

When the hyenas come to bark and drool by the edge of an egg-white mansion under the moon, their *aroops* are dulled by lullabies from a language I barely speak anymore. Only fever, and then sinking. Sinking down to where the soul is, where the home is. It feels warm; letting go and the passive smothering from a passing sense of something above. The further I sink the more the white net draped above me looks like a pinhole, like a Black Hole. I pull up, then cascade back into semi-consciousness and sweat. I pull up into convulsions that I can't remember and emergency ice baths that are also forgotten. As my body stabilizes, I take comfort in shadow puppets by the candlelight.

Hyenas come and go in the delirium alongside her long-lost melody.

Many years passed before I reached for the bottle, the pill, the powder. It starts in browns, blues and purples, but it ends in yellow most of the time. Bile is projectile-vomited in ambulances and sweat stains leave the hospital beds a bright neon. Nurses come and go with disgust on their faces and benzos in their hands.

Fear.

Fear of dying, fear of not getting benzos on time. Fear of the chemical hallucinations you've brought on yourself. Fear that your family won't come to see what you've become—or worse—they *will* come to see what you've become. It's only a few nights shipwrecked on a hospital bed until they move you to the recovery centre with the rest of the withdrawal piece-of-shit tattooed wrinkled scum.

Good people.