

LITTLE FISH

Written by

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Based on the Short Story by

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**Then/Now**

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Violent waves crash against the shore.

Seagulls fly against wind, moving neither forward or back.

In the sand - loose leaf papers litter the beach. Washing in and out as the ocean sighs.

The papers have writing on them. Little curls of letters blotted into swirling ink-stains from the salt water.

A YOUNG WOMAN sits in the sand. Bundled up against the winter air, she's on her knees, looking out to the grey horizon.

This is **EMMA**. There are a dozen words to describe her, but right now, only one will really do: exhausted.

Silent tears stream down her cheeks. Her face is red, her knuckles are bloody.

Breathing in and out with the sound of the waves, she closes her eyes- as if meditating.

*Breathe in.*

*Breathe out.*

*Breathe in.*

*Breathe out.*

*Breathe --*

An old HOUND DOG interrupts Emma's solace- intrusively nuzzling his face into her neck. Her eyes blink open.

She smiles, her demeanor completely shifting- as if a weight has been lifted from her.

EMMA

Hey. Who are you?

Out of the corner of her eye, she sees a YOUNG MAN come into focus in the distance. He's walking towards her, slowly, looking all around the beach as if he's lost.

A small film camera hangs on a strap around his neck.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Hey!

He looks to her.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Is this your dog?

The Young Man breaks out into a jog to bridge the distance between them. Emma rises, holding onto the dog's leash.

YOUNG MAN  
What?

EMMA  
Is this your dog?

Suddenly up close. Their eyes meet. For the first time.

The Young Man's eyes light up upon seeing her. He sheepishly gives her a dazed smile. This is **JUDE**.

Kind of taken by his awkwardness, Emma smiles. Which makes Jude smile more. Which makes Emma smile more. Which makes-

EMMA (CONT'D)  
What?

JUDE  
What?

EMMA  
You're smiling.

JUDE  
I just uh... I didn't expect your voice to be... That- I mean, your accent.

EMMA  
What's wrong with it?

He's beaming now.

JUDE  
Nothing.

EMMA (V.O.)  
I was so sad the day I met you.

*Waves CRASH into--*

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - **NOW**

*Dogs are barking outside. They yip and howl and sound like wolves.*

Emma lies awake next to Jude in bed. They are both in the fetal position, curled towards each other.

A moment, then Emma carefully extracts herself from the bed.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER - NOW

*Snap.*

A desk lamp clicks on, giving a soft glow to the small yellow-walled apartment.

Wearing a t-shirt five sizes too big for her, Emma sits at the desk and pulls out a notebook from a drawer.

She furrows her brow. An EMPTY FISH TANK sits in the corner.

On the wall in front of her are DOZENS of photos, scotch taped to the wall. Photos of their life together.

*A photo with another couple on a board walk. A photo of Jude holding their hound dog. A photo of the two of them in the back seat of a car- selfie on film. Emma holding her ring finger to the camera, showing off her wedding ring.*

EMMA (V.O.)

Dear Jude. I'm going to try to write things down again. I don't know why. Maybe just to feel like I'm actually doing something.

She takes a moment, thinking.

EMMA (V.O.)

I can't quite shake the bad feeling. You keep telling me I'm being silly, but I think you feel it too...

*Details. The floral pattern on the bed spread. A single dried rose in a glass jar. A plastic army man connected to a paper parachute hanging from the ceiling.*

EMMA (V.O.)

All these little pieces.

She stares at one photo of the two of them, barely in focus-a bright SPARKLER shoved towards the camera. All smiles.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT - **THEN**

*A 4th of July party. A dozen twenty-somethings sit outside, centered around a sparking camp fire.*

*Moments.*

*Emma sits on Jude's lap, laughing, watching one of their friends play tug-of-war with their DOG.*

EMMA (V.O.)

This was early on. Before we were married. Before everything started to fall apart.

*Pop. Pop.*

*A GUY WITH THICK GLASSES plays a guitar exuberantly. Everyone sings along happy as can be, howling into the night.*

EMMA (V.O.)

That smoke-smell in your hair while Ben plays the guitar. What was the song? Was it 'Love Me Do' or 'Don't Let Me Down?'

*The sound drowns out as the two possible songs mix in the memory...*

*As the image goes blurry, everyone uses the campfire to light their SPARKLERS.*

EMMA (V.O.)

I can't remember anymore.

*TOTAL BLUR-OUT before the image come back into focus--*

EMMA (V.O.)

Ben was the first person we knew to get sick... I've been thinking about him a lot lately.

*BEN - THE GUY WITH THICK GLASSES, comes into focus, playing in front of the open fire pit.*

EMMA (V.O.)

We say "get sick" but it's not the right way to describe it... You either snap, or you fade away. I'm still not sure which one is worse. For Ben... He faded...

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON - THEN

Jude has headphones, a laptop, a microphone set up- pointed at Ben and his guitar. Emma lies on the couch, watching Jude and Ben work together.

Ben nervously adjusts his fingers on the frets.

JUDE

You're over-thinking it. Just...  
Just go. It's okay. We've got all day.

Gone is the confidence from the campfire. Ben begins to strum a few chords- this time to an original song. He gets a few right-

Emma watches with cautious optimism-

The chords fall apart in Ben's hands. It's like he's just learning to play.

BEN

Fuck.

JUDE

It's okay. Let's try it again.

HOLD on Emma- Ben and Jude out of focus in the foreground, as Ben stands up and throws the guitar towards the wall. It hits the ground with a twangy thunk.

Emma flinches, but doesn't move out of the way. She watches as Jude wraps himself around Ben- the two men struggling, out of focus.

BEN

Fuck, fuck! FUCK!

JUDE

Hey, hey, hey- it's okay! It's okay!

Ben is crying- sobbing. A tear slips out of the corner of Emma's eyes. She watches the two men hug.

EMMA

Should I call Sam?

JUDE

Can you get us some water?

She stands and walks towards the

KITCHEN, listening to Jude calm Ben down.

EMMA (V.O.)

We went with him to get his first tattoo that day. We said it would be an adventure.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR - DAY - THEN

Jude sits with Ben as a Tattoo Artist inks in his arm.

The top of Ben's wrist has the letters E A D G B E with six lines dropping from each letter.

EMMA (V.O.)

He tried so hard not to seem scared. I guess we all did.

Ben smiles sadly, then begins wiggling his eyebrows, trying to lighten the mood.

Emma walks along the tattoo parlor, looking at the framed designs mounted on the walls.

Her eyes drift to a posted sign by the door:

**MEMORY DISCOUNT**

**80% OFF TEXT BASED TATTOOS**

**ADDRESSES PHONE NUMBERS NAMES NO PORTRAITS**

She looks at the sign then turns- something catching her eye-- a design of a small GOLDFISH. She smiles sadly.

EMMA (V.O.)

But we were.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - EVENING - THEN

CLOSE on Emma's ankle- her shoes and socks are off, a piece of clear cellophane is wrapped around her ankle which now sports a brand new FISH TATTOO.

She wags her feet in time with the guitar playing.

BEN

We need to be doing this by a campfire.

JUDE

You need to focus on that fingering, dude.

Jude holds a handheld microphone up to Ben, who plays-slowly, but with gaining confidence. Every so often he glances at his arm, which displays the fret patterns of the guitar, reminding himself of the chords. He sings a folk song, finally reaching the end.

EMMA (V.O.)

Back then it was easy to feel like it was going to be okay.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - NOW

Emma looks down at her journal. Her loopy handwriting ends with the sentence-

"Then it was easy to feel like it was going to be okay."

She stares at the writing for a beat, then up to the photographs on the wall. Out of focus with sparklers.

She looks over at Jude. He's still asleep in bed. She resumes her writing.

EMMA (V.O.)

I'm rambling all over the place and that's upsetting because there's so much to cover. So much I could lose. But then I think how is that any different from any other day and then I can't fucking tell if I'm even making sense...

She's got tears in her eyes. She takes a breath and puts the pen down, calming herself. Her handwriting has graduated from a curl to a scrawl.

Her eyes go to the ceiling... The little plastic army man hanging from his taped up parachute. Another deep breath.

EMMA (V.O.)

*Focus on the important things...*

## EXT. JUDE'S OFFICE - NIGHT - THEN - LITTLE MOMENTS

Emma crosses the street towards a skyscraper lobby. She looks down to her phone, checking the address. As she looks up, her eye goes to a PLASTIC ARMY MAN parachuting onto the sidewalk in front of her.

Her eyes go to the sky. More plastic army men are sailing down to the street from the skyscraper above.

EMMA (V.O.)

The first time you kissed me was  
the week after we met.

## INT. JUDE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Elevator doors open and Emma steps out into a crowded open office. Music is playing and several dozen 20-30 something's mingle with drinks in their hands.

EMMA (V.O.)

One of those awful office parties  
that you love and I hate that you  
love.

Stepping out into the office, Emma's dwarfed by the size of the crowd. Her jeans and sweater stick out among the chic business casual.

She weaves through the crowd until she finally spots:

Jude. Standing among a group of friends, drink in his hand, laughing hard. Emma smiles at the sight, catching Jude's eye.

## EXT. OFFICE ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Downtown San Francisco glows all around them. Emma, Jude, and a handful of coworkers lean over the edge of the building, dropping their plastic army men.

Jude and Emma stand shoulder to shoulder, brushing against each other. They drop an army man. Smiling, Emma turns and looks at Jude.

He leans forward and kisses her.

The army man sails down, down, down.

EMMA (V.O.)

But the first kiss is impossible to  
forget...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS - NIGHT - THEN

*Seemingly moments later- now Emma and Jude kiss on the street in front of his building.*

EMMA (V.O.)  
And the second.

EXT. BART PLATFORM - NIGHT - THEN

Emma and Jude are making out on the platform.

EMMA (V.O.)  
Until you lose count. How many times have I kissed you now? Have I given you a hundred thousand kisses?

*She looks at him, and he at her.*

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - NOW

Emma is still staring at the hanging army man. She hasn't written any of it down. She looks back over to Jude. A solid beat.

EMMA (V.O.)  
But when was the first time you made me laugh? Not just me throwing you a laugh because I thought you were cute... When was the first time you really got me?

Hold on Emma as she thinks.

JUDE (PRE-LAP)  
Nuh-uh. Nuh-uh. I got that beat. I got that beat... Wait. I can't believe I'm trying to tell you this. Naw. Never mind.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO WATERFRONT - SUNSET - THEN

The sky is shifting yellow, red, blue and purple as the sun sets over the pacific. Jude and Emma sit on a bench by the waterfront, sharing a stick of cotton candy.

EMMA  
No, come on! I told you about periods during communions, what's worse than that?

JUDE

There's so much worse than that  
communion periods, trust me.

EMMA

Well- like what? Come on, spit it  
out.

Jude blinks - he can't believe he's about to say it.

JUDE

Okay. You asked. So, in sixth grade  
we did natures classroom and-

EMMA

Nature what?

JUDE

Nature's classroom, it's like a  
camping field trip. Anyway, it's  
literally just a bunch of kids in  
the middle of the woods, so they  
teach you to, you know, go to the  
bathroom in a hole that you dig,  
and then you bury it, right?

EMMA

Oh, no.

JUDE

But wait- there's more. So we all  
do it, and it's fine. So a few  
weeks later we're doing  
construction on my parents house  
and I didn't know they were redoing  
the plumbing, so the toilet is out.

EMMA

No, no.

She's giggling now.

JUDE

So I find out, and I... I need to  
stop telling you this.

EMMA

NO, keep going, this is so good.

JUDE

You're never going to have sex with  
me if I tell you this story.

She's cackling now.

EMMA

I'm never going to have sex with  
you if you don't tell it. Keep  
going!

JUDE

So I go outside, I... You know-

EMMA

You poo.

JUDE

And I bury it, just like in natures  
classroom... And no one saw me, and  
it wasn't gonna be a big deal.

EMMA

But it was...

JUDE

Because the dog dug it up.

EMMA

Oh nooooooo.

JUDE

And is eating it-

EMMA

Nooooooo.

JUDE

And my mother is running around  
screaming "my dog's eating human  
shit!" And she never even thought  
it could be from her son, she just  
assumed it was these poor guys  
working on the house-

EMMA

She didn't-

JUDE

She totally accused them of  
shitting in her back yard.

Emma is in stitches- she's got tears rolling down her face as  
she laughs.

JUDE (CONT'D)

And I just kept my mouth shut and  
let her chew these poor dudes out.  
"Who shit in my lawn! I know what a  
human shit looks like!"

EMMA

I can't breathe- I can't breathe.

She almost drops the cotton candy, which Jude catches adeptly with one hand.

JUDE

I can't believe I just told you that. Man.

Calming herself, Emma is able to get some words out.

EMMA

Did you ever admit it to her?

JUDE

No, I never did... Never got the chance to.

That shifts the mood slightly. Emma leans into Jude and kisses his neck.

EMMA (V.O.)

That was the first time you really earned my laughter.

JUDE (PRE-LAP)

Em?

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - NOW

Emma snaps out of it as she looks over to see Jude- craning his head out of bed, half asleep.

JUDE

Whatchu doing?

EMMA

Just writing some things down... I couldn't sleep.

He raises his arm and beckons for her to come back to bed. She switches off the light on her desk and joins him. Jude is almost completely asleep by the time she gets back into bed.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I love you.

JUDE

Mmm. Don'tforget... Call mymom.  
Innamorning. Mmm.

She watches him sleep.

EMMA

Shh. I'll call her.

That sits with her for a moment. Sad.

EMMA (V.O.)

Jude Andrew Williams. He's 26. His favorite color is purple. We were married on October 17th, 2018. A Wednesday. His mother was Dawn and she died before I ever got to meet her. His father is Gerald, his sister is Amelia. And these are fractions of things that make him who he is. Could I forget you? Could you forget me?

Emma closes her eyes.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - DAWN - NOW

The sun begins to rise. The tallest buildings reflect the sunlight down into the dispersing fog below.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - MORNING - NOW

Jude, wearing a t-shirt and boxers, prepares the kettle as Emma packs up her lunch.

JUDE

Tea, coffee or hot chocolate today?

EMMA

Ooo. It's a hot chocolate kind of day I think.

JUDE

Yessss.

Jude begins the morning ritual of preparing her beverage.

EMMA

You said something weird last night in your sleep.

JUDE

What?

EMMA

You told me not to forget to call your mother.

Jude blinks at that. A beat.

JUDE  
Huh.

Jude hands her the hot chocolate mug then makes his way towards a ladder fastened to a nearby wall.

EMMA  
Going to the roof?

JUDE  
Yeah, want to come?

EMMA  
You go ahead, I'll say bye before I leave.

Jude scales up the ladder, opening a trap door in their ceiling, leaving Emma alone.

EXT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - DAWN - NOW

Jude sits on a lawn chair positioned on the flat roof- a whole surplus of supplies- cooler, umbrella, a few blankets- suggest this is his spot. He's got a down blanket wrapped around his body. His bare ankles reveal a FISH TATTOO matching Emma's.

EMMA (O.S.)  
Jude!

