigger. He couldn't fill his chest up the way he wanted to. Instead his head felt too heavy, and his neck felt smooched. It sent nauseating waves all the way from the top of his head, through his eyes, and into the tips of his fingers. The energy of it shook his fingertips as he pushed his silver key into the slot above the doorknob.

Edgar stepped stiffly into the studio apartment over the hiking boots and sneakers in the entryway. Kyle was sitting on one side of the room on his bed and

Kyle's brother
Pattio
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TRAMONTO

the setting sun shone threw in horizontal lines across
Edgar's own mattress that rested across from him.

Edgar went to it and sat down with a heavy sigh into a
sunken spot, and it too sighed under his gangly weight.

"What's up?" said Kyle, looking up from his
textbook. He was both protective and authoritative
towards Edgar, even though he was eight years younger.
In all other things besides financial, he provided for
Edgar persistent counsel. In return, there was a
constant quiet respect that Edgar paid his younger
brother in his allowance of Kyle's worldly lifestyle. It
was because of Edgar that Kyle needn't suffer from rent
dues, work responsibilities, and grocery shopping. But
Edgar also always questioned Kyle about his daily
offenses and when he was silent it made Kyle
immediately perk up and set aside his calculus
homework. "What's your problem?"

Edgar's face turned upwards and his eyes lit up,
dark pupils against bright whites. His mouth was drawn
tight and creased at the edges, and for a second Edgar
thought he was going to say something, but he felt the
tightness of his brow ease and he swallowed a large,
slippery gulp of the aching, burning rage that pulsed
in his forehead, chest, and throat. His fists peeled open
and revealed the crescent moon dimples in his palms
where his fingernails had dug too deep. His throat was
choking on the bile and the question, where was his
soul, but instead he asked, "Did you know her name?"

Kyle raised his eyebrows and leaned back. His
brow furrowed and he frowned. He stared at his brother
for a moment and leaned forward. "Do I know whose
name, exactly?" Kyle's eye twitched in the corner.

Edgar's brow was webbed with deep, troubled
lines and his hands stretched like starfish over his
knees. He blinked slowly, deliberately, and he watched

Kyle's face shift awkwardly through familiar expressions. Then Edgar used the same voice he had used when he and Kyle had played hide-and-go-seek, the coaxing voice to lure Kyle out of his hiding spot. "The girl you raped, Kyle. Did you know her name?"

There were scrapings of the metal chair legs against the wooden floor and the soft whooshing sound of the gathering of pencils and papers. Edgar curled up as if his chair was his shell and his arms wrapped around his knees that were drawn up to his chest. Over his arms he watched Maya scoot back her chair and reach for her backpack. Her thin arms reached down and he stared as if obliging her, silently appreciating the aesthetic gracefulness. She reminded Edgar of a dancer who, although doing regular things, still looked as though onstage. She stood up and her purple backpack swung in an arch and her other thin arm went through the strap. She tapped Sandra's desk with a pointed index finder in passing and Ms. Sandra nodded at her leaving.

Ms. Sandra, a pale and robust, wheezing, older woman and his third grade teacher flopped a heavy forearm onto her cheap metal desk so that the sound of her palm slapping the cold surface was almost a 'splat'. Her blue eyes matched the blue discoloration of the thin, hanging skin beneath them, and they smiled at him, bringing him to release his knees. Edgar felt the skin prickle up the back of his neck. He rubbed the hairs down with his palm, but kept in his seat. He put his head down, knowing he should be leaving, but the heavy feeling pressed harder and harder onto his shoulders, and Edgar wasn't sure if was going to be able to get up again.

"Why don't you move your chair up here, Edgar?"

Sandra indicated the space next to her desk with a nod of her head. She coughed deeply in her throat, bringing her thick hand up to cover her mouth.

Edgar swung his legs out and he picked up his chair, and wobbled under the weight of it to the front of the room. He put his chair down and again sat, but looked down at his fingers. Sandra knew Edgar was smart and she observed him, sensing his quiet, fragile sense of dignity. She waited to see if he would speak first by clucking her tongue softly, a habit she had picked up over the years from her starch peers, and she thumbed through the pages of her lesson plan. When he didn't speak or move, she said, "So, Edgar, what seems to be the problem?"

