

I sat on the doorstep in my own fleeting little world. All that happened around me went unnoticed as the sun set on my ice-cream cone that I focused all of my energy and attention on. Flies and wasps circled around the lukewarm drips at my bare feet, they darted down and sat in the sugary mud that I neglected to clean up. The insects lapped it up and tried to fly away under too heavy loads, to little avail. It was too hot to do anything. Everyone knew that. My parents knew that as they sat poolside, unable to move, bathed in sweat but unwilling to do anything about it. Earlier, as we'd driven down the dirty empty highway looking for a motel in the desert, a pool was a necessity my father had argued as we passed from motel to motel. It took ages until we finally settled on the one with the biggest dreamiest pool we could find. It was a huge pool, with a slide and toys and was surrounded by deck chairs, and as we started to jump into it at the same time, we felt like we were in heaven.

For a second.

Sploosh. The water hit me like a recently used frying pan; it's heat intense and uncomfortable, it was hotter than most baths where we came from. My dad yelled a word I didn't know, and my mom laughed as she ran after him, both of them more uncomfortable after the swim than before. I just sat there in the tepid blue murk and watched my parents dry off, and waited for my dad to bring me an ice cream cone. That was the only thing that could help me forget the piss warm pool.

The desert confused me as I lay in bed that night, it was so cold. Hot, cold, I couldn't understand the extremes. The coolness of the evening contrasted so badly with the hell like afternoon. The cool after the hot made my head feel light, like when I drank a slushy drink too fast, a brain-freeze that made my sense of time feel out of sequence. It felt late, but the clock in the room displayed 8:30, showing me that it was me that was out of sorts. I got to stay up late when we were on vacation, at least till 9:30, that was the way it always was. I told everyone that this was unfair; going to bed early was for babies. My mother sat on the edge a chair beside me, telling me that I had a big day ahead of me, and that I needed a good night sleep, if I wanted to go out with my father the next morning. So I laid there in the still lit cool but musty hotel room, lying on a bumpy rusty sounding cot that the manager had found in an old forgotten storage room. I didn't want to sleep, I wanted to do the things that big people did, whatever they did after kids fell asleep that is.

Morning came with the sun and the heat. As I lay there under the blankets, I could feel the room temperature rise with every breath. I was becoming more and more uncomfortable with every second in my pajamas under too many wool blankets. The sweat was already making me damp and icky feeling, just like that pool outside. I jumped out of bed and went and stared at my parents as they tried to sleep. They knew I was there, you could tell by their furrowed brows and concentrating sleep looks. But they knew. I focused all of my thoughts on my dad, forcing him to bolt upright after a couple of minutes, proclaiming that I was going to drive him nuts if I kept this habit up of waking him early from sleep. But it's morning time I said as he pushed me away from the bed, trying to get me from bugging mom as well. She'll kill you if you wake her up before I have some coffee to give her.

Dad bumped around the room, mumbling something about just because it's light out, doesn't mean it's morning. He still mumbled as he sat me in front of the TV in the little alcove area in our motel room. He gave me cereal and a water, saying that he would be back in a second, he had to go get coffee. He also told me not to wake mom. I woke her up right after he left. I was lonely.

Hey, come here my dad said as he ran into the room after getting the coffees. He had this smile on his face, and told me to put on my swim trunks. I don't want to go in the hot pool I said as my parents both changed into their swimsuits, but they forced me to put mine on anyways. We ended up in the same spot as the afternoon before, standing on the warm cement. After a second of wondering, we held hands and jumped with hope once again as we threw ourselves into the air, hoping that the water wouldn't be warmer than our bodies.

The coolness woke every inch of me up in a second, making me alert and aware. It was so nice and cool, almost cold. My parents seemed happy as they threw a ball back and forth in the water, and I went down the slide a thousand times I think before the air got too hot again, heating up the pool quickly, forcing us to all get out.

Hurry you two, you're going to be late. My mom kissed us both as we left the room and went out to the car. Good luck she said to my father, and then she told me to stay out of trouble. Yeah yeah I said to her, I'm going to work with dad. I'll be good.

We drove down the highway in our car, the heat already rising in snaking coils off of the black straight line that cut across the desert like a stained wound on a sleeping arm. We didn't see any other cars anywhere, I wondered if we were the only ones out there. Once and a while, we passed huge birds who picked at carcasses of dead things that had fallen asleep on the road in the early morning hours, unaware as they soaked up the heat. The carcasses and birds were also prime targets for the large trucks that rumbled sporadically along these roads 24 hours a day. The red little mounds were everywhere, making me wonder what each little mound was. I asked my dad if he knew, but he said he didn't have a clue, all that he knew is that they were dead. They sure looked dead. They kind of look like jam I said to my father's smiling face. The birds must've liked jam as much as I did.

The airport was smaller than I thought it would be. I was used to the big city airport, with its many gates and food fairs full of people. But this one was tiny. I asked my dad why it was so small, making him laugh. It's not small at all he said, in fact there's probably more planes here than you'll ever see at once in your lifetime.

