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Untitled

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The Hallucination of a Misfortunate Boy

Anonymous
Photo: Jack Davidson

Once upon a time there lived a small boy. He was quite small and frail for his nine years. He didn't know exactly where he lived. He knew that home was a small apartment on 19th street. It was dirty and dusty and always smelled strange. Menacing needles and pills lay scattered everywhere, carpeting the floors and counters.

Mom and Dad weren't awake often, which was usually better than if they were. The boy didn't know very much about them. He knew that once his parents were considerably successful. He also knew that after his brother's death, everything changed. He was too young at the time to remember how his first brother died, but out of sadness and loss, his second brother killed himself soon after. Mom and Dad collapsed into nothing more than rubble and dust. The scared toddler couldn't help them. He was too young to understand, and even if he did there wasn't anything he could have done.

In an attempt to escape the agony, Mom had started medicating herself. First she received antidepressants from a doctor, but when they no longer sufficed, she alternated to different methods. Her husband soon followed. They occasionally received money in the mail from family; probably to ensure that they stayed farther away. Life turned its back on them, and they turned their backs on life. From caring parents they morphed into dopey eyed zombies, spending most of their time unconscious. When awake, they laughed dark throaty laughter that echoed through the halls and terrified the small child. After a while, the boy wondered if they even acknowledged his existence. Every night he covered his eyes tightly with his small palms and strained to remember better days. Days when home smelled of food, not alien chemicals. But that memory had long since passed, and, like a dark shadow, reality soon permanently consumed in his naive mind.

He hurried into the familiar building just as darkness absorbed the last of the sun's warm strands. He hated the dark. It never offered anything pleasant or merciful. From the musty stairs he climbed up to apartment number fifty-one and cautiously opened the decaying door. Avoiding the hazardous clutter on the floor he made his way to what originally was a kitchen. To his utter surprise, a pastry innocently rested on a plate on top of the counter.

His stomach growled as if to remind him how hungry he was. Rarely was there food to spare. He wondered if perhaps his parents had left it for him. Maybe they remembered him. How wrong he was, for it was no ordinary pastry. Smiling, he carefully lifted it off the plate. He checked the surroundings more out of habit than necessity. He eagerly brought the sugary pastry to his mouth and bit.

After two minutes, he felt strangely lightheaded. He saw stars as his vision blurred. He leaned on a wall for support. His mind wandered, leaving his body to its own devices. His breathing and heart rate accelerated. He felt a rush of joy that put a stupid grin on his face. For once, he felt the weight of the world lightly lift off his skinny shoulders. Unable to maneuver his own limbs, he lost his balance and clumsily tumbled to the floor.

The drug consumed his mind as he rolled onto his back and admired the spinning colored spheres on the ceiling. He couldn't muster why they delighted him so, but his grin widened. The spheres morphed into one large blob, then solidified into a blue tree swaying in water. Little fish and birds hovered near the canopy until they found sanctuary in its dense branches. His conscious left him entirely. Like a small child, he marveled at the pretty tree.

Soon he felt himself lift off the ground. He floated up gently, levitating closer to the magical tree. Just as he reached out his hand, the tree caught fire. Shocked, he watched it burn. Whimpering a bit, he pieced together that the tree was dying. Everything around the tree darkened. Soon all was black except one little finch perched on a small branch. When that too was consumed, the unfortunate boy found himself in total darkness. He floated higher, closing his eyes. Soon he drifted to someplace else. A place where reality is nothing more than a