

When Shadows Start Breaking

By : [mypercioussun8kailee](#)

A poetic angst piece written about the grieving process that I myself experienced, though under different circumstances. About two freinds and a promise. "In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: It Goes On." -Robert Frost



Published on
Booksie

booksie.com/mypercioussun8kailee

Copyright © mypercioussun8kailee, 2013
Publish your writing on Booksie.com.

When Shadows Start Breaking

When Shadows Start Breaking

Jason Lemingway took the stairs to apartment 41C one step at a time, his face both stoic and determined. A bottle of rum, strong and impressive, grasped firmly in his left hand, a closed umbrella, recently used and dripping wet, in the other. There were twenty-seven steps in total, he'd counted before, and if ever that number had seemed so impossibly few, he couldn't remember.

Jason reached the top and leaned his umbrella against the wall. He raised his now free hand, took a deep, reassuring breath, and knocked.

Three times, he wouldn't receive an answer from any more or any less.

"Phil." he called, and before the word had completely fell from his lips the door was opened and a familiar man stood before him.

"Jason."

There were nods, and handshakes, and the bottle was passed from one man to the other.

The threshold was crossed and it felt nice, scary and tense and unfamiliar, but nice, to be around each other after the events of the day, the week, the month.

Phillip stood off to the side, bottle in his hand and momentarily forgotten, and wondered what he was supposed to say. They don't teach you this at school, parents don't prepare you for it at home, and short, 24 year long lives don't provide nearly enough experience. It was odd, and completely unnerving, to be with a friend you knew and trusted with your entire being, yet still not know what exactly it is your meant to do.

"May I sit?" Jason asks, and Phillip nods, and things are so outwardly normal but yet so inexplicably different.

Each sat on an opposite end of the couch, turned to face the other. Several moments passed, the silence loud and the tension tangible. Finally, Phillip stood and took the chair directly across from his guest, a position in which talking seemed less awkward and more inevitable.

"I've got five months." Phil declared, his expression unchanging and his voice both quiet and impassive. "Five months and that's it. Five. Fucking. Months."

Jason broke the gaze and looked away, focusing intently on the window and the steady *drip. drip. drip.* of the rain on the other side of it.

"Say something!"

"Phil," Jason sighed, "you are my best friend, and-" he took a deep breath, closed his eyes, *stay strong, Jason, this isn't about just you right now*, and continued "and Goddamnit! Do you really think I'm gonna-*we're gonna*-let this beat us? You are Phillip freaking Jones and I'm your right hand man. When-in all the years we've known each other-have we been defeated?"

"It's not the-"

When Shadows Start Breaking

"When?"

"Never, Jason, we have never been defeated."

"See? Now, that bottle there, yes, that one, hand it to me. This bottle will remain closed until we come out on top. It will be placed front-center of your fridge and will continuously remind us of this conversation. All right?"

"Yeah, all right."

