

"Neon"

by

Travis DeStein

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[travisusaf@hotmail.com](mailto:travisusaf@hotmail.com)

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The middle of nowhere.

An empty road crosses the world. From one horizon to the other, it stretches toward infinity.

A dapper young man, EDGAR.

He wears a WWII-era military dress uniform. Looking himself over, he anxiously straightens his lapels and adjusts his hat. Getting ready.

An old bus pulls up. The door opens.

BUS DRIVER (O.S.)

Ready?

Edgar smiles.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The smile fades, ages. Becomes a shell of what it once was.

Edgar, now an old man, slowly sits down beside the bed. A pained grunt as his aching joints settle into a chair.

His eyes, glassy with age but warm with affection, gaze upon a white-haired elderly woman on the bed. She is MADDY.

Her eyes are closed, her body still.

EDGAR

Just me and you again, dear.

Maddy's chest slowly rises. Falls.

The medical equipment is silent.

A young DOCTOR behind Edgar reads over a clipboard. He takes a few steps back. Watches.

EDGAR

Hasn't been the same, you know.  
Cooped up alone in the house and  
all. Sammy's still jumping on the  
bed every morning though, looking  
for you.

He breaks into a smile. A thousand more wrinkles splinter across his face.

EDGAR

He misses you, too.

Tears begin to well but he fights them back.

EDGAR

I know what you'll be thinking,  
worried if I'll be able to find  
you.

His voice is tender and soft, just loud enough for Maddy to hear.

Her chest rises and falls.

EDGAR

Just remember the first time I  
found you.

INT. BUS - DAY

The bus is filled with travelers. Edgar sits in the back.

A thick bundle of old, battered letters in his hand. He shows them off with beaming pride to the other passengers.

They smile tenderly as he tells his stories.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Edgar's eyes are lost in reminiscence.

EDGAR

Sometimes I'd wonder if I might not  
recognize you when I got back.

He laughs.

EDGAR

But then I'd remember you in that  
dress. The blue one with the white  
stripes. And those big brown eyes.

His eyes return to Maddy.

EDGAR

No matter what I saw over there,  
that was all I needed.

The doctor crosses his arms. Waiting.

EXT. DESERT - DUSK

Dusk has fallen. Not a soul in sight.

The bus continues its voyage.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Maddy's chest rises and falls.

EDGAR

Everyone on the bus wanted to shake  
my hand and ask me what the war was  
like.

He sits as straight as he can manage. Fills with pride.

EDGAR

I'd show them your picture and  
they'd all say; "Gosh, what a  
beautiful lady you got there!"

A sore chuckle. He slouches back down, massaging his back.

EDGAR

I could tell, you know. By the look  
in their eyes. They knew you were  
what kept me going. What I dreamed  
of.

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

Edgar steps off the bus. The place is a ghost town,  
completely dark. Utter silence reigns.

He watches the bus leave, then begins walking.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Edgar laughs.

EDGAR

But you best believe I told them  
you were all mine!

Maddy's breathing slows. Edgar notices.

EDGAR

(trailing off)  
... And I was so excited to see you  
I got off at the wrong stop.

The doctor jots something down on his clipboard.

EDGAR

But oh how beautiful you were, once  
I found you.

A long, sad sigh.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Edgar continues down the sidewalk. He makes a turn and then another. He walks faster and faster, more and more nervous.

He turns a corner. Sees something.

His eyes go wide.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Edgar's voice is now a whispered stream of consciousness.

EDGAR

You spotted a bunch of those neon  
signs and couldn't take your eyes  
off them.

Maddy's chest heaves. A short spasm and it falls again.

EDGAR

The way you glowed under those  
lights... I thought you must be an  
angel.

The doctor continues to take notes as he watches.

Edgar speaks faster, running out of time.

EDGAR

So don't you worry about me down  
here. I'll be just fine because I  
know...

His voice breaks. Tears fall from his eyes.

Maddy seizures again. And again. More intense each time.  
There is a soft gurgle as her chest falls and does not rise.

EDGAR

I'll find you in the neon again.

Edgar drops his head into his hands and collapses in the chair. For a long moment he cries.

The doctor holds out his clipboard to Edgar.

DOCTOR  
One last signature, sir.

The header of the paperwork: LIFE SUPPORT POST-TERMINATION

Edgar's bloodshot eyes keep watch over Maddy as he signs.  
Slowly, painfully, he stands and heads for the door.

He stops. Turns to see his Maddy one last time...

Too late. The curtain around her bed has closed

Edgar leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Edgar adjusts his hat and fixes his lapels one last time.

A smile as he fights back sobs.

He approaches a young lady.

Her back turned, she wears a blue dress with white stripes,  
Maddy. She waits beneath a row of darkened empty buildings.

Edgar wraps his arms around her and breaks down, weeps.

Maddy turns and looks up to him with big brown eyes.

She smiles.

And all at once, the city bursts into life through cascades  
of neon light. Orange, green, red and blue radiate from  
every window, streelight and storefront.

The shades of color tumble and turn through the air.

Edgar and Maddy glow under the neon.

Everything glows.

He goes to speak. She stops him, wipes away his tears.

MADDY  
I knew you would.

A silent kiss as the world is consumed in light.

FADE OUT