

Dreamers

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A \$20 DVD at Barnes and Noble would be \$12 or \$13 on Amazon or even Wal-Mart. But people still pay full-price for them. I think it's about the image; Barnes and Noble is for the snobbish and snooty. I once loved browsing through their books, magazines and movies, all tainted with the wonderful smell of fresh coffee. But once you get behind the scenes of anything—a film, a restaurant, a concert, a store—the romanticism becomes realist and modern, and in this case, post-modern.

Spend 20 hours a week at a Barnes and Noble in downtown Seattle and you'll meet the Dreamers, capital D. Dreamers don't have jobs. They spend their lives reading Kerouac or Nietzsche and watching Nolan or Fellini. They bring their MacBook Pros and work on their poetry whilst sipping latte and loathing other Dreamers. I saw them all from my post at the cash register.

A girl sat at the table with headphones and a large-print of Brutalist Architecture. She jotted down her thoughts in a leather notebook. I turned to Natalie, my co-worker, to comment on Dreamer but my phone vibrated before I could say anything. "Unknown Number."

"Hello?"

"Is this Judson Wells? Sir, you were listed as an emergency contact for Amy Goodmore." "What happened?" "She was taken to WestTown hospital about an hour ago. There was an incident."

I sat in the room alone for three hours. A few doctors came in and out but mostly I felt alone. Amy had gone to the garage where she worked and drank half a gallon of anti-

freeze. As it turns out, the anti-freeze didn't kill her. She was afraid of that so after drinking the blue poison she stuffed her mouth and nose with cotton balls then tied her hands together so she couldn't save herself. A co-worker found her and rushed her to the hospital. The doctors estimate she had been passed out for about three minutes without air.

I stared at her body, tubes attached at several points. What if she had succeeded? What would that mean for me? I had heard once that when a person dies, the mortician drains the body by slicing the heel and letting the blood run into a tank. That can't be true. I'm sure there's a more advanced way of doing it. I lifted the bed sheets and looked at Amy's heels.

She lay in her bed, sedated, unconscious. This wasn't her first attempt. I looked at her hands and wrists, an IV tube now embedded in her vein but I could also see the scars from years past. She had cut shapes and designs into her right forearm during her senior year of high school. The scars still glowed. For a few years Amy wore only long-sleeve tops in public to hide the scars but last year "came to terms" with them and shared them proudly with all—a way to say, "Look! I had problems but I licked them!" They now they seemed ironic to me.

Despite her previous attempts, this was the first time I really thought about not having her. What would I do? I'd go home after work to an empty apartment. I'd work all day to make money for said apartment. That's it. Without her my life would revolve around 500 feet.

When she finally woke up I smiled and gave her time to figure out where she was. "How are you?" She looked around the room, disappointed to still be here. She then

looked at me. I could tell her mind was still numbed by the sedatives. “It’s okay. You’re in the hospital. You’re alright.”

She took a deep breath and closed her eyes again. I kissed her forehead and watched her fall back asleep. What had caused this? It had been years since her last attempt. Why now? What happened? She had been more stressed after we moved in together but I thought things were getting better. I thought I was helping her.

I stepped out of the room to call Amy’s mother. My first instinct was to call her as soon as I learned what happened but then I thought I’d better wait until I’d talked to Amy. And part of me was probably dreading the conversation; I’d have to defend Amy. Maybe I could tell her that it was a car accident or food poisoning. How many people have to call their girlfriend’s mother to say, “Hey, just thought I’d let ya know, your daughter tried to kill herself again. How are you? Is Thanksgiving at your place this year?” I dialed the number, not sure what to say.

“Hello?”

“Julie, it’s Judson. Can you talk?”

“What is it?”

“I’m in the hospital. Amy’s here.”

“What happened? Is she alright?” How does she know *I’m* not the one injured or sick?

“She’ll be okay. But she did it again.”

“What was it this time? She try to cut her heart out?” I paused, not sure how to respond. You ever want to say something but you know it’ll only cause more problems? Well, sometimes you say it anyway.

“Ya know, Julie, maybe if you’d realize that she’s just doing the best she can then this would be a lot easier for her. You’re not in charge of her anymore. I am. So forget I called.” I hung up and saw Amy’s doctor looking over charts.

“Excuse me, Dr. Roberts, when do you think I can take Amy home?”

