

# Lights and Shadows

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## I am 22 Years Old

Elliott Sullivan III

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# *I Am 22 Years Old*

**Elliott Sullivan III**

*I* am 22 years old today.  
I lie in a tub of warm water.

It is such a strange feeling,  
Yet so distinct.  
As I lower myself in,  
Slowly but surely,  
The water consumes my body.

It is such a strange feeling,  
Yet so distinct.  
The last time I submerged,  
So many moons ago,  
My body was small  
And so were my troubles.

Back then it was different.  
There were bubbles,  
And my mother scrubbed me clean.

My mother saw me naked.

If my mother walked in right now,  
I'd scream.  
But now, I try to figure out who—  
Who I wouldn't scream for.

Downstairs, they're almost gone.  
People dispersing.

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Friends leaving the party.  
My parents are clearing the tables.

I wonder if they notice  
I'm no longer there.  
I wonder if they know—  
Know me.  
Know my worries.

I am 22 years old today.  
I am a college student.  
I lie in a tub of warm water.

It seems so odd  
To come home again.  
To get away from it all.  
To be away from her.

She's so beautiful.  
She's got her head on her shoulders.  
Everything points in the right direction.

We're supposed to get together.  
We're supposed to study.  
There's no computer here.  
I could email her,  
But I haven't.

We're supposed to connect.  
We're supposed to talk.  
I know her number.  
I could call,  
But I haven't.

I look down,  
Seeing nothing but bare flesh—  
Pockets of water filling the dips of my skin.

If my mother walked in right now,  
I'd scream.  
But now, I try to figure out who—  
Who I wouldn't scream for.

She's so beautiful.  
She's got her head on her shoulders.  
I wonder if I'd scream for her.

I wonder if she noticed  
I'm no longer there.  
I wonder if she knows—  
Knows me.  
Knows my worries.

I wonder if she knows,  
Knows my virginites.  
I wonder if she cares,  
Cares that I'm rusty.  
Wrinkled around the edges  
From years of inexperience.

I wonder if she'll know,  
Know my mind.  
I wonder if she'll care,  
Care for my rusty kisses.  
They're wrinkled around the edges  
From years of inexperience.

