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## The Great Gig in the Sky

A rough, slicing tone begins to shake the whole house. I hear my mom's shaky frightened response to the phone call.

"Is he ok?" she barely gets the words out. The person on the other line slowly mumbles their reply. I can feel her legs tremble under the weight of the moment. Turning towards my window, I stare out across the silent neighborhood street. Putting my hands over my ears and knowing what the answer will be, I know what happened to him, but I want this moment to last. Keep the hope in my system just for a bit longer.

Maybe he made it, and the crash didn't kill him. My mom could be crying tears of joy right now; I would have no idea. "I knew he would make it!" She would scream. The sun breaking through the clouds, and the angels at heaven's door would kick my brother back down the staircase. He would walk through the cracked door in my room and give me a hug only my brother could give.

My mother's muffled cries make it harder and harder to get my hands off my ears. My whole body starts to tremble. The air in my room feels poisonous. I begin to have trouble breathing; each inhale short and sporadic. My eyes close, nothing but blackness. I can barely hear my door creak open. The trembling mess I heard just a moment ago is gone. My mom's arms wrap around me like a thick blanket. I can feel the tears piling up on her sweater. My body shakes. Pain and fear, like electricity shoot through my veins. Slowly however my mom's presence calms me down. Finally, I am at rest. Before I was a bolt of lightning in her arms, shaking and exploding, grieving for my brother. Now the reality hits

me. I can see the void. A hole in my life that will never be filled again. An expansive black emptiness. My brother's life is only a memory now. A fractured poem of memories that only his friends and family have to read.

His room sits across from mine in the hallway. His Pink Floyd posters and Track medals stare at me. I get up and wipe my tears from my cheeks and stumble over. *It still smells like him*, I think to myself. I can feel the void in his room, his bed still unmade, and his laundry piled up in the far corner. The room is uncharacteristically dark even though the two big windows usually face the sun. I look over at his record player, thumb through his collection, and decide to play one of his favorites. The record begins to spin, and the speakers play that classic melancholy guitar lick. I can almost feel him with me, taking in the moment, nodding along to the beat. Leaning against the door frame with that sly smile, letting me know that everything will be alright.

The void is still there; even after five years, I can still feel that emptiness. I saw it at graduation in an empty seat. I hear it whenever that song comes up. I still remember that call and those tears when I first heard the news—a man taken away from me far too soon.