Edgar crossed his feet underneath the chair and slouched over, slightly hunchbacked. He was thin and bony and had large front teeth and purple bruises on his arms. He felt a deep red warm up his high cheek bones and he pulled his forearms in through the sleeves of his shirt into the body cavity. Inside he wrapped his arms around his bony torso and breathed slow, tired breaths.

Sandra put a hand underneath her double chin and smoothed the lines between her eyes with a thumb. She decided on, "How's your brother coming along, Edgar? I hear he's about a yard long now."

Edgar shook his head and looked up seriously. "No, he can't be." His husky voice sounded like it was crawling out of a bucket of sand. He pulled his arms out of his sleeves and held them two feet apart. "He can't be more than this," he explained, "Or else my mom would be huge!" He stretched his arms as far as they would go.

They revealed cuts in his upper inner arms,

2865

lacerations that were surrounded by dark stains in his copper skin.

Kyle smiled without showing his teeth. He leaned back into the bean bag and muttered, "Hum."

"Huh? What's huh?" Edgar stared with open, unblinking eyes that betrayed his earnestness. They pleaded with gentle, watery intent, eyebrows pulled way back.

"Hum is where ^{inferno} the hell are you getting the crazy ^{potterhouse} idea that I'd rape some chick?" Kyle ventured. His smile had vanished and he leaned forward, glaring back into Edgar's eyes.

Edgar hesitated. He had expected a full explanation, perhaps naively expected the same sort of bored explanation that he always received from his younger brother. He waited, feeling the hot pressure of Kyle's stare press into his own eye sockets. He managed, "A girl named Victoria found me today. She went out asking especially for me." His voice grew quiet. "She said you drugged and raped her."

Kyle laughed deep in his throat. "Icky Vicky, huh? Jeez, Edgar. You had me going there." He picked up his calculus book and flicked with his ^{finger} thumb to find his page, shook his head side to side with his smile still confident on his face. "A thing you have to know about chicks is that they don't know what they want." Kyle winked his eye. "You have to show it to them. Trust me. In any case," He cocked his eyebrows up and one side of his mouth rose into a grin. "I think we both know hard A is hardly a drug."

Edgar brought his arms down and looked away. He pinched his wrists with his fingernails. Out of the corner of his eye he watched as Sandra's expression

didn't change. Instead she opened one of the doors of her desk and rustled through a collection of books stacked inside. She brought out a small paperback. "Here," she said. "Try your hand at this."

Edgar released his arms and took the book, turned it over, and read the cover. "Hamlet, very interesting..." Edgar said, copying a deep impressive voice.

"Yes," Sandra choked. She sputtered and wheezed in breath like it was thick and painful, like she was breathing boiled water. She clutched her chest. "Whew!" She howled at last when it was over.

Edgar touched his own chest with small fingers. "Got a cold, Ms. Sandra?"

Sandra smiled. "A little more than that." She waved a hand at him. "Forget it. What do you say? You like hanging out here so much with a wispy old hag?"

Edgar frowned, closed the small book, and placed it lightly on Sandra's metal desk. "First of all, you're not a wispy old hag, you're just old." He said very seriously, the frown still in his face. He fumbled with his fingers and inadvertently felt the scratches in his arms. "Second of all..." He picked at a scab to distract from the hard feeling in his chest. His skin reminded him of sand, and how sand was all stretched and washed out on a cold beach.

Sandra waited, watching him pick at the thin scabs on his wrists that were nothing compared to the wounds under his arms. She wanted to ask who had hurt him, which kid, so she could actually do something to help. She at least had authority over her third graders. But she was silent, waiting like she did when she asked a student to read for her, waiting for them to figure it out. Children were impressionable, often out of laziness, and would take any answer given to them

when they could. She didn't want to put any names into Edgar's mouth for him.

Edgar started crying, started with shaking little sighs that broke the barrier and small, steady tears rolled down to the corners of his mouth. He whispered, "You love me, huh?"