Jude turns towards the trap door in the roof that leads down to their apartment- he sees Emma at the base.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
I'm going now.

JUDE  
Okay.

EMMA  
You good?

JUDE  
I'm great. Just waking up.

EMMA  
I love you. See you tonight?

JUDE  
Yeah.

A beat.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
Wait, hey! Hey!

Emma comes back into view.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
Yeah, what was your name again?

Emma freezes. And then-

EMMA  
Don't do that! You're such a little  
fuck.

Jude starts laughing. In spite of herself, Emma laughs too.

JUDE  
"A little fuck?"

EMMA  
Yeah, you're the biggest little  
fuck ever.

Jude's cracking up.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
That's NOT funny. It's not!

JUDE  
Hey, go to work. I love you.

EMMA  
I'm going! Fuck you. I love you  
too. Christ.

She leaves. Jude remains on the rooftop, watching the sun  
rise. Holding on him, his smile slowly fades.

He takes a breath. A deep inhale. A deep exhale. Inhale.

The world BLURS around him as--

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - DUSK - **THEN**

Jude walks down the street carrying a case of beer. He's got  
his film camera hanging over his shoulder. He approaches a  
HOUSE, there's noise coming from the back yard. A guitar  
twang, lots of laughing, yelling voices. A party.

Jude gets to the front door and knocks with his elbow. A long  
beat. Then:

SAMANTHA (26) opens the door.

SAMANTHA  
Heyyyyy Juuuuuuuude don't make it  
baaaaaaaaad.

Jude stares at her blankly.

JUDE  
Yeah, no one's definitely ever done  
that.

SAMANTHA  
I'm Samantha. Come in, come in!

Jude enters.

INT. SMALL HOUSE - DUSK - THEN

The house is empty, the party is going on in the back yard.

SAMANTHA  
Just put those anywhere.

JUDE  
Fridge?

SAMANTHA  
Anywhere.

Jude drops the case on the table and looks around. There's a smattering of mismatched furniture and art that comes from roommate living.

JUDE  
Nice house.

SAMANTHA  
Thanks, yeah. I mean, it's fine, I  
share it with three other girls so,  
you know, whatever.

His eyes go to the back yard. He sees EMMA chasing a small dog around a picnic table.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)  
Emma said you're like a movie guy?

JUDE

Oh, no. I work for Squix? You know, they do like little recap videos of the news, little viral videos, you know all the stuff you skip in your timeline?

SAMANTHA

She said you were funny. You met recently, right?

JUDE

Ish.

SAMANTHA

"Ish." Are you going steady?

Jude smirks, put a little on the spot.

JUDE

Uh... What does she say?

SAMANTHA

She calls you "gorgeous creature." But don't tell her I told you that. Come on. She's back here.

Samantha leads him towards the back door.

EXT. BACK YARD - DUSK - THEN

Ben plays on the guitar. Jude steps out to a group of fifteen.

The grill is going, hot dogs and burgers.

SAMANTHA

Hey everyone, this is Jude. Jude, everyone!

SEVERAL WITTY FUCKERS  
HEYYYYYY JUUUUUUUDE!

Ben instantly starts playing the opening chords to Hey Jude. Jude sheepishly makes his way to Emma, who is sitting on a picnic table with a beer in each hand. She hands one to him.

They stare at each other for a beat, neither one speaking. Then:

JUDE

I fuckin' hate the Beatles.

Emma laughs at that.

EMMA  
Thanks for coming.

JUDE  
Yeah. I mean. Thanks for inviting  
me.

EMMA  
Do you want to like... Meet my  
people?

Jude looks around.

JUDE  
Are these them?

EMMA  
No, they're all hiding in an  
upstairs bedroom.

JUDE  
Oh, good. I'm much more down with  
the upstairs bedroom.

Emma smiles. He leans in and kisses her shoulder in a way no  
one else would notice.

But she notices.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT - FRAGMENTED MOMENTS - THEN

The SOUNDS of the PARTY bleed through in real time AS:

*Emma leads Jude through the crowd of friends, introducing him  
to a few of them.*

*Jude and Ben talk back and forth, engaged in a deep  
philosophical conversation peppered with laughter.*

*As they work together to make a camp fire. Their dialogue is  
out of sync- disembodied, almost a voice over as the memory  
fragments.*

JUDE  
You gotta make sure it has room to  
breathe-

BEN  
Dude, I got it.

JUDE  
*Alright! Just saying.*

*Jude takes the guitar from Ben. Ben records him with his phone. Emma watches.*

*FLASH!*

*Jude takes a photo.*

*The circle of fifteen all stand around the grill, simultaneously lighting their SPARKLERS. As they light, everyone backs up, making big circles, writing their names, outlining sparkling dicks between their legs.*

*The laughter and far-off guitar twanging is infectious.*

*The party moves inside-*

*Emma leads Jude by the hand through the living room, around the corner, and up the stairs-*

*At the top of the stairs, she pulls him close. She kisses him. The darkness seems to envelop them as they disappear into each other.*

INT. EMMA'S ROOM - NIGHT - THEN

Jude and Emma lay in bed together. The room is lit by Christmas tree lights strung along the ceiling and walls.

Jude's eyes pass over Emma's room. There's a MAP on the wall staring back at him. It's got a dozen little pins tacked into different locations.

JUDE  
*Places you've been?*

EMMA  
*Uh-huh.*

JUDE  
*Where did you start?*

EMMA  
*England. Can't you tell?*

JUDE  
*That's like me saying I'm from America. I mean where are you from.*

EMMA  
*Oldham.*

JUDE  
Where is it?

Emma sits up and leans towards the map. She points to the only yellow pin in England.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
You miss it?

She thinks about it for a moment.

EMMA  
I miss the people. I miss some of my friends. My mum... But she's not there anymore either. She off with some... Guy. I don't know... Oldham it's not a place where things happen. It's not where someone goes to have their dreams come true.

JUDE  
What are your dreams?

She smiles at him, calculating if she's going to divulge any of that on this night.

EMMA  
Are you for real?

JUDE  
What do you mean?

EMMA  
Use that line on all the girls?

JUDE  
What do you think?

*The world blurs in and out of focus, melding Emma and Jude's bodies into one. With the image so out of focus, their words almost feel like voice over.*

EMMA  
Do you um...

She lets out a little laugh.

JUDE  
What?

EMMA  
I'm embarrassed.

JUDE  
Why? What up girl?

*Slowly, the image starts to come back into focus.*

EMMA  
I'm not good at this part.

JUDE  
Girl you're making me nervous. What is up? You're not about to tell me that you're married or something, are you?

EMMA  
What? No! You think that?

JUDE  
What are you trying to ask?

A beat.

EMMA  
Do you want to have sex?

*Back in focus, Emma's face clearly has a sudden look of bracing for rejection.*

EMMA (CONT'D)  
That was so awkward- Why- don't laugh at me!

JUDE  
Why are you being so weird!

EMMA  
I don't know, I just- you know... I fucking like you.

JUDE  
I fucking like you too!

*Again, the image rolls out of focus. In and out, like a deep breath in.*

EMMA  
So I don't want to-

Jude leans in and kisses her.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
I don't want to ruin it.

JUDE  
I like that.

She kisses him back.

*Out of focus, their bodies start to slink out of their clothes. Jude whispers something inaudible into Emma's ear and she starts giggling.*

*The blur of focus gets deeper, darker until:*

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT - THEN

*Everything bleeds in and out of focus.*

Most of the party has made their way to the backyard again. Distant pop and cracks! Echo across the neighborhood.

Up in the sky, far away, fireworks.

*The sky becomes harder to see- hazy, bleary.*

Friends, singles, couples all stand in the yard in a moment of happiness. In slow motion, Emma leads Jude by the hand. She looks back to him. Her eyes glowing with happiness.

This is the best it's ever been.

*The sounds are echoing into the distance, getting further away...*

*DING! Ding. Bzzzz. DING.*

Everyone's phone is going off. Jude's phone goes off. Emma's.

They dig into their pockets and take out their phones.

On the screen:

## BREAKING INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS GROUNDED DUE TO

*Ring ring.*

EXT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - ROOFTOP - MORNING - **NOW**

Jude is still sitting in his lawn chair. Dawn has broken definitively into morning.

He blinks, coming out of a daze. His phone is ringing. He hits answer.

JUDE

Hello?

EMMA (O.S.)

Are you okay?

JUDE

Em?

EMMA (O.S.)

I got a call from Stephen, he said  
you weren't at work?

JUDE

No, no I'm okay, just... Running a  
few minutes late.

EMMA (O.S.)

... Jude, it's noon.

Jude looks around. Sure enough, the sky is blue and the sun is high above him.

JUDE

Yeah, I'll uh- I'll talk to you  
soon.

EMMA (O.S.)

Jude are-

He hangs up and stands quickly. He looks around, orienting himself.

INT. RESCUE OFFICE - BACK ROOM - DAY - NOW

Emma puts her phone down on her desk. Pensive.

EXT. RESCUE OFFICE - BACK - DAY - NOW

Emma reaches into a bush and pulls out a hidden pack of smokes sealed in a zip-lock bag. She takes out a cigarette and lights it.

A VAN rolls up the long alley leading up to the back. Emma watches it come.

A DRIVER gets out.

DRIVER

Hey.

EMMA

Hey.

He goes to the back and opens it. The sound of yipping and whining can be heard.

Emma stubs out her cigarette and goes to the back of the van. A dozen crates filled with small and medium sized dogs line the inside.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Any collars?

DRIVER

Two.

Emma leans and unlatches one of the crates. She reaches into her pocket and pulls out a treat. She offers it to one of the smaller dogs.

EMMA

Hey you. Come on. Come on.

The dog slowly comes out to her.

INT. RESCUE SHELTER - DAY - NOW

Emma and the Driver move the stray dogs from the back of the van to the crates inside the shelter.

Little white boards are fixed to the bars of each kennel for medical and feeding notes. Emma makes markings on them.

She writes **5** in the corner of the white boards on many of the kennels.

Reaching a BLACK LAB with a collar, she writes **14** on his white board.

She kneels down and calls the Lab over. He obediently comes.

DRIVER (O.S.)

You good?

EMMA

All set. Thanks Frank.

At the end of the hall, the Driver blinks, taken aback that she knows his name.

DRIVER

Sure. Uh... Say, what's your name again?

Emma looks over to him.

EMMA

Emma.

DRIVER

Emma. Right. Nice to meet you.

Emma looks like she's about to say something else, then nods sadly. As Frank the Driver leaves, Emma turns her attention back to the Dog. She reaches for his collar.

EMMA

Alright you. Let's see if we can't find your family.

INT. RESCUE OFFICE - DAY - NOW

Emma sits at the phone, the dog collar in her hand. She dials the number engraved on the tag. The phone rings. And rings. And rings.

INT. JUDE'S OFFICE - DAY - NOW

Clutching his back pack, Jude rushes past row after row of brightly colored cubicles. A CO-WORKER pops their head out from their desk.

CUBICLE CO-WORKER

Dude, you're so late!

JUDE

I know, I know!

Jude keeps going, racing to the end of the room and cascading down a

HALLWAY

Filled with all sorts of people, men and women of different races, ages, looks and types. He ducks into a nearby door.

INT. JUDE'S OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY - NOW

Jude meets two CO-WORKERS who stand around a camera on a tripod.

CO-WORKER 1  
Where have you been?

CO-WORKER 2  
We started without you.

JUDE  
I know, sorry, sorry. I just uh,  
weird morning.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
How many have we done?

CO-WORKER 2  
Five.

JUDE  
Great, let's just keep at it. Bring  
in the next, please?

INT. JUDE'S OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - NOW

An AWKWARD DUDE sits in front of a bright blue wall. His yellow shirt is a stark contrast.

AWKWARD DUDE  
Just uh... Ha. Go?

JUDE (O.C.)  
Yeah, just say the first thing you think.

AWKWARD DUDE  
Um... Okay. Love is...

*The image switches, same background, but now an OLDER WOMAN sits in front of the wall.*

OLDER WOMAN  
Being able to make mistakes and finding a way to laugh about them. Even the serious ones.

*The images switches again, to a TEENAGE GIRL*

TEENAGE GIRL  
Complete trust. Like knowing he's not going to fuck some whore.

JUDE (O.C.)  
You can't say fuck.

TEENAGE GIRL

Ooh. Sorry. Like knowing he's not going to sleep with some whore.

CO-WORKER 2 (O.C.)

She- she can't say whore either.

*Now an ATTRACTIVE JOCK.*

ATTRACTIVE JOCK

I think love is being able to just be 100% real all the time, and sometimes that means being a dick.

*A beat.*

ATTRACTIVE JOCK (CONT'D)

What?

*An Older Man sits in the hot seat.*

OLDER MAN

Love... Oh my. I'll tell you what love is...

He opens his mouth to speak.

INT. RESCUE SHELTER - LATER - NOW

Emma walks down the hallway. She marks each white board.

5 becomes 4.

12 becomes 11.

Countdowns. This is death row.

She gets to the end of the row of crates and finds herself before a whiteboard with a big 1 on it. She erases it. She looks at the contents of the crate.

A little mutt with saucer moon eyes is staring back at her.

She kneels down to its level.

INT. RESCUE SHELTER - BACK ROOM - LATER - NOW

Emma plugs her phone into a set of speakers.

*THE BALLAD OF EMMA AND JUDE starts to play - a song that will be heard again. A man's voice sings it.*

Emma hums along. She knows the tune well, *it's about her*. She preps a syringe. The mutt lies on the table, following her with its big eyes.

She strokes the mutt behind the ears, continuing her lullaby.

It's eyes start to close. She keeps on singing.

The dog's eyes close all the way.

EXT. RESCUE SHELTER - BACK - AFTERNOON - NOW

Emma smokes another cigarette. She's got tears in her eyes. She takes out her phone and hits call.

MOM (O.C.)

Hi love!

She's got a thick British accent to match Emma's.

EMMA

Hi Mum.

MOM

How is it then?

EMMA

Fine... How's Germany?

MOM

Oh, didn't I tell you? I'm in France now. We've gone to Henry's nephew's chateau.

EMMA

You're back with Henry again? What happened to Paul?

MOM

Paul? Love, that was ages ago. Oh I do hope they'll lift this flight ban and you can come visit soon. And Jude of course.

EMMA

Me too Mum.

MOM

Well how are things? Are you happy over there?

EMMA

Yeah, things are good. They're all quiet over here for once.

MOM

What about your friend Samantha, how is she?

Emma falters for a moment.

EMMA

Yeah, she's good.

MOM

Well we're just about to pop in for a bite so I thought I'd give you a call.

EMMA

Kay.

MOM

Say hi to David for me.

EMMA

Jude.

MOM

What?

EMMA

Jude.

MOM

Oh God, what did I say? David? Paul, Henry, David, Jude, look at us, I guess it doesn't matter as long as they're all handsome!

That makes Emma laugh.

EMMA

I'll tell Jude you said that-

MOM

Don't you DARE!

