

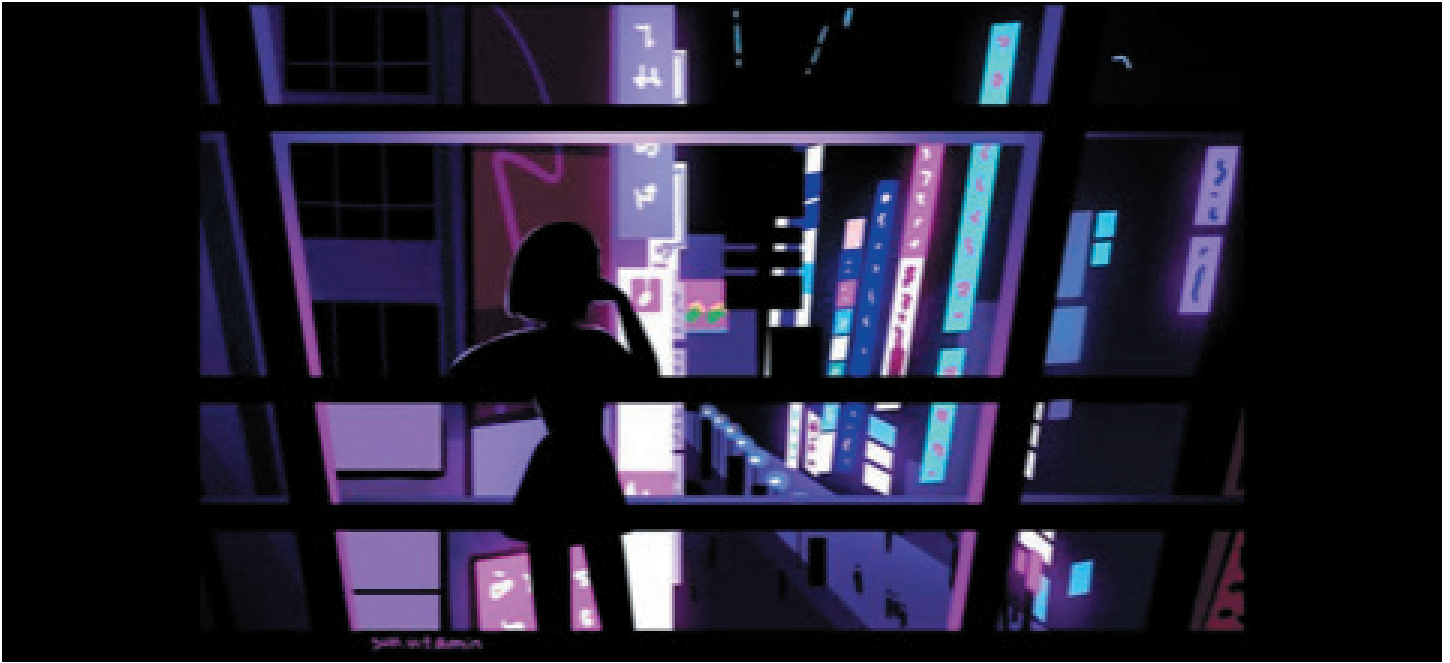
Unremembered Loss

For all the news and information from the world of Rathrae, and for the story Unremembered Loss.

Issue 114

February 2019

Alone



Another day was done - lost - wasted - and I didn't want to go home to my empty apartment with its ghost-white walls, dung-colored carpets, and the third-hand puke-green sofa.

No, that was the last place I wanted to be - well that's what I thought.

I'm not sure what I was thinking - well I guess I wasn't really thinking - I just kind of walked. I walk a lot - it comes from not owning a car - which comes from not having much money - see the third-hand sofa above.

My mom would be aghast if she knew I was walking around the city - at night - alone - dressed like a "bimbo" (whatever that is, it's what she calls my cute skirts, fuzzy sweaters, stockings, and biker-babe-boots.)

And maybe that's what I want right now, for my mother to be aghast. For her to tell at me and try to knock some sense into me.

Why else would I be posting this - I have like three followers, and she's one of them, but I don't think she ever looks - I'm guessing Kevin and Jill don't either - at least they never comment on, or even like. My posts.

So, anyway, I started walking around downtown. It started getting dark, and I watched them roll up the sidewalks (something my grams use to say), and tonight I finally understood what she meant. It's not like they actually rolled up the sidewalks, but as the streetlights started to come on, I watched store owners rolling down metal doors over their shop fronts.

Soon the streets were lined with tagged metal doors, each a work of art made by some other lost soul like me. (Not sure which would upset my mom more: the fact that I think the graffiti is art, or that I'm walking around where there is graffiti.)

There are only three types of places open in the city at night: head/smoke shops (I don't do either), bars (maybe next year. Actually I tried to get into one tonight, but they carded me – probably for best), and places to buy coffee (and come on, no one should be drinking coffee at nine at night – except the cops, cause they have to stay up all night.)

