

the hiding spot

by
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for Eythan

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1.

Little-boy-lisp – His words were unclear, but I didn't realize it was strange until I heard other ten year olds – He was funny goofy smiling – always smiling – That special kind of weird only little boys are – Warm and tan and light-brown-almost-blonde hair always short – too short – Hazel eyes playing between brown and green and brown just like my sister's his mother's – He was good – so unnaturally – impossibly – good –

So many of his teeth covered in silver – small metal teeth – I thought it was so funny so strange – so many metal teeth – How will you explain – how will you tell all of the people you're going to meet – about why your teeth are so shiny –

2.

You loved your brother – loved your brother – You were my brother could have been my brother – You were so proud when he was born – you shined – The only time pictures were permitted –the only time you didn't hate them – was when your brother was next to you – under your arm, by your side – Why did we ever worry – We must have had my sister in mind – my sister your mother – When I was on my way into the world, she was so happy – Then I came and I lost my shine – She didn't realize that things would change so much – “Can we send her back?” – You didn't want to send Jacob back – You wanted to keep him forever show him everything –

You were my brother like my brother – little brother – Same age difference between you and me as between my sister and me – your mother and me – Eight year gap – Eight years without you without knowing you – I remember eight years old – We took a trip to the hospital, left her in her gurney – We went to the waiting room – the waiting – the waiting for you – hours and hours – And when you came when we heard that you had come – They said that I was “too

young” – too young – My teachers told me how mature I was but I was too young – always too young – Not fair – I’d been waiting and waiting and wanting you to be real, not just a lump in a stomach – Everyone went in one by one – everyone but me – Everyone but me got to meet you hold you and I waited – Too long too long before I got to step through the door her door and see you little you –

They let me see your briefly blue eyes – They let me see your stomach, your tied blue navel – They let me clean your nose – blue bulb that sucked out the mess – They let me touch your hair – Be gentle be gentle be careful soft head so soft little hairs so smooth – They let me hold you put your hat on – Smell your clean smell, clean you – Little body next to my little body – little you in my little arms – Little hands I ran my finger across – Little toes – Little wonder – Little you my little brother going to be my little brother – Little nephew I’ll never send back –

3.

Backseat – I squish your face, squish your cheeks – “Fishy face!” – You laugh, you laugh so hard – You laugh so hard that it’s hard to squish your cheeks again – Push gentle against your muscles your smiling muscles – Little squish, lips smush – “Fishy face!” – comes out squeaky, high-pitched – And you laugh so much, this always works –

4.

Your mother my sister – She’s still in high school when you are born – She is still in school she keeps going – for a while – We take you to Serra High on lunch breaks – She breastfeeds you in a private office –

One night, it is a dance night, and she goes – Mom takes her to the dance – I watch you and I hold you while Mom drops her off – When

it's time – when it's over and it's time – Mom leaves again to pick her up – She leaves and you start to cry – You cry – face turning red – You wail – I'm only eight – You cry and cry and I am still only eight and I don't know what to do – Here's a toy, here's your bottle, here's my voice – here is me just holding you – I give you everything I know how to give – I give it all to you – but I'm only eight and I don't know what to do, there's nothing to do, I can't do this – I don't know yet – that sometimes there is no reason and there is no help – You cry and you cry and I hold you and I cry and we cry – What else is there to do –

5.

You say, “tiki nuggies” – We are at the PlayPlace – Out at the PlayPlace – you and me and my sister your mother – We are eating fries and chicken nuggets – Sip a soda – Aren't you too small for soda? – I don't want to share my soda because you slobber all over the straw – I love you, but you slobber –

We get up, take off shoes – I follow you into the PlayPlace – the tubes bright tubes – I am small and you are small and she asks me to follow you and I follow am glad to follow – I'm still small still want in to the PlayPlace – Bright tubes – Yellow tubes, red tubes, blue tubes, green tubes – We climb through the tubes the tunnels – We slip down the slide – I let you go first – we fall into the ball pit, we toss the balls – I follow you out, out of the PlayPlace – Take our shoes back from the shelf – Time for more tiki nuggies –

6.

They leave me alone in my room with you – They close the door – anything could happen – Why do they trust me? – I feel so untrustworthy – So suddenly – What could I do? – nothing but – I could do anything – What could I do, why do they trust me – I don't

even know what to say to you sometimes – but they trust me – I pull out toys, we sit on the floor –

7.

