Summary

San tried to ignore the way he felt giddy when Wooyoung squeezed his hand, and he tried to ignore the way Wooyoung's arm snaked around his like vines up a column, smoothly. They talked about the world above and the world below, as soft choruses of bells played, visionary neon lights beamed off their laughter, and the music box ballerina spun somewhere in an attic.

Or

San and Wooyoung fall in love during the winter of Louisiana, in a dorm stairwell.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.
The stairwell wasn’t bad really, he found the prison colored walls kind of comforting; the walls were not too distracting or messy like his mind felt. Plus, it had a nice echo that reverberated a haunting in the soles of your feet, a walking acoustic bird. He liked the friends he made in there, friends being the dust bunnies in the corners by the LED lighting.

Her voice hit a staccato, pipping and chirping something about painting the walls neon when Choi San had found a new friend.

“Hey.”

San’s eyes fluttered open, figuring it was a concerned RA wondering why there was a college student trying to sleep in the side stairwells of the building at 3am. Instead, it was a boy- crouched, by his feet, sitting on the backs of his calves with his brown eyes flickering. San pulled out an earbud and he paused, feeling lethargic not really knowing if he was seeing things. Static filled his brain.

“Hey.” The boy said again, and San was surprised at the higher tone. He had expected it to be at a lower register, but instead it was kind of melodic, a bit like her, who was still humming in his ear. He immediately liked the stranger’s voice, as it could probably soothe him to sleep.

“Um, hi.” San blinked, his voice soft, not really knowing what else to do.

“Do you sleep here often?”

San shook his head, grey hair flopping over his brow- “No, not really. I don’t sleep.”

The boy scrunched his eyebrows together and he tilted his head. San focused on his black shiny hair that looked almost blue under the grungy lighting. A lightbulb sputtered above them, and the boy looked up.

“Everyone sleeps.”

San hummed, “I don’t.”

To be honest, he still felt out of it, and the whole interaction didn’t really feel that real. He supposes that it was 3 in the morning and the dungeon of the dorm stairs and painted stone walls was not the best combination for reality. Sometimes, he felt like he was just cruising through, not really coherent for it all; dreams could be reality too.

“Are you on drugs?” The boy asked, skin poking through the holes in his knees. San noticed they were bruised and scraped up a little bit, maybe a skater, San thought to himself. He also noticed the bit of dried blood on the white strings that swung from the material in pendulum motions- down the rabbit hole he fell.

Was this real?

“No, I am just chilling here I guess.” San replied, trying not to seem too out of it.

The boy changed positions of how he was sitting and he now sat crisscross in front of San, like they were old friends, his eyes seemed to get more worried and turned down the longer he sat with him.

“Are you sure you’re not on drugs?” He questioned, leaning forward to look closer into San’s eyes- San sighed and pulled the other earbud out and sat them to the side. He sat up straighter and
cleared his throat from the lack of use.

“No, I just come here when I can’t really sleep. It is quiet and no one ever comes through here really.”

“Can you not sleep often?”

San nodded, not sure why he was even talking to this person more than he should. For all he knew, it could have been one of the cult Christian members of the Jesus group on campus, just waiting to sink their hands in on a lost cause. And Choi San, was not a lost cause. He just couldn’t let himself rest sometimes. The boy’s cheeks were flushed from the cold, and his scarf was still loose around his neck, like he had been in the midst of untying it when he came across San in their mini world.

San hummed again (a habit of his), “Yeah, it is usually like this for a couple of weeks and then I can sleep okay for a couple weeks, and so on. It is not a big deal or anything-”

The boy interrupted “-it still sucks though because you have class the next day.”

San shrugged, “That is true, but I have had this problem for a while now so I know how to cope with it and all.”

The boy chewed on his bottom lip, seeming to think through something, his eyebrows pushed together like a bridge. San imagined running across a bridge, but it was the one back home. The one that had all of the green moss around the bottom and lantern lights that strung through the chicken wire on top during festival day. It was pretty.