EXT. CITY STREETS - MARKET - EVENING - NOW

Emma walks through a small outdoor market, her head phones over her ears. She notices a group of PEOPLE hanging up a small sign with a ladder above an empty shop.

The sign reads MEDICAL. It's folded over in the midst of its hanging. She can't see the rest of it. She waits there for a moment, staring.

She doesn't notice Jude approaching and stopping next to her.

JUDE

I mean the relieving part-

Emma JUMPS at his voice.

JUDE (CONT'D)

-Is that you get all blank stare in times other than when we have sex.

Smiling, she pushes him, then kisses him.

EMMA

Jerk! Hi.

JUDE

Good day?

EMMA

Mmm. Fine.

She gets close to him and starts to slow dance. An onslaught of pedestrians begin to cross the street, coming directly towards them.

JUDE

Oh we're dancing now?

EMMA

We're dancing now.

JUDE

Why?

EMMA

Because I feel like it.

The crowd reaches them, and suddenly they're like a rock in a running river as people part to make room for the slow-dancing couple in the middle of foot traffic.

JUDE

Sushi tonight?

Emma scrunches her face, falling into their playful banter.

EMMA

I was thinking something less disgusting.

JUDE

One day you're gonna discover raw  
fish and it's gonna blow your mind.

EMMA

Why don't we pick up from Grateful  
Duck?

JUDE

You're not gonna cave on the sushi?

EMMA

Are you gonna pick a fight about  
it?

JUDE

I'm just saying, I could-

Emma suddenly breaks away, a big smile on her face and shouts  
to the nearby pedestrians:

EMMA

I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU, GO AWAY!

Wide eyed, Jude grabs her hand and starts to move as some  
people stare at them.

JUDE

Shh! Okay, damn, Grateful Duck, you  
win-

He looks up to the handful of people watching them.

JUDE (CONT'D)

She's joking. That's my wife!

INT. JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - LATER - NOW

Jude and Emma sit on the floor in the living room, their  
coffee table serving as their dining table for the take out  
in front of them.

Blue longingly stares at Jude, hoping for a handout.

JUDE

You think the dogs are forgetting?  
Or just their owners?

EMMA

I don't know.

Jude frowns. He looks over at BLUE, sitting on the couch.

JUDE  
Don't forget me, Blue!

A beat.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
It's too bad we can't take some of  
them. The dogs, I mean.

EMMA  
What?

JUDE  
I mean... We've got room. We could  
take on a puppy or something,  
right?

A sudden hush.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
What?

EMMA  
... You said we couldn't.

JUDE  
What?

Emma grows quiet.

EMMA  
Last week Jude. We had a huge fight  
about this last week. I wanted to  
bring home a corgi and we fought so  
much you slept on the couch.

A heavy silence sets in between them. Jude lets out a  
defeated exhale.

JUDE  
I don't remember that.

He rubs his face. No more hiding it.

EMMA  
... oh my god, Jude.

JUDE  
I just didn't want you to worry.

EMMA  
Well color me fucking worried.

The moment lingers between the two of them.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Jude ... I don't... I don't know  
what to say right now.

She swallows.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
... What's it like?

Jude shifts.

JUDE  
Don't know... It's like... Just  
hazy.

EMMA  
Everything?

JUDE  
No, no. Just... Little pieces. I  
don't think I'm missing anything  
big yet.

EMMA  
"Yet."

JUDE  
I can remember 10th grade math. And  
I sat behind Liz Claremont and  
Bobby Supercino was next to me. But  
I can't remember my teacher's name.

EMMA  
That... That doesn't sound so bad.

JUDE  
The more I try to remember this  
teacher... I can't remember if it  
was a man or a woman... Tall or  
fat... Or... The more I focus on  
it, the more it goes away.

The two sit across from each other. Eyes locked. Pained.  
She's got tears in her eyes.

EMMA  
This is going to be like Ben, isn't  
it?

JUDE  
That's not going to happen.

EMMA  
How do you know?

JUDE

Remember what you told me? You  
can't forget feelings.

He points to his temple.

JUDE (CONT'D)

They don't live up here.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - NOW

Emma sits at her desk, writing in her journal. Jude is on the bed, his face lit up by the screen of his phone.

EMMA (V.O.)

I'm not sure what's harder. The fact that we may be going through this... Or that fact that we're far from alone... Not unique, not warranting anything more than passing sympathy. When your disaster is everyone's disaster... How do you grieve?

She hesitates. She sneaks a glance at Jude, completely absorbed in his cell phone. A LONG silence as she slips into her memories.

EMMA (V.O.)

I keep going back to the start.

EXT. DOCKS - MORNING - THEN - MONTAGE MOMENTS

A LOBSTERMAN (60s) hauls wooden crates onto the back of his fishing boat. It's a misty morning- heavenly almost.

EMMA (V.O.)

Then it felt so far away...

*He starts the boat, it slips into the fog...*

EXT. OCEAN - MORNING - THEN - MONTAGE MOMENTS

*The Fisherman trolls through the calm ocean water. The sun fights to pierce the morning fog.*

*He squints- seeing a shape out of the haze. He brings his fishing boat to a slow.*

EMMA (V.O.)

You'd hear stories from somewhere  
like the coast of Maryland or  
Florida.

*A LOST MAN in a life jacket is bobbing in the ocean water. With sudden urgency, the Fisherman steers his vessel around to rescue the Lost Man.*

*The Fisherman pulls the Lost Man up to safety. The Man has a strange expression on his face- completely calm, almost half asleep.*

EMMA (V.O.)

The story of the man stranded in  
the ocean picked up by a fishing  
boat. It turned out he was another  
fisherman. His boat washed up to  
shore four days later. He said he  
couldn't remember how to steer it,  
so he decided to swim home.

*The Fisherman regards the Lost Man with uncertainty; fear.*

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT - THEN - MONTAGE MOMENTS

A WOMAN wearing running clothes with a number pinned to her back jogs along the highway.

EMMA (V.O.)

The woman running in the marathon  
who forgot to stop running...

A NEWS VAN pulls up beside her, shining a light on her face.

INT. EMMA'S ROOM - NIGHT - THEN - MONTAGE MOMENTS

*Emma watches the sight of the jogging woman on the television. The banner below reads NIA becoming rampant in midwest.*

EMMA

What is happening?

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY - THEN - MONTAGE MOMENTS

*PEOPLE pass each other wearing medical masks.*

EMMA (V.O.)

There was something beautiful to  
these stories at first.

(MORE)

EMMA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

People whose lives had been whisked away from them. With their memories, the pain of their life went away too.

*A YOUNG GIRL stands in front of a wall of televisions, watching the NEWSCASTERS talk- Doctors on some screens, suits on some others. The Young Girl drinks the images in.*

EMMA (V.O.)

Those stories became more frequent, and then a scarier narrative began to unfold.

*MAPS, SCIENTISTS, VIDEOS OF MALLS, AIRPORTS, STREETS with pedestrians covering their faces.*

EMMA (V.O.)

Like the avian flu and SARS before it. Vague symptoms and casually concerned experts. An outbreak in Philadelphia. A rash of cases in Detroit.

*Images of SCIENTISTS wearing MASKS in white LABS, dropping liquids into PETRI DISHES.*

EMMA (V.O.)

They call in NIA. The Neuroinflammatory affliction.

## N I A

The block letters BLAZE across the news images- the images begin to show burned fuselages and headlines: **Another Crash Makes 4 Since September.**

INT. JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - THEN - MONTAGE MOMENTS

Jude and Emma lie in bed together. They both scroll their phones, looking at photos of the wreckages.

EMMA (V.O.)

Then the flights were grounded and we couldn't pretend it was just in some other part of the world.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY - THEN - MONTAGE MOMENTS

The airport is COMPLETELY EMPTY.

EMMA (V.O.)  
It was everywhere.

INT. VET'S OFFICE - MORNING - THEN - MONTAGE MOMENTS

Emma sits at the front desk, her ear to the phone. A number of PATIENTS wait with their animals in the lobby.

In the corner, a television plays the news. A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL speaks to the camera.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL  
Until we, at the very least, can screen for the NIA, we can't risk another plane crash. I will tell you that we are all working tirelessly.

Emma watches the television, clearly not consoled.

INT. JUDE'S OFFICE - DAY - THEN - MONTAGE MOMENTS

Jude sits behind a computer editing footage in his cubicle. He watches the OLDER MAN wax poetic on love.

EMMA (V.O.)  
But the world keeps moving. People show up for school, for work. It's not the end of the world is it?  
These things happen. Don't they?

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - NOW

Emma stops writing in her journal. She scans over the last few lines. She looks over to Jude, who is now passed out on the bed.

Blue the Dog begins to whimper by the door. Emma sighs.

EXT. CITY STREETS - MARKET - NIGHT - NOW

Led by Blue on his leash, Emma walks down the city streets, weaving her way through a market.

It's eerily unpopulated- two dozen people at most.

EMMA  
Come on, Blue.

She suddenly stops. Frozen for a moment at the sight of a crowd of PEOPLE. Everyone is lined up, crowding around a storefront.

A sign hangs above the door and now she can read the whole thing.

**MEDICAL TRIALS [NIA] INQUIRE WITHIN**

Emma walks towards the crowd as if in a daze. She weaves through people, pushing into the doorway.

She speaks to no one in particular.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
What is this?

A RANDOM WOMAN responds.

RANDOM WOMAN  
Lottery.

EMMA  
For what?

RANDOM WOMAN  
For the trials, what do you think?

EMMA  
Does it work?

RANDOM WOMAN  
Honey it's called a trial.

Emma looks around. Money changes hands. People fill out forms. People walk out with tickets in hand.

She pushes deeper into the crowd. She arrives at a desk. There's a CLINICIAN taking notes.

CLINICIAN  
You have money?

EMMA  
How much?

CLINICIAN  
\$300 for a ticket.

EMMA  
And that gets me into the trials?

CLINICIAN

No, it gets you a lottery ticket  
for the chance to be in the trials,  
it's a lottery.

Emma hesitates for a moment. She regards the people around her. A LOT of tickets have gone out.

EMMA

When's the drawing?

CLINICIAN

Tomorrow.

The Clinician hands her a clipboard with a form.

CLINICIAN (CONT'D)

Fill this out, bring it back when  
you're done.

Emma takes it and goes to a corner. She begins to fill out the document.

**Name: J-U-D-E**

JUDE (V.O.)

Why do you love me?

EMMA (V.O.)

What do you mean?

She keeps filling out the forms. Birthdays. SS number. Eye color. Height. Weight. Medical history. She knows it all.

JUDE (V.O.)

The pessimists say love is just...  
Synapsis in the brain and that this  
is all chemical.

EMMA (V.O.)

And what do you say?

JUDE (V.O.)

I asked you first. Why do you love  
me?

Emma finishes filling out the forms. She takes them back to the front.

EMMA (V.O.)

There isn't just one reason.

JUDE (V.O.)

Give me your favorite one. Give me  
the one that's your favorite today.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT - NOW

Emma steps out of the pop up shop and weaves away from the crowd.

EMMA (V.O.)

I've never been able to picture  
more than a year or two ahead with  
another person. But with you I can  
see next year, and the year after,  
and the year after that... I can  
see our thirties... And our  
forties...

*Her words begins to fade out as the world blurs around her.  
The sound of a guitar, twanging out of the echoes of  
oblivion.*

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON - **THEN**

BEN's hands play the guitar-- *here he has no tattoos.*

Emma and Samantha are lying on the floor, sharing a joint.

Jude sits opposite Ben, headphones jacked into his laptop,  
monitoring the open audio editing program.

BEN

The ballad of Emma and Jude. Take  
one.

Emma bursts out laughing.

JUDE

Shh!

EMMA

I'm so sorry.

BEN

You're not going to laugh when you  
fucking love it and I play it at  
your god damn wedding. Okay, take  
one. Go.

JUDE

I cut.

BEN

Why?

JUDE

You're not playing anything!

BEN

Well roll it- The ballad of Emma and Jude. Take one.

JUDE

Take two.

Emma and Samantha repress their giggles in the corner. Ben closes his eyes- *taking stage*- then begins to play a Dylan-esq ballad.

As he does, Emma and Jude look over to each other.

*Quick cuts*

As Ben sings through his ballad-- little moments, hinted at in the lyrics of the song.

*Emma and Jude sliding down a slide in a WATER PARK*

*Sparklers in the back yard*

*Emma takes a photo of Jude, who cradles Blue the Dog.*

*Jude and Emma in a pet store- Jude talks animatedly to a parrot. Emma is red in the face with laughter. The parrot spreads its wings- trying to escape the two.*

*The couple is in the middle of the audience at a concert. People dance and jump around them- but they are still- foreheads pressed against each other, caught in a slow dance, out of time, out of place.*

Ben finishes his ballad. Emma looks to Jude. She lets out a small giggle- covering her mouth to choke it, right as he plays his final chord.

INT. EMMA'S ROOM - DAY - THEN

Jude sits on Emma's bed, laptop opened. Emma's giggle plays over and over and over. Jude scrubs over the soundwave.

Emma lies near the foot of the bed, a remote control in her hand.

*The NEWS IMAGES on the TV flip to CARTOONS, and then to a sitcom, and then a movie.*

JUDE

I can't get rid of your laugh.

EMMA

So leave it in.

JUDE

Hm.

The thought hadn't occurred to Jude. He extends the clip. He lets it play. Ben's final chord plays, and the sound of giggling erupts. It's kind of lovely.

Emma's focus is on the television: back to the NEWS.

EMMA

Do you ever worry about it?

JUDE

About the memory-obliterating  
epidemic sweeping across the world  
with no cure? Girl, naw.

EMMA

I'm serious.

Sex noises come through the wall. Emma and Jude glance at each other.

JUDE

I'm more worried about the noises  
coming through that wall.

EMMA

We should record them and put it on  
his album.

JUDE

Bonus track. "The Ben Bang-a-Rang."

EMMA

Grossssss.

Jude closes the laptop, blinking.

JUDE

That- is awful. Are you just so  
desensitized to that that-

A loud, guttural grunting comes through now- Jude and Emma can't contain their smiles.

JUDE (CONT'D)

Man, sounds like Sam is having sex  
with a wild boar in there. How  
often does this happen to you?

EMMA

What? It's not that bad. What about  
the sounds you make?

JUDE

What sounds I make?

Emma centers herself, then makes a goofy eye rolling face and lets out a groan that sounds like Chewbacca's sad cousin. Jude starts laughing.

JUDE (CONT'D)

I do not do that.

EMMA

I swear, you've done it. In fact it  
sounds just like that.

The grunts from next door get louder.

JUDE

This is awful.

Jude rolls over, hitting the tv remote with his back. The channel flips back to a NEWS STATION. A news reporter is chattering in the background now.

The chyron describes a rise in suicides across the country.

EMMA

... Holy shit.

Jude follows Emma's gaze, back to the television.

*A FEMALE DOCTOR is on the screen, standing in front of a podium. Half a dozen microphones with different news logos point at her. A BREAKING banner flies across the bottom: ROAD TO A CURE.*

*FEMALE DOCTOR*

*-have identified the cause of the neuroinflammatory affliction, NIA.  
We've been able to identify an absent enzyme in more than 60% of NIA cases. At this time...*

Jude and Emma are glued to the screen.