Many answers came to the tip of Sandra's tongue at once. The consequences of saying yes, his devotion, his dependency, his emotional health were immediately delivered to her as something she could proceed with or deny. The consequences of saying no, however, because of his obviously low sense of self-esteem, haunted her even more. It took perhaps two seconds to say, "How'd you know?" She petted his head. He was sweating.

"I don't want to go home. My mom's all full up with my brother and they don't talk to me anymore. They just go to bed. Dad and her used to fight to read me stories..." Edgar squeezed the upper insides of his arms and winced. But he felt relieved, felt his shoulders fall a little, give a little slack. It was like he wasn't wound up as tight, wasn't busting at the seams. He felt Sandra wrap her floppy arms around his shoulders and he rested on the fleshy part above her collarbone.

Kyle turned away from Edgar, meaning that the conversation was over, meaning Edgar wouldn't say anything about it anymore. If Edgar had felt the same as he had his entire life, he would have done just that. He would have shut up. He would have put it down in his mind as the disorientation of spirits in other lives. Kyle couldn't be exactly what Edgar wanted him to be.

But Edgar was tired, more tired than he had ever felt. He watched Kyle turn away and felt his fists close up again. He stood up and went over to Kyle, took up the calculus textbook from his lap, and threw it across

them room. It slammed into the wall next to the bathroom door and left a small indent.

"What, Edgar?" Kyle's face contorted, revealing conflicting narrowed eyes and a wide awkward mouth. He stood and pushed Edgar on his shoulders, shoving him backwards a few feet. There was no doubt who was the stronger of the two. Kyle was lean but with broad shoulders and a stocky stature, more like their father. Edgar was tall and gangly, never having really appreciated sports or his own body.

"You're not supposed to be this way," Edgar said, and he started to cry. He started to shake and the barrier let loose in him until streams cascaded down his face. Edgar mourned the loss, and felt cold waves trickle through his insides into the hard, empty spot near his heart, where he felt the burn cold in his soul. Edgar put his hands there, and remembered her face in his mind, remembered how she had touched the wounds on his arms, dressed them, and never reprimanded. She had told him that she would never let anything like it ever happen again, but now she was really gone.

His eyes were red where the whites had always been, and Kyle's eyes opened wide defensively, like Edgar resembled a demon, with glowing red eyes and stringy limbs that ended in curled fists. Shaking, he pulled back his right shoulder and punched Edgar's weeping face.

Edgar finally walked through his front door as his mother was calling up the stairs for him for dinner. It was just the same, whether he was there or not, but Edgar at least didn't feel the same. He didn't take his knife with him after dinner. Instead he carefully peeled off the bandages Sandra had put on his arms and cleaned himself in the shower, like normal people did.

He didn't cry out, but hummed along to the Jeopardy tune he heard coming from the living room TV. He tucked himself in and slept.

Edgar was on the playground of his school before the sun had risen the next morning. He trudged faithfully through the parking lot to the entrance and frowned when the metal doors wouldn't open, no matter how hard he pulled. He heard the sounds of a car pulling up and spun around, narrowing his eyes when the car's lights flashed over him. They went out.

Edgar didn't know the teacher and didn't say anything when the broad, Native American man opened the doors for him. The doors closed swallowing a whoosh of air back out as they thudded heavily on the metal frames. The main hallway of the school seemed more enclosed in the dark. Edgar put a hand on the wall and followed it to the opening of his classroom. Only half the lights, the ones near the front of the classroom were on. Sandra was at her desk, flipping through her lesson plan. He stood in the doorway and waited, watched her throw a curtain of sandy blond hair behind her round shoulder. She coughed and drew her head down, drew in a shuddering breath. Edgar cleared his throat and Sandra's eyes found his.

She blinked at him and sighed deeply. Edgar blinked back and itched a scab on his elbow. Sandra closed her eyes. She opened them again slowly and said, "Come here, Edgar."

Edgar felt cold. He went to her desk and sat down. His chair was still beside it.

"You can't be here, Edgar," Sandra's face was calm, her voice soft. She held Edgar's bony hand in her own fleshy one.

"Why?" Edgar said. His brows furrowed together, cleaving old lines in his young face.

"Because, it can't always be me, Edgar..." Sandra touched his temple and ran her thumb across his forehead, smoothing out the lines.

