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Lost in Time

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Shaker Heights High School

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Honorable Mention

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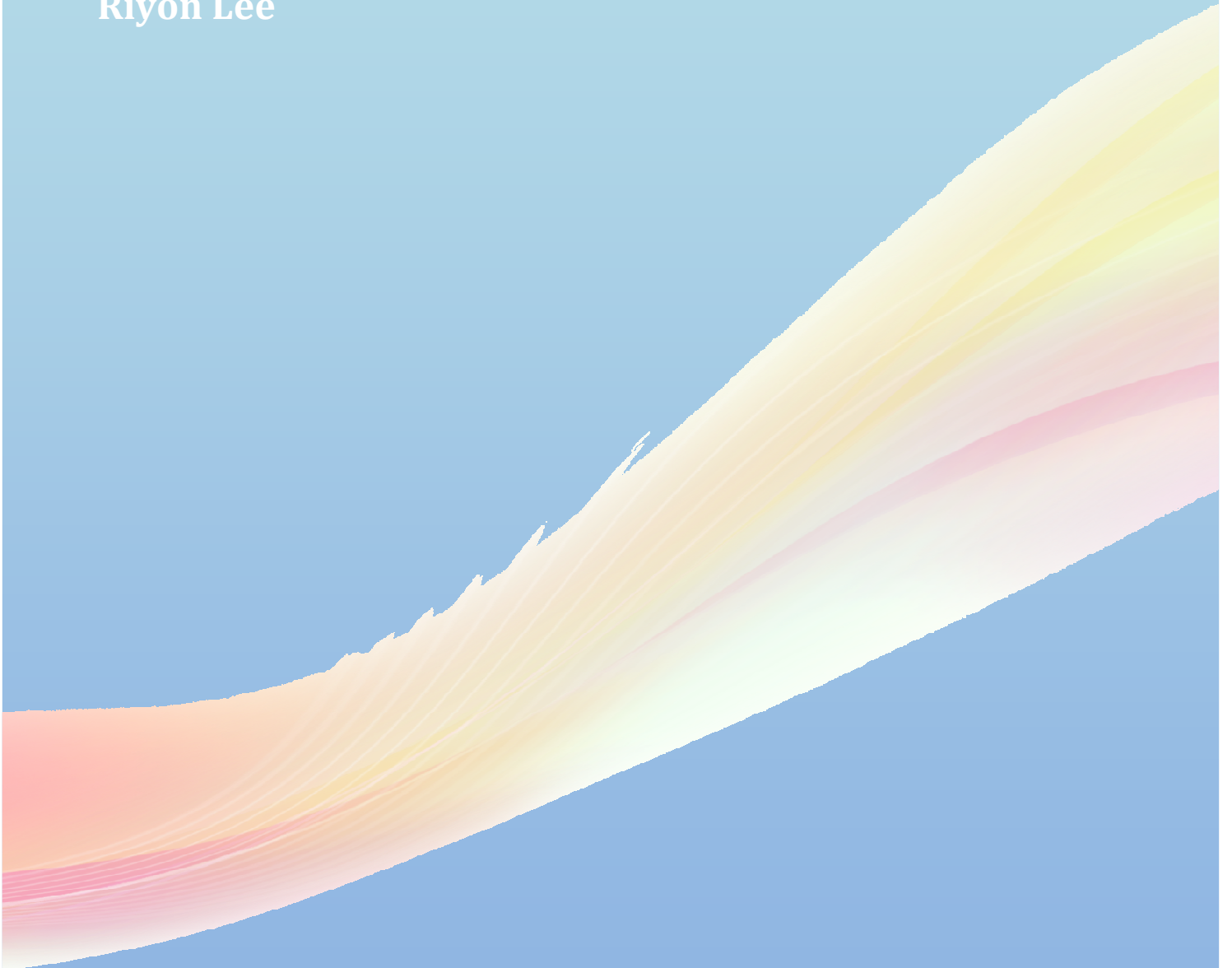
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Lost in Time

Creative Writing

Riyon Lee



Eric: Now-The Trip

He didn't understand. Senior Year that is. It's assumed to be the best time of your life, but that is a lie. Eric couldn't wait to get out of here. But of course, ever since he was little, his mom wanted him to go out and "make friends" she would say. So back in reality, Eric is currently sitting with a bunch of arrogant popular people, nerds and Michelle. Michelle is the girl next door...literally. Flowing hair like a clear river, with of course her blue flower barrette in her hair. It was the same one Eric has carried with him for the last 8 years. While daydreaming, he is casually summoned back into reality with the shout of his name. "Eric and Michelle, I dare you to go into the forest and get some wood for this lame fire!" Paul shouts. Paul. A four letter meaning Possibly an Ugly Loser.

