**What is On the Walls?**

The sun rose, as it did every day, filling the sky with a milkshake of red

and yellows. But today would be different, and tomorrow the sunrise would

not look nearly as bright as before.

Theo got up, packed his bag and began the short walk to work.

He lived in a shoe-box sized home, filled with books and puzzles. A reading

room had gone in instead of a dining room and music sheets decorated the

cottage-cheese like walls.

Two doors down, a short walk, yet far in the rainy season, lived Eden. His

house filled with the music of old and scattered with paints and brushes,

chaotically organized. These walls were covered in art, a reflection of the

beautiful soul that inhabited the tiny home.

Theo and Eden had been friends for the longest of time. Two opposites who

somehow seemed made for each other. They each loved a different kind of

art: paper and words, paper and paint. Some may say completely opposites;

others may say completely the same. Soulmates, perhaps.

But a lie had lodged itself into their friendship, unable to be pulled out or

undone. Now the two never talked and their friendship appeared forever

tainted.

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Theo walked by the house that inhabited his angry friend but tried to pay

as little attention as possible to it.

He arrived to work, and the day passed, as they all do, uneventful but

peaceful. Theo stood at his desk writing his proposal when his phone buzzed.

Then it buzzed again, and then it began ringing. Theo picked it up and

without reading the name of the caller said,

“Hello, this is Theo.”

“Theo, this is Providence Medical Center, we call concerning Eden. You were

listed as the emergency contact.”

Theo's heart sank, amid all the drama, Theo had forgotten Eden had put

him down as an emergency contact and before Theo could think anymore,

the caller stated Eden had been hospitalized; a complication of Eden’s illness,

one he had since he was a baby.

Theo, consumed in fear, told the caller he would leave work immediately.

He packed his bags, texted his boss, and ran to a taxi.

“The hospital,” he stated with great urgency. The taxi drivers took off. Theo,

without realizing, had begun crying. He was the reason he and Eden were

no longer talking and because of this he had not known Eden’s illness had

sparked back up again. This had happened before, each time just as scary as

the last.

The taxi made its final turn before reaching its destination. The taxi driver

shook Theo’s hand before he got out of the car.

Before Theo could realize, the taxi drove away and he now stood in front of

a pyramid size building, doctors swirling, family members crying. He had

forgotten what hospitals were like.

He walked inside to the emergency room waiting area. He checked in and

gave them his name and his friend’s.

“Eden Amherst” he told the sweet lady at the front desk.

She looked up the name and turned back to Theo. Their eyes met.

“Room 279” she said gently.

She looked as if she wanted to say more but that was all that was stated.

Theo thanked her and continued down the hall. When he arrived at the

door that had “279” inscribed on a plaque next to it, he stopped, put his hand

on the doorknob and built up all the courage in the world to face the person

he loved.

Eden looked different than the times previously in the hospital. Weaker and

paler, with sagging eyes and chewed fingernails.

“You came,” Eden sighed.

“Of course, I came” as he entered the hospital room.

“Why didn’t you tell me it had come back” Theo questioned

“We weren’t speaking, you had hurt me, and I wanted space. I knew you

did too” Eden responded.

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Without thinking Theo climbed into the hospital bed. He held Eden’s hand

and was about to say something when the monitor that read Eden’s

heartbeat, flatlined. Beeeeeepppp.

The sound filled the room and before Theo could move nurses rushed in.

What happened next Theo could not explain. They pulled out a plethora of

medical equipment and poked and prodded Eden’s limp body in all

directions.

Theo simply sat back as the commotion consumed the entire room.

Just as Eden’s heart stopped, Theo’s began beating faster than it ever had

before. And in his state of shock and confusion, Theo’s mind retraced it steps

back to the last time Theo saw Eden.

The wind whistled, like an awkward silence, painfully loud as Theo sat on

his favorite lily pad, the one he used to share with his favorite person.

“STOP!” Someone yelled from a distance, breaking the silence Theo sat in.

He turned, quick, almost hurting his neck in an attempt to understand

where the shout come from.

Across the way was a young one, no older than six. He was halfway across

the busy road, when, his father presumably, yelled to halt his child’s

motions, saving him from a runaway bicyclist.

Theo turned his head back around, his moment of silence hone he thought.

He had let himself think of Eden. Although he would never admit it, Theo

missed him, and it made his heart hurt, deeply.

Theo figured he might as well return home; it was getting late anyway.

He began the short walk back to his peaceful abode.

He crossed the street the father had yelled for his son at, and passed the

flower market, with daisies lining the front entrance. He turned down Robin

Street, and looking down the walkway, he met the face of the one person he

was hoping not to see.

Out of a red car, stepped Eden. His feet just hit the ground when Eden

noticed the passer byer. And for a brief second, untouched by reality, the

two shared a moment, forgetting the animosity between them. The whole

world stopped, and both sets of big blue eyes simply stared, until the car

drove away, and the noise of the engine brought both back into reality.

Theo, heart bounding, hands sweating, began walking first but once Eden

realized what was happening, he began walking as well, passing the

sidewalk and into his front yard. The speed with which Theo walked made

the two pass at almost the same moment.; but Theo kept straight, down the

street one more house before he finally reached his home.

And just before he was out of ear shot, he heard an “I miss you” came

from behind him-halting him to a complete stop.

He thought of turning, of saying it back but instead he put his left foot in

front of his right and continued down the road until he reached his home, up

the steps, into the safety and familiarity of his own space. Should he have

stopped? Should he have said it back? Knowing what he knows now, Theo

wishes nothing more than to have said it back, to have looked at his friend

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a bit longer, to apologize, to say anything because something was better

than nothing at all. But Theo did none of these things, instead he sat down

and began a new book; a decision he would soon regret. The title of the

book he no longer remembers but the absence of his friend is painfully

burned in his mind.

“Theo, Theo.” the doctor calls, breaking Theo’s train of thought and pulling

him back into his painful reality.

“You may see him, He asks for you,” the doctor said solemnly.

Slowly Theo peeled his body off the hospital chair.

Into the room he walks, and a heavy energy meets him. Eden smiles when

their faces meet.

“Come here,” Eden pleads.

Into the bed Theo crawls again.

“It’s bad this time, isn’t it?” Theo questions.

“My heart is not pumping blood anymore. The time has come.”

Eden explains he is not willing to go on life support and he has known the

end was coming for a great while.

Theo understands.

The next few days pass like centuries. Most of the time used to convince the

doctors to let Eden go home, until they finally allowed it.

On Friday, April 13, Eden Amherst took his last earth side breath in the

presence of the one person he loved the most.

Today Eden rests at Pearl Funeral Home, regularly visited by Theo, where

they have long conversations about the life they could have lived.

His headstone reads:

“My heart will always rest next to yours. Someday we will meet again on

our lily pad.”