



Accelerated Schools

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He stood there in the middle of the crowd. He could see them, but they couldn't see him. He stood there for a while and simply watched the people pass. A step forward, a step backward it didn't matter. He was quite content until someone bumped into him. They said no apology and never looked back. It was over. His eyes met only a few people by the time he had gotten home. As he walked in the door an interrogative voice rang through his ears asking where he had been. Even though he was certain he told her before, he answered again. The walls in his house were so familiar and yet so miserable. He laid in the middle of his bedroom floor and let his thoughts whisk away his consciousness. In the beginning, everything had started small. He would only vanish for a short period of time. He would often seldom notice when it took place. It was a much more common occurrence now. Sometimes he would disappear for hours. It was as if he wasn't there. His thoughts gently lulled him into asleep and the rest of the world vanished.

The next morning was like any other. He woke up still on the floor. He needed to get to school. It wasn't as if it mattered though. He may as well not have even been there. Still, he picked himself up and got moving. He looked in the mirror and nothing looked back. It looked like it would be another day of disappearing. As he walked past his mother, she made no movement or sound. He thought she was most likely pleased that he was gone. Recently she had become very discontent with her son. She was tired of getting calls from the school about how he never showed up. She was tired of him not having a job and she was most fed up with him vanishing most days. She never knew where he was. At the same time, he was always hidden away in his room. She never got an answer when she called out. The boy knew this and had stopped his daily habit of saying goodbye to his mother. She never responded anyways. School is the same as always. He never sees a familiar face. They are similar to him, lost in the crowd. The teacher calls roll and sighs when there is no response from him. At first, he would try to scream. Now he just sat there. It didn't bother him at all. He finished the class and felt a tear roll down his face. He would sit with the same people every day and at some point, they would leave. Everybody always left. Each person was the same, even if he thought they were different. He put a smile on his face for the rest of the day even though he knew no one could see him.

This was one of the longest times he had been away. He felt himself calling back to him. Fear swelled in his chest. He couldn't contain himself as no one met his eye. By the time the day was done he felt as if he would explode. He ran home screaming. When he walked in the door, he saw his mother crying. He knew she was crying over him. He didn't like to make her feel bad. She held pictures of him and was muttering about what could have been and what wasn't. The boy could contain himself no longer. For the first time in his life, he screamed. He screamed to his mother, he screamed to his peers, he screamed hoping that at least one person would hear him. Tears blurred his vision and yet he could still see the figure of his mother. His screams went unheard. He longed for something from her and yet he didn't know what. He grasped for his mother wishing that she would hold him tight. He couldn't feel anything. He cried there for what could have been hours next to his mother, but she had no way of knowing that. Eventually, he ran out of tears to cry. He staggered to his bedroom and looked in the mirror once more. There was still nothing to be seen. He began to wonder if he would ever turn back. He wondered if he even wanted to. He stared up at the sky knowing that this was his last night. He knew it would be better. He knew he could make his mother happier. The moon was full as the boy finally disappeared.

Piper Koustas, May 2020