JUDE

Did they cure it?

EMMA

Shh.

FEMALE DOCTOR

*We still have a long way to go. But today is a sure sign of progress. If we can identify, that means we can isolate. If we can isolate, we can treat it. Given our recent discovery, we believe that real steps have been taken towards immunization.*

Jude and Emma look at each other. Slowly, smiles come over their faces.

JUDE

That's good right?

EMMA

Yeah. That's good. That's a really... Good sign.

Jude flops back on the bed. There's quiet for a moment. Then another loud GRUNT from Ben on the other side of the wall and the couple erupts into laughter.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - MORNING - **NOW**

A CELL PHONE is ringing loudly as Emma VAULTS straight up. Jude is asleep in bed next to her.

She looks at the screen- a new number. She picks up the phone.

EMMA

Hello?

WOMAN'S VOICE

Mr. Williams, please.

EMMA

This is his wife, who is calling?

WOMAN'S VOICE

I'm Janet Dormer, I'm with the San Francisco Medical Research and Development Opportunities Initiative?

Emma glances over at Jude-- still asleep, then quietly slinks out of bed and shifts to the next room.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Hello?

EMMA

No, I'm here. Hi, Ms. Dormer.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Doctor.

EMMA

Doctor, sorry. Um- what's this-

WOMAN'S VOICE

I was calling to let you know your husband has been selected for clinical trials on an NIA suppressant study set to begin at the end of this week-

Emma is shaking. Tears well up in her eyes.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I see from the forms that were filled out that he's exhibiting NIA signs, correct? Hello?

EMMA

Yes. Yes. I'm here. I'm here.

Emma's voice breaks. She starts crying.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

A beat.

WOMAN'S VOICE

It's alright. Now... When you're ready, I'd like to ask some follow up questions about your husband's current condition. If selected, we'd ideally like to be getting him in the trial this week.

Emma's eyes go to the corner of the room. The empty fish tank sits against the window.

## INT. EMMA'S ROOM - DAY - THEN - MOMENTS

Emma and Jude work together to box up her belongings. Books, photographs, hard drives, clothes, they all get packed up.

## EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - AFTERNOON - THEN

Jude piles the last box into the bed of a rented pick up truck. Emma gets into the passengers seat.

She looks out the rear window and waves goodbye to SAM, who stands on the sidewalk. Sam waves back as Jude puts the truck into drive and it starts down the road.

## INT. JUDE'S APARTMENT - DAY - THEN - MOMENTS

Boxes get piled in the apartment.

Furniture gets moved every which way- a couch pushed to one wall, then another, then another, before it finally goes back to where it once was.

Jude's full mattress is replaced by a queen mattress. And thus, Jude's apartment officially becomes:

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - THEN

The apartment walls have gone from BLUE to YELLOW. Paint cans on the floor and plastic is strewn over some of the furniture.

Emma sits in bed, typing on her computer. Jude comes out of nowhere, FLOPPING on the bed.

EMMA

Tired?

JUDE

Yyyyyup.

EMMA

Good work.

Jude looks around the room.

JUDE

Girl, I don't know. Yellow?

EMMA

I like it.

Jude's turns over and yanks his phone out of his pocket.

JUDE

Yeah, we'll see how it looks in the sunlight, but I'm pretty sure you're... Gonna...

His phone captivates his attention. Emma notices, a smile on her face.

EMMA

You gonna finish that sentence?  
Or...

He swallows, concern on his face. Emma registers.

EMMA (CONT'D)

What happened?

Jude shows Emma his phone. She looks at it. A headline glares at her:

**SCIENTIST ON PATH TO CURE SUCCUMBS TO NIA.**

Emma begins to scroll through the article.

EMMA (V.O.)

The minds that were trying to break ground with the NIA were snapping under the pressure. Every few weeks a new team would get on the air and give us hope...

Jude stands up. He walks to the other side of the room. He turns off the lights and sits in a chair for a moment.

EMMA (V.O.)

Only to fall apart a few weeks later. We all took to calling them the "cure of the week." To remind us not to get our hopes up and-

JUDE

Let's tell each other all our important memories now.

EMMA

What?

JUDE

Let's tell each other everything. All of it. Let's record as much as we can, about ourselves, about our relationship... In case we lose it.

Emma stares at him, taken aback by his fear.

EMMA  
Turn on the lights.

He stands up, turning the lights back on, and returns to the bed. He takes his phone from her and switches it to the camera app. He hits RECORD.

JUDE  
When I was nine, I walked in on my parents having sex. I didn't know what was happening. All I knew was my dad told me it was all right. I hadn't done anything wrong, but it felt like I was.

EMMA  
Jude this isn't-

JUDE  
I was the only one in the room when my mother died. I saw it happen. I didn't do anything. I didn't get my dad. I didn't call a nurse. I just sat there with her. And she died.

Emma pauses.

EMMA  
I'm sorry.

JUDE  
Now you. Just... Start anywhere.

She thinks for a moment. She looks down at the camera.

EMMA  
I was so sad the day I met you.

A beat. She rests in the sadness for a second, but then smiles suddenly.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
But for the life of me I can't remember why. I can remember the water. I can remember the cold air. I can remember the sound of splashing. But when I think of that day, it's not a memory anymore. It's a feeling.

She picks up the camera and turns it off.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Maybe we'll get NIA. Maybe we'll...  
Maybe we'll forget what each others  
favorite color is or who bought the  
fridge or how we met our friends...  
But we won't forget how we feel  
about each other.

A beat.

JUDE

How do you know?

EMMA

Because feelings aren't memories. I  
can't describe how I feel about you  
in any real way. I can't write it  
down or take a picture of it. And I  
can't say recite some words in a  
way that will remind me how to feel  
about you if I forget a memory.  
Feelings don't live here.

She puts her hand against his head. Kisses him. Her hand goes  
down to his chest.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I could never forget how I feel  
about you.

Jude takes this in.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - MORNING - NOW

Emma and Jude sit across from each other at the kitchen table  
in silence. He reaches over and squeezes her hand.

JUDE

Okay. Let's go talk to them.

EXT. CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY - NOW

Jude holds his camera to his face and frames up a photo of  
the towering skyscraper.

CLICK.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - DAY - NOW

Elevator doors open. Emma and Jude get out and are met with a flood of PEOPLE sitting and standing in the waiting room. Every single one of them is wearing a face mask.

A folding table is set up in front of the elevator. A FEMALE CLINICIAN (30s) wearing rubber gloves and a face mask greets them with what is probably a smile.

FEMALE CLINICIAN

Good morning. Last name?

JUDE

Williams.

The Female Clinician looks pages through a chart, then crosses off Jude's name.

FEMALE CLINICIAN

Juuuuude. Hey, Jude. Got you.  
And... You?

EMMA

I'm Emma. His wife. I'm just here  
for-

FEMALE CLINICIAN

You're not participating in the  
study?

EMMA

No.

FEMALE CLINICIAN

You'll have to wait downstairs.

A beat. Emma nods, kisses Jude on the cheek.

EMMA

It's okay.

She returns to the elevator and presses the down button. Jude watches her for a moment.

FEMALE CLINICIAN

Wear one of these.

She offers Jude a face mask.

JUDE

I thought it wasn't airborne.

FEMALE CLINICIAN  
Go ahead and have a seat-- while  
you're waiting you can fill out  
these consent forms.

Jude takes the face mask and straps it on before walking into the waiting room. Emma watches as the elevator doors close on them.

Jude looks down at the clipboard in his hands. He reads the verbiage.

**I understand that my insurance may not cover any unintended side effects which may be incurred from this clinical trial.**

EXT. CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY - NOW

Emma sits outside by a corporate fountain. Water splashes into the sky. She takes out her phone and hits call.

EMMA  
Hi Mum.

MOM (O.C.)  
Hiiii Love. Are you on your way home?

EMMA  
What?

MOM  
It's almost six, you're usually back home by now.

Emma swallows, taking in her mothers words.

EMMA  
Mum... I don't live with you anymore.

Silence.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Don't you remember that? Can... Can you tell me you remember that?

A sigh on the other end of the phone.

MOM  
Of course I do. I... I'm sorry, I don't know what I was thinking.  
You're right.  
(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)

I knew to dial your American number, I must've just been having a moment or-

EMMA

This isn't the first time...

Emma holds her emotion in, trying to be helpful.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Mum, have you told anyone that you're starting to forget? Mum?

MOM

I can't remember.

Emma nods. Of course not.

EMMA

Mum, you're going to have to start being careful. You're going to have to write things down. Go see Aunt Claire and tell her what's going on so that-

MOM

I've got to go.

The line goes dead suddenly.

Emma freezes. She puts her hands in her head and smushes her face with them, taking a deep breath, trying to reconcile. Unwittingly, she makes a fist and begins to grind her knuckles against the brick she sits on.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY - NOW

Jude sits awkwardly in a folding chair. He's alone. This isn't a doctor's office. Everything about it is temporary.

DR. DORMER (50s) enters with an ASSISTANT.

DR. DORMER

Jude Williams?

JUDE

Hi.

DR. DORMER

I'm Dr. Dormer, I think I spoke to your wife on the phone?

JUDE

Yeah.

DR. DORMER

So, how long would you say you've been experiencing the effects of NIA?

JUDE

I'm not sure the day-

DR. DORMER

Approximately. Weeks? Months?

JUDE

Maybe a month.

DR. DORMER

Any gaping holes?

JUDE

Uh... Sorry?

DR. DORMER

Any big holes in your memory you've discovered in the initial loss?  
Maybe a distant relative's name, or the street you live on...

JUDE

I keep forgetting my dog. It's like... Foggy. You know? I can remember parts of things, but I'm starting to lose details.

DR. DORMER

On specific memories, or overall.

JUDE

Overall. Like...

*A quick cut to a*

*BODY OF WATER*

*Jude's eyes rest just above the surface. He stares straight ahead at EMMA- whose eyes are also just above the surface.*

*It's an image not seen before...*

JUDE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I can remember being with people...  
And who they are... But I don't remember where we were.

*And like that-- the image is gone.*

Jude blinks, coming out of the memory.

Dormer's assistant furiously jots down notes.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
So is it like a... Pill, or a-

DR. DORMER  
We'll be doing an oral CP to let-

JUDE  
Sorry. Oral... CP?

DR. DORMER  
A oral cranial puncture.

Jude swallows.

JUDE  
You're talking like a... Spinal  
tap?

DR. DORMER  
It's a... Cousin of the lumbar  
puncture, yes. Gretchen?

The Assistant hands Dr. Dormer a metal straw and a plastic skull. Dr. Dormer pops the back of the plastic skull open, revealing smaller plastic pieces packed together.

DR. DORMER (CONT'D)  
Now, your brain lives inside your  
skull and is connected to four  
interconnected ventricles. This is  
where cerebrospinal fluid is  
produced, which helps cushion your  
brain and provide it with basic  
protection.

Holding on Jude, Dr. Dormer's words start to fade away and are replaced with a ringing in his ears. The ringing grows.

He watches as she slides the metal straw into the mouth of the skull, pushing it into a hole in the roof of the mouth. She turns the skull around to demonstrate where in the brain the probe is hitting.

Jude closes his eyes. The sound CUTS back in.

DR. DORMER (CONT'D)  
Are you okay?

He swallows.

JUDE  
What are the risks?

Dr. Dormer nods, making eye contact with him. Ready to deliver the answer.

EXT. CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY - NOW

Emma stares down into the rippling water of the fountain. Orange FISH undulate below the surface.

She looks at her phone. MUM is ringing. She doesn't pick up. Emma tucks her phone into her pocket just in time to see-

SAMANTHA walking past her, bundled up in a coat, her hair shorter. Emma stands, alert. She hasn't been noticed yet.

EMMA  
Sam?

She steps after her.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Samantha!

Samantha turns, shocked out of her daze.

SAMANTHA  
Hey. Em. Good to see you.

EMMA  
It's been a minute.

SAMANTHA  
Yeah, I know. I'm just here for the day, you know um... Running errands.

EMMA  
Right. Right. God, it's good to see you. Are you-

SAMANTHA  
I'm good. I'm good. Really. What about you?

EMMA  
Well, Jude's got into a clinical trial of some potential cure, so... Fingers crossed.

Samantha nods. She's fighting back tears.

SAMANTHA

Oh... I'm... Yeah. That's great. I hope it works on him.

Emma hugs her. They stand by the fountain for a moment. Just a moment-- then Samantha breaks away.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Sorry. Tell Jude I say hi. It was great to see you. I just- it's tough.

EMMA

Okay.

SAMANTHA

Okay.

EMMA

Let's catch up for real soon, okay?

SAMANTHA

Yeah.

Samantha smiles. Nods. Emma watches as Samantha walks away from her, blending into the crowd of pedestrians crossing the street.

JUDE (O.S.)

Hey.

Jude is right behind her. He's carrying an armful of thick binders.

EMMA

Hey-- how'd that go?

JUDE

Breezy. No problem... You okay?

EMMA

I'm good. Come on. Let's get out of here.

She takes his arm and starts to move.

INT. MOVING BART - LATE AFTERNOON - NOW

Jude and Emma sit nestled into the corner of the BART- leaning into each other like they're one organism.

EMMA (V.O.)  
To identify a neural inflammation,  
begin by asking basic questions.

He twirls her hair with his fingers. They both stare out the window to the setting sun.

Jude's eyes go down to Emma's knuckles. They're raw and cut opened. He looks at them sadly, but doesn't say anything.

EMMA (V.O.)  
What's your name? How old are you?  
Your favorite color?

JUDE (V.O.)  
Jude Andrew Williams. I'm 26. My favorite color is purple.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - DAY - NOW

Emma opens THE BINDER.

It's professionally organized. Pages laminated. Full of charts, statistic, diagrams and flowcharts.

A set of questions followed by if/then statements. (*Ask if the patient remembers their birthday. If yes, move to question two. If no, ask them if they can recall a party with a cake.*)

Diagrams show maps of the brain with helpful explanations of which part of the brain does what.

A whole page with a cartoon piece of smiling broccoli says **BRAIN FOOD!**

EMMA (V.O.)  
Who am I? How old am I? What's my favorite color?

EMMA  
This is it? This is what they gave you? Brain teasers? I thought there was some sort of procedure.

She flips the binder over. A pamphlet falls out. Jude sits by the window, looking out at the street as Emma opens up the pamphlet.

JUDE  
Yeah. It's brain teasers and a surgery.

EMMA

Surgery?

JUDE

Yeah they uh... They take a... Like  
a metal straw and...

Jude swallows.

JUDE (CONT'D)

I don't want to do it, Em.

EMMA

What did the doctor say?

JUDE

They don't even know if it's going  
to work. You know. It's a TRIAL.  
It's a... "See and find out." Let's  
poke around in some dude's spine  
and hope we don't cripple him or  
make him go fuckin blind!

He takes a breath, calming himself.