And suddenly all the bindings and constraints were lifted and it was nice and not scary nor tense nor unfamiliar, and they were back to being Phillip and Jason, and nothing, not even third-stage cancer, could stop them.

~~~~~

Three months later, (three months, two weeks, and a day, to be exact) and Jason is again at the door to 41C. His left hand is empty and the umbrella in his right has yet to be opened. It's raining outside, storming, really, with thunder and lightening and cars driving madly to find their way home. And Jason's best suit is soaked and saturated and dripping. His clothes cling tightly, uncomfortably, to his skin and there's hair sticking to his face and his neck. And he's been standing here so long, not thinking or saying or doing or knowing anything at all, that a puddle of water has collected beneath him.

His hand is numb now, so numb and so empty, and he looks at it, its grip on the umbrella so strong, that he releases it and lets it fall to the ground with a *crash*.

His breathing is tight and sporadic and he's suddenly aware of the chills clenching his bones, nails pinching and scratching, and dancing-running-sprinting across his spine.

If ever a day was more miserable he doesn't think he's lived it and *dang it! Why the hell hasn't Phillip answered the door yet?*

He knocks three times, because he won't receive an answer from any more or any less.

"Phillip," he calls, and a strange uneasiness is settling in, for he can't remember a time he's been able to finish the name.

He fishes for the spare key in the mailbox, surprised that it's still there and hasn't been moved "because really, Jason, a mailbox is the first place a criminal would look for a key and once they have it the possibilities of things they could do are unlimited. Now, hide it somewhere else, unless you want me to die."

For reasons unknown, he cringes at the memory and a chill wracks his body that he doubts is from the cold. Of course he doesn't want his best friend to die, he has no one else in the city, the state, the country, the world, and without a someone one would go crazy with loneliness and Jason especially because once you've known Phillip-known him and liked him and loved him and shared your every thought with him-there's no one else that can compare. You'd feel empty and broken and torn apart from the inside-out. And who wants to feel like that? Not Jason, that's for sure.

The key's in the lock, the doorknob's turned, and Jason takes several hesitant steps into the room. It's quiet, too quiet, too unbearably quiet with the air stale and silence loud and

## When Shadows Start Breaking

*why are the lights off? They're never off!*

With a flip of the switch he can see everything, every still, unmoving item and his chest feels heavy and his throat feels clogged and he can't breath, he can't breath but he's trying and there's a scream caught deep within his being.

He runs across the room and rips open doors, because, *yes*, surely Phillip is in his bedroom, his bathroom, the kitchen, the closet. He tears cushions from couches, blankets from beds. He's on all fours, peeking beneath the table and scanning every cupboard, every corner, every niche.

He doesn't know how long he's like that-searching, panicknig, struggling to hold on- but it was certainly a while because it's dark out now, and not just dark from a storm but darkness so dark that it's black, and he's worried because if Phillips not here then he's out there, out with the darkness.

When Phillip and he were little, little like five-year-olds and teddybear-holders and sons who just want their mommies, Phillip was afraid of the dark, the dark and nothing but the dark because he was a big-boy and big-boys aren't afraid of anything, and Jason doesn't think he ever got over it. He's not sure, though, because those aren't the sort of things he and Jason talk about, but the two always seem to do important things during daylight and if the electric ever goes out the generator has to be turned on before anything else, even going to the bathroom, or eating, or breathing. And Jason really should be out there, looking for him behind every wall of the street, but he just can't. It's gravity, pulling him, tugging him, roping him to the couch, where he always sits, and chaining him down. He still can't breath, not like he normally breaths, and his chest still feels heavy and tight, and his throat's still clogged. His face is wet, his cheeks, his neck, and he blows it off as left over rain water. A noise escapes his lips, breaking the silence. It sounds like a whine or a cry or a sob, but no, he's never sounded like that before and he must've imagined it.

The atmosphere is strange, suffocatingly so, and he can feel, see, and hear things he's never before noticed.

There's a clock on the far wall. It's small, and blue-blue like the sky, not like the ocean-and it's an odd, stretched out square. It's almost completely covered by clutter: pictures, posters, calendars, post-its- and it makes a faint, almost inaudible *tick*. No *tock*, just *tick,tick,tick*. And he thinks it might be the strangest clock he's ever seen.

There's a rim on the coffee table, the size of a mug, the travel-kind, not the sit-at-home-and-do-nothing-kind, and it's brown and disgusting and he really must have Phillip clean it soon.

So with these new, observant eyes, Jason takes a look at himself. He's wearing his nicest trousers and jacket and a black button-down underneath. There's a grey tie around his neck, and, *yes*, surely that's what's been choking him. His shoes are shiny, so shiny he can see the reflection of the light above him, except on the bottom, which is crusted with solidified mud. He remembered cufflinks, too, which is unnervingly odd because he never wears those, not even to weddings, for which his sister constantly chastises him.

And then he sits, his lips pulled in a staright line and his brow furrowed, because he can't, for the life of him, recall why he's so impeccably dressed.

So he sits like this, his expression just so,for a long while. He looks at the strange clock, and the disgusting rim, and his dressed-up self, and then out the gloomy window. He feels the thickness, the emptyness, the nothingness. He hears the *tick* not the *tock*, and the hum of the refridgerator and his own heartbeat and nothing else. He sees, and feels, and hears it all but he doesn't get it.

And then he does.

## When Shadows Start Breaking

And when he gets it, finally, really, completely gets it, he screams. He screams a scream so loud that the floor vibrates and pictures fall from their place on the wall. He screams and he cries and he wraps himself into a ball, because, *God*, he's never before felt so much unbearable pain. His mind is both empty and full and every degree inbetween. He feels heavy with sorrow and there's a whole spreading throughout his mind, his heart, his soul.

He can't believe it, really, because things like this don't just happen. Recovering cancer patients don't get hit by buses. People don't do so well just to die. And so he must, he must, he must be dreaming, there's no other explanation.

He rips the jacket from his back, tears it in two, and throws it across the room. But it's not enough, he's still so sad and so angry and so confused and so full of emotions that he needs to do it again. And he does, with the cushions and the blankets and the button-down shirt he still doesn't remember putting on. His hands are in his hair, pulling, tugging, holding on for dear life. He's moving fast, so fast, faster than a horse, a car, a plan, he thinks, but yet it all feels so slow. Like he's a fly trapped in amber.

And none if it's real, not really.

He's empty inside. Empty and blank and wiped of everything he's ever been. He's no longer Jason, but a gaping whole void of all things human.

There's a sound, a new sound, and he hears it instantly. He stops what he's doing, drops what he's holding, and listens, because right now having something to do is better than needing to do everything.

It's footsteps. Soft and dainty and not at all Phillip, but it has to be him, it has to be, because this is Phillip's house and no one but Jason visits and Jason's already here so there's only one left.

"Phillip." he whispers, his voice cracked and broken and everything he is inside.

He's staring at the door, the handle turns and it's a girl. A girl that is so-not-Phillip Jason begins to cry again. The girls in the kitchen, in the fridge, with a bottle, with a cup, and then she's right in front of him and he recognizes her as Suzy-Stacy-Lacey or something like that, she lives directly below and Phillip once said she was pretty. She has two cups in her hands and she gives one to him and at first he can't drink it because it doesn't feel like something he can do, not after all he's already done and everything that's already happened. But his lips are so dry and he feels so completely empty that he takes one sip.

He doesn't know how to feel, really, because he knows what he's drinking, he knows and she doesn't and all of it's so *so* wrong.

Phillip's dead, and Jason will never see him again, and Jason is unbearably, horrifically alone.

She handed him rum. *The Rum*. And he drank it.

ã

ã

ã

## When Shadows Start Breaking

## When Shadows Start Breaking

Created from Booksie.com

Generated: 2013-05-20 13:36:19