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Fluoxetine

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Fluoxetine

You took my virginity hush-hush. I couldn't admit we had something going even to the closest of friends. Our relationship was clandestine as affairs often are, and unlike most, it was kept that way. I kept you hidden from the loving concerns of many not out of spite, but shame. You evoked shame in me. The thought of swallowing you down daily, morning breath still lingering, bones afflicted with weary fever, was almost impossible to fathom. That I could sink deep enough into emotional turmoil to warrant your existence in my life...

Sarafem to some, Prozac to most. 24.4 million prescriptions a year. Used to treat major depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, bulimia. Side effects include headaches, nausea, dry mouth, sweating, sleepiness or insomnia, and diarrhea or constipation.

My head hung low. I had long gotten used to staring at my feet while holding a conversation. It was part of my demeanor. My head's y-axis had been broken for a couple months now, the pulley system keeping it upright jammed. In my peripheries I could make out the doctor flipping through sheets of paper on a clipboard. My mom was to the side, sitting in a chair. The doctor spoke. "So, Sean. What brings you in today?"

The question was met by a long pause. I was trying to formulate words in my head and chewed furiously at the inside of my cheek, deliberating on what to say. I shuffled through half-complete sentences, the ends trailing off into nothingness. The small fragments I managed to grasp onto were quickly dismissed. None of it seemed right. I knew what it was that brought me to

the doctor's office. The paper sheet under me crinkled wildly as I shifted back and forth uncomfortably. I just didn't have the capability to verbalize it. There was simply nothing for me to say. My mind was muddled.

"I...just it's been...lately, I've been feeling bad."

The doctor nodded.

"Depression?" he asked. It was more a statement than a question.

"Umm..."

I got lost again. Two minutes later I received a script.

Prozac: classified as an SSRI. Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor. Delays the reuptake of serotonin in the brain. Ultimately leads to serotonin lasting longer when it's released. Serotonin is the neurotransmitter responsible for influencing mood, sexual desire and function, appetite, sleep, memory and learning, temperature regulation, and some social behavior.

You were my first. I ignored you for as long as I could. Only your presence loomed over me like some sort of medicinal cloud of guilt. You were prescribed to me. My parents thought I took you. They had my well being in mind, yet it felt as if they and everyone else was misguided. What exactly happens when you take a pill you don't need?

I rolled the pill in the palm of my hand, shooting it a spiteful yet curious look. It had an industrial appearance to it—one half of the pill, a drab green color, fitting snugly over the other half, a dull white. No additional assembly included for happiness. I imagined what the capsule's insides held. The pill continued its course on my palm. Apprehension.

I looked up. The translucent orange of the pill bottle drew my attention. It sat on the kitchen table, full of a month's worth of pills minus the ones I pretended to take. I'd be familiar with this bottle soon. It'd be the first thing I'd open upon waking. It would interject its way into my morning routine, which consisted of sluggishly getting out of bed at maybe 1:00 or 2:00 p.m., eating some junk, and falling back asleep. The effort involved for this inclusion would be Herculean, no doubt.

My mom watched over me. I had been fiddling with the Prozac for quite some time now. I couldn't go on feigning that I was feeling better any longer. My parents had caught on to my game. I had no other option but to take it, to accept that I was fucked up enough to have to rely on a pellet imbued with magical powers to get by. It pained me. For the first time in my whole life, I had to rely on something other than myself, because I wasn't good enough anymore. I was a wreck. I couldn't manage to stay upright with the flood gushing around me.

I let out a defeated sigh and threw the pill into my mouth.

I'm a fuck-up.

Mom forced a smile as I drank from a full cup of water. What had happened to me?

I didn't return the smile. I left the kitchen and rushed upstairs to hide back in my hole. Sleep this away, I thought.

Fluoxetine Hcl comes in 10mg, 20mg, and 40mg dosages. Some people find Prozac to be fairly stimulating, so it is recommended to start out taking your dose in the morning. Usual dosage for Major Depressive Disorder: 20mg.

I surrendered myself to you. I put myself in your hands. I would follow you blindly through the brush, letting you lead the way as you chopped at the stubborn branches in front of us. Would you lead me to civilization again? Could we get there before nightfall?

The coffee machine sputtered and dribbled brown liquid into the mug. I was careful to stay a good distance away. I didn't want any stains on the shirt I was wearing. It was 9:00 a.m. A random Tuesday in May.

I woke to the sun pelting my eyes. I intentionally left my blinds open the night before. This was unusual for me. Ever since February they had been closed—day to night and night to day. Today was different, however. This day had definition. Evaluating the prospects of the day and the future ahead didn't feel like looking out into an endless meadow somewhere in The Great Plains of America. There were slopes and twists and turns to be explored. The same day wasn't about to be relived over and over again. I had an objective, a purpose. I was job hunting.

With a coffee mug in one hand and my Prozac in the other, I looked out my kitchen window. I watched my dog roam around the yard, her head buried in the grass. Her life was simple. Explore. Eat. Sniff. Piss. I pondered whether or not dogs could inexplicably lose their sense of self.

