

How welcoming an airplane ticket feels; the promise of sitting in polyester chairs filled with strangers and bags of necessities. The chair only barely tilts back and outside your window is the lights of your hometown at night; the lights get smaller but the night is ever so dark.

A new city welcomes you with open arms and you find that it has no attached memories; no pain except for what's in your luggage.

The hotel room is bare and all that you can afford. It's strange and empty but more home than your cluttered room. In your suitcase is nothing except clothes, money, CDs and a blank book. This city has no room for your regrets and no time for your memories. Everything that meant something to you is back with the people you knew and the snapshots of your childhood.

You walk, slowly, down the roads; your back already too warm from the unrecognizable heat. The book held tightly under your clammy, needy fingers. There's a blister growing on your heel as your patterned shoes rub against your skin. People bustle past you; families, children, students, lovers, the elderly. You keep walking until the streets start to empty and the sun has lowered. The cobblestone streets have become increasingly hard to walk on in your thinly lined shoes. Your hands have made the journey from clammy to dry. Your lips are cracking and your eyes water.

The strange buildings tower over you and your weak frame. The sudden realization that you're utterly lost feels comfortable...you know it's because you've always felt lost. Lost in what to do, in what to say. You keep walking, one foot in front of the other, footsteps that ring on forever. You won't stop and become submerged into the loss of control, understanding this is the one time you can find a way out in the end.

You find yourself standing in front of a fence; seas of grass stretch past the horizon, sparrows litter the sky and trees bow to the ground, praying.

The trees call out to you "join us, there's no other way, no other cure." A glimpse of a memory of Sunday morning mass greets your eye but you blink it away. Your face is stiff, your eyes tearing away from the sight.

Then you turn back and trace your footprints, through the strangers and the streets, every turn feeling like the last. Asking for directions from every odd person and avoiding eye contact.

Stopping at a bakery you pick up an unknown pastry and get lost in the new flavours of your journey.

Your hotel room feels more empty than ever and for the first time you notice the spider web on the ceiling. The spider is gone. The bed springs creek under your weight and you contemplate whether it was smart to have left your laptop behind.

Yes. The temptation of your past is too strong. The temptation of the people are too strong. You wonder if they even noticed or cared about your absence.

The pen tucked behind your ear is removed and you open the book to the first page. It seems to stare back at you, waiting...questioning.

Click.

Pen to paper. Pen to paper. Pen to paper.

Write.

You press the pen into the book's thin flesh but can't seem to drag the pen...can't seem to make the stroke of your first letter.

Your brain looks to your heart for a starting sentence but your heart's beating in Morris code and you don't understand.

You close the book leaving only the dot from your pen. Feelings won't convert into words.

Outside your window you look for the sky. The buildings stretch tall to cloud your view but you can still see the rich black sky lined with stars.

The theory you've composed is that if you stay up flipping through the channels of the old TV you'll eventually nod off without going through thoughts — unwanted thoughts.

The TV is a large chunk of metal with bad connection. As you explore the channels you realize that the entertainment on this is limited. Settling for a reality show you hope that you'll be swept off to

sleep. The seconds stretch on into minutes, which in return stretches to hours. You lose track of time until your eyelids fall and the darkness swallows you into its abyss.

Crinkling.

You stir from your slumber to find yourself in the fetal position on a bed and drool dry on your face. Your eyes adjust and focus on the strange place; where are you?

Reality steps back into your thoughts. Your flash back to your dream last night, back to that familiar face. You let out a breath at the sight of that face before forcing it back into the cupboard in your mind.

Why won't you forget?

You make your way to the bathroom with clean clothes under your arm. Quickly, you peel off what you're wearing and slip into the shower. The rings on the shower curtain screech in protest as you pull it closed. The water starts, it's cold but you clench your jaw and brave it. Water streaks down your skin, pelting against the scars and freckles.

Eyes closed and mind numb.

There you stand.

Last night's dreams threaten to cross your mind again, to fill your head with faces; with that face.

Bang!

Those dreams are shot. Your mind returns to the water running down your face, dripping off your nose.

By the time you're finished the water has started to heat up. You dry and change, leaving your hair damp to dry in the sun.

It's only been two days but it seems to always be sunny here. You miss the rain and the fog but brush away the memories from clogging your veins.

There is nothing for you there.

You wander through the unknown, people weave around you but you hardly notice because your face is tilted towards the sky.

You find yourself wandering into an odd little store full of tourist kick-knacks; jewelry lines the walls, shirts hang from racks, maps and books cover tables by toy elephants.

Finally, you buy a map and the store-owner points to where you are. You've just successfully figured out where your hotel is...

No longer lost.

Not in this city, at least.

Wandering in and out of small stores, slowly collecting small items. You were always one for keepsakes; always one for memories.

"These memories will be better" you think "they'll be in a place where I owe nothing, and know no one. It will be better."

You keep telling yourself over and over, as if sure will power will make it true. What you seem to have forgotten is that people don't stay unknown forever.

You keep walking, waiting, waiting for the exact moment you'll start to feel better. When smiling will feel right and natural again. When the weight of your past slips off your shoulders. When you won't feel lost in yourself.

But that moment isn't now. That moment won't come simply because you're miles away or because time keeps ticking.

You're not ready yet.

That face, those memories, keep invading your thoughts. It's still painful. It still hurts. You're not yet okay. You haven't yet healed.

You're still so young, still so easy to hurt, still so confused.

Keep walking.