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The Factory

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YCARE

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At ground level, alone in the middle of this battlefield, I struggle to stay alive, I struggle to keep my eyes wide open and my heart intact. How long have I been lying there in the lateral safety position ? for a few seconds ? for a few minutes ? for a few hours?

...A duration close to eternity...

Right cheek plated to the ground, a paralysis invades me, I feel my body floating, I lose all sense of time and pain. I see the world wrong, my brain is at a standstill, it's undeniable, this life does not give me rest or a truce.

Once again, your hand holds mine tight, you keep me on land, you are my point of reference, my common thread, this link in this world. You prevent me from wandering, from taking too much height, like a kite, from time to time, you lose me, you let go of the bridle then you call me back to you for fear that I will disperse too much. Your fire-colored eyes electrify me, they keep me alive and your irises revive me. I plunge into their nuances, into their immensity, I move from light to dark areas: from yellow to black, from sun to

moon, from day to night, from life to death.
I fall into their crater, I reach your pupils...

Dazed, I close my eyes. You disappear. I open my eyes, your face reappears. You are indeed there, on the ground, facing me whispering to me to be strong, you are not letting go, not now, not like that. I take the time to look at you, the time to find myself. Your presence soothes me, I shout all my love to you, but you can't hear me. Under my fingers, under their imaginary movements, I walk all over your being; your forehead is still as smooth as ever and you have kept your baby's nose, this round and tiny nose. Despite your fear, your mouth remains the one I knew : expressive and laughing. Your chin has kept the same dimple of yesteryear, when it trembles, I feel all your pain, all your torpor. And that hair! I had almost forgotten their brilliance, that wheat yellow that revives all my senses, that increases my survival instinct tenfold. Instantly, you become my Goldilocks again, this little girl with angel hair, each loop, each honey-coloured reflection is an invitation to dreams and enchantment. How can you not fall in love with these strands of straw

covering your entire neck and delicately dying on your shoulders ?

Back to reality, to my reality and here I am seized by the scent of your peach/apricot skin. Gently, this smell evaporates, I disappear with it, I leave you there, alone. I scream in silence, I am voiceless and again I lack strength. I let my guard down, I lose my thread, I break it in the hope of leaving this arid and burning land in a hurry. You are there again and again, by my side, reminding me where I come from and where I belong. Your hands become my only path, thanks to them, the future belongs to me, but exhausted, I empty myself, I wait for someone to come and save me or deliver me. My eyes open for a few moments, just long enough to look at my watch and this dial that tells me that two hours have just passed. What the hell have I been thinking about all this time ? Who ? My body remains numb and my right cheek remains frozen by the freshness of this ground. Your hand, your forehead, your nose, your mouth, your chin, your hair are now a distant memory. Inaudible sounds come to my ears, your absence comes back to me in my face.

A year has passed in a split second and two eyelashes later, here I am three hundred and fifty-six days ago, the time since sleep no longer exists, even in dreams. You grew up under a bad star, under a sky that didn't want you. From the beginning, you had the wrong cards, the ones that are hidden without even trying to reveal them, your fate was cast, your destiny traced. My Goldilocks, I remember that nickname I chose for you on your tenth birthday, the day the doctors decided to destroy your life along with ours, that's the day you despised never again wanting to believe in fairy tales.

In your princess dress, life reminded you that your time was short, that your being was only a very ephemeral loan. Despite your young age, you became aware well before the time that scarring and nicks were replacing fairies and sequins. 4:23 p.m., your angel face hidden behind the flames of that damn birthday cake, your instinct to look up to the sky, to look for a new breath. Your hand on your chest, your small heart it is, has started to derail, the earth has vanished under your feet and from your light weight, you have reached the ground

under our frightened eyes.

For the next ten years, you braved life like a champion, day after day, announcement after announcement, hope after despair. The doctors offered you a few years to live, time for us to love you endlessly. Your mom and I were breathing for three, living for you. For the medical profession, it was vital that you spare yourself, that you save your heart from any turbulence, even if it meant living with indolence. This word was not part of your vocabulary, very quickly, you understood the meaning of life, you made every moment a celebration. You knew better than anyone the obstacles you would have to overcome, you took a good look at life, constantly reminding us that :

*"Living is not just about breathing...
is also having your breath taken away..."*

We dreamed so much that one day we could take away this crystal heart for a stone heart, dreamt of offering you the eternal to the

ephemeral. This other organ would have spared you all suffering, it would have desensitized you to pain, made you inhuman, but would have prevented all of us from tearing you apart. Your left ventricle sounded wrong, was acting up, working the minimum necessary, perhaps out of laziness. This piece of flesh, this vampire, this monster wanted your skin, stingy and selfish, he performed his function with a lot of casualness and led us from a disjointed and chaotic rhythm from a waltz to a tango. Despite our utmost vigilance, this bomb imploded in your chest, without any noise and towards everyone. Impossible to defuse it, it was too late, the countdown was on, you were already defragmenting...

10...9...8...7...6...

What about that heart that was out of breath ? You have braved the mountains and crossed the storms, kept your heart awake thanks only to your will, thanks to your faith in life and love. Unfortunately, we hadn't imagined that you were going to be one of those, one to three percent of women affected by this little-known disease : Takotsubo cardiomyopathy

this disease poetically called "broken heart syndrome". Is it a myth or can we really die of a heartbreak ? Is this man the cause of your unexpected departure ? Is it possible that this being took your breath away from you indefinitely ? I curse this very last breath, the one that caught us off guard during your twentieth year...

