

One, Two, Black.

One car. Two.

One motorcycle. Two. Then three.

It's black. The truck, that is. It makes the lights flicker when passing. The fluorescent bulbs tremble, fearful of the sudden noise and the brisk night air flowing through the open door. A glass drips water down my curled finger, while my other hand twirls the straw around the edge. The ice has melted. The sweat between my overlapping thighs glued the skin in place. It would simply be rude to uncross my legs and allow my repellent body odor to float around the damp room; it would bother the cashier. I have forgotten what I ordered—maybe an orange juice—but now it's so watered down I might as well allow it to splash onto the dirty street with the rest of the acid rain.

I subconsciously wipe my wet hand on my frayed shorts and move my straggled hair behind my ear. I had to squint my boring, brown eyes at the neon sign across the street to see the logo: *Tropical Strip, Come in for a Dip!* Wondrous, yet another strip club lining the filthy streets. I should leave, I should stand—but I can't. My numb legs don't want to move from such a comfortable position, even with the *moist* coating of sweat. Sweat, it's everywhere. Between my thighs, my inner elbow, my palms, my cheeks, my glass. A muggy place can only serve to even more muggy people. Muggy, like damp. Damp, usually coated with dirt. Dirt follows filth, and filth follows trash, and trash is thrown away. Trash is always thrown away. Maybe I am the typical city girl who got too close with the wrong people. I was shiny, new, and exciting. I got rubbed too much, handled too much, touched too much. Now I'm dull, old, and boring. I'm a broken toy who no one wants, just throw me out. Toss me in the rain the way I want to toss this drink away. That's what you do to trash.

It's really his fault though. Everything is his fault, is someone else's fault, never mine. Not my fault, even if I agreed to go. Not my fault, even if I accepted the drink. Not my fault, even if I kissed back. Not my fault, even if it seemed like it's what I *wanted*. Not my fault, because I said "no." It should have been enough; but it wasn't. It wasn't because I can still feel everything. The event, however, is blurry. It's not like the images are blurry, no, I can see

everything so clearly. His touch, though, feels blurry. I can't remember if his fingers were rough or not, how he smelled, how he gripped; but my body knows something was there, rubbing. It was there and it wasn't supposed to be. His nails grazed under my breast. His palm hovered over my hip. His tongue slid from the base of my ear down to the hollow of my collar bone. His chest heated mine, but it was too hot. Everything was too hot, everything is too hot. I need to leave, from here, right now.

I tried to stand, but stumbled, and collapsed a bit on the counter. My head feels dizzy, my eyes are trying to hard. I shut them. Focus, focus, on something else, anything else. The cars. They whiz by me in a flurry of rush, no one car can be singled out, but they blend together seamlessly in a chorus of an urban melody. Horns and honks mesh with drunken slurs and heated curses. You can only hear this sort of performance here, in a city. It's beautiful, breathtaking really. People can drive through life without looking back, left, or right. They cruise carelessly. I calmed down, slowly peeked out again. The lights seemed less intense now, blaring only slightly. I stood—again at an elephant's pace really—and allowed my shaking thighs to adjust. The air has cooled my soaked thighs. I manage to push the door open, step out into the night. I glance around, no bearing of the time, trying to find a cab of some sort. In this condition, however, that goal was as far from me as Neverland is from Wendy. I took a few steps, but something still felt off. I still didn't feel quite like myself. I look up and down, side to side, everywhere at once. I gripped my head, my blood didn't seem to know where to go. I was falling, though, I could feel that much. Things felt blurry again. My thighs feel sweaty. They're wet, but it's not cool water like the rain. There are hands on them, rain is falling down those finger tips. They're not my finger tips.

One breath. Two.

One hand. Two.

Black.