“-pretty out of it.”

San had missed what the boy was saying, his mind wandering thinking about bridges and lights and green things- he shook his head a bit.

“I am sorry, what did you say? I didn’t mean to zone out like that-”

The boy rolled his eyes and interrupted San again, “-I said,” he sighed, “you seem pretty out of it.”

“Oh,” San said, retying the knot in his vans, “I am. My mind gets messy.”

He felt like an idiot for saying that aloud, but it was not like he would ever see the pretty boy again. The campus was too large and full of bodies to ever really cross paths with the same person more than once. If they did, San doubts the boy would remember him any ways.

“Mine does too.”

San made a noise of acknowledgement, and he hugged his knees and let his head gently fall back against the dorm wall again. He let his mind wander, but then it got stuck on a tiny thorn, tripping, and he opened his eyes.

“Wait, um, why are you awake at 3am? And, why are you in the stairwell too?”

The boy now held a secret smile, and San just noticed the red that lined his waterline of his large dark eyes.

“I am high as fuck and I wanted somewhere to sit and think.”

“Do you think often?” San asked, in a bit of higher tone, joking, but not really.
The boy giggled, and it sang off of the walls with a pretty bell tone, kind of like a silver chimed music box. San used to have a music box that sounded like him, but he packed it in some cardboard box that probably got crushed in the attic.

“I think a lot, actually, my mind is always running with lots of things.”

“Things.” San said, his eyes closed again.

The boy hummed, and San found himself smiling on the habit the boy already picked up.

He wonders if the boy had a habit of mimicking, and if he thought about the stuff he thought about.

If that made sense.

San found himself in the stairwell the next night, his feet restless and his ears feeling particularly empty, a tiny part of him wishing that he was alone- but another silver bell in his wishing to be rung.

He wondered if he needed another person that didn’t sleep either to keep him company. He had never thought about going through something with someone else, because, that was ridiculous, right?

The boy didn’t show up that night, but he let her voice sing again about neon kitchens and painting the skies deep in his ears. It was always the same tune he would put on repeat.

*I’ll paint the kitchen neon; I’ll brighten up the sky. I know I’ll never get it, there’s not a day that I won’t try*

He dreams of yellow.

“Fatal familial insomnia is a rare genetic disease that prevents a person from falling asleep, eventually leading to death. Experts have identified it as a prion disease, caused by an abnormal protein developing from a genetic mutation, that affects brain function, causing mem-”

San’s eyes fluttered open to the boy again, who was now crouched holding his knees.

“Oh, good, I was hoping you were awake.”

San kind of missed his voice.

“I do come here-”

“-when you can’t sleep. Yeah I know.” He finished for him.
The walls seemed grayer this time, the dark sky and bronze streetlamps poked their eyes through the small glass pane of the hall door. The stairs would be a long fall. The streetlamps ignored San.

The same tune was once more playing in his ears and he let his throat relax, buzzing the tune out.

“That song sounds pretty.” The boy said.

“It is.”

San sat up straighter, offering him an earbud, not really caring, as it was 4am after all. Their only interactions, which were just two, were limited to this space only. The boy smiled and he took an earbud, settling beside San. He was really warm.

“Her voice sounds pretty.”

“Mhm.”

The boy had a backpack and he dragged out a notebook and a textbook, but he looked sheepish. His melodic voice was steady, “Do you mind if I do some homework?”

“Why would I mind?”

The boy paused, “I dunno. I just thought I should ask.”

“But-” The boy shuffled his butt around a bit, getting comfortable, and he stuck his hand out in front of him, “I get to choose a song after this.”

“Okay.”

The boy chose some song about dandelions and wishes, and San thought it was really fitting for him. He reminded San of back home, and all of the pretty flowers that would grow in their garden and all of the flowers that rained down during spring.

They sat in silence as her voice rung in their ears, San’s eyes were closed, and the boy working hard beside him.

It was comfortable, warm, and San thought it was nice to sit by someone.

