

How I Forgot You

The first thing to go was the coffee maker. Not because it was yours or because the smell reminded me of you, but rather it occurred to me one morning that your head is shaped like a coffee pot. Frankly, your ears stick out like the handle does and I realized I could not start my mornings pouring coffee from your head and then be expected to go about my day. So I got rid of it and forgot about it.

Other objects in my apartment went next. Little things like pictures were changed out of frames, and then frames were eliminated altogether. Vases became bags of shattered glass to take out with the trash. Placemats became doormats which became welcome mats until they were dumpster insulators. Forks had no home here. I pulled books off shelves, wrenched the words we loved from their spines, and tossed the pages down onto the street below. But I ran downstairs and caught them before they hit the ground. I couldn't have strangers picking up the pages and reciting them to me if we ever crossed paths. I emptied my arms full of words into barrels I found behind our Chinese restaurant three blocks up. Smelling of old lo mein and crab rangoon, I hoped it would suffice.

Our couch was fatally infested with kisses and Sunday morning cinnamon rolls. So I watched as the moving men drove it away from me, and I waved and hollered "Goodbye, you old couch! I'll miss you never!" The rest of the furniture soon followed with the same gusto. But standing in my empty apartment, I ran out of things to forget and I hadn't forgotten you. So I left.

Once you start forgetting and eliminating things, it becomes easy to keep going. I walked further from my apartment. I closed my eyes and forgot restaurants we liked and hated, parks we had laid down in, Goodbye, Bench. Goodbye, Graffiti. Goodbye, Hat. Blink and it never happened.

I eventually forgot music, but I didn't lose sound. Instead of notes and pregnant chords, I gained the buzzing of mosquitos, the crinkling of paper, and the hum of computers. I gained constant sound.

People were harder. I separated from all the Andrews I knew, which was a shame because I had a fine dentist named Andrew, and even a childhood dog. I was sad, but the Andrews had to go.

I forgot and I forgot until I had nothing to remember.

But how do you forget a word.

A word is seen, or heard, or said and then it destroys everything you've worked for.

It's the word living in the impossible space between two hands holding each other. It's the word in every song that means something. It's the word that whispers both *keep going* and *stand perfectly still*.

L (A remarkable journey beginning with "I like you")

O (Otis Redding records vibrating, making the table dance with us)

V (Existing in comfortable, vulnerable silence)

E (love like caramel and euphoniums)

How do you forget a word?

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I returned to my apartment exhausted. I grasped for the light ready to be relieved by the emptiness of my apartment. But instead, the light showed all the memories I had forgotten to forget. Our third date in Providence stood next to *A Fish Called Wanda*. Meeting your mother was next to my grandmother's funeral. Spilled coffee, David Bowie, and Big Tony's Deli, everything was there. These were the memories that had no couch cushions to bury into, no books to hide behind, no dust to take cover beneath.

I never forget you. I missed you.

We sat on the floor, each memory and I. We had a cup of tea and I let them remind me of what they were and what they meant. I moved between memories around my apartment until the night told me

it could no longer wait for day. The sun began to rise as our final argument quietly grabbed its hat and passed through the door.

I sat. And I forgot about forgetting you. Eventually, I think you don't have to forget in order to remember without pain. I sat. Remembering you and Missing you and Missing We.