He didn’t stop looking at the charts. “Oh, probably tonight if you want. I just want to look over her vitals. She’ll have to take some things to clean her stomach out and keep her calm for a few days. No going to work, no extreme exercising. She’ll have to see a therapist by the end of the week but she shouldn’t stay cooped up inside. Maybe you could take her on a hike or something easy like that.”

I returned to Amy’s room. She was awake as doctors instructed her about her required therapy and medicinal duties. I answered some questions from a financial advisor but I kept hearing Dr. Roberts’ words, “Take her on a hike or something.”

Amy had visited the Grand Canyon in her early teens and fell in love with it. This I knew well—a poster of the canyon hung on our bedroom wall. “You can’t just visit it once,” she always told me. “And I’m taking you there someday.” Well that day had come. We’d left our apartment at 5:00 a.m. that morning. We both were able to get time off work for the one-day trip. Amy had made me read every Wikipedia article related to the Grand Canyon in preparation for our trip. This was the “coolest thing we’ve ever done” to her.

The June sun beat down on our car but thanks to the marvels of air-conditioning my pits stayed cool and dry. This was a welcome change considering how soaked the armpits of my T-shirts usually were when coming home from work. Amy would inspect

them daily and say, “We gotta look into prescription deodorant.” I’d tell her they didn’t smell to which she would crinkle her nose.

“When we get there, no comments about how I’ve talked it up too much,” she said, staring at me with no trace of a smile. She *had* talked up so many movies and bands since we first met a year before this trip so of course I was likely to accuse her of doing it again.

“Can you talk the Grand Canyon up too much?” I asked.

“I just want you to love it as much as I do.”

“Not sure if that’s possible but I’ll try. Deal?” I took my right hand off the wheel, spat in its palm and extended it to Amy. I looked at her and smiled. She looked at me frowning, fighting with the smile that was creeping into the corner of her lips. The smile won and she spat in her palm. We shook. “Deal,” she said. We ended our handshake and I wiped the spit on her shoulder and gripped the wheel. She shrieked at what I did and wiped her spit on my shoulder. We laughed and discussed how gross we were. I thought about the small box in my pocket, the box that contained an engagement ring, and knew that today was the perfect day to ask Amy to marry me.

Later we stood at Shoshone Point and took in the majesty of the Grand Canyon. It really was impressive. I thought of the poster of the canyon hanging on our wall. Why is it, I wondered, that something can look so much better in person than in a photograph? A lens is seeing the very same thing as the eye but it somehow misses out on so much emotion. My arm was around Amy and she hugged my body. We didn’t speak for about five minutes. I thought of getting the ring out of my pocket and asking her right then. But where’s my sense of theatricality? I couldn’t do it after we’d been out of the car for only

a few minutes. We planned on doing a hike so I'd wait until the end of the hike. After all, this would (hopefully) be the only time I'd propose in my life.

We began the hike down into the canyon, holding hands the whole way. After talking for a while a natural silence fell and we walked for 5 minutes in silence.

Amy suddenly stopped walking and looked up at me with that face that means she's about to cry. "I gotta ask you something and I know it's a stupid question but I just gotta hear the answer."

"Ask me anything," I said.

"Are you sure you want to be here with *me* right now?"

"Of course. This is awesome, babe." She wasn't satisfied by my answer.

"You wouldn't rather be here with Natalie?" she asked.

I couldn't believe it. Natalie was a girl I had known from work long before I even met Amy. Natalie and I had become best friends but nothing romantic had ever happened. After Amy and I moved in together I hadn't stopped talking to Nat and spending some time with her. I saw her everyday at work, for crying out loud. Amy and Nat got along but Amy had expressed her uneasiness for the friendship on multiple occasions. I let go of Amy's hand and stepped in front of her, blocking her view of the canyon.

"Are you serious? How many times have I told you she's just a friend?" I asked. Amy stared me straight in the eye and didn't look away, something that was rather rare. She usually would look me in the eye for only a few seconds.

"She's your best friend. Sometimes I feel like you're closer to her than you are to me." I told her that wasn't true. I was living with Amy, for crying out loud. How could I be closer to Natalie?

“Sorry, I just get really insecure when you talk to her so much.” I had talked to Nat on the phone the night before for a few minutes. She called to ask about a mutual friend’s last name so she could find him on Facebook. We ended up chatting for 5 minutes or so.