*Dandelion, a million little wishes float across the sky*

“What is your name? How have I not asked for your fucking name by now?” The boy said, exasperated, throwing hands up in the air.

San wasn’t sure how he had so much energy at 3am.

“San.”

The boy sounded it out on his lips, and then he looked up at San through his eyelashes, “Like mountain?”
“Mhm. What is yours?”

The boy smiled a bright smile, stars reflecting off his eyes and cheeks.

“I’m Wooyoung. Jung Wooyoung.” He stuck his hand out- it looked soft. Like downy pillows, his mom’s hands, the roses outside of the humanities building, the blankets that surrounded his bed.

San gingerly took it in his and it felt like the realest thing he had felt in a while on a particular night like this. Something solid it was, grounding him back to earth- the clipping of balloons that hung on to the music box.

“You hands are really soft.”

“You look really awake now.”

“Well, I am awake.”

Wooyoung narrowed his eyes, “You know what I mean. You don’t have that sleepy look to you right now, or the high-fucked-up-lazy look.”

“I feel real.”

And yeah, that was weird and vague, and most people would probably nervously laugh and turn away back to their mundane lives. But Jung Wooyoung understood.

“Yeah?”

“You know when you feel weightless when you’re drifting off before you fall asleep?”

“Yeah?”

“That is what I feel like a lot. Not really knowing and taking in things- maybe I am taking in things but it feels like too much. I always feel dumb when I try to explain it-”

“-You shouldn’t. I think I know what you mean. You feel disconnected because you connect. It’s not weird to become overwhelmed by everything, because there is always so much going on. I know you’re a college student like me, right?”

San nodded, turning down the music in his ears, to listen to the music of Wooyoung.

“Well, that means you’re already busy. And I am assuming you have friends. Right?”

San nodded again, feeling like he was in a place he had already been in before, feeling it all.

“You have normal conversations, you have normal homework, you have normal interactions, but when you go to sleep it feels like it is all you do. You think about things, you think about your feelings, you think about why you feel those feelings, you think about what you could do the next day. Understand? Sometimes it feels nice to disconnect and just bask in the connections you have tied to the world.”

“Like tying a balloon to a music box.”

“And like clipping a balloon’s tail to the music box.”

San smiled and he turned the music back up a bit more.
San spoke, “And when you want, you can tie the balloons back to the music box.”

“You get it.”

“What do you think her lyrics mean?”

San pulled another colored pen from Wooyoung’s bright pencil pouch and he doodled on the side of Wooyoung’s notes.

“Never really listened to them.”

Wooyoung turned to him, his face in some sort of shock- dramatic.

“What do you mean?”

“Um- what do you mean, what do I mean?”

Wooyoung sighed and tossed his hands up. “Choi San, I mean how have you never thought about what she was saying. You only listen to this song.”

“Nuh-uh I listen to other stuff.”

Wooyoung leaned in close, their noses almost touching, his face adorably pouted and serious; San thinks that if he booped his nose that his finger would go right through.

And oh, Jung Wooyoung has freckles.

“But not when you can’t sleep. Kind of like you’re stuck in a loop.”

“Do you think I am stuck in a loop?”

Wooyoung shrugged his shoulders, his warm brown sweater resting comfortably. “I do only see you in the early hours of the morning, you always have your eyes closed, and you always have the same song on. Have you ever even painted a kitchen neon?”

“Maybe if it brightened the walls.” He finished the lyrics, not explaining what he meant any further.

Wooyoung looked upset.

“You’re always so vague.” He said lowly, turning his head back to his notes.

“Um.” Was all San said.

He didn’t mean to be so hard to peek through, he didn’t want to be the dirty glass that was always outside around the university. He hated to be like that- he couldn’t help it. It wasn’t that he didn’t have anything interesting to say, it was that he didn’t know how to say it.

“Um,” he began again, “Well, maybe I am in a loop. I go through the same motions every day, I can’t sleep, I do listen to the same song when I can’t... I dunno. I think it is just hard for me to
know how to word things because whatever I say gets tossed out as weird.”