We had ten years of innocence at your side, ten years of life before we understood that every little minute spent in your company could be the last. We had planned a long and peaceful life for you, a life as a girl, a woman and a mother, but you left us with nothing but a bitter taste. Our parents' hearts could not bring themselves to see you leave, to see you stay there so we fled this fate, we lied to ourselves in the hope of keeping you alive. We knew, however, that this small organ that was at the centre of our anguish was far too fragile to support all this surge of love. You will have had, to our great despair, only a brief and epistolary life.

Now it is up to me to lose my footing, when I stop, I realize that I am a year behind, a year

behind. Fatally, I chose denial over my own decline. Your absence was unbearable to me so I closed my eyes for an inordinate amount of time, I filled your absence with my silence, without making a wave, without any noise. You left without warning, without even making a sign to your patriarch, you disappeared, you abandoned me and today I cry to you in a staggered way. Man is selfish, I am, I know that, because I regret you one year too late. I scream my suffering and not your absence, I die of pain while your soul is elsewhere.

Every day is enough with its pain...
Since you, I've been dying down here...

5...4...3...2...1...0

I am here, I realize that your presence is only absence, your face is born of my imagination, only ramblings. Happened in the past, my soul has just taken leave, only your face comes back to me, reminds me of the life before, that a nothing does everything, that everything is now synonymous with nothing, that your being is no more. Today I curse myself for

losing you.

Our two beings have brushed up on each other during these twenty short years for me, during a whole lifetime for you, we have rubbed shoulders without loving each other, out of modesty or bullshit, I don't know myself. In our country, expressing emotions is not done, we do not express these things. A man does not talk about his feelings and even less to his own daughter, his stature is enough for his words, his words would only be weakness... this weakness... what a load of crap ! We are poor humans ! You grew up before my eyes without me taking you under my wings, I knew you were strong, I thought you were safe on this earth. I trusted life. Wrongly. How can a father accept to live without his child ? You are my most precious possession and I now understand that, no matter what people say, our arms would not have been enough to keep you alive. Your absence disfigures me, you will remain my heroine, my endorphin dose. Your fight was my greatest pride and your departure my greatest tear.

On that May 30th, I lost you forever, you took with you all the air that surrounded me, since then, cone, I stopped inhaling and exhaling as if to repel death. I hoped that out of politeness, She would not take you away from me, that She would wait until I was ready. This decision was not mine, it was imposed without any negotiation possible, but is it possible to contest a death sentence ? It seems that you stop being a child the day you lose your parents and I in there ? you made me an orphan parent forever...

I miss you, my darling daughter... my hell...

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My journey stops abruptly. I wake up, everything reappears, nausea occurs, tears come to me, everything comes back to me.

This pain reminds me that I am weak, that my body is no longer able to support my own weight, it is crushed under all these moods, these gloomy and fatal thoughts.

I'm down... I'm waiting for his call...

The workshop is plunged into near darkness, the bright daylight refuses to move to me. What time is it exactly ? With my eyes in the dark, I look through the only existing window, this only opening to the world, to life. The only person responsible for this artificial night dances in front of me, shows himself, reminds me of his presence by immersing me in the shadows. From its height of eight meters, this silk tree is proof of life outside this building, of life after death. It found its place in this deserted garden the year you turned ten years old, my Golden Loop. It's been eleven years. You would have been twenty-one today.

As to you, my hands offered him life, I helped him to grow, to grow and to rise. In him, I brought all my attention, all my hopes, all my love. At least someone I've kept alive ! It took him so many beautiful seasons to acquire this

parasol-shaped frame, this tree is worthy of a painting, it is a work of art in its own right. Its green foliage is dotted with large, feathery flowers that are bright red and passion red. His pompoms are similar to paint spots on a canvas, they give an impression of lightness, of weightlessness like brightness in the mist, like clouds in the summit. At the sight of its flowers, I get the answer to my question and I understand that it is the middle of the day, that if night had come, they would have become shy, closed in on themselves. Only their perfume is missing to fill this magical painting, this painting that seen from the inside is much less idyllic.

At my feet, a thousand and one tools littered the ground and scattered throughout the workshop: knives to paint, dozens of pots of acrylic or oil paint were spilled. Hundreds of gouache tubes dry in the open air or are split on the formerly white linoleum. Brushes are scattered, abandoned, all left to their own devices, far from their half, of their vital essence. Turned upside down, sketches of canvases lost their easels, holding perilously like balancing actresses. Everything reminds

me of the chaos in this place, only the cupboards and shelves sealed to the walls resisted the earthquake, the cataclysm that took everything in its path, that turned this room into an arena. Even the walls have been renovated, these four white cellular concrete partitions, which I found too austere, have been given a new look. Sprays and paint flows dress the new places, the stigmas of the tornado's passage. A fusion of colours is superimposed ; a heap of stains and traces of paint. White is only an old memory, all these shades are to turn its head, to make it lose its balance, but here I am reassured, the six pillars serving as load-bearing walls are very present, still standing. Relieved, my U-shaped sofa is still here, for better or for worse. He survived all this hustle and bustle ; the dark thoughts, the sleepless nights, the uneventful days, the evenings with friends. It is my cot, my stretcher, sometimes my refuge, but always my only comfort zone. Four ten meters of happiness, nine places in paradise in these one hundred and fifty square meters of stagnation...