

The weather, or perhaps your memories, makes the town look like a grey speck. Your car pushes forward, intermittently making unhappy noises. The town looks about the same as the welcoming sign, both decrepit. The windows are too dirty to reflect light, the buildings appear pale and sad.

You notice the local bakery, in which the baker's son hands a customer their change. He grew a beard, finally got rid of that awful bowl cut he had. He alone would listen to your ramblings about the books you read, but your parents didn't like his punk t-shirts, and that meant you couldn't talk to him anymore.

You drive by a park that's too small for that appellation, and you recall tripping on a rock here. Your mother kissed your forehead as you cried. That sort of affection only existed before your brother 'turned' gay and ran away.

Eventually you get to your parents' house. Your father answers, looks you up and down and lets you in. Your mother asks if you're married yet, if you have children. You say you're not planning on it. Your father gets himself a drink.

You tell them you're moving out of the country next year. You argue. Your father leaves furiously saying something vile about your brother. Your defeated mother says that you might as well visit your old room.

It looks the same as when you left: suffocating and dark. An old mirror beckons you. You look into it, and the reflection is that of a young girl with a reserved expression. What stands out is the colourful book she's clutching tightly to her chest.

You take the long way through town, since there's a place you'd like to see.

The library stands tall and proud as ever. Even with the new, albeit terrible paint job, it's as comforting a sight as before. The countless hours you spent here show through your extensive vocabulary, your affinity to poetry, your love of happy endings. This place made you who you are.

And you think about who that is. You wonder what would've happened if there wasn't a kind boy, no brother to help you sneak out of the house, no library. You conclude that you'd be pretty unhappy, maybe even miserable. But thankfully right now, you're content.

You'd go inside, but your grade elevens need their reflections graded. Best be on your way.