Standing on the trail looking at Amy I began to feel intensely flustered. Why couldn’t she get it into her head that Nat is just a friend? *Just* a friend. Does she expect me to only have guy friends the rest of my life?

“Amy, a guy and a girl can be friends without having feelings for each other. I’ve really only had girl friends the last few years of my life. The way I feel for you is totally different than how I feel for Nat or any other girl.” She didn’t say anything but sighed. “Amy, I don’t think it’s my job to reassure you at every moment that I’m committed to you.”

“Well it’d be nice if you did every once in a while. I’d have no idea if your feelings for me changed.” She was still looking at my eyes.

I wanted to say so many things. I wanted to tell her that she’s too insecure, that she expects too much. I wanted to tell her that maybe she doesn’t really know me at all if she can’t tell if I’m committed to her. But I’d learned that it’s better to wait a minute before saying those types of things. “We’d better head back to the car” was all I said.

We walked back up the side of the canyon towards the parking lot. My hands were in my pockets the whole walk back. Neither of us spoke. I fumbled with the ring box and wondered how I ever thought we were ready to get engaged. Amy was so unsure of my feelings for her. I had known all about her problems with Nat when I bought the

ring. Amy wasn't really sure if she believed that two people could stay together their whole lives and be happy.

Her family had seen so many broken relationships, each of them starting out with phrases like "I'll never leave you" or "I'll never hurt you" but they all ended up the same—cheating, lying, selfishness, separation, divorce. "Why would we be any different?" she would ask me. I told her that I believed that if we were willing to put forth the effort then we could stay together. But now I realized that maybe I wasn't willing to put in that effort. Maybe I wasn't willing to try the rest of my life to convince her that I love her. Maybe there was another girl out there who would be easier to convince, who would be more comfortable with the person I am.

Amy walked in front of me on the trail. She suddenly turned around, grabbed my arm, and lifted it. What was she doing? She felt the armpit of my shirt. It was wet. She looked at my eyes and smiled, a genuine peace in her face. Then she leaned in and kissed my cheek and kept walking up the trail. I stared at her in shock. "What was that all about?" I asked. She didn't turn around but kept walking. I knew she was smiling. I felt that familiar pull on my heart. By touching my armpit she had said, "I love you. I'm sorry. I want to be with you." I smiled just thinking that this was how we communicated.

A random thought came to my head. Amy had told me of a time she decided to clean the kitchen without her mom asking her to do so. She had cleaned everything and couldn't wait for her mom to see the surprise. When her mom came home and inspected the kitchen she found one spot of jam left on the counter and said, "If you're going to do a job, do it right." That was it. No "thank-you" or "you missed a spot." I realized that I

was only noticing the jam on the countertop, not the clean kitchen. I was defining our relationship by one small problem, ignoring all the positive contributions Amy had me.

I thought of walking the trail alone without her in front of me. I thought of going home to our apartment everyday after work and not finding her there. I thought of my life without Amy. I wanted to put forth the effort.

We reached the parking lot and Amy asked if the canyon satisfied. “Well, it hardly compares to the poster in our room but I guess it’s alright,” I said. She smiled and opened the trunk of the car and took her hiking shoes off. Her back was turned to me. I reached into my pocket, pulled the box out, and knelt on the pavement. Amy’s back was still turned. I didn’t speak. I’d wait for her to turn around. I didn’t know how she’d react to my holding the ring out. If she said she wasn’t ready, I was willing to wait. If she said she wanted to leave me, I was willing to let her go. If she said she yes, I was willing to work the rest of my life to convince I love her. She fumbled with her shoelaces, still unaware that I was kneeling behind her. I looked at her and thought of the clean kitchen.

Amy turned around and looked down at me on the pavement. She jumped and stopped breathing. She looked at my eyes and smiled.

Amy didn’t speak or look at me once on the drive home from the hospital. She pressed her head against the glass and cried. “Your work called. They’re sending your things to the apartment,” was all I said to her. They had also made it quite clear to me that she was fired but I’m sure she knew that. I guess they have a “no tolerance” policy for attempted suicides.

Amy went straight to bed. I made sandwiches in the kitchen and looked across the studio apartment at my fiancé, lying face-down on the mattress. I cried for the first time that day and tried to tell myself that this was just another setback in our relationship, that it was still worth it to stay with her. Every couple has challenges. *Yeah, challenges like a mortgage or milk spills.* I checked my phone to see the time but noticed the background, a picture of Amy and me at the Grand Canyon, her showing off the ring.