A loser who dates Michelle. "Really Paul, that's the best you got?" Michelle chimes in, "C'mon Eric let's just do this. We will be back in 20"

"Whatever" Eric says.

But inside his heart leaped like words of a page. As they slowly descended into the forest, the silence is deadly. They continued to walk further in the forest. Eric began to think that this was a metaphor of him walking into his past. Then at that moment, he has a flashback. He didn't know what would happen, in the future, but he has this moment to finally to get it right.

Eric: Then-Love

She was so short, that his dog Toby was as tall as her. She was but 4 years old. The new girl who had just moved in. Her name was Michelle. Eric understood that she was pretty, and a shiny new toy he couldn't wait to wear out. So every day until they were 10, the two were inseparable. At 7, he developed a crush on her. But he didn't want to ruin the friendship. So he went about it as just being mean to her. Finally in middle school, they went to their first school dance together. She went in for a hug, but then he kissed her, by accident (not really). The first and only kiss he would ever receive from Michelle. It lasted for only a brief moment, only it felt like an eternity. He knew then he loved her. And for a 10 year old, he knew it was real because his heart hurt. Sadly, things never remained the same and in middle school, they finally parted ways. She wanted to be the girl who everyone envied, and well Eric, he became the boy no one knew.

Michelle: Now-Stuck

LOST! The four letter word that is the possibly the worst word in the English language except for panties, yes panties is way worse. Michelle weeds and whacks through her thoughts while standing next to the boy who once knew her like an open book. For the past 30 minutes, the two of them had managed to find a ton of wood but when it was time to turn back they couldn't seem to find the path they had previously walked. When Michelle would ask, "Should we try this path?" Eric would reply, "Yeah, sure, whatever". It was like he wasn't even there. Both lost in thoughts, too scared to say a thing, they stood in silence. After walking a little further they were able to finally agree on going right.

Taking a moment to realize that this was stupid to be acting the way they were, Michelle finally spoke. "Eric, are you going to just walk in silence or talk to me? We used to be friends you know."

Eric replied, "There are a lot of things that used to be" Michelle was quite appalled at his response. And quite annoyed. You know, he was her favorite person for most of her childhood. He was always there when she needed him and even when they became distant in middle school; he was there when her grandfather died of dementia.

Michelle finally spoke back, “I know we used to be a lot of things to each other when we were younger. But so much has changed for the both of us, Eric. If we are stuck out here together, I would like to at least be entertained by your presence.”

Eric turned to look at her with those bright blue eyes and said, “We grew up Michelle, and you left me better. I was your best friend and you have no clue what I have been through these past eight years.” Michelle thinks to herself, “Neither do you, neither do you.” Michelle knows that little secret of hers would never disappear and she wanted nothing more than to share it with Eric. But she didn’t know him anymore. So she took this moment to start and make it right. “Well I wanna know what you have been through. So how have you been, Eric?”

Eric: Now-Michelle

She wanted to know him! That just makes Eric go insane in the head. He is putting up this front that he is mad, but to be honest he is more hurt than she ever will know. She probably thinks he doesn't know her secret. But he does which makes it even harder to love her, because she doesn't love herself. He carries that barrette with him everywhere. It's the one thing that keeps them together. For a moment, he forgets they are lost in the forest forced to talk to each other. He doesn't want to make it awkward, so he talks to her. "Well I have been through my parents divorcing, my brother flunking out of college and moving back in and my girlfriend dumping me because 'I'm not invested enough and never share my feelings' but I said bullshit. I told her how I felt all the time. It was the time when we weren't talking about her is when she got bored. Now that I think about it, thank goodness she dumped me."

