

Psyche Therapy

Adriana Ciafardo

“Please, come in. How have you been, Lily?”

The schoolgirl sighed when she sat down across from him, mindlessly tugging at a braid. Tugging at those two dark braids, gnashing teeth behind the constantly faded lip gloss, rolling the white-plumed angel wings. Her ticks never changed. Neither did she. Neither did her doctor, or anyone in that plot of land.

“Paolo, recently I haven’t been able to stop thinking about falling.” She spoke as if she were confessing to a priest, quiet and guilty.

“Going from flying to falling now, it has to be important,” he mused.

“I’m getting closer, aren’t I? I’ll figure it out soon?”

He thrummed his thin fingers atop his desk, one hand holding up his head in a way that messed up his hair. Offer her encouragement. But no false hope. Just enough to fill her desperation, not feed it.

“I think there’s some progress, you’re becoming more grounded. Flying to falling, well, now you’re thinking about something that’s possible,” he paused, looking down at his desk with his dark drooping eyes. “Have you reached impact?”

“No. It’s like... at first I was rising up, everything was so light. I remember the sky being so blue and there weren’t too many clouds. Just the right amount, it was still sunny. But now it’s so heavy. Just heavy.” Lily’s wings rolled. From their first meeting, Paolo had known those wings meant something. An outward hint from her psyche towards what had happened. That

kind of hint happened sometimes. Not for him, but he's seen it before on others. The wings were utterly useless as wings.

"Paolo, how did you figure yourself out? Maybe if I know how you did it, it'll be easier for me."

"I didn't die." Paolo felt his neck sting, as if his vertebrae were spinning beneath his skin. Smashing and pulling against their restraints. He looked troubled, eyes focusing on something that wasn't there. A dim entrance way, the barrage of concrete against his body. The rest. The cold floor. The release.

"O-okay..." Lily's voice woke up Paolo. He blinked. He was fine now, a thin-lipped smile on his face. Lily noticed the darkness around his eyes. She noted it before, but it felt striking to her now.

Her doctor went on, his hands folded on his desk, but Lily wasn't listening.