I took the pill, washing it down with the fuel of the working man. It traveled down my throat, a submarine propelled by caffeinated tides. This was *the* American breakfast. A cup of joe...an anti-depressant or two...yes, some roasted beans and a pharmaceutical crutch was the key to success.

In the parking lot of my local shopping mall, I felt something inside me change. A surge of energy coursed through my body. I was wired. It wasn't a familiar type of wired. Something about it wasn't clean. But nevertheless, I accepted it. It was a welcome shift in consciousness, natural or not. My mind was quick and nimble like it used to be, and it was rejuvenating to be able to

think clearly again. I immediately began to dismiss my ways. How could I have been huddled up for so long? How could I live with myself ignoring the calls and texts of friends? Had I even been living until now?

I put on a smile and jumped out of my car, ready for any form of interview they would throw at me. Let's knock 'em dead out there.

Feelings are fleeting. "Solidified" emotion pops up and disappears unexpectedly like restless drifters with sleeping bags strapped to their backs. Such is the pattern of the distressed. Positivity tickles and teases, prompting you to let your guard down. Then it socks you hard in your stomach and leaves you coughing up blood. You let it happen a few more times, purposefully fooling yourself with blind hope because it feels good during the moment. Then one day, you give up on hope. It keeps tricking you anyway.

"Well, it's been four weeks now. The Prozac should be kicking in by this time. You should start to feel something soon. Give it a little more time."

The psychiatrist informs me of this reality coldly. I don't know if she knows she comes off this way. But I could feel the half-hearted chill of her promise crawl down my back. I wasn't going to get better. I was sure of it.

Job hunting went well. I had an interview at Eddie Bauer and thought I did a passable job coming off as someone who hadn't left school, who hadn't left his life, and who hadn't left his soul God knows where a month or two ago. I came off as your average nineteen-year-old college student, who was for whatever reason, applying early for a summer job. That day went well.

Except it turned out to be a fluke. Two days later I couldn't get out of bed again. Weeks passed and the good days the Prozac provided me were proving to be so few and far between I couldn't tell the difference anyway. In fact, things were taking an even deeper turn to shit. Feeling a particular way and then having it stripped away from you was frustrating and upsetting. Monday: bed. Tuesday: bed. Wednesday: motivation to answer a text back (a shimmer of what's to come?). Thursday: bed (maybe it's just a bad day...). Friday: bed (no), Saturday Sunday Monday bed bed bed. It was all tiring. I lost energy to do anything. Then the numbness came.

Users of Prozac may experience side effects. More severe side effects include: mood or behavior changes, anxiety, panic attacks, trouble sleeping; impulsive, irritable, agitated, hostile, aggressive, restless, hyperactive (mentally or physically) behavior, depression, or thoughts about suicide or hurting yourself. You should report any new or worsening symptoms to your doctor.

Dawn made itself known to me. The leaves and grass took on menacing hues. Their edges became sharp with the darkening skies, tearing at my ankles, my cheeks, all skin exposed to the outside. No sign of life anywhere in this thick brush. The voices I thought I heard in the distance a while back now vanished. I was most certainly alone. Alone with a guide whose intentions were now clear to me. I was being led gradually away from the familiarity and comfort of existence.

The thought swelled up wildly then sunk down into my chest cavity. It ached when it got there, colliding with a thunk against my insides. Everything felt bruised. I stared forward as my shoes moved through the liquefied mud. I recognized all that stared back. It was 93rd street. I've walked a dynasty of dogs down this street for nearly all my life. And here I was continuing that routine, shuffling onward, gloves grasping a bulky blue leash attached to my dog.

The thought stung hard. Mental distress transforming into physical discomfort then converting into emotion over and over and over. Numbness that somehow wept with pain. My eyes glossed over everything I passed, no attention given to the external world. Trapped in my own body which was trying to abort from itself, neurotransmitters whacked out and firing in unfamiliar ways.

I don't want to be here.

No love for my dog. No love for anyone. No feelings except the constant throb of my insides turning, flipping, burning. There was nothing for me here. Empty hope, happiness siphoned, passion tapped. House after house I trudged by, and I became more and more certain of it. It scared me how much sense it made.

I wish I didn't exist.

My eyesight shimmered as I looked through the tears that began to form in my eyes. I cried in disoriented desperation. The streets were empty. Nobody watched me do it. I let my dog carry me forward as my inner self curled up in a ball and hid in a dark recess somewhere.

I turned the TV on when I got home. I knew I wouldn't kill myself. I was too passive for that. I submitted long ago to where my feelings would take me. I gave up on fighting whatever came to trample over me. Nothing was worth the effort. Not even if it meant leaving this life permanently.

I opened up a can of chicken noodle soup and ate it cold. I sat cross-legged in front of the television glow, not really paying attention to the events that unfolded on the screen. I instead focused on my lap. I would wait for my mom to come home from work to wonder why her son was eating soup out of a can.