

# Short Story Contest

November 2021

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PROMPT: You live in a busy city, where the sound of traffic is constant. One morning you wake up to complete silence . . .

## Making Everything Go Silent

by **Hailey Gann**

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I never understood my life, but I thought moving could help me create a new concept to find my meaning on this floating rock. The city that never sleeps, even with a room so small it can barely hold a bed, I thought I could chase my dreams. Instead though, my demons chased me here. I cannot help but to look at my body everytime I see a mirror, judging every edge the reflection within shows. The sounds of the city could never drown out my dark thoughts as well as my addiction can. No matter what my fix is for the day, pills, starvation, or any other tactic my brain can fathom the thought of. A distraction of what is really real in my present life. I cannot imagine another day here, within a place so filled with energy when I have nothing. *Why must my mind be so empty, yet so filled with darkness? I just want everything to stop. I want the noise to stop. The noises in my head.*

I start to lose my breath, nothing uncommon as my anxious thoughts take control of my mind. I begin to feel faint, tears running down my face. *I will never amount to anything. I am so unproductive. I could be working out. Trying to better my career. I don't deserve the oxygen to breathe. I should just die.* As these thoughts run wild I am slowly slipping to the floor, curling into a ball, still unable to breathe. With the mixture of tears and lack of oxygen, I start to gag. *I can't do this anymore.* I force myself up to grab the thing that controls me, my addiction is what keeps me alive. I swallow one, two, three, seven pills, who even knows, as I wash them all down to lay in my bed again. For once, all of the noise.. is a simple ringing in my ears. The silence of nothing, no traffic, no sounds of the city, not thoughts, no voices.

When I open my eyes, I do not see what I normally see, instead I am met with seeing myself, on my floor, tangled in my bed sheets.. I am blue and covered in what looks like vomit. *Wha-* I kneel to touch my body, screaming at it to get up, to move, to do anything other than lay

there. I move to the window and see that it is now daytime, but why is it that I cannot hear anything? I can only hear the silence, a constant ringing in my ears. I move back to my body, laying there unconscious. "Am I dead?" I question myself. I gasped at the sound of my own voice, how can I hear myself, but nothing else? I clapped my hands, creating another sound. *Is this the afterlife?* I think as I look at my hands, I get lost in thought as I stare at my limbs shaking.

I sit there for what feels like hours, just watching my body become bluer, and my breathing become slower. As I begin to lose hope, my vision becomes blurry and brighter, but just before the feeling of my eyes close took over my body. I see a blur of what looks like my sister, my vision becomes focussed once again to see her in shock. She looks as if she screams before quickly running over to my body and calling an ambulance. I watch all of this happen, yelling at my sister, trying to get any words out to her. Nothing resonates to her though as I can see her lips moving, doors opening, the ambulance arriving, but I do not hear anything other than my own voice. My own screams and cries for help as I am desperately trying to understand what is going on.

The next thing I knew, I was looking at myself in a hospital bed. IVs were in my arm, something up my nose, and doctors were flooding around me. Everything was happening so quickly, I almost forgot about my sister who was pacing in the waiting room. I left my hospital room to see her on the phone, but I did not know to whom she was talking. All I could see was how she was crying and scared. How whomever she was talking to was someone she probably wanted to tell about me being in the hospital.

I sat there with my sister, even though she could not see me, I kept my hand on her lap when she finally sat down. I made sure she was not alone as she made phone call after phone

call, or while she was simply sitting here trying to catch her breath from the tears she had been crying. “Don’t worry sis, I will come back to you.” I say, but this time my own voice sounds faint.

It took hours before a doctor showed up, my sister jumped up quickly and anxiously as she wiped her face. This is how I knew the doctor was for me. The doctor started to explain something to my sister that made her drop to the floor. She was screaming or crying or both. I could not tell as her face was now covered. *What is it that could be so bad? Am I not going to wake up? If this was true wouldn't I no longer be here?* After my sister could stand once again, the doctor finished informing my sister of something, looking at their clipboard every once in a while for further information. They soon pat my sister’s shoulder, giving their last words and a nod before walking away.

I am stuck in my place for a moment, terrified by whatever news this could possibly be before running after the doctor, trying to look at the clipboard he is carrying. They stop to talk to another coworker, unable to hear what they are discussing, I peek over the doctor’s shoulder to see what the sheet of mine says. *Damage to the temporal lobe....* I skim through it. *Patient may be deaf once awake.* I now realize what was happening, it was not just me only being able to hear whatever is on the other side of life, but that if I chose to return to life, I would no longer be able to hear anything. The only things I would ever be able to hear are my dark thoughts, as even now my voice is the only thing I can hear.