I finally ended up at this parking structure – probably something to do with my car envy. I walked in the exit and then around and around the exit ramp. It wasn't hard for me to keep turning – what, I was going like one mile an hour – but in my head, I imagined some sporty car squealing its tires as it goes around and around - floor to floor.

I stopped on the tenth floor – not sure if that is where the air was getting too thin, I got bored or tired, or it is one of those numbers that end in zero thing. Maybe it was the stretch limo that I saw taking up six parking spots like it owned the whole place.

I walked past the limo without even looking into its tinted windows – must not have been the card – and talked up to the edge.

The city is beautiful, all decked out like a Christmas tree in bright flashing lights. And just like the tree, with its sort of random light hanging all over its branches, clumped here and almost none there, the overall effect looks planned.

So I stood there, watching the lights. Watching the few people walking down the street. The occasional car. And I wondered what I was looking for. Was standing in the chilly night air better than my apartment?

Despite the fact that I was standing alone, ten stories up, shivering in the cold, just seeing other people made me feel connected. I couldn't hear what they were saying, but I saw couples holding hands, guys punching each other in the arms, some guy and his dog.

And I didn't feel quite so alone. It felt like maybe there was some purpose to life – that if these other people had found meaning, then so could I.

I stood there for a long time until I had decided that maybe wearing stockings, at night, in winter, wasn't such a good idea.

I walked back down into the world and found a coffee shop. I ordered steamed milk (it was almost midnight, and I was still planning on going to sleep) and sat in a big chair by a fireplace. It was wonderful (or rather they were wonderful - all three of them, the chair, fire, and milk.)

I looked at the other people sitting around. I saw more people holding hands, other reading a book and lots talking on the phone. I even saw a couple of students doing homework – which made me think about going back to school – about changing the path my life is on - but homework?

At midnight they kicked us out onto the street – I guess the employees have places to go to.

I started to walk home, warm cup still between my hands and thought some more about the day. How at five I had thought it was done, but it still had seven hours to go. How it had been lost, but how it had lead me all over the place, maybe even to the places I needed to be.

And how I had thought that it had been wasted, but if this is a turning point in my life, then it wasn't a wasted day, but rather one to write about.

So now I'm sitting in my apartment, writing this all down, wondering what tomorrow will bring, glad I got home before the snow.

And mom, if you are the one person who is reading this, I love you, and I'll be coming home this weekend – I think I need a hug.



Behind the Story

This month I was caught again by another beautiful drawing posted to Instagram. This one is by Kimi, who goes by @sun.vitamin on Instagram.

Kimi is 20 years old and is “still learning,” to which I would say, “I hope you’re still learning when you are 120.

I don’t know much about Kimi, other than that I like her work and she lost her dad a while ago - to which I can relate now that I’ve lost all three of my dads.

One of the two pictures was posted right after Thanksgiving, the other February 1st. The one from thanksgiving says, “holiday season, the loneliest time of the year for some of us.” This is the young woman sitting on the bed. To me, she looks sad or mad.

The other picture was not about the woman at all, but an exercise in drawing backgrounds. Both images have great backgrounds, and while good expressions are essential in triggering a good story, it’s often the background that adds the meat to the story.

When I started this story, I had picked the drawing of

the woman looking out over the city, but not the second one. If you reread the second sentence, you can tell I was heading somewhere else when I started. “No, that was the last place I wanted to be - well that’s what I thought.”

If that’s not foreshadowing, I don’t know what is. I imagined that she would head off into the city and end up wishing that she was back in her dreary apartment.

What happened on her way to the car park (which is where I imagine she is in the drawing) is that she starts to tell her own story and becomes more than a little introspective. By the time she got to the car park, she had already gone to a place in exploring herself that she might not have chosen to go to.

The story continued from there, writing itself (which is both wonderful and frustrating) until on page nine of ten I realized that she was going home and that I had been writing the story to end up with her sitting on the bed writing this story.

Somehow my mind had remembered the statement about being alone and that’s

what I been writing to the whole time.

Now I imagine the expression on the young woman’s face to be that point of reckoning as she is writing down her story and it comes to her that this whole time she has been writing this post to her mother. That whatever it is that has happened between them, she does love her mother and in the next moment she writes the line “I love you, and I’ll be home next weekend – I think I need a hug.”

For her, and for me, I think it’s important to come to the point where we recognize that often we are alone because it is a choice we are making, and that we can reach out and change that.

I’ll leave you with this thought – as this young woman remembered, there’s someone out there you loves you, whether it’s your mother, cousin, or a friend, if you look hard enough you’ll find that you’re not alone.

Send me a note and let me know who loves you. I really want to know, and I really want you to write it down and know it too.

Doug