

Kaleena Deshawn

It was the end of July, the sun shown down on the asphalt of the driveway as she stood in it's mouth with a group of what could only be called family. The funeral home wasn't too far down the street, but she stood with them anyway waiting for the long black limo to pull up in front of the white barn style house where she spent so many summers. The hem of her black dress dancing in the breeze and her patent leather pumps clicking against the concrete as her feet and eyes shifted uncomfortably.

As she stood there, looking around at people she hadn't seen in years, at a house she hadn't seen in years, on the way to a funeral home for a wake to see a person she hadn't seen in years, a person who she would never see again, she didn't know what to think. It was all so sudden and simply too much for her to comprehend. When someone has lived a long life, people say things like "she lived a full life" as if that really makes anyone feel better, when you have just lost someone you aren't thinking of how old they were or whether they were ready to go, just that you weren't ready. It's selfish and that's ok. This however was a little different, as annoying as the funeral commentary was, or the hugs from people she barely knew, if she knew them at all, at least there was some effort to comfort her. Here however that effort was lacking. Everyone was much too shocked and lost in their own sadness and confusion to really notice what was happening around them.

She was guilty of it too, she knew that at some point in the last few days she had completely missed the opportunity to comfort someone she loved, someone who needed her as much as she needed them. Maybe it was her mom after getting the unfortunate phone call, or her sister on the plane last night, maybe their was even

someone right now her eyes had shifted over without really noticing. She let the thought simmer in her head for a moment and then decided it didn't really make a difference; even if she had noticed anyone she wouldn't have known what to do or say and she imagined that could have only made her feel even worse about the whole thing. Though she couldn't imagine what worse could have possibly been because she was feeling particularly shitty right now, like a zombie, not like when your tired and have to drag yourself out of bed, or in the movies where you limp around chasing after people trying to get at their brains, this was something different.

This was something she knew she had never felt before. She had been to funerals, gotten the bad news that she'd lost someone, cried for days and even weeks about it, but she'd never felt like this, she was sure of that even if she couldn't be sure of anything else. It was almost as if she had died in some sense and for the last few days she had been wondering aimlessly through her own life, unknowing, not noticing, and certainly not participating in anything she could even recall doing. She knew she had gotten dressed as she looked down that somehow she had made it outside as she stood in the driveway, that she had had to get on a plane at some point to make it here, but she wasn't conscious about how any of it had happened, it was as if she had been fading in and out of her own existence.

She knew that thought should have scared her, but though her mind continued to wonder constantly, she couldn't concentrate on anything long enough to decide how she feel about it. Not her troubling zombie realization, the people grieving around her or even the fact that soon she would be on her way to say goodbye to someone she considered her sister. It was then another faint memory faded in of the ride from the

airport last night. Her mother had been joking with the “aunt” who had come to pick them up, the conversation had started with them both discussing the accident how terrible it was and somehow made it’s way to her mother talking about how she hadn’t cried, like it was no big deal, as she sat in the backseat with her sister beside her, she suddenly felt very uncomfortable as if she had done something wrong, as if someone had revealed her deepest darkest secret and in made her sick to her stomach.

The same shameful feeling found her now as she stood at the mouth of the driveway still swaying, completely unaware of how long she had been standing here or anything that had gone on in that time frame. She knew that everyone dealt with things in their own way, that it would take time, that everyone handled death in their on way, but at 18 she couldn’t possibly imagine how she was supposed to handle this and even as she looked around and around, surround by family, the people who are meant to help you in times like this, she couldn’t see anyone who looked like they had an answer and suddenly, though it made no sense to her how she could have missed it, she felt very unprepared for what was waiting for her down the road. She shifted her ankle to the left revealing the bottom of her shoe as she starred at her own reflection in the side of her shiny patten leather pumps, she didn’t know why she was doing it, but she was just hoping she would find an answer to all of the unanswered questions floating in her head and she had already come to the conclusion that she had nowhere to look, so she decided she’d look everywhere. However as she was looking she heard the screech of tires in front of her and her head shot up immediately, much as it had often done in this situation the last few days, and her eyes met the limo, shiny and black like her shoes, but she wasn’t expecting any answers from it.