

Space Man

By: Adrienne LaValley

Do you think every time someone plays a David Bowie song and really feels it - like muscles tense, white man overbite - feels it- that somehow, somewhere, in some other dimension he knows? Like he can just feel a little tingle of something. A buzzing in his heart, or the hair on his arms stands straight up and he gets a shiver. A really good one. Like the shiver you get when you think back on a spectacular night of sex and your sixth sense gets to relive it just for that second. That woosh. Do you think he feels that? I cried watching the last five minutes of his documentary because Major Tom finally found a damn resting place. I was overwhelmed with sadness and reverence all at once. Do you think he can feel a tear roll down my cheek? Maybe it's raining where he is.

My sister called me one afternoon when I was having a hard time shaking the heartbreak of my dad dying. A feeling I can only equate to a persistent and deep homesickness. Like there's an empty part of your soul you can't seem to fill, no matter what you try to shove in there. I could not for the life of me stop thinking about him that day... and neither could she. It wasn't the deep, dark missing I'd done in previous months. The incessant replaying of the exact moment I heard the words: "Your dad passed away". Like my brain wanted to make sure that every cell of my body had a snapshot of that moment frozen in time, branded into it's DNA. Lest I ever attempt to erase it. Oh, It's there. Wrapped up in the fabric of who I am now. Thank you brain. Message received.

It wasn't like that at all though. It was lighter. Softer. Less jagged. Like he was casually trying to tell me something through the void but I couldn't quite grasp it. A whisper through the fabric of time, if such a thing exists. Just something he was excited to tell me but couldn't quite figure out how to relay. It came in flashes of memories from our past. Both good and bad. And it warranted a mere: "I can't stop thinking about him today. I miss him so much" from both of us.

My sister called to say she'd dreamt of him the previous night. The same sister who had a dream the very night he died, before she'd heard the news, that her old boyfriend who'd died in a car accident in college found her in the dream world, hugged her and said "Everything's going to be ok, I promise". The same sister who already knew our great Aunt Edith died and said "Yeah I know, I dreamed it last night" the morning we told her she'd passed. That sister.

She said he was desperately lonely, just sitting in the darkness all by himself. This of course makes the trauma of losing him that much more palpable. Knowing he's sitting in the dark all alone, unable to find anyone who loves him. Just wondering if anyone even remembers him in that other dimension. The one he used to call home. But then

she said he started gazing around, noticing all these soft yellow lights way down below him. He watched them twinkle and warmly pulse for awhile before a slow realization came over him. A deep knowing that would grant him the peace he couldn't find in the last few months of being in this new place. This new place void of all light and anything familiar. This dark place he thought he'd find his mom in. Because they told him he would. This place he found himself retracing and revisiting every step of his life in. This place where he discovered what true loneliness feels like. A place of deafening silence.

But once he knew what there was to know... a soft little grin came over his face. That soft grin turned to a gaping wide smile. And in that smile he found his peace. Because what he learned was that each little orb of light had a purpose meant for him and him alone. Each little glow... was a person thinking about him. Someone he loved, loving him back. A forest of fireflies when the family sat around reminiscing and laughing about the frozen turkey busting out of the grocery bag and breaking his big toe a decade of Thanksgivings ago. A forest of fireflies letting him know we were all thinking about him. So he didn't need to be lonely anymore because every time he crossed someone's mind a light flicked on... so he'd know. He'd know that someone cared. Someone loved him. Someone... anyone... missed him.