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A Blue Candle

On a grey Wednesday I bought a blue candle while grocery shopping. I was getting home and decided to go by the isolated street I normally ignore. At one of the corners was an old lady with a table selling candles. She said she made them herself, at home, in her small kitchen. Her kids were adults and she lived alone so she made candles. Each colour for one of her children. Orange and red were for her eldest who always had a temper, she took care of the family when her mom couldn't. Green and yellow were for her youngest who wore his heart on his sleeves, he dreamed of saving nature and was travelling the world with a message to share. Blue, she said was for her second, the middle child. She was someone a little closed off, who always felt things deeply but contrary to her younger brother never let it show. She said she was learning to live fully, and she was always a little worried for her. As the old lady told me this last story, I couldn't help but feel drawn to the blue candle because it reminded me so much of my sister. My sister who would never tell me what was wrong, my sister who was always afraid of what the future might hold. That's why on a grey Wednesday I bought a blue candle from an old woman in an isolated street.

I can't exactly say for how long I have had it but I still haven't touched it. It's standing on my coffee table looking as good as new. Every week I make sure to clean the dust and put it back in place. Sometimes my hand will seize the lighter, but I never go further. Every time I look at that candle, I can't help but somehow feel guilty. It's eating from the inside, bit by bit.

But one day I understood, all of a sudden it made sense. This candle was grief, I bought it without even realising it, but it was the grief I had from the death of my sister. She was the only person that ever took care of me and even though she was this closed off and frightened person for me she always smiled a little more. She always held me tight when the parents were fighting, and I was crying. When she moved out, I followed, and she was the mom I never had. But one day she was gone. One day I found the note and the little sense of belonging I had disappeared, my home crumbled, and I was lost. This was five years ago, five years and I can't seem to have cried once, I haven't accepted the fact that she will not come back. I cling to the idea that maybe one day the bell will ring, she will somehow have found me. I live alone, I have my apartment, but I have never felt at home ever since. This blue candle is the first nice thing I bought for this place, but I can't seem to actually use it. The idea that maybe if I light it a new chapter will begin terrifies me, but as much as my crushing grief slowly kills me this candle does too.

On a Sunny Sunday, those were her favourites, I decided it was time. Time to accept what comes next, to accept that she will not walk through this door and that it's time I rebuild myself a home. As I stand up and walk to the kitchen, the sun shining through the window, I have never been more certain. I take the lighter from one of the drawers and sit on the couch facing the candle. It's time, all it takes is a little fire and I can start again I tell myself. So I light the wick and watch the flame dance. I spent the whole day watching the fire consuming the wax the way I let my grief do so to me, one last time. Slowly but fully.

When the sun sets and there is nothing left I stand up, clean the table, go to bed and hope for a new beginning.

It's been years and even though some days getting out of bed is a little hard things got better. As I finish work, I walk to my apartment and once I step through the door, I think: I am home. This place feels safe and even though I haven't found anyone to share it with yet, I know she would be proud. Every Saturday I go help the old lady with her candles. We stand together in her little kitchen and talk for hours while we dip cotton cords in wax. She always let me do the blue ones because now we made them for my sister too.

I stare through my bedroom window and wonder if maybe it is time I get myself a house with a garden and yellow tulips that bloom every spring. Maybe it's time I get myself a new home with a blue candle on the coffee table to light when things get hard. And even though I don't know what's coming I don't worry so much because now I know how to build a home.