* * *

I took a couple days off work to spend with Amy. She mostly slept. When I went back to work Natalie was worried. “Where’ve you been? Is everything okay?”

“Amy had an accident. She’ll be okay but it was kinda a close one.” I told her. Natalie gave me a hug. “Oh, Judson, I’m so sorry. She’s okay?” When Nat hugged me I realized that I hadn’t once hugged Amy since her “accident.”

“She’s okay. It just shook us up, that’s all,” I said. I had never told Natalie about Amy’s health problems but I think she could sense what was going on.

“Well I’m here for you—for both of you. If you ever need anything, seriously just let me know.” The way she said that was sincere, genuine. She hugged me again. I didn’t let go of her for a few moments. It felt good to hold her. I closed my eyes. Her head pressed against my cheek, her hair tickled my neck. She finally let go, a little choked up. She cleared her throat. “Uh, I’ve gotta head to the back but seriously, if you need *anything* just let me know, okay?” I watched her walk away and noticed her arms, tan and smooth, no scars or cuts on them. It was obvious she had feelings for me, strong feelings. But that hug was the first time she’d really expressed her feelings physically.

I was assigned a new kid to train. As we walked around the store I explained his various duties and introduced him to several of our co-workers, none of whom know anything about Amy's incident. One guy who works in the children's section said to my new trainee, "Hey, did you know that Judson here is a writer? He's had tons of stuff published."

"Really?" the new kid asked.

"Well, not *tons* of stuff. Just a few short stories and almost a novel."

We walked down aisles of books. "How do you almost publish a novel?" the new kid asked.

"A few agents were looking at it. One tried to get it picked up but nothing ever happened."

"That's awesome. Why'd you stop?"

"I haven't stopped. I mean, I guess I'm taking a break. I moved in with girlfriend and had to make money, couldn't sit around all day writing and hoping somebody would pay me, you know? But I still plan on pursuing it in the future, once things settle down a little."

As we walked around the store, I saw Natalie occasionally. She seemed to be avoiding me. Something about that hug must have hit her just right. I guess it did me too; I couldn't stop thinking about her. She hasn't had any mental illness, no depression, no eating disorders, no hospital trips. She cared about me, had for years.

* * *

A couple days later Amy was on the job-hunt again. It'd been a few weeks since she tried to kill herself and she was starting to seem better, almost normal. She was

talking to me more frequently, though never about what she had done. I was ok with that; I didn't want to push her in any way. I told her I wanted to take her out to dinner, try to get things back to normal.

We sat in an Olive Garden booth and talked quietly about the menu. While waiting for our food I said, "I think I want to try doing some more writing."

"You mean in your spare time?" she asked.

"No, I mean full-time, or at least part-time. Barnes and Noble can knock me down to 20 or 30 hours a week."

"If you go part-time we lose benefits," she said.

"Yeah, I know. But I really feel like I need to do it now."

"Why, because I tried to kill myself? Did that inspire you?" She wasn't ashamed to say it loudly. We caught some strange looks from surrounding tables.

"Amy, that has nothing to do with it. I just think it's kinda like my last chance. What if we have a baby or something?"

"We're *not* having a baby."

"I know, I'm just saying what if our life gets more chaotic? This could be the last time in my life when I can really focus on writing."

"You think our lives could get any more chaotic? I'm obviously not gonna find a job anytime soon but I'm still trying. We need you working full-time."

"Look, I kinda gave up a dream of mine to be with you, Amy. I was right on the edge of success but I let it go, temporarily—I thought—to be with you. You owe me this."

"And I didn't give anything up to be with you?"

“That’s not what I’m saying. I think this might be my last chance,” I said as the waiter dropped off our food. Amy ate her meal silently.

I lost my appetite after a few bites. I couldn’t stand fighting with her. “Alright, I’ll stay on full-time. And I think you’ll find a job. You’ve got a good resume and you’re great in interviews.” She didn’t look up at me. “You’ll be alright,” I said.

She froze, her fork stuck in chicken breast. She looked up at me, embarrassed. I knew what she meant—*I’m sorry for everything*.

As we left Olive Garden she reached into my pocket and took the keys. “I’ll drive,” she said.

Amy drove past our exit. I was about to say something but I could tell she did it on purpose. “Taking the scenic route?” I asked.

