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A Little Bit More Broken

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She hated it. Everything was messy and confusing. It was back when they still had somewhere to go and something to be excited about. She didn’t know then that it was only going to get worse. Despite everything, she refused to give up and spent an hour flattening her curly hair. The steam from the straightener made her room smell like birthday candles. She told me they all did it, applying endless layers of mascara and checking their outfits in the mirror over and over again. When she arrived and finally gathered the courage to enter, the only answer was no, no, no, and no. So she ran and hid alone in between the concrete walls and next to the dumpster with the vomit-covered mattress. There in the dark frozen air, she cried for hours. The kind of crying you remember from falling off your bike as a kid, where you laid pain-stricken on the pavement while your chest heaved in and out and your eyes burned. When she called me, I cried too.