

I only miss you when I'm breathing.

I only miss you when oxygen enters my lungs and leaves just as fast. There is a burning there like fire, the embers of grief still glowing in the darkness of my soul. Everyone said the feeling was natural and it would become more bearable with time, and they may be right. Their sad smiles and gentle touches should have brought comfort and made the wait easier. But three months feels like a long time to hold my breath just to ease the pain— for the tightness in my chest to be an expectation rather than a reason for anxiety. Three months feels like a long time to sit and stare out of the window where you'd draw the stupidest things in the condensation, where you'd turn and smile as you drew an abstract version of a cat, a frog, your mother-in-law. Three months feels like a long time to stare at the boxes of your things in the corner of the kitchen, waiting to be taken out— sometimes I'd run my finger along the top and stare at the dust on my fingers for a minute, an hour, a day. *Just take them out*, I'd tell myself. That will never happen. Three months of missed calls from my boss. I quit my job. Three months of worried emails, worried texts, worried letters. Your mom wanted to write and tell me I was still--- and always will be--- welcome in your family. I wish I had the energy to write her back. But it's too hard. Too hard like going to work. Too hard like eating, sleeping, living. Too hard like breathing— in and out, and in again just to be let out once more.

Breathing. It's a simple thing, really. But if it was so simple, then why was it taken from you? Why you? And if such a simple thing could be taken away with such ease, why not take mine as well? These questions I've asked since I watched them lower you into the ground that day— watched the rain drops fall onto your casket and roll off just as fast. Every day I lie in bed and ponder if I should join you, if you'd be mad if I did. Would it be worth it? Would you reject me for being so stupid? I guess I will never know.

But what I do know, and will never forget, is just how hard it is to breathe now. How suffocating the world is without you by my side. It will get easier with time, they all seem to say. I really hope that's true. I wish you were here to help, though. I miss you. I miss you more than anything. I miss you more than breathing.