“You’ll just have to wait and see,” she said.

Amy took us downtown to Benaroya Hall, an arts and performance center. “Is there a concert or something?” I asked.

“Yep. But we’re not going through the door.” She smiled and climbed out of the car. I followed her to the back of the building. “Follow me,” she said. She started up the side of the building on an escape ladder.

“Amy! What the hell are you doing?” I whispered/shouted. She stopped a few rungs up.

“We used to always do this stuff! Get up here!” she said with a smile, then continued climbing. What a domesticated, lame boyfriend I had become! Up the ladder I went, struggling to keep up with her.

We reached the roof. The sun had already set by this time. We set about finding a hatch to sneak into the building somehow. We found one and I held my phone on to give Amy light while she climbed into blackness. I followed her onto rafters high above an enormous concert hall.

We found a place to sit amidst the spotlights and watched the second half of a cellist's performance. I put my arm around Amy. She rested her head against my chest, her hair ticking my neck. I thought of the first time I saw her, of our first date, watching her roommate's choir concert. I thought of the cuts on her arms, of my dreams of being a writer. I thought of climbing out of the Grand Canyon with her, all the happiness she gave me. I looked at her and thought of the clean kitchen, not the spot of jam on the counter. We were one again.

When the concert was done we just waited a few minutes to watch the crowd dissipate. Amy found a small goblet in the rafters, probably an old prop from a play put on in the theater. It was the kind of goblet you'd see in some Shakespeare production. After the concert we climbed back onto the roof and down the ladder. Amy made me put the goblet in my pocket because she wore only a summer dress. I led the way down and, with only a few feet left to go, heard a grizzly voice scream, "Hey! What do you think you're doing?" I turned to see two security guards with flashlights running towards us. "Stop right there!"

"Run!" I screamed at Amy. We jumped off the ladder and ran as fast as we could. Amy threw me the keys while sprinting. "You drive!" The guards were right behind us. I saw a couple trash cans next to the building on Amy's side. "Trash cans!" I screamed. Amy grabbed the trash cans and tipped them over, one guard tripping in the garbage, the

other leaping over the mess entirely. We rounded the building and saw our car—our refuge. I weaved between cars in the parking lot, unlocking our doors with the remote. We hopped in the car and locked the doors. The guard reached the car, tried opening the door, and began pounding on the window. “Open this door right now, young man! You were trespassing on private property!” I started the car and flew out of the parking lot. The guard fumbled for paper to write our license plate number down but I think I got us out of there in time.

The whole drive home we laughed and screamed about the adventure. The adrenaline hadn't died by the time we reached the apartment. We stayed up for hours retelling the story from our own point of view. “We used to do that stuff all the time,” I said. “Then somewhere we became a *serious* couple.”

“I know, we suck,” she said with a laugh. “We need more adventures.” She looked at me and smiled. I could tell that at that moment she was happy. We took a drink from our new goblet, made love, then fell asleep in each others arms.

* * *

In the morning, we ate breakfast together. Amy had a job interview that morning. “Do you want to drop me off or should I take the car?” she asked. I told her to take the car. It was my day off and I thought I'd try to get some writing in. She took our newly found goblet “for luck.” She got ready for the day and I told her she was beautiful. She kissed me goodbye and walked out the door.

She came back in just moments after leaving. “Hey, before I leave, I just want to say thanks for working so hard. I know the writing is important to you. If I can get this job, we should try to figure out a way for you to stay home more to write.”

“Yeah, that’d be awesome,” I said. She smiled and walked back into the room. She put her hand in my armpit. “You’re dry,” she said and kissed me. I playfully pushed her away. She laughed and then walked out the door again. I couldn’t help but smile. *Maybe we’re going to be ok.*

I wanted to do all the shopping for the day while Amy was gone, maybe buy her something nice, surprise her. But Amy had the car. I remembered Natalie telling me I could count on her for a favor so I called her to ask if she could take me to the store before Amy came home.

Natalie didn’t have to be in to work for a few hours and gladly took me to the mall. The conversation turned to my writing. Natalie had always believed in me and wanted me to pursue writing. “You’re going to keep trying, right?” she asked as we walked past numerous shops and stores.

“If I can find enough spare time, yeah. Right now money’s kind of the issue,” I explained.

“You should. You’re so good. Seriously, you’re going places.” I blushed a little. “But I totally understand the money thing. I think it’s pretty admirable how you set your writing aside for Amy. You really care about her.”

