The energy of the unknown enveloped everything and time ceased to hold meaning for either of them. In those moments, they existed solely for each other. Phones were forgotten. Obligations ignored. He looked at her, longing to memorize every line, every detail- to take her in, to keep her somehow with him always.

It’s strange how similar the end of a relationship can feel to the beginning. A mirror of first touches and lasts.

In those final hours, he was a different man- people tend to be on their best behavior at the bookends of a relationship. He was kind and present and completely and utterly too late. The decision had already been made, the death knell struck, and all of his actions just made the process all the more painful for them both. What should have been over in a matter of hours took three full days to resolve. There were meals and teary walks and lengthy, thoughtful discussions that drew deep into the night.

In those last three days, they had the relationship of her dreams- which only served to reinforce her decision to end things. To her, it was proof. Proof that he had always known what she had needed, but simply chosen not to do it. So, she indulged in those last days, vacationing in this alternate reality, imagining just how lovely life *could* have been. She basked in the warmth of the feelings, all the while reminding herself that the warmth was just coming from the fire she herself had set. Their home was engulfed in flames and there was only so long she could sit and enjoy marshmallows before she would have to leave. She hated to leave it, knowing that when she returned, all that would be left were cinders.