Michelle responded, "Well I understand. Everyone thinks Paul and I are so happy. But half the time we are arguing about sex or arguing about how much we hate each other. I can't remember the last time I actually smiled without it being forced. I always have to front, to fake it. But it's almost over, and I will be out of here so fast and on to better people and a better, happier life." Eric just stared. He stared at how her hair has grown so much, almost to the middle of her back. Jet black is the color. She is still short but now she has curves and filled out, the way

she didn't look like she would when they were younger. Michelle has the most beautiful hazel eyes, in such a way when she looks at him, Eric's heart stops.

But jolted back to reality, he turns to Michelle. "Well your life isn't as picture perfect as it seems. But life could be better. You could leave Paul, do some dramatic thing with your hair and finish the next four months off great."

Michelle says, "HA! You think it's so simple. I'm popular. I've worked hard to get here and Paul is the key to prom queen. It's the only thing that will make up for the past 4 years of hell." For a moment, he saw it. The vulnerable girl behind the mask. But it would be just a glimpse.

He wanted to ask her about the secret. But instead he is mean, "You think prom queen makes up for all that? You climbed to the top because you wanted to be something but now you are so far from the person you always talked about being. That was the girl I love." Shit. It slipped from his mouth like word vomit. Eric felt like running away and never looking back but instead he just shut up and put his head down.

Michelle's face was so appalled that she couldn't even form a cohesive thought. But with her hazel eyes, she turned and said, "Well you finally used this moment to make it right huh?" Eric just stared dumbfounded.

Michelle: Then-Crush

“He kissed me. Like on the lips, skin on skin contact, kissed me.” Michelle thought to herself. Eric was shorter than her, with dimples so big that showed when he smiled. He was wearing his favorite blue shirt with khakis. That night, Michelle gave Eric one of her favorite blue barrettes. And that’s when Michelle knew she would never forget the moment her heart belonged to Eric Fisher. But Michelle was only ten years old, and she knew she should not have butterflies like this. So then she got scared. Her dad was a lieutenant in the military and this was the longest they had ever lived somewhere. And she didn’t want to get too close before she would have to leave again. Michelle began distancing herself and much to her surprise, her father retired the next year. She felt so stupid that she gave up Eric’s friendship, but it was too late. Eric began avoiding her, so she began making new friends. But when she was 14, her whole life shattered right before her eyes. And that barrette in her hair would never let her forget.

Michelle: Now-Lost

Eric and Michelle had been walking around the forest for a while, but they forgot for a moment that they were lost. Michelle started thinking about that day: The day she became lost.

He was her dad's best friend. He loved her and her brother as her own. But one day, while Michelle's parents went for a romantic dinner, something happened. It had been a good day for Michelle. Her first month of freshman year was good and she had gained many friends. While doing her homework, jammin' out to Ed Sheeran, he walked in.

He said, "How is homework going?"

"Good. Algebra is challenging but kind of fun." Michelle responded.

He walked passed her desk and sat on the bed next to her, "Well let me help you

"No, I got it"

"I just want to help you."

He leaned closer and that's when Michelle got freaked out. "I'm fine, just let me do my homework, please."

He responded, "You know you look kinda hot when you start to get frustrated. And ever since you have hit puberty, you have only gotten prettier."

"Ok, you're weird and I don't like your comments towards me. Go play with Gabe or something."

"Gabe went to Trevor's for an hour to play; he left five minutes ago." He looked at Michelle with a smirk upon his face. That's when Michelle ran. But he caught her. He threw her on the bed and towered over her. His eyes were void, soulless, like the man she knew died inside. He ripped off her clothes and it happened. She cried the whole time. Afterwards he said, "I love the barrette in your hair baby, you look so innocent."

She never told anyone about that night. She was so ashamed. He continued to do it three more time before he was deployed to Iraq. That killed her. It's like nothing mattered anymore and she hated herself.

It's not until Eric is around her, that she realizes that she fell on the ground shaking and now hysterically crying. "Michelle, breathe."

"Did you know?"

