

## **0.vii.i: closer...closer**

*Hangin' around - you just keep hangin' around, a specter from a lost time and place. Why? Dour, sad face cast in cold cobalt light, eroding blackened hills, crumbled charred husks of oaks, runoff mixing with soot and slithering down the saddened hills like tar, a never-ending rain melding with and therefore hiding your tears. I'm sorry that I ultimately couldn't be - and wasn't - the one you needed - it just took some time to see. And you should see, so why are you here? It's as if you're demanding something more of me - maybe you want more penance, but if so, you won't get it because you were partly responsible, too, and I won't pay your debt. There is no rekindling - you and I are so far from who both of us need or want. But still you stand here, icy glare, sad glare, glaring at me, but I think the reason why you're looking so hard at me - you don't wanna look at yourself. And you've not looked yourself, and that's ugly. And tragic.*

Fuck, okay.

It was close. We were close. First saw her in a classroom, smooth creamy skin, kinda rockabilly-punk look, cute face, bouncy chocolate hair, and, when she rose, a fine, curvaceous ass: the epitome of quirky-adorable. Stemming from fucked-up roots, and so we related rapidly, with the connections multiplying through music, through Nature. She fertilized within me crude, nascent desires to be better at food and art, although those nubbins didn't bloom until after the relationship's death. We agreed intellectually on several subjects while differing in some, a requisite for true love - she really enlightened me. Some of the most ecstatic moments of my life were with her, because of her - a great girl. Result was that she made me a better man - for that, I don't think I ever thanked her like I should've.

I did love her - the oceans of tears that poured from my eyes when the long-disintegrating relationship finally crashed and burned the proof - but it was never complete. I always held some things, some of me, back - I never felt comfortable enough with her to totally open myself, even when the relationship was really booming - and that was a dim sign of the fate, that we'd separate, and that, I admit, was unfair. She just wasn't removed enough for me, we just weren't removed enough from *them*, for me to fall totally into her like I did another. Needed more distance to get close enough, and she just couldn't - and wasn't - the one to walk that distance. Likewise, the closer I walked to *them*, where she wanted to be, the more distant I became. Close - but not close enough.

But, fuck, okay, there was one - once.

How much she means to me really didn't hit until yesterday. The one interaction. Her silky body silhouetted by a soft sun in a mountain meadow of love, hummingbirds surrounding, gallant male Mallards holding their iridescent emerald heads regally high above rolling blue lake water, the flowing wind waving the fields of smooth grass on the slope, the pure snow ice-cream-topping the peak. Our toes in the velvet grass, our backs warmed by the glowing sun. The few words of the one interaction. Their arrangement, their flow. Their content. Their intimacy. One moment

of contact, one touch, and it's she that keeps me going, she that serves as the impetus not to put the heat to my head and end all the pain. The most intense love I've ever felt, and in just a glimmer of instance. And she's gone, so gone, so long gone, for so long now - nearly two decades. But her memory - she'll be here with me 'til my death, that I can't forget, and with her memory is a lifetime promise, a lifetime possibility. She is transcendence beyond words. She gives me life. Beauty. Resonance.

Hope.