



CRIMSON CLOSURE

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Prose

I can remember everything about us.

I remember every last thing about her.

I remember the high school days —
junior year — relishing our youthful bliss
with post-class milkshakes and fries.
We had been friends for a long time,
but that summer, we were more.

There was this one spot...

Pop's Place!

Damn, I *loved* Pop's Place.

There was just something peculiar
about it: A quaint little mom-and-pop
shop in the middle of the suburbs.

I remember this one day, over the
summer, I took her to this picnic by a

I can remember everything about us.

Well, okay...

I remember *most* things about him.

I remember when he was the new kid
in the second grade, and all the times
we played together at recess.

I remember he always took us to this
one place. Oh, what was it called? The
one with the cream soda floats!

Pop's Place!

Talk about good curly fries!

But you know what's funny? I haven't
thought of Pop's since I left for college.

The summer between junior and
senior year? It was fun.



playground.

We brought back burgers and floats
from Pop's.

I kissed her on the cheek that day.

And before I know it...

...she's kissing me on the mouth!

I can still taste the cream soda on her
lips.

That's what I'm talking about though.
It's these kinds of memories that seize
me at random, bring me back to days
gone by. Every time I smell freshly cut
grass, for example, I'm hurled back to
that moment in time, the picnic. I'm
reminded of the swingset, and that
dizzying whirlwind of colors as my
body careened back toward earth.

All these memories come at once,
flooding my mind only to mock me of
what came before.

I know all of this sounds too whimsical
to describe a high school fling, but I
knew her as long as I could remember.

We had a picnic once, right on this
swing set and its surrounding pebbles.

And in front of all these little kids —

— he kissed me on the cheek.

So I kissed him back.

Like I said, it was a fun summer.

Nostalgia is a powerful weapon.



So, while I was left sifting through the remnants of this broken relationship...

She stopped talking to me.

That was that. Summer ended, senior year began. And I heard nothing from her.

The truth is, I never moved on. I shouldered that summer's wreckage for the months to come.

I wanted closure.

I didn't even see her months.

We saw each other at Homecoming.

See, here I am thinking I'm looking pretty spiffy.

That's why I never wanted to wield it.

So...

...I stopped talking to him.

Just because we were friends when we were seven doesn't mean we had to get married.

Now, I'm not a villain, okay? I just chose the path of least annihilation.

He wanted this extensive, resplendent conversation that ended in hugs and rainbows.

He was *so* sweet. He always has been. I remember him, and I remember us. But I don't remember the way he does.

I ran into him twice my senior year. Once on my way to the bathroom, and then...

...we saw each other at Homecoming.



I've got some buddies flanking my right and a girl from my Stats class on my left.

And that's when I see her with *him* .

He was two inches taller than me.

I didn't recognize him. But I recognized the way she looked at him.

I approach her.

Boy, in that moment, did I wish my punch was spiked!

But I had to tell her. I had to say it.

"Your crimson dress looks absolutely stunning tonight."

She laughed at me! I haven't talked to her in months, and she laughed at me!

I went with another boy.

He was cute, and charming, and funny, and all the good things you could want in a guy.

I met him just after the summer ended.

Anyway, out meanders my former best friend. He's clutching this cup full of punch and he looks like he had just seen a ghost.

And you know what he says to me?

Crimson.



It was so *him* , you know? Looks at a red dress and calls it *crimson*. He loved using pretentious words like that. He always did.

She called me a douche.

I called him a douche.

I smiled at him, took a sip of his punch, and that was the last thing I said to him all year.

The absence of response is worse than anything. I think in that moment, I wished she would've just told me she never wanted to see me again.

He was *so* sweet. He was in elementary school and he was that whole summer. And I loved him. I still do. But not the way he wanted.

See, at least it'd be closure.

See, I remember the swings and the floats and the dress. It's all up there still. But I refuse to dust it off.

The Homecoming incident gave me hope, you know?

He has such an extravagant way of describing things, remembering this.

And so it got me thinking — it's still got me thinking — that someday, there's going to be a chance.

He dusts these memories off until they don't look so bad.

I can't stop thinking is the problem.



We're in college now.

I really should just move on.

Sometimes there's no closure.

It's not fair that she gets to package everything away and I don't! If I could, I would!

I can't help myself!

I know that I should just forget the second grade, forget playing on the slides or trips to the toy store together.

I should forget the long walks to school, and the time we played Mario Kart until 1 a.m., and the time I picked her up and twirled around like a princess.

There are two sides to every story.

Someday, I'll be over this. It's helping just to talk about it.

I remember everything about us.

But she doesn't remember the way I do.

We're in college now!

He should just move on!

The conversation we could've had to "patch things up" wouldn't have done any good. Just look at what seeing me at Homecoming did to him!

Sometimes there's no "closure."

Sometimes, I imagine him sitting there, clinging to that summer like a pathetic, lost puppy.

I can't help myself!

I imagine he's thinking about the second grade, blowing dandelions at recess or sitting together for Pizza Day.

I felt bad about this for a long time.

But it's time to let it all go. These memories are just memories, and they can't change the way I feel about him.

There are two sides to every story.

I don't really want to talk about it anymore.

I remember everything about us.

I remember. I really do