Edgar stared into Sandra's face and watched her eyes drift towards the doorway. She leaned back, away from him, and he turned around.

"Thank God!" It was his father, heavy-shouldered, charging through the doorway of the classroom. Edgar felt his heavy hand squeeze his shoulder. He felt himself lifted up and turned around. "Excuse me," his father nodded at Sandra. His breath blew hot down Edgar's neck. "I've been looking all over for you. The baby's coming, so we're going to the hospital."

Edgar turned around and Sandra nodded towards the door. Edgar felt like he was deep inside his body, or as if this body was bigger than he had ever felt it to be, so that he felt it surround him and his soul was small and shrunk inside so that he could see his body around him. Sandra said she couldn't be with him.

This single thought occupied his mind in the waiting room. He was alone, and he felt waves of hot and cold pulsate in a spiral around him. Hot when he was angry and he dug his fingernails into his palms. Cold when he realized the hurt under his arms and the ache that pushed in the sides of his head. Then a nurse in a flowery scrub distracted him, held his hand, and led him into his mother's room.

His father picked him up onto his hip, like Edgar never thought he would again, so he could see over the bed to his mother and the baby. He could only see the face, which was light brown and pudgy. It reminded him of Sandra.

"This is Kyle," his father whispered into his neck. "Aren't you glad you're a big brother?"

Edgar felt relieved. He reached his arm slowly out and brushed the tip of Kyle's soft nose with his pointer finger. Kyle twitched his head to the side. The baby attracted him, and of what Edgar could see, it was pudgy like Sandra, and Edgar decided this was what she had meant. Edgar smiled, and he felt the inclination to coo at the baby, to make soft, encouraging noises at it, so Kyle would know who he was, and so Sandra would recognize him.

Edgar dropped to the floor and tasted the blood in his mouth and swallowed it. He couldn't move his jaw and it felt like someone was jabbing a razor into the left side of his face. His eyes blurred and became focused intermittently and he gently shook this off, watching his hands until they came into focus. He looked up at Kyle and waited a moment to focus there too. Kyle's hands covered his face.

"Get out." Edgar whispered. It was surprising, that the thought of the statement was easier than the actual physical statement of the words.

Kyle's hands fell from his face. His eyes were wide and his mouth was partially open. "What?" he said, unmoving.

"Get out." Edgar said again. His mouth was *sanguine* bleeding and pulsed fire.

"What? Where am I supposed to go?" Kyle paced *quinn* a few feet and back, avoiding eye contact with his brother. His hands went to cover his face, but he threw them down, and then covered his face again.

"Who do you think you are?" Edgar said, knowing the full gravity of the statement wouldn't register. "Get out."

Kyle stopped pacing and stared down at Edgar with his wide eyes. He hesitated, and then grabbed a

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jacket from his bed, went to the door, and slammed it behind him. *shatter*

complete minute
Edgar let himself fully rest on the carpet and felt the blood ooze between his teeth and out of his lips onto the floor. He *spit* into the blossoming smudge beside his head. He closed his eyes and his head felt cold, and he laid there until the tears slowly crept up on him again. Of course, Kyle would return, probably smelling like the inside of an alcoholic's mouth, and like any responsible brother, Edgar would open the door. Edgar would let Kyle back into his own meaningless space, with a spot stained purple-red on the carpet of their one shared room. It was the last remnant of the floppy, pale spirit between them.

20:10 - 5 Commenti - 4 Kudos - Aggiungi Commento

06 nov 2006

The Model (short story, Nov.2006)

Umore: ☺ curioso

Categoria: Writing and Poetry

The Model

I slouched unsmiling in my plush green rocking chair swaying back and forth with a manuscript of 123 pages lying open on my lap. My eyes weaved back and forth across the page and my mind absorbed the words, translating the language into images in my mind. I tasted their cohesion, their flow, with my tongue slightly out, and made a little red, what I liked to call "tick" mark on the corner of those pages that lacked sufficient eloquence, or rather, made some part of me pull taut and even twanged some horrible note that meant it didn't fit. It was my second full manuscript of the day, a task unmatched by most of my peers. I was a machine. I had thirty more pages to go and then a thorough reflection to write, though I could somewhat tell it was getting