Wooyoung gave him a soft smile that made gentle butterflies flutter their wings in the pit of his belly. They liked to rest by the trees and prepare for flight.

“I don’t think anything you say is weird. Continue.”

San wasn’t sure what to really say, so he just started saying what was on his mind.

“Painting kitchens neon would be nice, I think it would make things less drab. All of my friends’ houses have these boring white walls or throw-up yellow ones that makes me want to close my eyes. She talks about painting the walls because maybe it will make her happy and that is nice and all but painting a wall won’t change anything. She is just doing it temporary.”

“So you like temporary?”

San chewed on his bottom lip and he drew a little flower in the corner of the paper, “I have not thought about it.”

Wooyoung stood up and San tried to ignore the way his jeans stuck to his thighs— he had never seen a boy wear jeans that tight before in Louisiana.

Wooyoung had paint splatters all over the light material and his brown sweater was fluffy like clouds that lined the campus horizon— San tried not to stare at the sweetness of it all. It was kind of like Wooyoung had a band of fireflies circling him at all times, helping him glow and radiate kindness and neon paint.

“Imagine,” Wooyoung started in a staged soft whisper voice, “a perfect world.”

San thinks Wooyoung would be in it.

San remembers being seven and catching fireflies in the palms of his hand, waist high in the Sea of Silver grass of Saebyeol Oreum. Sometimes he would pretend that his fireflies would follow him in a neon chain, dancing after him as he twirled through the woods and chrome. He would pretend that a pretty prince would be waiting for him, cloaked in royal blues and a crown of mugunghwa.

The prince would throw up his hands and a flurry of ribbons would fly— the fireflies would float and catch the ribbons and drape the silks over their hands.

San would pretend that he was happy.

Wooyoung looked nice cold.

If that made sense.
His cheeks were flushed like blooming flowers and his scarf was wrapped around his neck like a chunk of cotton candy. San felt the urge to poke his cheek.

“So, when are you going to hang outside of this creepy stairwell? I am tired of staying up until 4am just because I feel the need to see your pretty face.”

San thinks this is weird, not Wooyoung, but the thought of seeing Wooyoung outside of their mini reality that they had been camping in. The stairwell felt a lot like the out of body experiences people feel when they are at a gas station before midnight, when they are waiting in the hospital for news, when they are on an empty playground swinging swing chains.

It just didn’t feel real.

A shift of plates in the living room, faint lights that you could see outside your window at night that you’re too scared to stare at for too long- all of it unsettling but undeniably human.

“Um. Whenever you want-”

“Do you want to hang out?”

“Yes.”

“Hmm.”

Wooyoung was staring at him, his eyelashes fluttering. He was also on his back on the dirty floor, looking up at the even dirtier ceiling filled with lights and cobwebs, the occasional cricket too. The wind outside howled, snow falling softly was their soundtrack. Wooyoung’s shoes had snow melting off of the bottoms and his warm fluffy sweater was swathing him like a baby.

San heard the wind sigh with him.

“Hmm.” San repeated, teasing.

Wooyoung narrowed his eyes and he pulled his beanie over his eyes.

“You know,” San began, “You were high the one time you stumbled upon me here. What about the other times?”

“Oh, now he has questions.”

“Don’t be bitter,” San muttered.

“I’m kidding.” Wooyoung giggled, “Continue.”

“Why did you come back?”

Wooyoung sat up, and his soft black hair fell back over his eyebrows and he smiled. “Do you want my honest answer?”

San nodded.

*I’ll paint the kitchen neon; I’ll brighten up the sky*

“I don’t know.”

“That is it?”
Wooyoung tossed him his scarf and San caught it in his hands, confused. It was soft, thin threaded strands that were out of place a bit, maybe homemade? The royal blue and cream color was pretty against San’s tan hands. He thought it looked nicer against Wooyoung’s pink cheeks, though.