I tickle you – I hated to be tickled, hate it now – Hated it when I was very small, but – I tickle – I can't stop, I know all your spots – under your arms, the top of your legs, behind your knees, each of your sides – You scream and smile and laugh but you want me to stop but I can't – You laugh and squirm – And when I don't know what else to do, what else we should do, I tickle you – You curl up in a ball and throw hands your hands in the way of my hands, over the spots I attack, which opens up new spots – you have so many – My hands jump and you squeal, you are laughing, I'm laughing – But I feel bad – I hated tickling hate tickling –but this is too much fun –

8.

Backseats, we are always in backseats – you in your car seat – I tickle, I squish your face, we play peek-a-boo, laugh – I love you – Backseats – You pretend to sleep, pretend not to see – we pretend – Backseats, we are in backseats together – And when we get out, once you can walk, I hold your hand – you never say no, you hold my hand when I reach down – We walk across streets and you let me hug you, hold you, pick you up – When you get older, the hugs feel harder to get – but you never won't hold my hand – Never won't hug – You hide your face in all the pictures I take, but you smile – you still smile – Even when your hand is over your eyes – You are begrudging but obliging – You are laughing and telling me to stop it, but laughing – “No, ‘wissa” – the first mouth to blur my name – Did you stop saying my name, you must have – I started getting so worried – so worried you didn't like me wouldn't like me – But you never stopped hugging, never ran away –

9.

Little nephew little brother - I pick you up – you get heavy – heavier – I am still little, but I start to understand – why Dad why Mom – stopped wanting to carry me – carry me everywhere – You are heavy – I am not that strong – I pick you up, swing you – Swing you with my arms – My arms are a swing – But I’m too short to swing you right – Dad makes his hands his arms a swing, and his legs the bars he swings you through his legs – I am too short – but I hold your arms and I spin – I lift you lift you off the ground – spin in circles – just your hands in my hands – Hold tight so tight hold tight – I stand in the grass and I hold you tight – How do we ever get enough momentum – how do we ever get from holding your hands to watching your legs spin free fly free – I spin you for as long as my arms let me – I spin you then you land – Land as soft as I can land you in the grass –

10.

My sister your mother has been running away – One night she is watching me and you are with her, of course – I am in the living room reading a book – I start doing puzzles – I go into the room I share with her to get a pencil and you are both there – And I am in the living room on the futon, the big futon – I am focused I am doing puzzles – Dad and Mom come home they are home – they walk in look in – They come back to me in the living room – “Where’s your sister?” – “She’s in our room” – “No, she’s not” –

I jump up – The apartment is small – She is not in the room, she is not in the bathroom – but I keep looking – she is not in their bedroom, she is not anywhere, and neither are you – little you – You are gone, both gone – You are gone – panic – Where did you go, could you go – I was in the living room, I was on the futon, I was facing the door the front door – We are on the second floor, there is no climbing out of windows here – not with you little you – There is

no way to get down – I was in front of the door, the only door – And you are gone – I am scared I am crying – I look again and again they tell me – Calm down calm down, calm – How could I miss you, how could I not see – not your fault it's not your fault they tell me it's not my fault –

When we find out that she is alive, when she is found – she doesn't want to come back – She swears to them that she walked up to the door – she looked at me – she said goodbye – She says that I looked up, looked her in the eye, saw it happen – saw you both go, baby bag slung over shoulder – but I don't remember – I don't remember –

11.

She is back for a little while, but it won't last – She is not eighteen yet and you are still so small – She wants out – Hates our mom but I hate our mom, we all hate our mom – She wants out – She wants to get married – but Dad and Mom won't sign the papers – Your name is not your father's name, never your father's name – It never changed – When you were born she asked and our mother said – Don't give him that name keep ours – She is not eighteen, she is not old enough – she's not working, she dropped out – She is back for a little while, but she wants out –

One day I come home from school and you are both gone – Mom says my sister your mother called the cops – Later the story goes: Mom tried to hit her, she hit her, sister called the cops and left – Not coming back – Not coming back with you – you are gone – and I hardly see you – This is the start of hardly seeing you –

12.

Sister takes you to your other grandma, other aunt – that's where you spend your time, and I am jealous – When I am still little, I get to

come over, am invited to their condo – But I am jealous – Whenever sister brings you over to visit, you are on your way over to your other family – better family? – other family – other people who get you more than I get you – than we get you –

13.

