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When I wake Up

by Jane Reynolds

When I wake up, the other side of the bed is cold. As I push my palm against the same smooth sheets the coolness there feels like a hole. But for some few beautiful seconds, I bask in the peace that follows sleep. The unknowing of all life's pain, in those first blissful moments after waking.

I reach down to feel for you, ready to play, my fingers opening like petals in the darkness of our bed. But instead of the tingle of desire, a harsh, shrill playground bell clangs and bangs me back. A cursed call, a repellant reminder that you have left me. And that she may be holding you now. And again, my heart sinks, back, down, down. Into the crevasse between my breasts.

You used to bring me a cup of tea when we woke. All I had to mouth was "tea", or, I would simply draw the letter T on your back. And you would go and make me tea, while I dozed in dreams until I heard your feet and sensed the hot creamy steam.

I could even pull myself up, stuff some pillows behind my back, take the handle from your hands and the mug up to my lips, all without opening my eyes. That was love I would think. And the tea would taste just perfect, whether or not there was too much milk or not enough sugar, or both.

But this morning, is the last time, I will lie, like a zebra dying in the mouth of a lion, in these cold covers and this sickening silence. Those beautiful seconds, before I remember who I am, who I was, where you are, are getting shorter and shorter. I can bear this no longer. I am going to get you back.