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Untitled

Macy Freeman

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LETTING GO

Christine Hagen

THERE WE WERE; SITTING IN A ROOM in the basement of a church, staring at a picture of him. We all know why we are here. It's as if our existing in this moment made up for all the moments he's already missed. But I know that's not it. A circular formation of souls, crowded around, staring at a clergymen I'm sure the deceased barely knew, if at all. The faces of those souls in observance are blank, pained, hurt, or guilty, as if someone could've stopped his selfishness or hurt getting the best of him. I'm not sure that's the case. But I think I could have.

This man is saying words, but I am not hearing them. My family is not hearing them; his family is not hearing them. They do not exist because he is not dead. He is not dead to me, anyway. His picture is his only representation in this cold, damp shell of a room. Maybe it's not his only representation, for there sits his piano, guitar, and autograph book. I hated that guitar but I would die tonight if I would get a chance to seem him play.

The hushed tones of tear-strained voices muttered to themselves the words of Lennon & McCartney, his favorite. "Let It Be" was the simple motto for which he lived. If only he had done so. His parents are there. They don't look sad, per se, but bewildered. As if this is for a show, as if he will come around and say "Mom, Dad, you've been Punk'd!" But that would never be. He didn't like that show anyway because he said it was unfair.

UNTITLED Macy Freeman

And as we light these candles that looked like they were used at the first Passover, I look at his picture. Everything, with the soft candlelight and the music and the tears, falls on me so hard, knocking every emotion out of my being. I can't help it. We're instructed to go outside to release one hundred silver balloons. Silver was his favorite color. I loved him for loving a color so much he named his dog after it.

We are walking into the dark, black night, into a garden where church ladies have their tea and chat about azaleas and their husbands' dentures. I remember when I saw him here, playing his guitar after church one day. That's when I fell in love with him.