JUDE (CONT'D)

I'm not doing it. I'm... I could  
just wind up with no memory, and...  
And no legs and no eyes. If I'm  
gonna forget who I am, I'd like to  
be able to see where I'm going.

Emma stares at him, taking in his fear.

EMMA

You've made up your mind then?

JUDE

Yeah.

She's quiet.

EMMA

Don't I get a vote here?

JUDE

Emma... You can't ask me to-

EMMA

But I am asking you. I have to ask  
you.

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)  
You don't want to be blind or in a wheelchair I get that, but if there's a chance we can stop this... I don't understand why you won't try for me.

Silence.

JUDE  
... What happened to not being scared because we can't forget feelings?

EMMA  
It's fucking different now.

Tears are welling in her eyes. It pains Jude to see.

JUDE  
Emma-

EMMA  
Who am I? How old am I? What's my favorite color.

JUDE  
Can-

EMMA  
Who am I? How old am I? What's my favorite color.

Jude closes his eyes.

JUDE  
You're my wife. Emma Veda Ryerson Williams. You're 25. Your favorite color is-

*QUICK CUT TO:*

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - THEN

Emma runs a paint roller across a wall-- painting the room yellow.

JUDE (V.O.)  
-yellow.

Her overalls are stained with paint- she's got a dab on her cheek. She's having fun.

Jude watches her from the bed covered in plastic.

EMMA (V.O.)

Now describe a specific memory that took place in the room you are in.

Emma catches Jude's eye. Face flushed red from laughing, she runs over to him, paint roller still in her hand. She jumps on the bed-

-silently laughing- he tries to get away from her. She rolls his shirt with yellow paint.

JUDE (V.O.)

You didn't like the blue walls in here. You said it reminded you of rainy days back home. So you painted it yellow.

Emma pins Jude down and starts painting on his face. She then leans forward and kisses him.

JUDE (V.O.)

You chased me with the roller and painted half my face yellow. Ruined my favorite shirt, too. Then you kissed me.

EMMA (V.O.)

What time of year was it?

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - SAME MOMENTS - THEN

*Jude's face is half covered in paint. He sits at the edge of the bed, looking out the window.*

*It's snowing outside.*

JUDE (V.O.)

...Winter...

He blinks.

*It's a gorgeous summer day outside. Green leaves blow in the wind.*

JUDE (V.O.)

No... Summer.

*Jude looks around. Things start to get fuzzy. Emma stands on the other side of the room- dissolving into an indistinguishable blob- bleeding into the yellow wall.*

EMMA (V.O.)  
The shirt I ruined. Your favorite.  
What color was it?

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY - THEN

A DRIER DOOR opens. Jude pulls clothes out of the drier and into a laundry basket.

He looks down at shirt splattered in faded yellow paint. The shirt is blue.

JUDE (V.O.)  
Blue...

He stares at.

The shirt starts to change color right before his eyes. Blue shifts to green.

JUDE (V.O.)  
No... Green.

EMMA (V.O.)  
You're not sure?

JUDE (V.O.)  
I'm not sure.

EMMA (V.O.)  
Do you remember something else about the shirt? Separate from that time. You said it was your favorite shirt-- why?

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY - THEN

*Jude runs. He wears a white shirt.*

JUDE (V.O.)  
I like the way it felt.

*Details of the shirt. It clutches his arms but not his torso.*

JUDE (V.O.)  
Good cut. Nice fabric. It had that print on it.

EMMA (V.O.)  
What is the print?

*Jude turns- facing front. A cartoon MOUSE giving the middle finger.*

JUDE (V.O.)  
The Fuck You Mouse.

EMMA (V.O.)  
Do you remember when you bought the shirt?

INT. CLOTHING STORE - DAY - THEN

*Jude rifles through racks of clothing. He stops and stares at the print of the Fuck You Mouse.*

*BEN, sans tattoos rifles through the wrack next to him.*

JUDE (V.O.)  
I was with Ben.

*Ben shows Jude a shirt with Fuck You Turtle on it. The shirt is green.*

EMMA (V.O.)  
What color is the shirt?

Jude looks back to the Fuck You Mouse. It's ORANGE.

JUDE (V.O.)  
Orange.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY - THEN

Jude runs in his Orange Fuck You Mouse shirt.

JUDE (V.O.)  
Orange.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY - THEN

Jude piles his laundry in the basket. His Orange Fuck You Mouse shirt is has faded yellow paint across it.

JUDE (V.O.)  
Orange.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - DAY - THEN

Jude lies in the bed covered in plastic. Emma stands over him, paint roller dripping paint. His Orange shirt is smeared with wet yellow.

JUDE (V.O.)  
The shirt is orange.

EMMA (V.O.)  
Were we dating, engaged, or  
married?

*The world around them starts to blur intensely, until Emma and Jude become an indistinguishable blob.*

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - MORNING - NOW

Jude's eyes snap open. Emma is sitting across from him. He blinks, trying to remember.

EMMA  
Jude?

JUDE  
... I...

EMMA  
When I moved in with you. Were we  
dating, engaged, or married?

He's quiet.

JUDE  
We were... Dating?

Emma closes her eyes.

EMMA  
Jude.

JUDE  
We were married.

EMMA  
Do you remember the fish?

Jude blinks. He clearly doesn't.

INT. MOVING BART - DAY - THEN

The couple sits on the BART together, curled up in the back, clutching onto each others hands. She leans over and kisses him gently on his neck.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS - AFTERNOON - THEN

Sun low in the sky, Emma and Jude round the corner, arm in arm. Making their way dow the sidewalk, Jude releases Emma and freezes.

He's right in front of a PET SHOP.

JUDE

Yo. Can we go in here?

She blinks.

INT. PET SHOP - AFTERNOON - THEN

Squawks and chirps greet them as they enter the shop. Exotic birds hang in cages on a nearby wall.

Jude wanders ahead. Emma lets him gain some distance before she enters- taking in the sights. Parrots, red, blue and yellow stare back at her.

She rounds a corner to the reptiles. Frogs and snakes roast under sun lights.

Slowly, she makes her way to the tropical fish.

A calming blue light bathes the long row of tanks. Emma watches multi-colored fish dart around the little tank.

At the end of a long row, she sees Jude with his face pressed up against the glass of a particularly colorful tank.

She reaches him, putting a hand on his back.

EMMA

What's going on with you?

JUDE

Look at this dude.

He points to a little yellow fish with an absurdly long nose.

JUDE (CONT'D)

Dude has no idea what's going on in the world. He doesn't know about AIDS or the Crusades or nuclear proliferation. He's just swimming around and feeling good.

EMMA

Mmm. We should be so lucky.

JUDE

Aren't we? I'm in that kind of happy zone when I'm with you. Look at his face- doesn't he look like me?

She laughs.

EMMA

Yeah I guess he does.

JUDE

Let's get married.

She eyes him up and down, smiling, not missing a beat.

EMMA

Okay.

JUDE

Yeah, but I'm not joking.

EMMA

Neither am I.

He falters- it's almost like he didn't expect it go quite that smoothly.

JUDE

I just-

EMMA

Shut up, Jude.

Emma grabs him by his shirt and pulls him close into a kiss. They clutch onto each other in the tightest embrace ever, surrounded by little fish tanks.

JUDE

Shit.

EMMA

What?

JUDE

I... I don't have a ring. I mean- I  
got one, but... Not on me.

Emma smiles.

EMMA

Then buy me a fish.

Jude smiles back. He keeps talking but the sound drowns out. Slowly, the image begins to BLUR, first in the periphery, until Jude and Emma become indistinguishable among the blue haze of fish tanks.

EMMA (V.O.)

"You're gonna have to move in now.  
Who the hell gets engaged and  
doesn't live together."

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - MORNING - NOW

Emma and Jude sitting across from each other. Emma tries to hold back her emotion. Jude looks over to the EMPTY FISH TANK in the corner of the apartment.

EMMA

Jude we were engaged. We were  
engaged and that's why we moved in  
together... And you don't remember  
that at all.

Jude is looking down in shame. She reaches over and takes his hand.

JUDE

I'm sorry.

He makes eye contact with her. Nods.

JUDE (CONT'D)

Okay, Em. I'll do it.

*In the distance, THE BALLAD OF EMMA AND JUDE begins to play.*

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - DAY - MOMENTS - NOW

Jude scrolls through vibrant photos on his laptop, pouring over images from his past- not just his relationship with Emma, photos of his family, of his mother...

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS - DAY - MOMENTS - NOW

Jude, Emma and Blue walk down the street together.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - EXAMINATION ROOM - MOMENTS - NOW

As the song continues to play, Jude and Emma sit in the examination room, listening to DR. DORMER explain more about the procedure.

They fill out paper work together. Sign release forms.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - EXAMINATION - DAY - MOMENTS - NOW

Jude is now dressed in a johnny. He lies on his back as the metal slab he's on slides into the MRI machine.

INSIDE THE MRI SCANNER - Jude stares up. Little green dots of light are pointed at his head. They blink on and off.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - MOMENTS - NOW

Jude and Emma lie in bed together. She's curled up against him, he lies flat on his back, looking up at the ceiling.

Speakers next to the bed are playing their ballad.

EMMA

What are you thinking?

JUDE

I'm trying to memorize what everything looks like. In case I don't see it again.

Emma sits up, looking deep into his eyes.

EMMA

You'll see me again.

Jude nods, unsure. He looks over to the wall. An empty fish tank in the corner.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY - NOW

Jude lies on the operating table, awake. An anesthesiologist inserts an IV into his arm. He watches in discomfort.

DR. DORMER

We're going to be administering a general anesthetic so that you won't be able to move... And a local cranial anesthetic.

Dr. Dormer and a group of medical ASSISTANTS move around the room, out of focus. Sounds of metal on metal, a high pitched drill, and an EKG monitor are heard.

The world blurs in and out of focus.

DR. DORMER (CONT'D)

Try to relax.

JUDE

Dr. Dormer?

DR. DORMER

Yes?

JUDE

... Do you think this is going to work?

She looks down at him, her face losing focus to Jude's eye. A comforting smile. Comforting voice.

DR. DORMER

We're going to do our best for you.

Jude nods. Dormer raises a small metal CONTRAPTION.

DR. DORMER (CONT'D)

Okay, open your mouth.

Jude does so. She fits the contraption in his mouth- suddenly making it so that Jude's jaw is spread wide opened. Stuck.

DR. DORMER (CONT'D)

Okay... Little pinch.

A needle appears. An assistant guides the needle into Jude's mouth. He closes his eyes, bracing for the feeling.

DR. DORMER (CONT'D)

Deep breath. Don't forget to breathe.

Tears spill out of Jude's closed eyes as the needle makes contact with the roof of his mouth. The syringe goes in deeper than expected. He chokes a little.

The needle comes back out, but he's given no reprieve, his jaw forced open. Jude takes a long breath, calming himself.

DR. DORMER (CONT'D)  
Okay, Gretchen, ready?

One of the assistants comes over.

DR. DORMER (CONT'D)  
Okay Mr. Williams. Close your eyes for me and keep breathing.

Jude takes another deep breath, closing his eyes. The high pitched ringing of a medical drill shrieks out. Jude moans in discomfort, tears still spilling out from under his eyelids.

The DRILL cranes towards his mouth, the metal tip already spinning. Jude squeezes his eyes shut and tight as he can as the drill goes into his mouth, that high pitched ringing piercing all other sound as it makes contact with his skin-

EXT. CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY - NOW

Large goldfish swim below the surface of rippling water. Calm. Serene. A complete exhale.

Emma sits on the edge of the fountain, looking at her phone. On the screen- she's calling **MUM**. It's on speaker, ringing. Ringing. Ringing.

Emma hangs up, shifting uncomfortably. She notices a COUPLE coming out of the doors of the office, the woman is in her 40s, in a wheelchair. She's got medical patches over her eyes.

JUDE (O.S.)  
Em-

She jumps.

Jude stands next to her. He's got tears steaming down his face. He extends his hand to her. A little shocked, she takes it and stands. He wraps his arms around her.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't fucking do it.

Emma starts to cry.

They stand in the middle of the courtyard, wrapped around each other. Crying like that.

EMMA (V.O.)  
If I could take your place, I  
would. Don't you know that?

It feels eternal.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS - AFTERNOON

Emma and Jude walk hand in hand. As they walk down the street together, they drop each others hands and walk separately.

EMMA (V.O.)  
Do I believe you won't forget how  
you feel about me? I used to... But  
then we saw what happened to **Ben**.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - NIGHT - **THEN**

Emma and Jude jog hand in hand hurriedly down the street together.

They approach EMMA'S OLD HOUSE. All of the lights are on.

As they walk up the steps- the sound of glass SMASHING is heard. Then: SCREAMING.

Jude doesn't hesitate, and right away he bolts into--

INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - **THEN**

The screaming is coming from upstairs. Jude races up the stairs followed closely by Emma-

EMMA  
Sam? Samantha!

SAMANTHA  
I'm here!

Emma catches Samantha running halfway down the stairs. She's in hysterics.

EMMA  
What's happened?

SMASH!

BEN (O.S.)  
GET OUT! GET THE FUCK OUT!

Emma guides Sam to the bottom of the stairs-

SAMANTHA  
He- he- he... He doesn't know who I  
am. He doesn't know who I am  
anymore.

Jude and Emma trade glances from the top of the stairs to the bottom.

Jude proceeds to walk--

DOWN THE HALLWAY

The bedroom door at the end of the hall is slightly ajar. Light spills into the dark hallway. A lamp sits on its side in the doorway.

Jude goes to the door and knocks on it.

BEN (O.S.)  
GO AWAY!

JUDE  
Ben?

A beat.

BEN (O.S.)  
... Jude?

Jude pushes the door open, revealing

SAMANTHA'S BEDROOM

A desk is turned over, pictures torn off the wall, frames smashed. Ben's hand is bleeding- probably from when he put his fist through the television.

Compared to the last time we saw him-- Ben has a dozen tattoos. He is absolutely COVERED in ink.

JUDE  
Hey Ben.

BEN  
... Hey Jude.

Jude kneels down in the doorway.

JUDE  
What are you up to, pal?

Ben looks around, frantic.

BEN  
I don't know- I don't know... Where  
I am. Or-- or who that fucking  
bitch down there is!

Jude puts up a hand-

JUDE  
Calm down. Ben. That's Sam.  
Samantha. You've been together for  
years. You've known her longer than  
you've known me.

BEN  
I have?

JUDE  
Yeah... Ben... You've got the NIA.  
You've had it for a while and we've  
all been helping you deal with it.  
Look at your body, Ben.

Ben looks down. His guitar string tattoos.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
Look at your hand.

Ben looks down. He's got an address tattooed on the back of  
his hand.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
Unbutton your shirt.

BEN  
Why?

A tense beat. Ben does as he's asked. His torso reveals a  
plethora of tattoos. He looks down at them.

Names, license plates, numbers, addresses. Over his heart,  
upside down so he can read it- is **SAMANTHA** inside of a  
cartoon heart.

Ben collapses at the sight. He cries. Jude shuffles close to  
him and wraps his arms around him.