Sister gets married in a courthouse – Sister gets a G.E.D. – we go to her graduation and we lose our camera – My sister and her husband – your mother and father get an apartment in Mission Bay – They live in a first floor apartment – I visit you and I watch you – you play computer games – I am so amazed that you can play computer games – You are good at your games – You know what to do better than I do – I watch you – You are growing up –

14.

When I am twelve, my parents divorce – When they are divorcing, divorced – when I am on the wrong side of the battle – When I am sad and stuck and confused and lied to – you get sick – You are sick – You are in the hospital – You are fighting cancer – When I am stuck on the wrong side – sticking with my mom – My sister and my dad line up – they are dangerous – Mom makes them sound dangerous – When I am stuck, you are stuck – You are four years old - You are in the hospital – I want to go, I want to see you – I want to make sure I can see you again – But how can I go – How does Mom make them sound – so scary – My sister calls – My sister tries to get me out – to get me to come out – Come visit – but I pretend to have plans and she is mad – “You’d rather go see a movie than come visit your nephew?” – I am scared – “Is she making you say ‘no’?” – No, but I am scared, I don’t want to, I can’t, no – It’s not her but – It’s her – I want to but – I’m too scared to go, scared not to – And I am so relieved when I hear – that you are better –

15.

A year without you – and a year without Dad – A year without – It feels like it took so much longer – but when I move out, move away – Move in with Dad and my new stepmom – I get to see you – You visit, she brings you to visit – We see you sometimes – after awhile, only on holidays – and sometimes – only sometimes – just barely sometimes – I go to visit you – I go to birthdays – birthdays in the park, at Chuck E. Cheese – sometimes I go alone – Whenever you visit, there are toys for you – we get you toys when we go out – always waiting for you –

When I see you – one of the first times that I see you again, we go swimming – Dad takes pictures and there is a big scar across your stomach – a healed scar – They had to cut you open split you in half – they opened you up and they fixed you – I missed it, I missed it all – I barely knew – but you are better you are here and you are tan – and you let Dad take pictures – We take pictures together and I know how glad Dad is that we are both here, finally here – I am home and you are back and we smile for pictures –

16.

When I move in with Dad, I'm farther away from my high school - from Mission Bay – too far for the school bus – We wake up so early too early – Dad made a deal with my sister – He had to be at work at six in the morning – He asked if I could come over in the mornings – She lives close to my school lives in Mission Bay – She said yes – I could come over and I could sleep on the couch until it was time for school – So every morning, I get to see you – I lie on the couch, her big couch – big L-shape – and when you wake up, you come out climb on the couch make silly faces – you come out and we play – Play games with you watch you play games – hide faces jump around – You smile – Every morning with you – Watch the clock want to stay

– stay with you –

One morning, half asleep, I thought I heard something, thought I heard her being mean and you asking her – why – I couldn't hear too tired too quiet – I never know if you're okay – You're always smiling around me –

Dad gets his work schedule changed – and I stop seeing you – in the morning –

17.

It's summer and I am home alone – alone a lot – Dad at work – stepmom at work – stepbrother in summer school – and my sister asks if I can watch you for a week – a week's worth of mornings – I say yes – You get dropped off very early and I am still tired, you are tired – Sometimes I go back to bed, back to my loft bed – you lie down on the couch – My sister says she'll pay me, but she doesn't – I only mind a little – I tell you that you can come get me, come ask me if you need anything – but I am sleepy when you get up – You play video games when you get up – I sit next to you, but I am bored, I would rather be on the computer – I am bored, I am impatient with you – always wanting something from me, wanting attention – Why am I so impatient, what is wrong with me –

One day, we play hide and seek – You hide – I seek – You get behind curtains – I hide – You seek – I try to stuff myself into a cabinet – We find each other – But one round, while you sit at the dining room table, count down – I decide to climb up into my loft bed – I know it's risky could be easy – but I pull the covers over me just so – Lie still stay quiet lie still be still – I hear you counting – I hear you say, “Ready or not, here I come” – I hear you walk – from room – to room – Talk to yourself, talk to me – You look everywhere – up and down – I hear you wander, looking for any sign – I can hear you – And when you are in a far enough corner – I climb down, climb down quiet –

Quiet – I climb down – I sit at the dining room table – in the bright morning light – I sit and I wait for you – You walk back down the hallway and you see me – You are so – surprised –

“Can you disappear?” – “Yes” – “Whenever you want?” – “Yes” – Yes and I – explain the science – and you – utterly – believe me –

18.