I felt uncomfortable. I didn’t like talking about Amy to Natalie, or vice versa. “Well, it’s life, I guess. You can’t do what you want all the time.”

“I’ve said it before, Judson, and I’ll say it again. You’re a badass.” She punched my arm playfully. We laughed and walked into a clothing store. I needed socks and we were having fun.

“What about these?” I turned to see Natalie holding a pack of white ankle socks.
“They’re on sale.”

I cringed. “I hate white socks. They’re so ‘90s,” I said.

My phone vibrated in my pocket. I answered it. “Hello?” “Is this Judson Wells? Sir, you were listed as an emergency contact for Amy Goodmore.” “What happened?” “She was taken to WestTown hospital about an hour ago. There was an incident.”

* * *

They took Amy to the same hospital. On my way into the building I recognized many of the same doctors and receptionists. I was led up elevators, down hallways, much deeper into the building than the last time we were here. I reached the room where Amy was. Dr. Roberts stood outside the door. “Judson, there was a car accident. Hit and run. Amy’s lung collapsed. Blunt force trauma. We did everything we could but she only lasted a few minutes. I’m afraid Amy has died.”

I entered the room and saw her body on a bed. I looked at her arms, at old scars. I looked the rest of her and realized these wouldn’t be new scars. It was over.

* * *

Our car was taken to a warehouse. I went straight there from the hospital to collect our things. The driver’s door was completely smashed. I carefully stuck my arm through the windows to gather what few items there were. Amy kept the car pretty clean, like her mother’s kitchen. No jam spots in this car. Amy’s mother. I’d have to call her. I’d have to tell Amy’s brothers. I’d have to tell my parents. I’d have to organize the funeral. I’d have to get a new car. I’d have to find her dad and tell him. And I’d have to

wake up alone every morning. Beneath the steering wheel lay our goblet. As I reached to grab it I noticed blood on the seat, on the floor, on the dash, like great spots of jam.

* * *

Natalie stood waiting by my apartment when the taxi dropped me off. She ran to me and took me in her arms. I felt nothing at first. I just listened to the sound of the taxi pulling away. I felt nothing. But then it came, like a swift sunrise. It rose from my chest to my face. My tears wetted Natalie's hair. I was breathing in hard gasps, my shoulders shaking uncontrollably. Soon I was moaning. Natalie said nothing. She didn't let go.

"I-need-to-sit-down," I mumbled. We went inside and sat against the wall. I laid my head in Natalie's lap and shook until I fell asleep.

* * *

I woke up in Natalie's arms. I don't think she fell asleep that night.

"Want me to make you breakfast?" she asked.

"No."

"I called work and told them you're not coming."

"Thanks."

"And I got the day off so I can stay here as long as you'd like."

I sat up and looked at her. "Thank you." Natalie's face showed sympathy, pain. She too had been crying all night.

"I'm so sorry, Judson." She leaned in kissed my cheek. I wanted to tell her everything I felt inside. I wanted to tell her that I never should have been with Amy, that I should have been with *her*. I wanted to kiss her back. I wanted to tell her how much I loved her.

I debated what to do next. I looked down while thinking and saw Natalie's shirt smeared with dried blood. "Are you bleeding?" I said, pointing to the shirt.

"No, it's from you," she answered. I looked at my shirt. It was covered in dried blood from climbing in the wrecked car. Both our shirts now stained in blood. I looked up at Natalie and it was over.

"You should probably go," I said. Natalie was surprised.

"Are you sure?"

"Yeah. Thanks a lot for coming over. But I think you should probably go."

"Oh... sure." She stood and looked around. "I could clean the apartment if you want. Or make some phone calls."

"Natalie, please."

"Right, yeah. Sorry, I know you need space. Alright, well, just call if you need anything, anything at all."

"Thanks. It means a lot."

"You'll be ok, Judson. You'll get through this."

She walked out the door, leaving me alone against the wall.

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A \$20 DVD at Barnes and Noble would be \$12 or \$13 on Amazon or even Walmart. But people still pay full-price for them. It's about the image. Dreamers want a life of art and they look for it in expensive DVDs, in beat poetry, in Cubism, in The Grateful Dead. But maybe a life of art isn't found in *art*. Maybe a life of art is found in a person who knows what would make him happy but gives that up again and again in the name of something greater.