INT. HOUSE - SAME MOMENTS - THEN

Samantha and Emma hold each other at the bottom of the stairs.

EMMA

Look at me, look at me, love. It's gonna be okay. It's gonna be okay.

SAMANTHA

No it's not- he's fucking gone!

EMMA

No he's not. Look at me. We'll figure this out. We'll all figure it out together.

SAMANTHA

Emma. He doesn't remember any of it. It's. All. Gone. He's **snapped**.

Emma takes this in.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT - THEN

*A blurry Ben plays the guitar, was it 'Love Me Do' or 'Don't Let Me Down?' I can't remember.*

EMMA (V.O.)

Ben Richards was from Nashua, New Hampshire. And whenever anyone talked about Ben, two things always came up.

EXT. CITY STREETS - AFTERNOON - THEN - QUICK MOMENTS

Emma and Samantha eat ice cream by the pier together.

SAMANTHA

His tinder profile just says "guitar and campfires." Is it stupid that I think that's kind of hot?

INT. JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - THEN - QUICK MOMENTS

Jude and Ben record music together, Jude on the microphone, both wear headphones.

Ben slides his headphones off.

BEN

The ambience is wrong- it's wrong-

JUDE

What's so wrong?

BEN

We should be recording this by a fucking camp fire.

Jude lets out an exasperated sigh.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT - THEN - QUICK MOMENTS

Extension cords run out of open windows of the house and into the back yard. Jude records Ben as he plays his guitar next to a campfire.

EMMA (V.O.)

His mother was Fiona and his father was Barry. You would know Ben for years and only if you asked him would he admit he has an older sister.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR - DAY - THEN

Ben sits in a the chair as he gets a tattoo on his chest. Samantha over the cartoon heart.

EMMA (V.O.)

When Ben started to lose his memory, he kept it a secret. Just like everyone did back then. That's when the tattoos started.

EXT. BACK YARD - NIGHT - FRAGMENTED MOMENTS - THEN

Ben plays his guitar by the fire. Tears streak down his face. He blurs in and out of focus.

EMMA (V.O.)

Ben Richards always smelled like charcoal and he had chronic bad breath and he ate more pasta than anyone I'd ever met yet never put on weight. Ben could turn any room into a concert, and he was inclined to. A casual get together with four friends would evolve into a night of live music. That was his gift.

Ben stops playing. He stares straight ahead. All that is left are the pops and crackles of the fire.

Darkness encroaches him on all sides.

EMMA (V.O.)

This is who we all remembered. Who we were clutching on to.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING - THEN

Samantha lies in bed. She opens her eyes, waking.

EMMA (V.O.)

No tattoo, calls from friends, late nights crying, guitar lessons or campfires could bring Ben back.

The spot next to her is empty.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT - THEN

Emma sits at the bottom of the stairs, wrapped around a sobbing SAMANTHA.

EMMA (V.O.)

I promised my best friend it would be okay. I didn't know I was lying.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - MORNING - THEN

In the foggy San Fran morning, Samantha runs out of the house-the front door already open.

She gets to the middle of the street and shouts Ben's name.

EMMA (V.O.)

We don't know what happened to him. We don't know if he's alive or if he's dead.

EXT. CITY STREETS - MORNING - THEN

Ben walks down a street, shrouded in fog. He's only seen from the back, walking away.

He disappears into the fog.

EMMA (V.O.)

He just... Went away.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - NOW

Jude unlocks the door. Blue greets them as the couple walks in together. They shrug off their jackets. Emma can't quite get hers off, so she starts to wrestle with it.

Her arm gets caught in the sleeve and then she's yanking at the shoulder-

JUDE

Em-

She lets out a little cry as she RIPS the sleeve open. In a sudden spat of fury, she kicks a nearby chair, sending it head on with the wall.

JUDE (CONT'D)

I know you're upset-

EMMA

I'M NOT FUCKING UPSET!

Her volume surprises even her. She dials it back down.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm just heartbroken.

A beat. Tears roll down her face.

JUDE

I'm sorry.

EMMA

My mum's starting to fade.

This is news to Jude.

JUDE

Why didn't you-

Emma laughs at the absurdity of it all.

EMMA

Because I can't do anything for her. I'm stuck over here and I can't get on a plane and I can't be there for her. But I can be there for you. And I'm not losing my mum and my husband in the same breath. So I need you to explain to me why you won't try. I'm asking you to try and it's like you don't care. Why are you being like this? Can you explain it to me?

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)  
I'm asking you, seriously. Can you  
explain it? Can you? CAN YOU?

Jude stands in the middle of the room, bleary eyed. He suddenly goes to his desk and awakens his computer.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

JUDE  
Come here.

She stays in place.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
Come here.

She joins him as Jude pulls up a VIDEO on the screen. It's familiar. *Interviews about love.*

EMMA  
I don't want to watch one of your fucking videos, I want you to talk to me-

JUDE  
Just... Please... Hold on.

He scrolls through the video until he arrives at an *OLDER MAN occupying the screen.*

OLDER MAN  
Love... Oh my. I'll tell you what love is... Love is being sent to the opposite side of the world. To fight for what's right. It's to leave a beautiful woman. It's to be gone, with no promise of ever returning...

The double meaning of the words aren't lost on Emma.

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)  
... Only to come back. Changed?  
Yes. But... And, I'm, I'm rambling now, you said I only had 30 seconds. But I'll tell you. Love is when two people hang onto each other, across the world. Across time. Across the wars outside, and in, and against all of the odds... They never let go of each other. And it could be... Another person.

(MORE)

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)  
Or a war. Or even death... Nothing  
will truly get between them.

*The Older Man shifts his focus back to the off-camera Jude.*

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)  
Was that okay?

The video freezes. Emma and Jude stand in silence. Then:

JUDE  
I know this is just some old man  
saying some shit on an internet  
video... But I... Fuck.

He takes a breath.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
I'm not going to let this get  
between us. Even if I forget my  
name, our past, everything... I'm  
gonna look at you and fall in love  
all the fuck over again. Because  
you can't forget how you feel.

That sits.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - NOW

Emma and Jude lie in bed together. They are back to back- no  
longer facing.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - MORNING - NOW

Emma opens her eyes. She's now facing Jude, and he's facing  
her. She kisses his forehead. He stirs.

JUDE  
Hey.

EMMA  
Remember me?

Jude opens one eye.

JUDE  
I still remember you.

EMMA  
I'm sorry about yesterday.

JUDE

Me too.

EMMA

I'm scared, Jude.

JUDE

Me too.

EMMA

Do you believe what you said to me?

JUDE

I do.

She nods and makes herself smile.

EMMA

Okay.

She sits up and begins to climb out of bed.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Do you want to have a day with me?

JUDE

You don't have to go in?

EMMA

Later. Just popping in to lock up.

JUDE

Yeah... Let's have a day.

INT. MOVING BART - DAY - NOW

Emma and Jude lean against each other on the Bart. They talk animatedly, Emma coaxing laughter out of Jude.

It's like everything is back to normal.

EXT. TICKET BOOTH - DAY - NOW

The two approach a ticket booth.

TICKETER

Good morning.

JUDE

Hi. How are you?

TICKETER  
I'm great. Just two adults?

EMMA  
No, uh, one adult one child please?

The Ticketer blinks, looking at them both.

TICKETER  
Can I... See some I.D.?

EMMA  
Me? Oh, no. I'm the adult, he's the  
child. He just looks really old for  
my age.

Jude is grinning behind his glasses now.

TICKETER  
How old are you?

JUDE  
Uh... Fifteen.

In the distance-- Emma notices a small pack of stray dogs  
wandering around.

TICKETER  
When's your birthday?

JUDE  
199... 200, uh.. 2003? Is that  
right?

She laughs, printing out two tickets.

TICKETER  
\$40 flat.

Jude concedes, pulling out his wallet.

EMMA  
Age is just a number, you know.

**Ding.**

Both of their phones chime. As Emma pays, Jude looks at his  
phone. She turns back to him and sees his focus. She grabs a  
peek at his screen.

**POTENTIAL CURE ISOLATED IN ENZYME LINKED TO ALGAE BLOOM.  
BENEFICIAL SIDE EFFECTS MAY BE FOUND IN FISH CONSUMPTION.**

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Come on. Let's go in.

Emma takes his hand and leads him into the large dome of an **AQUARIUM.**

INT. AQUARIUM - DAY - NOW

A blue void.

Out of the blue, a yellow fish cuts across the screen.

Tens, hundreds of fish suddenly flood vision-

Emma and Jude watch the fish undulate in a giant room-sized tank. Their glances shift over to other Aquarium-goers. They're all on their phones.

*NEWS REPORTER (O.C.)*  
*An enzyme scientists are calling GR-14E found in a bloom of pacific algae has been highlighted as the key element in a promising new NIA antidote-*

Emma's eyes go to a television in the aquarium gift shop. A *SCIENTIST* occupies the screen. A DOZEN PEOPLE are conglomerating around the television.

**TV SCIENTIST**  
We've seen this in a couple of places around the world where the ocean temperature has risen about two degrees above average- now that may not seem like a lot, but two degrees is night and day in ecological terms. Now this particular algae bloom is then consumed by fish, and the fish process it so-

**NEWS REPORTER**  
There may be a cure in the fish.

Minnows avoid sharks, manta rays swirl clouds of sand beneath their fins, turtles coast around the edges- circling for an eternity.

The crowd around the television starts stirring. It's now most of the aquarium. She turns to Jude-

He's moved away from here, now moved to the TURTLES. Everyone else is focused on the television or on their phones. He's now the only person looking at the exhibits.

EMMA

This is kind of bizarre, isn't it?

JUDE

Look at this dude. Look how happy he is. Dude don't know anything about NIA or taxes or dead parents. He just lives in a happy zone.

Emma blinks.

EMMA

... What did you just say?

JUDE

What?

Emma's gaze shifts behind her. There's a group of people flocking to get out of the aquarium. A sudden momentum to the crowds, unsettling- dangerous.

She sees that an AQUARIUM EMPLOYEE trying to calm an IRATE CUSTOMER.

EMMA

Jude...

JUDE

Yo-

She looks back to Jude. His gaze is up. She follows it-

EMMA

Oh my G-

SPLASH!

A MAN is suddenly IN the giant sea tank- struggling against his clothes to force his way to the bottom- air ballooning out of his mouth.

Fish scatter violently around him.

Jude and Emma are on their feet- backing away.

The MAN in the tank swims all the way to the bottom. He manages to get his hands on a slow-moving fish. He starts to BITE into it.

Blood spills into the tank- rust colored swirling around the moving currents.

The fish start to go crazy- swarming around the Man and the cloud of blood- unable to make sense of the chaos.

INTERCOM

Attention please- the Aquarium of the Bay is now closed. Please calmly make your way to the nearest exit. We apologize for this inconvenience-

Jude and Emma clutch each others hands and start to head towards the exit with the majority of the aquarium guests as the employees deal with the asshole in the tank.

EXT. BOARD WALK - DAY - NOW

DOZENS of people are wading around the underbelly of the boardwalk.

Some of them have fishing polls.

Others have nets.

And others beyond that carry plastic shovels, plastic bins, trying to chip off the green algae hanging off the submerged boardwalk wood.

TV SCIENTIST (V.O.)

We're still not sure what changed in is. If our biology has somehow rendered a component of what prevented NIA in the past useless, or if NIA is newly formed. In any event- we can say that multiple studies in Switzerland, Houston and Tokyo have yielded promising results.

Amidst all this, a MIDDLE AGED WOMAN sits on a bench feeding seagulls popcorn. She has a sign next to her that reads:

**I HAVE NIA BUT I AM A-OK!**

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS - DAY - NOW

Emma and Jude walk hurriedly together. There's panic in the streets.

People are rushing in and out of grocery stores.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

A CNN report earlier today about an algae enzyme has created an unprecedented run on grocery stores and fish markets in areas close to these so called "algae blooms."

*This is a level of chaos that hasn't been seen before.*

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY - NOW

Glass coolers with ice racks are completely empty. A few spare lemons and leaves of lettuce where rows of fish used to sit on display.

*A handmade sign reads YES! OUR FISH EAT THE SPECIAL ALGAE!*

A TV in the corner displays a GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL SPEAKING to the camera.

*GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL*

*We've increased police presence in lieu of the looting and we ask that everyone not give in to media sensationalism. We've all seen these "cures of the week" and ask people remain calm.*

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON - NOW

Jude watches the television. A MEDIA ANALYST is on screen.

MEDIA ANALYST

Well it's because everyone can eat fish. Past cures were, you know, scientists creating polio vaccines, you'd have to wait for the FDA. We're seeing this crazy run on fish for the same reasons people buy lottery tickets when the jackpot goes up. People are desperate. It's really a great sociological study!

Emma pulls her bag over her shoulders.

JUDE

What- you're going?

EMMA

Just for two hours.

JUDE  
It's a fucking madhouse out there.

EMMA  
I have to-

JUDE  
Emma, they're dogs, it doesn't matter!

EMMA  
Jules isn't picking up her phone. I don't think she went in today... It'll take just a few minutes.

He frowns.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS - DUSK - NOW

Dogs bark in the distance. The sounds of people shouting around corners. It's not full on apocalypse-- but there's a definitive absence of civilization.

Emma and Jude walk hand in hand down the dark streets.

JUDE  
Wait- wait, wait.

A FIGURE can be seen passing by a street light at the end of the road.

Jude squeezes her hand.

A moment, then the figure moves along.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
This is some fuckin... Zombie apocalypse shit.

INT. VET'S OFFICE - EVENING - NOW

Emma steps into the office. Jude follows. The barking from the back is at an all-time high.

EMMA  
What the hell-

She frowns and looks to Jude.

Some of the crates are opened. There are dogs running around the front office.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Hi. How'd you get in here? Hi.

She scoops the dog up and looks down death row.

JUDE  
You gotta kill some dogs right now,  
don't you?

She nods. Jude tisks and takes a seat in one of the waiting room chairs.

INT. VET'S OFFICE - BACK ROOM - EVENING - NOW

Emma walks along the rows of crates. Most of the crates have two dogs in them. Almost all of the white boards against the crates have a circle with a slash through them.

INT. VET'S OFFICE - BACK ROOM - EVENING - NOW

An AUX cable plugs into a phone.

*The Ballad of Emma and Jude starts to play.*

INT. VET'S OFFICE - EVENING - NOW

The sound of the song bleeds into the waiting room. Jude looks up. He smirks at the sound.

He looks back down at his phone.

*On his phone in the video of the OLD MAN he interviewed, talking about love.*

INT. VET'S OFFICE - BACK ROOM - EVENING - NOW

Emma sings to a Golden Retriever that lies on a metal table. She sticks it with a syringe as she rubs behind its ears.

*The song plays.* She sings along with it.

Her thumb rests on the plunger of the syringe. She doesn't press it down. Instead she keeps on singing along to the ballad.

She removes the syringe from the Golden.

EXT. VET'S OFFICE - BACK ROOM - EVENING - NOW

Emma sits by herself.

Jude knocks on the door.