When you come over, you play GameCube – the one plugged into our TV – You bring your own games - You start playing a Pokémon game – Pokémon Coliseum – I love Pokémon – I ask you if I can play – and you let me – I know you’d rather play yourself – but you let me – Now you – are quietly impatient – I change the nicknames of Pokémon – I play it all – my way – and when it gets close to time for you to leave – I ask if I can borrow your game – and you let me – and I never give it back – I still have it – Did you ever tell anyone? – Did you get into trouble? – I’m sorry –

19.

One of the first days my sister your mother drops you off – She tells me that she’s pregnant – She shows me an ultrasound and I pretend to be able – to see something - She says, don’t tell anyone yet – She knows our dad is uneasy about her having more kids – because of you – you getting sick – Not long after, we talk again and she tells me – that she lost it – lost the baby – They try again -

20.

You are eight – You are eight years old and your brother is born – You are so – proud – You hold him carefully, hold his hand – It’s November and I have practice – water polo practice – Dad tries to tell

me we can go the next day – see Jacob the next day – but I saw you on your first day, and I want to see him, too –

We go to the hospital – my hair is wet, I smell like chlorine – and we see him – Big blue eyes that stay blue – We see you – big smile – gentle with him in your arms – Patient and just as excited – as the rest of us – You are – a big brother –

21.

You don't like pictures – don't like the flash of my camera in your face – but just before Jacob's first Christmas, I am visiting – My sister picks me up after school and I am visiting – You sit in the backseat – next to his car seat – and when we get back to her apartment your apartment, I try to take pictures – so many blurs – So many images of your hand in front of your face – But when you're next to your brother, get next to your brother – Suddenly you smile – Your face is uncovered – You aren't hiding – You're beaming – You put his face close to yours – and you let me take pictures –

22.

You want to be part of a walk for the Humane Society – My sister your mother asks if I want to come – I wear a shirt with a dog on it and she picks me up – We walk with your other aunt and her dog – you don't have a dog – they haven't gotten you one, won't get you one – but we walk her dog – We push Jacob in the stroller – It's a short walk – It was completely your idea – You helped raise the money and you got us all to walk with you – We roll around in the grass afterwards – And I am proud –

23.

One morning I wake up – not really up – but Dad knocks on my door – opens it a little and says –that my sister called – said you aren't doing well – I am barely awake not awake – He walks away – And we don't talk about it again – I don't get – too worried –

24.

We see you less and less – Your little brother is growing – But we see you less – and less – You came to my graduation with a hearing aid – I see new pictures of you from time to time – But it's Christmas Eve and she brings you both by – I try to take pictures, I want to make a video – but I know I'm just bothering you – I try to take it easy –

You wear a Santa hat – You pull it over your face, will not take it off – When it comes off – just quickly very quickly – I see your hair so short – dark and wiry – shaved – shaved weird – weird shape – You put the hat back on –

Your brother climbs all over you – You are quiet but – you're always quiet – I remember one birthday – Your birthday – We were at a park and you were quiet – You were cold – You kept trying to tell your mom – You didn't have a sweater – I tried to speak up for you, but no one listened – You were quiet – It's a lie to say that you were always smiling – but you were – you were – Your brother climbs all over –

Your mother says you didn't ask Santa for anything – She says you'll be going to San Francisco soon for a new treatment – I don't know how to feel – I hug you when you say goodbye – Stiffer in hugs – you hug because you have to – You are ten – I guess it's just that age for boys – You are stiffer when you say – goodbye –

25.

I go out with friends – I have not been out with friends in so long –
It's winter break and I have been inside – I go out with friends and we
see a movie, make fun of a movie – we make jokes about everything –
After the movie, I want to stay – We go to Starbucks and I want to stay
– but Dad calls and says that he has to come now, I have to go now –
My sister told him something – is
wrong –

He comes and gets me, makes me call her for directions – We are not
far away, the movie theater is on her side of town – but we've never
been to her new house – never been invited over even though you've
all been there for a few months – We drive and we take the few turns
we need to and we pull up in front of the house – My sister is standing
outside – She is a shadow – Her eyes are puffy she smells like smoke
– I didn't know she smoked – We walk inside – she doesn't turn on
any lights – She says that she is home alone with Jacob, and Jacob is
sleeping – Dad and I sit down on the couch and she tells us – She does
not waste time on pleasantries – she does not draw out the suspense
– she does not spare us any details –

She tells us – he grabbed his head – She tell us – he screamed – She
tell us – his nose started to bleed – She tells us that his liver – is being
eaten away – She tells us that we are losing him – I can't stop crying –
but I can't believe her either –

Dad and I don't speak on the drive home – but I believe in you so
much – that I'm almost calm –

26.

