

Please Take Her

My town streaks by in a blur of color as the train flies down the tracks, resembling more a Rothko painting and less my entire life's history. I was born in the sparse beige building up ahead on the left. That's what they told me, anyway. I was too young to know of course. I purchased the crumpled ticket in my hand at almost the exact same spot where my mother left me when I was only two days old. She packed me into a small cardboard box and dropped me at the train station like a package out for delivery, swaddled with newspapers to protect me from the late fall chill. Scrawled in her childish handwriting on the side was a note:

“Please take her.”

That was it. Just three words. That's all I have of my mother, a tattered note tucked inside a plastic bag and zipped into the side pocket of my purse. I have carried her with me always. This is all I know of who I am. Who I should be.

I'm not blaming the Hendersons, or implying they didn't love me. They did, in the only way they knew how. Father a little too much, on the days Mother was at bridge and he opened a few too many bottles. In the mornings, she would mend my torn clothing and change the bedsheets so the smears of blood wouldn't stare at her, accusatory.

There were brothers and sisters throughout the years. None worse or better than the rest, or more or less memorable than the next. It all just happened, my life. I have had no more control over it than I do this train.

It goes, I go.

It stops, I stop.

It doesn't care how I feel, or what I want to do, or who I want to love. Or if I even know how. I'm encased in a block of ice, frozen against hurt and disappointment. Whatever happens I stay the same. Hard, cold, and tired.

So very tired.

On the other side of the window, grass blurs into green blobs and the clouds rush to catch up in a swirl of blue and white. This train is my first direct act in taking control. My decision, my choice, instead of reacting to everything and everyone that has ever wanted a piece of me. I couldn't die in that town that had already claimed so much of who I was, and who I should have been.

And I no longer want to live.

I check the zippered pocket of my purse and caress the hard steel grip of the handgun I stole from Father this morning before I left their home. Nestled next to my real mother's note, this is the tool of my salvation.

This new town, wherever I end up, is absent of anyone who has ever abandoned me or claimed pieces they did not deserve.

I will end things with my own hand and on my own terms. Knowing what lies ahead, I smile. My life. My hand. My way.

I choose this.