JUDE

How many times are you going to  
listen to that song?

EMMA

It's what I listen to.

JUDE

You listen to our ballad when you  
kill dogs? You have to see on some  
level that you are definitely  
deranged.

She smirks, but is unwavering.

EMMA

It makes me happy. It's the  
counterweight.

*The song ends. Emma and Samantha's giggles can be heard. It then starts again.*

JUDE

Did you uh...

Jude's eyes go to the back door. It's ajar. There are no dead dogs in the room tonight.

EMMA

Yeah, you know there weren't any  
dogs when we got here. They must  
have all been taken care of on the  
last shift.

Emma shrugs innocently. Jude smiles and starts to sing along with Ben's recording. He comes close to her and takes her in his arms. They start to dance.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Do you remember when we recorded  
this?

JUDE

With Ben.

EMMA

But do you remember?

JUDE  
I remember.

EMMA  
I'm so scared you're going to  
forget.

JUDE  
You can't forget feelings.

They slow dance together as the song keeps playing.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
You're pretty good. You know that,  
right?

EMMA  
You too.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - SUNRISE - MOMENTS - NOW

The sun rises over the city as the Ballad continues.

INT. JUDE'S OFFICE - DAY - MOMENTS - NOW

Jude edits on a computer. He notices people gathering in the common area. He slides his headphones off and begins walking towards them.

On the television, a news report with the titles: **NIA RELATED SUICIDES IN THE MILLIONS.**

Jude frowns.

EXT. VET'S OFFICE - BACK - MOMENTS - NOW

Emma sits in the back, smoking a cigarette. She stares down at her phone as her call to **MOM** rings over and over again.

Now she frowns.

EMMA (V.O.)  
What's your name?

JUDE (V.O.)  
I'm tired of doing this, Em.

EXT. CITY STREETS - EVENING - MOMENTS - NOW

Emma and Jude walk Blue down the street. They pass a man wearing a FACE MASK and carrying a BASEBALL BAT. He doesn't take any notice of them.

EMMA (V.O.)  
We said we'd do it every night.

JUDE (V.O.)  
For how long?

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - NOW

Jude is looking out the window. Emma is sitting at the kitchen table, looking exhausted. The memory exercise binder sits in front of her.

EMMA  
The doctor said to keep doing it.

JUDE  
We've done every night for a month.

EMMA  
Jude.

He sighs. She's not giving up.

JUDE  
Jude Andrew Williams.

EMMA  
What's my name?

JUDE  
Emma Veda Ryerson Williams.

EMMA  
When's your birthday?

JUDE  
March 11, 1992.

EMMA  
When were we married?

JUDE  
April uh...

Emma's ears perk up. She looks to Jude.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
Sorry. Uh... August, uh-

EMMA  
When were we married Jude?

JUDE  
Wednesday... A Wednesday in...  
April?

Emma looks forlorn. Jude looks panicked.

She makes a note on the piece of paper- a flowchart directing her to sets of questions.

EMMA  
Do you remember the year?

JUDE  
20... 2018.

EMMA  
What year is it now?

JUDE  
2019.

EMMA  
Tell me about our wedding.

It's clear that he's struggling. Tears well up in Emma's eyes. She moves on:

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Just start with the details. A memory has dozens of threads to other memories... Was it in a church?

JUDE  
I don't know.

EMMA  
Was it a big wedding?

She smiles hopefully at the prompt.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO COURTHOUSE - DAY - **THEN**

*Steps. Steps. Steps. Steps.*

BACK TO:

Jude looks up, struck.

JUDE  
Steps.

EMMA  
Steps?

JUDE  
We kissed on the steps.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO COURTHOUSE - DAY - THEN

Jude and Emma, both dressed up, though not in 'formal' wedding attire, kiss on courthouse steps. They both grasp at their marriage certificates.

JUDE (V.O.)  
It was a Wednesday. I remember  
that. And... And... It was just us.  
We decided we... Didn't want to  
wait until the date...

EMMA (V.O.)  
What color was the dress?

Jude answers with what is seen.

JUDE (V.O.)  
White.

*The IMAGE BLURS COMPLETELY OUT.*

BACK TO:

A tear drips down Emma's cheek. She wipes it away, controlling her composure.

EMMA  
It was blue.

Jude frowns. Getting worried. Emma sniffs.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Let's move on-

JUDE

Em-

EMMA

Let's just keep going... Please?

She flips a few pages of her memory prompts. She sits up.  
Resets.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Do you remember meeting me?

JUDE

As clear as day.

EMMA

Describe it.

QUICK CUT TO:

A WATER SLIDE

One of the covered ones- like a tube flushing a person-- Jude goes sliding down, down, down.

SPLASH!

Jude lingers UNDERWATER for a moment. It looks like he's unconscious. Then- he stirs to life and

JUDE (V.O.)

It was August. Cold. End of August.

BREAKS THE SURFACE to

EXT. WATER PARK - DAY - THEN

He pops up, nose just above the water.

Turning in place- he sees her.

EMMA.

EMMA (V.O.)

We were the oldest people there.

JUDE (V.O.)

We were the oldest people there at the end of summer.

Her eyes linger just above the surface- half her face hidden by the water. *It's a recognizable image.*

JUDE (V.O.)  
I just thought of something funny.

EMMA (V.O.)  
What?

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. WATER PARK - QUICK MOMENTS - THEN

*Little moments.*

Jude at the top of the water slide, looking down into it.

OPPOSITE:

Emma at the top of another water slide, about to go down.

JUDE (V.O.)  
At the top of the slide we didn't  
know each other.

*They both jump.*

IN THE SLIDE

He slides down.

She slides down.

JUDE (V.O.)  
It's like we went from our old  
lives...

*In SLOW MOTION - they both hit the surface of the water and  
plunge into the blue.*

They're both submerged under water. They rise.

JUDE (V.O.)  
To our new ones. Is that stupid?

They turn above the surface-- just feet away from each other.  
Their eyes lock.

EMMA (V.O.)  
No. That's not stupid.

Jude wades towards the shallow water. Emma wades towards the  
shallow on the opposite side. They both get out on opposite  
ends of the pool and start walking. They keep their eyes on  
each other.

EMMA (V.O.)  
I was so sad the day I met you.

JUDE (V.O.)  
Why?

Emma and Jude both stop walking. They stare at each other across the pool. Jude smiles. Emma smiles back.

EMMA (V.O.)  
I can't remember. I just know after I saw you I wasn't sad anymore.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - NOW

Still teary eyed, Emma closes the prompt binder. She smiles sadly.

EMMA  
We got married October 17th of last year. We didn't have a wedding. We went right to the court house.  
We... We tried on a Saturday but...  
Their offices were closed.

Jude nods.

JUDE  
I'm sorry I don't remember.

EMMA  
It's not your fault.

She reaches out and squeezes his hand.

JUDE  
I haven't forgotten I love you.

She smiles, taking some consolation in the fact.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - MORNING - NOW

Emma lies asleep next to Jude.

Jude is awake, staring at his wall of photos. They blur in and out of focus.

The FACES in the photos feel like they subtly melt away.

The faint sound of dogs yipping in the background can be heard out the cracked window.

He sits up, careful not to wake her. He passes Blue.

Carefully, he creeps over to Emma's desk. He takes out a pen. He uncaps it.

A beat.

He pulls a photo off the wall. He writes on the back of it.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - MORNING - NOW

*The Ballad of Emma and Jude plays.*

Emma opens her eyes. Jude is stuffing a backpack.

EMMA

Hey...

He looks at her. Bright eyed and smiling.

JUDE

Good moooooorning.

She blinks.

EMMA

Hey. Did you forget me yet?

JUDE

Not yet.

EMMA

Good.

Emma flops her head back onto her pillow- she grabs her phone and begins scrolling through.

JUDE

They ungrounded flights between America and Mexico.

EMMA

Mmmhm- I see. I wish we'd all just make up our minds on if we're going full-on apocalypse or not. One day it's total lock down, the next day there's shooting in the streets, the next day we're having a parade and planning trips to Cabo.

JUDE

Aquarium's still closed.

EMMA

I want a bloody refund.

Jude laughs and crawls across the bed to her. Emma sees the look in his eyes.

EMMA (CONT'D)

What's got into you?

JUDE

Let's get out of town.

EMMA

What?

JUDE

Let's leave. Just for the night.  
We'll take a car, get Blue in the  
back seat. Have a road trip.

EMMA

You're cheery!

Jude kisses her and springs off of the bed- switching gears.

JUDE

You in or out?

EMMA

Mmmmm..... IN.

JUDE

Ok, get packed.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - DAY - NOW

A RENTAL CAR speeds across the Golden Gate bridge, away from the city.

Blue stares out the back.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - DAY - NOW

The car reaches the end of the bridge and slows. There's a POLICE CHECK POINT that has been set up.

EMMA

Oh, no.... They aren't turning us around, are they?

JUDE

I looked it up, they said the  
bridge was opened... Hold on...

Jude rolls down his window. A COP approaches.

COP

I.D.'s please.

JUDE

Are you turning us around?

COP

Just need your I.D.'s.

He scans them. His handheld monitor lights up green.

COP (CONT'D)

Okay, go on through.

He hands them back their I.D.'s and they are off.

INT. MOVING CAR - DAY - NOW

Emma looks down at her phone- concerned. Jude drives.

JUDE

What?

EMMA

I can't get hold of my Mum.

JUDE

Since when?

EMMA

It's just been a few weeks. I tried  
my aunt too. No one's picking up.

Jude frowns, nods sympathetically. He offers Emma his hand.

JUDE

Maybe they're just forgetting to,  
and that's the worst it has to be.

EMMA

Yeah. I hope so.

EXT. MOVING CAR - DAY - NOW

The car winds through mountainous roads-- carving through the  
forest- getting smaller along the horizon.

INT. MOVING CAR - AFTERNOON - NOW

The radio plays soft music. Emma holds up Jude's camera and takes a photo of him.

The world around her blurs in and out of focus.

EXT. CABIN - AFTERNOON - NOW

The car pulls up to a small cabin nestled in the woods.

The couple gets out. Jude pops the trunk and dances in the mud with Blue.

Blue starts to howl. Jude joins him. Emma watches them both-struck by his happiness.

EMMA

Do we have a key to this place?

JUDE

Yeah, the guy I was emailing said it would be in the mailbox.

Emma looks around. There's a mailbox next to the door. She goes to it and opens it.

Empty.

EMMA

Shit...

She looks at the back of the mailbox, around the ground.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Juuuuuude.

Jude's still playing with the dog.

EMMA (CONT'D)

No key.

JUDE

Come on! Come on! Let's go sort out your momma! Come on.

Jude and Blue run up to the porch. He checks the mailbox. Yup-still no key.

JUDE (CONT'D)

Ooooo...Kay.

He checks above the door frame. He check a plant on the window sill. He checks underneath the welcome mat.

There's the key.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
Got it.

He smiles.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
He probably just forgot.

Jude puts the key into the door. It opens.

EMMA (V.O.)  
I'm going to try to write things  
down again. I don't know why. Maybe  
just to feel like I'm actually  
doing something...

INT. CABIN - EVENING - NOW

Jude is working on starting a fire. Blue is asleep on a couch. Emma is in the corner, writing loopy letters in her journal.

The cabin is small- quaint. Like a rustic studio apartment.

EMMA (V.O.)  
I keep waiting for the world to  
end. Some days there is violence in  
the streets. Other days it's like  
nothings happening. I keep  
picturing it like a pot on a  
stove... About to boil over, until  
it hits the wooden spoon. Are we  
the pot, the water, or the spoon? I  
don't-

JUDE  
I need to say something to you.

She looks up. The fire is roaring. Jude is sitting in front of her.

EMMA  
...Okay.

Jude is holding a piece of paper in his hands.

JUDE

I uh... I wanted to write it down.  
So I don't... Get jumbled.

Emma stares at him- pensive. *What is this?*

JUDE (CONT'D)

I'm forgetting things, Em. More and more every day. It's just the reality.

Jude unfolds the paper. And starts to read.

*The world starts to blur around them.*

JUDE (CONT'D)

Dear Emma. I wanted to write this to you... I wanted to say this to you while I still have as much of me as I do. It started with little details. Telephone numbers or old teachers names... But every morning I wake up and have to check a note pad I keep in the drawer to remind me what our dog's name is. The surgery didn't work. It's getting worse. I can't remember our wedding. I can't remember my Dad's name. And I'm starting to forget you. It's getting to the point that I can feel it.

Emma sits, still as a statue, listening to her husbands words. *He falls in and out of focus.*

JUDE (CONT'D)

The world is moving fast.  
There's... Chaos around us. People freaking out. Looking for cures.  
Flights grounded. Borders sealed.  
People getting lost on their own streets. And in the middle of it, there's just us. Doing the best we can. I wanted to pump the brakes. I wanted to come here and have a moment of stillness. Of some quiet. So I can look you in the eye, in case...

He swallows.

JUDE (CONT'D)

Before I'm all gone. So that I can tell you that you are the love of my life. In no uncertain terms. I love you. We always ask each other why we love one another, but we never give the real answer... The real answer isn't that I make you laugh or that you make my life worth living, although those things are true...

He takes a breath. Fighting the emotion.

JUDE (CONT'D)

The real answer is that I love you because you're the person who makes me feel like I'm not alone. If things were normal, you'd be the person who makes it feel okay that I'm going to die someday, because, at least... At least I'll be with you. But things aren't normal. So instead, I love you because you're here with me. Because you get me through each day, and I hope I've been able to do that for you. Because it's like we're the middle of the sea. During a hurricane. And all we can hold onto is each other. And no matter what, we're going to forget. And if we don't forget, we're going to die. But at least I've got you. At least you've got me. I love you. I love you. I love you.

He puts the letter down. Emma is in stunned silence.

JUDE (CONT'D)

I... I just needed to say that. I think we've got to be real. I can feel myself slipping now. And I don't...

He stops. Nods. That's all.

An eternity between them. The fire crackles. The dog yawns. Emma has tears streaming down her face.

She leans forward and kisses him.

JUDE (CONT'D)

If-

She kisses him harder. She grabs him close, suddenly straddling him.

There's silence. Just the sounds of the fire crackling and their breathing.

She pulls his shirt off. He yanks at her pants. They're both half naked, wrestling at the fabric to get to each other.

The world blurs out completely around them.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT - NOW

The fire is embers now.

Emma and Jude lie next to each other, a makeshift bed pulled together on the floor of blankets and couch pillows.

EMMA

What are you thinking?

JUDE

I'm thinking about what you said to me when you found out I was slipping. When I said I wanted to tell each other everything.

She blinks.

EMMA

What did I say?

He smiles.

JUDE

You said you can't forget feelings.

He looks at her.

JUDE (CONT'D)

Do you still think that's true?

She considers for a moment. Rather than answer, she begins to hum the tune to the *Ballad of Emma and Jude*.

After a moment, Jude joins her with the lyrics.

FADE OUT.

INT. CABIN - MORNING - NOW

Emma opens her eyes. She looks around. Jude is gone. Blue is gone.