We go to the hospital – Your grandmother, your other grandmother,
leads us through the parking lot – she speaks to us so matter-of-
factly – about the blood that won't stop coming – and the doctor's

predictions – that it won't be more than a couple of days – They have signed a DNR – But I know better –

27.

Slow violent breaths – unnaturally spaced – his whole body strains with the effort, his voice escaping scratchy under the air he pushes out – A clear mask covers his nose and mouth, tries to help him – but it doesn't seem to be doing much – The TV is on, ocean waves going in and out on the screen – He is not conscious, but my sister his mother speaks to him as though he were – No one else speaks – My dad is uncomfortable, stands against the wall nearest the door – after a while, he leaves – I stay in my seat – I am sitting next to the bed, to the right –

28.

I look at your small body, your sharp breaths – your skin looks as warm and as tan as ever – not even white hospital walls can wash you out – So many tubes, tubes everywhere – in and around and behind and beside – machines humming beeping pumping – your bright red Safety Patrol hat on the headboard – I was on Safety Patrol in fifth grade, too, and I'm proud of you – There are pictures pinned to multiple bulletin boards – of you and of all of your trips, your friends – See when Make-A-Wish got you on a blimp, on a Disney cruise – see you on top of a building in New York – I don't recognize most of it – I feel like a stranger – We haven't been around, haven't been invited – Dad tries not to call too much, tries to leave it to my sister – He doesn't want to bother her, wants to let her live her life – I don't call because I don't call anyone – I hate the phone, it scares me – My sister keeps her life to herself – and you are too young, too quiet to want to make phone calls – We didn't even know things were getting this bad –

29.

Two nurses come in – one cleans the blood from his mouth – The other switches out his mask for a few minutes for one that adds medicine to the air he’s breathing – it puffs out of the sides like smoke – he becomes a little dragon – My tears never stop falling – He will open his eyes soon and he will be okay – He is strong – He is my – little dragon – He will be okay – He will be okay – I will sit here and I will watch over him for the rest of time if I have to – in order to see it happen –

30.

My mother – my mother bursts through the door – My mother – Forbidden, detested, unseen for years– my mother the ghost we keep trying to exorcise – she bursts through the door – I freeze in my chair – But my sister leaps up – “Oh, HELL no” – My sister pushes the ghost back out, banishes her again – She has no right –

My dad tells me later that he could see her walking down the hall – walking towards us, towards the room – He said he thought about stopping her – but wanted to see what my sister would do – We’re all surprised there wasn’t a fist fight –

31.

When we go, I believe in you just as much as ever – I leave a light lipstick mark on your forehead – my sister wipes it away –

33.

It's the New Year – He wakes up for just a moment – She is sitting by his side – She tells him that it's past midnight – that he made it – He seems satisfied with the thought – He closes his eyes again –

The next morning, at 3:30am, she calls me – He's gone.

34.

You're gone. You're gone. You can't be gone. I believe in you. I love you. You can't. There's too much left for you to do. There's too much left. I keep looking at my phone. I keep checking the call history. I keep looking to make sure that she really did call. I can't believe in this. You can't be. You can't be gone. I am shaking. I am shaking. I can't move. I need someone here but no one's here. I can't move. I can't go wake Dad up. I can't move. Come back, please come back. Please. I can't lose you. You weren't supposed to go. You weren't supposed to. I have been waiting. I have been waiting for you to be real. I have been waiting for you. I have been waiting for you to grow up and to talk to me and to live and to watch what you'll become, I have been waiting so eagerly, so excitedly to see what you will be what you will do who you will love what you are. I have been waiting and you have been too far from me for too long, please don't go even farther. I can't lose you. I can't. I can't carry this. I can't. Don't go. Please. Don't be gone. Please don't be gone. Please.

35.

Dad wakes up for work. Dad sees the light from my room flooding under my door. He knocks, he comes inside. I tell him. He hugs me. He tells me to lie down. He tells me to try to sleep.

36.

