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## Always Ocean

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By late May, all the dandelions died. Their white fuzz floated around town, building up in the hard to clean places. Children ran through grass, kicking them up like dead leaves. I was fifteen. Old enough to be angry. Too young to know why.

I followed Jack across the scorched black top. Dandelion puffs danced in the windless air like snow. I asked how long it takes to kick in. He said it'll be instant. Be patient. We would be there soon.

I tried to call it our Neverland. An abandoned parking garage sentenced to demolition. For a few weeks it was still ours. Freshman year was almost over. Jack had been gone since September. He brought a knife to school one day and dragged it across his forearms in homeroom. It took him this long to attain out-patient status. They're either crazy or retarded, he would tell me, but the girls there just want to f---.

I swallowed my anger and jealousy. I was still just a white kid from the suburbs. Jack had become something else. We had nothing in common anymore. Nothing but rage and concrete.

It's not Neverland, he said angrily, are you a lost boy, do you feel lost? It's the exact opposite. We are not lost. We are found. Call it something else. Just not Neverland.

OK, I said.

In the garage, Jack kept a stained, wet mattress in the corner. I don't know if he brought it or if he just found it there.

It's for when I bring girls here, he told me.

When we made it inside my eyes adjusted to the dimmed light. A small insect clung to Jack's greasy hair and I kept silent. We climbed to the third floor and Jack took off his backpack. Sitting down, the cool cement felt nice. I watched as he laid out a clipboard, a folded piece of tin foil and a pink straw cut down to an inch or so. He unfolded the tin foil and dumped it out on the clipboard. It was browner than I expected. Carelessly, he pushed the pile around with the straw until it was two.

You know what to do, right? He handed the clipboard to me.

I'm going first?

Yeah. Do you know how?

Yeah. I breathe.

That's right. Close your other nostril and breathe.

It hit the back of my throat and dripped. It tasted like chemicals taste. Jack took his hit and we slouched downward. My body rose up, leaving the ground. I bumped along the ceiling until I found my way out and fell into the sky. I could smell the coming rain. The white dandelion puffs gathered on my clothes as I flew through them. My limbs twisted and expanded like a rubber band. I looked back at the garage but it was gone. Everything was gone. There was no more anger. There was no more jealousy. I could see for miles. Jack was right.

We are found.