Barking outside.

Emma pulls on a shirt and sits up.

EXT. CABIN - MORNING - NOW

Poking her head outside, Emma finds Jude and Blue playing tug-o-war with a stick. Jude playfully goads the dog, who gives a gutteral grunt in response as he wrangles the wood.

JUDE

You can't get that stick.  
You can't get it! No you can't.

EMMA

Hey.

He's beaming. She can't help but giggle at his energy.

JUDE

This dog's great!

He returns his attention to Blue. Emma blinks at that. Then:

EMMA

His name's Blue.

Jude smiles, taking the new information like a stranger just meeting the dog for the first time.

JUDE

HI BLUUUUUUUEEEEEE.

Emma takes this in. A soft smile. *This is okay.*

EMMA (V.O.)

He looks the same. He looks like  
the same person I've shared my life  
with for three years. But I can't  
see in his head. What does he  
remember? What does he forget?

EXT. FOREST ROADS - DAY - NOW

The car weaves along the forest roads.

EMMA (V.O.)

Jude Andrew Williams is 26. His favorite color is purple. He was married on October 17th, 2018. A Wednesday. He is the love of my life.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - DAY - NOW

Emma, alone, looks at the wall of Jude's photos. She notices the scotch tape has failed- one of them has fallen to the ground.

A photo of Emma rests at her feet. She picks it up. On the back, the words **EMMA (WIFE)** are written on it.

Jude enters behind her.

She smiles sadly. He blinks- sees the photo in her hand. She's discovered his coping mechanism.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - DAY - NOW

Jude and Emma stand in front of his photo wall. It's peppered with photos- some old, some new.

Emma writes on post-it notes and begins sticking them on the wall. Jude watches.

EMMA

This can work.

A post-it labeled BLUE next to a photo of Blue.

MOTHER next to a childhood photo of Jude and his mother.

FAVORITE COFFEE SHOP next to a photo of a coffee shop.

EMMA (V.O.)

For some people NIA is a slow drip.  
For others it's all at once. For  
you it's the slow fade...

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - NOW

Emma and Jude are stuffed into the bathtub together. Emma's foot rests on the edge of the tub, displaying her fish tattoo.

JUDE

When did you get that?

EMMA  
I got it with you.

JUDE  
Really?

He looks at it analytically.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
I don't really like it.

She laughs.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
What?

She laughs that silent can't-catch-your-breath laugh and claps. It's just tooooooo good.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
What? Tell me the joke!

She reaches down into the tubs and pulls out his leg- he's got the same tattoo on the same place.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
Nooooooo.

EMMA (V.O.)  
Do I know you better than you know yourself? A love story.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - NOW

The pair lies in bed together.

JUDE  
Why fish?

EMMA  
What?

JUDE  
Why did we tattoo fish?

*QUICK CUT TO:*

INT. PET SHOP - FISH TANKS - THEN

*Emma and Jude are locked in an embrace around the fish tanks.*

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - SAME MOMENTS - NOW

EMMA

It's not true what they say. About fish and their memory.

JUDE

What? That they have none?

EMMA

They can remember longer than people think. They'll forget someday. But not right away.

JUDE

Huh.

He thinks about this.

JUDE (CONT'D)

Think about all they get to rediscover.

EMMA (V.O.)

Dear Jude. I'm going to try to write things down now. I don't know why. Maybe to just feel like I'm doing something. Maybe for you.

*The Ballad of Emma and Jude begins to play.*

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS - DAY - NOW - LITTLE MOMENTS

Emma and Jude walk together through markets- street corners we've seen before. He points things out, taking photos.

*Emma frozen, swinging off a lamp post like Singin' in the Rain.*

EMMA (V.O.)

There's no order to how the memories were lost. You can remember your high school graduation, but you can't remember our address.

Jude looks around.

JUDE

Have we been here before?

Emma looks to the shop in front of them. It's the PET STORE.

EMMA (V.O.)

Every day we rediscover the city,  
places we had known in special ways  
were strange again.

EMMA

No. No we haven't.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - MORNING - NOW

Jude stands in front of a stove, cooking eggs. His eyes go to the window.

EMMA (V.O.)

Some things are easy.

Emma comes rushing in.

EMMA

JUDE!

He looks back to the stove. The skillet is literally ON FIRE. The smoke alarm starts going off.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - NOW

Emma writes in her journal.

EMMA (V.O.)

Other things are harder.

A knock at the door.

Emma goes to it and opens it. Jude stands in the doorway, panic in his eyes.

EMMA

Jude?

He hugs her.

JUDE

Thank fuck. Oh, man.

EMMA

What?

JUDE

I couldn't remember which apartment  
we were. I tried all the doors  
downstairs.

Emma winces. She reaches into his jacket, and pulls out a small NOTEBOOK from his pocket. He looks at it.

It's filled with all the important details- spelled out, like for a child.

**Emma (Wife) Number, Home Address, Email address, BART station all in a row.**

JUDE (CONT'D)  
I guess I forgot it was there...

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - DAY - NOW

Jude frames up a photo of the Golden Gate bridge.

JUDE  
Wow. Look how beautiful it is! Have you seen this?

EMMA  
Yes Jude, I've seen it!

JUDE  
Get in the picture, get in there!

Emma watches him take in the wonder of the bridge.

EMMA (V.O.)  
Maybe we really were like the fish.  
Slowly forgetting to discover all over again.

Jude lowers his face from the camera. All smiles.

INT. VET'S OFFICE - BACK ROOM - DAY - NOW

Emma sits over a dead dog. She covers it in plastic.

A bell rings.

EMMA  
Coming!

She rises and goes towards the back.

EXT. VET'S OFFICE - BACK - DAY

The white DOGCATCHER'S VAN pulls up. Emma helps guide it as it reverses down the alley. It slows to a stop and shuts off.

Emma opens up the back to greet half a dozen dogs.

A NEW DRIVER comes around the corner. It's a woman in her 50s.

NEW DRIVER

Heya.

EMMA

Hi.

She looks at the New Driver, a little perplexed. Shrugs it off.

EMMA (CONT'D)

How many today?

NEW DRIVER

Just five.

EMMA

Any collars?

NEW DRIVER

One.

EMMA

We're on a low streak right now.

NEW DRIVER

Maybe people are finally  
remembering to close their gates.

Emma and the New Driver begin to shepherd the dogs into the vets.

INT. VET'S OFFICE - BACK ROOM - DAY

The final dog gets locked in the final crate. Emma writes a big **10** on the white board fastened to the bars.

NEW DRIVER

Here you go.

The New Driver hands her a paper attached to a clipboard. Emma looks at the bottom and signs it. She detaches the paper and returns the clipboard.

NEW DRIVER (CONT'D)

Alright, see you in a bit.

Emma watches the New Driver go.

EMMA

Um- sorry. Do you know where Frank is?

The New Driver turns and looks at her.

EMMA (CONT'D)

There's usually a driver named Frank. If he's sick he usually just reschedules.

NEW DRIVER

... Frank's been gone for weeks, dear. I'm Annie... Do you not remember me?

Emma freezes.

EMMA

No of course, Annie. I was just wondering if you've... Heard anything about Frank.

NEW DRIVER

No, haven't. I think he's with some family up in Oregon. See ya soon.

Annie, the not-so New Driver leaves. Emma blinks. Frozen like a statue for a moment. Then-

INT. VET'S OFFICE - DAY - NOW

Emma rifles through desk drawers until she gets to a binder of papers.

She opens the binder and begins to turn through the pages.

It's delivery receipts. At the bottom- a signature. She looks at the signature. Loopy A's that look like ANNIE. Next to Annie's signature is Emma's signature.

She pages back further. Weeks back. They're all ANNIE's signature. Weeks back. Emma's signature next to each one.

Emma sits down. She breathes. She closes her eyes- as if meditating.

*Breathe in.*

*Breathe out.*

*Breathe in.*

EXT. VET'S OFFICE - BACK - EVENING - NOW

Emma looks at her phone. She stares down at a number. It says **MOM**. She hits call.

As soon as she does, the line disconnects.

ROBOT

We're sorry. The number you have dialed is no longer in service. Please check your service provider-

She hangs up.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS - EVENING - NOW

Emma walks up the streets by herself. There's an emptiness you don't often feel in major cities. People walk around in the far background, few and far between.

INT. EMMA AND JUDE'S APARTMENT - MORNING - NOW

Emma opens her eyes. Jude is fidgeting with his phone, frustrated. He smacks it.

EMMA

Hey.

JUDE

Hey- can you fix this? I can't get this- this- this- this-

EMMA

Phone?

JUDE

Yeah. I can't get that phone to turn on.

Emma looks at it. No response. She reaches over Jude and grabs his charger. She plugs it in. It begins to pinwheel to life.

EMMA

It's just out of battery.

JUDE

Huh. They should really make versions of these that last.

He sits up and starts to get dressed.

EMMA

Where are you going?

JUDE

To the beach!

EMMA

What?

He blinks at her.

JUDE

I asked and you said we could go to  
the beach last night.

She thinks about it.

EMMA

You're right. I did. I didn't think  
you'd remember.

He tisks, chipperly loading his camera with film.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Why do you want to go to the beach?  
It's winter.

JUDE

... To see what it's like.

INT. MOVING BART - DAY - NOW

Emma and Jude sit on the Bart together. She's got her backpack in her lap, journal and pen in hand. Blue sits by their feet on a leash. Emma's attention goes from the window to the middle of the cabin.

JUDE

What do you always write in there?

EMMA

Things.

JUDE

About me?

She playfully yanks the journal towards her.

EMMA

Never.

She sees the same WOMAN with FRIZZY HAIR from their Aquarium day sitting at the opposite end. She doesn't say anything.

EXT. BEACH - DAY - NOW

Emma, Jude and Blue walk along the beach. Fascinated, Jude runs around, taking as many photos as he can.

Seagulls push against the wind, moving neither forward nor back.

Foam catches the sand and shivers in the cold air.

Waves sigh in a constant inhale/exhale.

JUDE  
Come over here!

Jude begins to frame up a photo of Emma, hair blowing in the wind. She closes her eyes.

JUDE (CONT'D)  
Open your eyes.

EMMA  
Jude I can't- this wind.

JUDE  
Just try?

Emma squints in the wind. She closes her eyes, bracing. She turns away from it, laughing, her hood flying over her head.

EMMA  
No I'm sorry, it's too much, I-

She looks up.

Jude isn't there anymore.

She turns.

He's twenty feet away, ambling down the beach with Blue.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Jude?

She gives chase, pushing to catch up to him.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Jude!

Bridging the gap between them, he turns. He blinks at her, a pleasant smile on his face- totally at ease.

JUDE  
Hi?

EMMA

Hi?

A beat.

JUDE

... Um... Okay. Well. Sorry?

He turns and keeps moving. Emma's eyes widen. *It dawns on her.*

EMMA

Jude. Jude, Jude.

She grabs his hand.

JUDE

Hey!

EMMA

Jude, Jude. Look at me. Look at me.

JUDE

What?

EMMA

Who am I? Jude? Who am I?

JUDE

I don't know! Fuck off!

She doubles down- she grabs onto the front of his jacket.

EMMA

EMMA! Emma! I'm Emma, Jude! I'm  
your wife! Look at me-

JUDE

Let go of me-

He pushes her back. A space between them. He drops Blue's leash. Clearly a little freaked out, Jude puts a hand up in defense.

JUDE (CONT'D)

Look- I don't know you. We don't  
know each other. I'm just having a  
walk here. Okay!

He leans forward-

JUDE (CONT'D)

Look, I think you're just confused-

EMMA

I'm not confused-

JUDE

Don't follow me. Okay? You understand? I've got my own- my own personal space here- you're really getting up in my shit right now, and I think you're freaking out. So- just let's leave it at that.

He backs up.

Desperate, she grabs onto him again.

EMMA

No- Jude-

WHUMP.

He pushes her. She falls backwards into the sand. A little surprised at what he's done, Jude backs up. Wincing, Emma sits back up.

JUDE

I'm-- I'm sorry. Just... Just go!

Hold. Their eyes locked. Emma gulps.

*She begins to hum the tune of the Ballad of Emma and Jude.*

Jude looks at her- a hint of recognition?

She begins to sing the lyrics. Tears run down her face. She belts them out, finally getting to the chorus. He breaks the eye contact. He turns. He begins to walk away.

Step. After step. After step.

Emma puts her hands to her mouth, completely mortified.

EMMA

Oh no. No! Jude.

She completely loses all composure. She watches as Jude walks further away. In the distance, Blue romps happily by himself.

Emma rocks back and fourth. Curling towards her knees- total fetal position.

In an eruption of anger, she begins to hit the sand. She punches the sand until her knuckles start to bleed. Her wraith continues- turning to her backpack. She starts to rip at it, tearing at the cloth.

Her notebook spills out. Fluttering open.

She begins tearing at the pages. The wind takes them with it. Paper spills out into the air and onto the beach.

Emma stands, in a final act of raw emotion, and launches her backpack into the sea.

And then she's done.

She falls to her knees in the sand. All emotion drained in her face. Eyes bleary, cheeks flushed. Knuckles bleeding.

Violent waves crash against the shore. Seagulls fly against wind, moving neither forward or back.

In the sand - loose leaf papers litter the beach. Washing in and out as the ocean breathes.

The papers have writing on them. Little curls of letters blotted into swirling ink-stains from the salt water.

Glimpses of those papers show what they say--

*I'm going to start writing things down now.*

They all start the same way. In fact, every page contains the same entry. The same thought, written over, and over and over again.

There are a dozen words to describe Emma, but right now, only one will really do: exhausted.

Silent tears stream down her face.

Breathing, in and out with the sound of the waves, she closes her eyes- as if meditating.

*Her eyes begin to blink- rapidly, as if caught in REM sleep.*

*Breathe in.*

*Breathe out.*

*Breathe in.*

*Breathe --*

BLUE interrupts Emma's solace- intrusively nuzzling its face into her neck. Her eyes blink open. She smiles, and suddenly it's as if a whole new person is sitting on the beach.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Hey. Who are you?

Out of the corner of her eye, she sees a YOUNG MAN come into focus in the distance. He's walking towards her, slowly, looking all around the beach as if he's lost.

He's got a small film camera hanging around his neck.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
Hey! Is this your dog?

The Young Man breaks out into a jog to bridge the distance between them. Emma rises, holding onto the dog's leash.

YOUNG MAN  
What?

EMMA  
Is this your dog?

Up close their eyes meet for the first time. He sheepishly gives her a dazed smile. This is **JUDE**. Emma smiles. Which makes Jude smile more. Which makes Emma-

EMMA (CONT'D)  
What?

JUDE  
What?

EMMA  
You're smiling.

JUDE  
I just uh... I didn't expect your voice to be... That- I mean, your accent.

EMMA  
What's wrong with it?

JUDE  
Nothing.

EMMA (V.O.)  
I was so sad the day I met you.

*Waves CRASH into--*

BLACK.

EMMA (V.O.)  
I can't remember why.

*In the darkness, THE BALLAD OF EMMA AND JUDE begins.*