Celestials

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Wilkes' stomach felt as though it were a balloon filling at an exponential rate, just waiting to burst all over the forest.

Because. God impregnated me with his child, and then told me I was not pretty enough, and did not love him enough. So he left me for another.

Miss, whoever is the father of this baby, he isn't God.

Who are you to tell me? God is the absent father of all. Invisible and omnipresent. Wilkes' lungs burned. He had to rest again against the trunk of a tree, but only allowed himself thirty seconds.

Please don't give up. Please don't give up.

Her breaths grew more and more shallow and rapid, until they quieted altogether. She grew limp. He felt the blood that had soaked through his jacket.

They arrived at the truck and Wilkes laid her in the cab, felt her pulse, and felt her pulse again. His vision cracked. He lay his head upon the tight skin of her belly.

You're okay, he said. You're okay, you're okay, you're okay.

Before he crashed he was thinking of the day he found his daughter at his doorstep. They had dressed her up in all new clothes. Even did her hair. He was thinking of the bows they had put in, bright pink bows with white stars.