

Future Free

It was time for a change.

The smoke breaks between study sessions were not the highlight of his day anymore. Motivation was lost and inspiration was killed. He had nothing to look forward to. He stood outside, a few feet away from the library doors. He had been going there for months, trying to prepare for the most important assessment of his life. His future was going to be decided in less than a few weeks. That was when the question arose.

“Is it all worth it?”

He remembered when he first made the decision to pursue medicine and become a doctor. It was back in high school. He was never pressured or forced, yet it seemed like he had somehow been lured into going into this field. Hundreds of coffee cups and countless hours later, he was standing in the cold with a cigarette in his hand, questioning it all. He could not feel his fingertips and he was shivering but he didn't want to go back inside.

“Do you have a lighter on you?”

No response.

“Excuse me sir, do you have a lighter?”

He felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned around and saw a man standing behind him.

“Do you have a lighter?” he asked.

He handed the man the lighter in his jacket pocket. A cigarette was lit and the man handed his lighter back to him.

He spun the lighter between his fingers in a counter-clockwise direction over and over. The melted snowflakes that were racing down the translucent doors took his attention away from

the lighter. They reminded him of the day he left his friends and family behind to come to this country.

He watched the melted snowflakes that were racing down the translucent airport windows. His dad was carrying the few heavy suitcases that carried all that was left from their previous life. His mom had her purse in her hand and she was looking for their passports. He remembered his grandmother the most. Her petite figure was covered in a long, grey blanket scarf. He could see his reflection in the tear drops that had accumulated in her eyes. The kindness and the innocence in those luminous eyes had left him free from any thought. Maybe he was doing it all for her. He wanted her to be happy.

The enthusiasm was now gone. His ambition was destroyed and replaced with obligation. His heart was not in it anymore. It was time for a change. Time for a new adventure, a new path, a new life. Sometimes, he would stay up and watch the sunrise. It gave him hope and serenity. It would make him feel like a new opportunity had presented itself. He looked up. The sky was gloomy and dark. It was not raining but the clouds had painted the sky grey. The color of life.

Two doves flew their ways down to the sidewalk. Their necks pecked back and forth as they picked up the little seeds that were on the street. His eyes were pleasantly uncomfortable from looking at their dazzling white bodies that gleamed like the sun. They intertwined and their beaks struck each other meticulously and in a mellow manner, as if they were in a dilemma between play-fighting and showing affection.

Suddenly, he felt his palms getting sweaty and blood was rushing through his body faster than before. Excitement took over him and a voice in his head told him that this was it. It was time for him to choose his own path. He wanted to quit school and cancel his test. Maybe he could paint. He had always loved painting and fanaticized about it. His heart beat faster and his

legs started shaking. This was it. He decided to call the university and cancel his test. He pulled out his phone from his pocket and dialed the number and suddenly his phone screen turned black. He tried to turn it back on again but he couldn't.

He looked around once again and watched people as they walked with a fast pace so they could catch the bus. Some were talking on the phone, some were listening to music, and some were skipping over the lines in between the sidewalk slabs. He went back inside the library and continued reading the rest of his textbook.