He pulled the barrette out and said, "I'm so sorry, I couldn't save you"

Eric: Then-The Secret

He would always watches the window, and sees if the blinds were open or shut, if the lights were on or if she was not home. He loved when she danced during the summer and he would just sit and gaze. But one night, her window was cracked just a quarter of the way with the blinds closed. And nothing prepared fourteen- year- old Eric for what he would hear. First it was just murmuring, then it became shouting. Then it became the muffled tears of Michelle and the grunting of the older man. After 20 minutes, it went silent and Eric heard a door close. He would hear the piercing silence become loud tears against the wall. Only it wasn't Michelle, it was him. He was the one crying. Because he had just heard the girl he loves lose everything. And he had not done a damn thing.

Eric: Now-The End

“I’m so sorry I couldn’t save you” It’s the end of hiding the secret. The end of the guilt and the lost hope for Eric.

Michelle says three words that change his world, “I forgive you.”

He stared at the barrette in his hand and realized that it was joined with the one that Michelle has worn in her hair for the past eight years. He looked at her red hazel eyes and did it. He kissed her again. But this time she kissed him back. For a moment the world was quiet and focused on them.

When Eric pulled back, he said “Wow, that was just...wow”

“I love you too, Eric Fisher.”

Eric takes the time to raise her from the dirt floor and takes her hand. He can’t form a cohesive sentence so he just gives her the biggest grin he could muster. After their moment, both realize that they should actually try to find their way back to camp. They take a few lefts, three rights and walk straight for a quarter of a mile and end up right at the fire.

Every popular person screams “OH MICHELLE YOU’RE SAFE!!!” Paul walks over and kisses and hugs Michelle. But as usual, no one cared if Eric was ok.

But something happened. Michelle pushed Paul off of her and said, “We’re over you dumb, manipulative, big jerk. You make me feel like crap and I know that you cheated with Cindy. Take care.”

Then something even stranger happened. Michelle walked over to Eric and kissed him. In front of everyone! She whispered in Eric’s ear, “Was that dramatic enough? All I need to do now is dye my hair.”

Eric laughed, “You know there is the girl who I used to know, and I would love to meet her again, the new version”

“That can be arranged. This new version is finally letting go of what happened to her because she knows that someone loves her.”

That was six years ago. That senior trip. Now they are moving from their houses next door into one house, side by side, in New York. Eric and Michelle are looking through their last four months of high school but also the best four months they had spent together: prom, graduation, skiing, first day of college, graduation, and much more. Michelle is laughing when Eric takes out the ring, and says, “That moment I decided to make it right made me the happiest person ever. Michelle Avery Stoney, will you make this moment better and marry me?”

Michelle: Now-The Wedding

The white dress. The one that she never dreamed of having but at this moment, she couldn't live without it. Michelle stares at herself in the mirror and takes a deep sigh. After loving the boy next door for all those years, she would become his wife. "Are you ready?" her mom asked.

"Yeah, let's do it."

Michelle knows it take six steps from the room to the door and then ten steps to the altar. She takes the six paces to meet her dad. He looks so spiffy with his suit. After the camping trip, she told her parents. Her dad had him arrested and they grew so much closer, and Eric was with her the whole time. "Let's go get you married." Her dad says.

They take the ten steps down the aisle and when Michelle locks eyes with Eric and feels an emotion she can't describe. And when reached him, her whole life changed.

Eric: Now-Aftermath

All that was left of her was the veil and the ring. She was gone and Eric couldn't understand why. He just sat in their room and cried. Up to an hour ago, his world was perfect. People keep walking around him and murmuring words that he isn't listening to. All he keeps seeing is her leaving out the door. What did he do wrong? Seven years together, the perfect wedding planned and then poof. The scene was still so vivid and clear in his head.

"We are gathered here today to witness the joining of Eric Fisher and Michelle Stoney in holy matrimony. They decided to write their own vows. Eric you first.

"Michelle, our love is one of a kind. A diamond in the rough. Every rollercoaster has it ups and down and I wouldn't have wanted to take this ride with anyone but you. In this infinite world of stars, you shine the brightest to me. I will protect you, love you, and fight with you when you become stubborn. But most of all I will be the best friend who has loved you since he was seven. I can't wait for you to be my wife."

"Wow that was beautiful. Michelle, your turn"

"Eric...I can't. I can't marry you. I can't stay."

Before he processed her words, she was gone.

The end