All I could figure out to ask him after that was what was a lifetime?

He didn't have time to answer me as we parked the car near the front doors of the terminal, and went inside. It was really small, maybe a bit bigger than my gym at school, and there wasn't anybody walking around. My dad seemed to know where to go though, and so we made for a little hole in the wall that must have been the administration office for the whole place. A lady sat there, and dad asked her questions that I didn't understand. They talked adult stuff and he gave her a large envelope of papers that she went through one at a time, making sure that everything was in order. She then made a quick call over the phone and told dad that someone would be with him shortly.

We sat on the plastic molded seats that looked brand new even though dad said they were probably older than him. My legs dangled off of the sticky plastic, my fidgeting showing my exuberance. I wanted to run around and do stuff, and I told dad that, but he was reading some papers that the lady had given him, and was busy in thought, as mom likes to say. I left him alone and tried to sit still, which luckily wasn't that long since the man who we were waiting for came to talk to us pretty quickly after we'd sat down. He greeted my father with a handshake, then he rustled my hair. I wanted to kick him in the shins, because I hated when people touched my head, but I didn't. I told my mom I'd be good, so I let him off this time.

The man asked my dad if he was ready to go, and then led us through some long hallways that ended up bringing us outside into the heat again. He motioned us over to a jeep like vehicle that sat alongside the building. It was the most uncomfortable thing I'd ever sat in, making the cot that I had slept in the night before feel like a gigantic marshmallow. We drove alongside the airport fence for a while, every bump cracking my butt in half a little bit more. I didn't know where we were going, and just as I thought that, my dad put his hand on my shoulder and pointed to where we were headed. Do you see that he said as I looked in the direction that he pointed, my smile telling him that I thought this was the coolest thing ever. Wow, what's that?

The man who drove said welcome to the boneyard kid; this is where jets go to die. They've served their lifetimes, and now they're being used as scrap. Planes from all over the world kid, seen millions of passengers and miles, and they're all here to retire. I was confused, this whole 'lifetime' thing was going right over my head, but as we got closer, I kind of figured out what he meant. Everywhere I looked, there were parts of planes, noses, tails, wings, a whole grove of landing gear. There were parts everywhere, parts that didn't even look like anything, but they were there. We drove by whole planes that looked like recent arrivals, and by fragments of former air glory, looking like broken abandoned skeletons. But we kept on driving past it all. I asked my dad if we were going to stop. He took a sip from a water bottle then handed it to me. He said no, we weren't going here. We were going over to where they stored planes that still had a bit of life left in them.

Finally, the jeep pulled to a halt, and we got out. The man gave me and my dad hats, telling us to be careful, and to try and stay in the shadows of the planes. That heat's a bitch he said to my dad, it'll kill ya if you're not careful. I had to remember that once we got back to the hotel, I had to ask my mom what the word 'bitch' meant.

I walked behind my dad and the man as they walked amongst the planes that were everywhere, all organized in perfect lines by plane group and kind. It was amazing. The man said I could run around if I wanted to, just make sure to stay in the shadows, and come out to the road when they honked the truck's horn. That sounded easy enough to me as I ran away, my head craned skywards as I looked up at the dormant hulking beasts, they all shone so brightly in the sunshine, their silver bellies reflecting intense light onto the sandy dusty soil that they sat on. I bet the light from the planes could start a fire if someone put a piece of paper under them during the day.

I found a plane that was bigger than the rest. It filled my whole horizon as I stood beside it. The plane's large white paintjob made it look like a huge puffy cloud. I walked around the whole metal beast. It took forever to round, but once I got to the back, my heart

skipped a beat as I saw that the rear stairs were down. I ran up in a heartbeat, my over-excitement making me trip over a cable that was left at the top of the stairs, but I wasn't hurt. I was the opposite. I was in an airplane, all alone, it was mine. I hadn't been so excited since three days ago when we went to Disneyland. I almost wanted to puke. I ran down the aisle of the plane, jumping over fallen cushions and junk that the workers hadn't cleaned up since the planes repossession, or whatever else brought it here. I ran all the way to the cockpit, hoping to get a look at all the stuff in there, all the lights and levers that people pushed and pulled when they flew the plane, but the door was locked. I kicked the door anyways, but I wasn't mad. It just seemed like the thing to do when your heart is almost broken.

The hours passed and I still explored intensely, around corners and in closets, under seats and in washrooms, I poked around until I couldn't poke around any more. I then played imaginary scenarios revolving around crashes and the hero that saved everybody. I took turns between being a hero and villain, just to keep it real. But it all wore me out eventually; playing both sides was hard and tiring work. If only my parents could've seen that it was possible to wear me out.

Sitting in the cool abandoned cabin, I couldn't imagine myself being any happier. This whole barren land that had the super-size versions of my toy planes back home was paradise to my ten year old eyes, and as I sat and stared at the ceiling, I felt my eyes stinging with weariness, then close as I drifted off into a sleep that wasn't bothered at all from the constant honking from outside the parked aircraft.

I didn't want to be found just yet, this was everything I had ever wanted.