

day // break // night

Step, step.

Reluctantly, the sun kisses the softly orange sky goodbye. The dull yolk wavers just above the horizon: hanging in the awkward space of new acquaintances who don't have anything left to say but feel obligated not to leave. Step, step. Step, step. The sun is slowly retreating to the end of the Earth, chased by cosmically wandering gradients of vectors arching over the collapsing heavens. Step, step, step. The last pixel glimmers, shakes. It falls quietly into the dark chasm, like everything else.

I was going to catch the sun, but it was too quick for me.

Step, step.

What to do now.

Step, step.

One of the laces on my left shoe slaps against the concrete. The plastic pitch modestly pierces the silence every other step.

Step, step.

What to do now.

Step, step.

Cool breath, from the boy several paces behind me. Quiet, but not quiet enough.

Step, step.

Stop.

Breath — louder, closer. On my neck. In my hair. Across my chest.

Stop.

Eyes — in, out. Inside out. Around, downside up.

Stop.

He stares at the back of my head until my eyes roll inside out, and when our eyes look back into their sockets, I taste his bitter tongue snaking, searching.

Stop, stop.

It wafts from my stomach, slithers through the cavities of organs and spaces in-between. Hands grasp against intestines and livers delicately wrapped in skin. Organ donation. Organ transfer. Organ exchange. His nose falls through my chest. Organ deletion. I smell dirt, sweat. Veins; shot, parched, drowned. My legs slam into his feet, hard.

Stop, stop.

They dig deep into my lungs. They scar the tissue, rupture the arteries. Internal bleeding. External bleeding. He grabs my ankles. Knees contract, swell. Kick, turn, rise, fall. I exhale. The air escapes his trachea. Dry. I feel the inside of the throat: the blood, the coagulating spit. Foaming, menacingly. Arm: numb, rings dully. His right leg twitches, spasms.

Stop, stop.

It shakes violently; up, around, disjointed. Anatomically incorrect angles. Hits me in the eye. Digs into the sockets, deep. Pupils dilated, bursting, bleeding out. I cannot move my arm. Numb: rings dully. Organic material decomposes; melting atomic broth. His head knocks back, convulses. Saliva foams, chokes; a dense web. Throat depleted. Spasm, gasps, paralyzed. I cannot move.

Stop, stop.

The air is still.

Step, step.