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The Poet

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Night. Eraser struck by a sliver of moonlight that shines between blinds. Even in soft glow, inked brand name stark against pink. Besides the eraser, scratchy pencil against scratchy paper. Frantic scribbling by a poet drunk on beautiful hypotheticals. Love with no recipient and hope with no cause seep from shaky fingers into a sheet of paper that, in the darkness, seems to offer salvation from the sins of the heart.

Morning. In the sepia light of dawn, eraser meets paper for the first time. Absorbs words. Swallows graphite. Showers rubbings across the page. Rubbings fall to floor, carrying ghost of words that linger in negative space between two faded blue lines. Graphite imprints recede into eraser's flesh. The pencil has left impressions of the deleted words etched into the coarse fiber of the paper. Words are forfeited for a blank slate. Dreams are discarded in the humbling spotlight of the rising sun. The eraser drawn across the paper removes the burden of hope and foolish ambition from the poet's mind. But the memory of the poet's thoughts persists within the eraser's rubber pores.

Noon. Pencil falls to the paper again like a guillotine to the blankness of the newly erased page. The beginning of a letter leaks from her fingers. Things she was never able to say. Some that she was never willing to. The name of her deceased mother printed at the top. A pause as eyes skip across the page. A sudden realization. The letter was never for her mother. It was a tribute to all the times the poet had lost her voice. Whenever her own search for perfection caused her to lose connection with others. Tears suddenly drip to the page, joining all the secrets and regrets that she had yielded to the light of day. Eraser accepts them all, even as the wetness of the paper forms ripples and slashes. Rubbings spill over the edge of the desk. The eraser is smudged with shadowy blotches, like the black bags under weary eyes.

Evening. The eraser consumes pages and pages of mindless doodles. The poet's name, blocked in large, lopsided letters. Against a backdrop of messy flowers, vines, cars, animals with huge eyes and limbs in peculiar places. Cityscapes, insects, people with gaping mouths and stretching arms. Empty clothes but full closets. The poet's mind overflowing with ideas, but suddenly, a lack of words to express them. Excruciating lethargy sets in. As the eraser sweeps across the page, the ticking of the overhead clock is deafening.

Second night. The poet's heart has been evicted from her chest. It clambers, disoriented, across another empty page, lugging a suitcase of sorrows, loneliness, and insecurities. The stars through the window seem even farther away than most nights. The poet is too impatient for beautiful things. Again, her writing is chaotic, bubbling with a desperate energy that threatens against the seams of the suitcase. Jagged, unpredictable letters scar the pulp of the paper. Anger justified by pain commands the pencil. The poet carves language into the world with a powerful, if not stable, hand.

Second morning. The poet awakes at her desk with metallic fingers. Grey smears fade from her palms into her wrists. She presses the eraser into last night's chaos, soaking up the graphite. Rubs it stiffly against a page of poems she is already forcing herself to forget. The poet blows above the paper. The rubber remains scatter across the desk, leaving faint graphite trails that explode outwards like fireworks.

She often writes about things that hurt her. It's her form of self-destruction. All worth it for the satisfaction

of the paper rippling beneath the thick eraser during her emotional hangovers. For the idea of slowly untwining herself from the very thread of existence, creating writing that no one will ever read. Flirting with the idea of impermanence, even while suffering from the intense realities of her pain.

Yet, as the gust of wind cradles the eraser rubbings on an open breeze, as the shreds of rubber kiss the street, evidence of the secrets she faithfully poured into her poems remains. The fragments of the eraser, clinging to the soles of strangers' shoes, flying into flowerbeds, across winding roads. Tumbling down like stained black snowflakes. And although people may not recognize or notice them, those who unknowingly come across the dreams and losses of the poet are struck with an indescribable sense of familiarity. The poet's secrets camouflaged within the extraordinary mundanity of everyday life, living through many more nights, mornings, noons, evenings.