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## Panic

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## Panic

Taylor Roylance

There are days where Panic clings to me like a toddler in a department store, desperate not to lose his mother, clutching her floral skirt in two tiny, white-knuckled fists.

Panic smells like the bleach and lemon pine-sol my mom uses to clean up after I'm sick.

It is the same smell as hospital hallways.

Panic feels like a concrete truck rolling over my legs and pouring its freshly mixed cement down my throat and into my lungs, weighting them down as it dries.

Panic sounds like raging techno beats.

like water roaring, and not in the oh-I-can-totally-do-yoga-to-this way,

but in the hurricane-is-going-to-destroy-my-house way.

It sounds like tribal drums, banging away in my ears until they ring.

Panic is the fire that rages through a forest, killing every bud and sapling in its way.

It is the black hole at the edge of the universe

Waiting to destroy all of our photos, shoes, and the ground beneath us.

Panic tastes like battery acid and blood.

I try to spit it out,

But that awful cocktail won't leave for hours

Panic looks like scabs on my arms and fidget toys in my bag

For when the black hole

The tribal drums

The Pine-sol

The toddler

Become too much for me and I can't handle all this

Panic.