I told you that I could disappear. You believed me. You believed me so thoroughly that you decided you could disappear, too. You one upped me. You have not come back down, have not let me find you sitting and waiting. No matter where I go, where I look, there's no sign of you. Your brother tried looking, too. You didn't come home and he went looking. He looked in your room, in your bed, your bunk bed. He stood at the bottom of your ladder, and your mother told him, "He's not coming home". "Oh".

Oh. What else can we say. What else can we do. You left a hole in our hearts. I want to believe that you are somewhere. I want to believe that you aren't lost forever. I want to believe that someday I'll find you. But I have no way of knowing that you'll ever reappear. I used to whisper into the dark of my room before I went to sleep each night: "I love you, Eythan, no matter where you are. And if you're nowhere, I love you there, too". There is no past tense. I love you. I will always love you. I will always feel this ache.

37.

I would trade anything.

After you died, all of the good things didn't leave me completely. After you died, I let someone love me, and I've loved him back. After you died, I got into a school that made me feel at home. I found a new place to live. But I would trade anything. I would give anything up if it meant that I could bring you back. If it meant that you could be alive and you could be well. If your insides would come back clean and safe and never be fed on again. If your ashes could rise up and reform and the cancer that was burned with them was the only dead thing, the only thing left behind. I would give you all of my organs. I would give you every moment of happiness. I would give you every opportunity if I could just see your face again, just once, see you back, see you ready

to start again, really start. If that's all I got of you, I would take it, and I would be glad to disappear.

38.

After you died, they held a ceremony at your elementary school. It's as close as they got to having a funeral. Your name was set into the sign out front in black plastic letters. They planted a tree for you and placed a plaque beneath it. My dad and I stood at the back of the packed auditorium at Toler Elementary. All of your classmates, your friends, your family filled every open space. Some people got up to speak. Your mother, of course. She played slideshows of pictures of you that your father made. He put them into frames with a Legend of Zelda theme. You liked the Legend of Zelda. You played all the games. You used to draw a triforce on the back of your hand. Three stacked triangles with a gap in the center. Power at the top, Wisdom to the left, Courage to the right. When my sister and your other grandmother and your other aunt got tattoos for you, they were all Legend of Zelda themed. My sister played slideshows of pictures of you and played songs to match them. I scribbled down the names, made a playlist when I got home. Dad and I stayed at the back. I wished so badly for a hand to hold. Your teachers got up. Talked about how much you loved aliens and sea monsters. I loved aliens and sea monsters, too. You convinced a teacher who asked you to write a non-fiction report to let you write about aliens. You found plenty of research to work off of, he couldn't argue. Your friends got up. Two or three of your tiny friends. One talked about you throwing up during P.E., but not wanting to stop, not wanting to be excused. You kept running. Another remembered carrying your lunch tray for you in first grade because you were on crutches. "Eythan is always going to be my best friend. I feel bad for what happened." They broke my heart the most. Their tiny, imperfect sentences said it all better than anyone else could.

39.

After you died, I made my dad take me to get a newspaper. I wanted your obituary in print. It didn't matter to me that I could find it online, though I did look it up. There was an online guest book. I poured over the entries. I hated every single one that said you were an angel now. I cried over the little things your friends typed. I found one by my dad:

My heart is broken and I will never get over the fact that your gone. You changed my life from the moment you were born. I will never stop thinking of you. Thank you for being a part of my life.

40.

After you died, they finally got a dog. They named him Luke for you. Luke like in Star Wars. You loved Star Wars. I don't know how Luke is, or Jake. You have sisters now. I don't know how Jacey and Jalyn are. After you died, every child became a J name. Your mother wanted three kids. Didn't stop till she hit three again. Three and all J's. Like you didn't exist, almost. But you exist. Your ashes are in their house. Your picture is all over. Your picture on my desk. Your named tattooed into my arm. Your name is the string to a red balloon. Your mom said that was your favorite color. I bring you everywhere. I write you everywhere. You are still here. Just hiding. Hiding somewhere I can't get to. Somewhere I don't know that I can get to. But I love you. I love you always, Eythan.



about the author

melissa louise, also known as the emo seal, is a small sea creature native to california. she earned an m.f.a. from the california college of the arts, and writes poetry and creative non-fiction. she also sews together creatures, draws silly animals, binds books, and takes up any other craft that catches her eye. her fondness for bright colors, strange monsters, and the tendency to stick out her tongue were inherited directly from her father. more of her work can be found at:

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