

Jackson Beamito

I never remember talking to my brother in the daylight. He'd always find me at some weird time, hours after the sun went down and the yelling downstairs stopped. Somehow he always knew when to stick his head under the bed right before I went to sleep.

He'd always start the same way too: "'Ey 'mano. What you doin' down there? You know beds work better when you sleep on top.'"

I smiled, "But I like it down there."

He snorted, "What choo mean you like it down there? You know that's where the monsters live, right?"

I loved it when he said that, "I know. What if I told you the monsters and I were friends this time?"

He laughed in such a way that you could hear his nose was stuffed up, "Heheheheh. Whatever Monstro. Get back up here," He reached under and gently grabbed my wrists.

"Hey Sig, where do you go at night?"

"It don't matter none. You don't want to know anyway..." he looked down at the ground, but just for a second, "You want me to tell you a story or somethin'?"

"You always tell me a story. Tell me where you went tonight. Pleeese?" I said, giving him the face that always worked on mom.

Sig shook his head again, "Naw, not today Monstro. You can hear another time. I just want to tell you a story so you sleep, okay?" he looked down, smiled, and sniffed back a lugie. Sig's hands shook a little while he tucked me in. He smelled weird.

"Okay..." I said, "But don't make it a scary one..."

He smiled, "Psh. You scare too easy..." Sig popped his knuckles and cleared his throat, "Okay... see this one time there was a little vato cowboy..."

"YOU ALREADY TOLD ME THAT ONE!" I yelled at him in a whisper.

He'd always smile back, "Psh- oh yeah. Shit. Sorry... just wanted to see if you were listening. Okay... so this one time there was this... this... ice cream guy."

"Ice cream guy?"

“Shuddup. You don’t know the story.”

I didn’t, so I shut up.

His eyes got real big, “So this ice cream guy, he drove his truck through the neighbourhood every day. He gave out pushpops, snowcones, cherry bombs, and... mmm...”

“SIG!”

“Sorry bro... the story’s makin’ me hungry. Hehehehheh...” he laughed, hiccoughed, and continued: “So, anyways, everybody say they love this ice cream guy. But this ice cream guy, he don’t feel like they mean it. He just think that they all like him for his sweet goodies, you know? Well, one day, this lil’ vato comes up to his truck and is all like, ‘Hey, what’s your name?’ And the ice cream guy’s all like, ‘What do you want?’ And the little kid’s like ‘I want to know your name’. The ice cream guy is like, ‘Man. Don’t nobody ask me that. I’m always ‘Ice Cream Guy’, you know? I... I think... I think my mom used to call me... Jack...son.”

“Jackson?” I said.

His face scrunched up, “SHUDDUP... yeah... Jackson... Beam...i...to.”

“That’s a stupid name.”

Sig got up and played like he was leaving, “Whatever, go to sleep Stupid.”

“No no no. Sorry Sig. I won’t talk no more. Finish the story! Finish the-”

“Okay... you don’t gotta cry about it, jeez. Okay so, Jackson and this little kid became friends, right? And this little kid, because he’s so little, he couldn’t work or nothing. So he couldn’t get no money for ice cream. But because he just wanted to be the ice cream guy’s friend, Jackson gave him a Push pop...for free. Everyday Jackson would give the little guy ice cream. They’d talk and laugh and tell jokes and stories. On the last day of summer, the little guy started to get all sad. He was like ‘Man, you’re not gonna come back.’ And Jackson looked the guy right in the eyes and said ‘Don’t worry lil man. I’ll always come back next summer. I like you and junk. And the sun’s always gonna be hot. People will always need ice cream.’ Then one day, the sun got all cold. When the little guy came out, Jackson didn’t come by. The little guy started to get all sad but then he remembered what Jack said: He’d be back. Then he went inside and went to bed.”

I laid there in silence for thirty seconds and watched him stare off into space, indicating he was done.

“I love you.”

“I love you too. Now go to sleep, Stupid.”

Sig disappeared after that night. Mom and Dad looked for him for many years after the divorce; Never did find him. Some nights, when it's too quiet to sleep, I want to cry and think about all I never had. But instead, I chose to dream. I dream that Sig found Jackson Beamito and the two of them chase the summer in a rundown white truck, driving like madmen, telling dirty jokes to all the little vatos while feasting on orange and yellow Push Pops underneath a hot, hot, summer sky.