“I mean- yeah. Is that weird? A lot of people think I am, but I don’t care if I am being honest. I kinda care what you think, though.”

“No, I don’t think it’s weird.”

Wooyoung scooted forward, his legs crossed and he sat in front of San with big brown eyes shining.

“I thought, what is there to lose if I come back the next night? Maybe this pretty boy will tell me to go away, but he seems too gentle to do that. So, I am going to be careful not to make him anxious or uncomfortable because that is weird. Then I saw you were here and I stayed just in case you wanted company. Not that you looked like you needed company.”

“You thought I was a pretty boy too?”

Wooyoung sighed dramatically. “Is that all you got from that?”

“No- I understand. But, you called me pretty.” San said, now smiling- maybe teasing a bit.

Wooyoung’s face flushed a bit and he scrunched his eyes together and he stared San down, pulling his knees up.

“Didn’t you just say ‘pretty too’, or did I imagine that?” He butted back, maybe trying to capture him on the spot like a camera with a quick shutter sound.

San didn’t blush.

“Uh. Yeah.”

Wooyoung turned away quickly, laying back down on his side and he faced the snowy stairwell doors.

He mumbled something and San had to turn his music down again, to hear what he was saying.

“What?”

“I said,” Wooyoung paused heavily, “that is interesting.”

“That I think you’re pretty?” San replied, confused.

Wooyoung made a noise and he turned around quickly to snatch his scarf back from San’s delicate hands. He shuffled and placed the scarf under his head, still not facing San.

“I did not know you thought that.” Wooyoung mumbled.

San smiled, still confused but a small giggle escaped his lips, “I didn’t know I had to tell you.”

“You don’t.”

“Then...?”

Wooyoung waved his hand up like he was trying to physically move the conversation somewhere
else and he let it flop back down dramatically. He was always dramatic, Wooyoung was. San pictured poking his cheeks again.

Wooyoung made another inhuman noise.

San is scared to sleep, because if he blinks, Wooyoung might disappear.

It’s daytime and he finds himself in the library. The Louisiana chill and wind that came from up North was suffocating and it can only be relieved by the warm heaters that fill the ginormous building. If San had to choose a perfect spot besides the stairwell, this would be it.

Large stained-glass windows filter the sun in at rainbow hues, streaking a splatter of paint that litters the tables and skin. San’s favorite color at the moment would be the emerald green that puts the pecan tree leaves to shame. The verdant held it’s own royalty down South.

San is skimming over his books, trying to take in the words and Latin but his mind keeps wandering, thinking.

“Don’t squint. You're gonna get wrinkles.”

And, it is Jung Wooyoung in his tight, paint jeans.

“Wooyoung?”

A girl passing by gave him a strange look, and he sheepishly waved to show that he was sorry for the outburst.

Wooyoung laughed and San turned back at him, leaning forward to a whisper, “How the hell did you find me on this campus?”

Wooyoung scoffed, pulling a creaky oak chair out to sit in. They were sat near the back of the library on the first floor, surrounded in a little nook of bookshelves and plush dusted crimson pillows. It was cozy- considering the cold outside.

“Don’t be daft, I was not actively looking for you at the moment. I came to study like everyone else.” He pulled out a large sketch book from between his arm and torso- San hadn’t noticed he was holding it.

“Oh.”

Wooyoung rolled his eyes, “Anyways, it is odd to see you outside of a stairwell. It almost doesn’t feel right, right?”

San nodded, he couldn’t agree more. To be honest, he was in shock about how much more pretty Wooyoung looked in the lighting of day. Green that was coming in from the stained-glass window next to them was highlighting across his nose and cheekbones, casting an angel like iridescent glow. It was breathtaking really.

Choi San thought Jung Wooyoung was stunning before, in all of his flushed cheeks and fluffy sweaters- but this was something new in him. Maybe, it was just the shocking reality of Wooyoung
not being some random man he imagined in the stairwell because he was dying from the lack of sleep.

Wooyoung rolled up the dark smaragdite sleeves of his sweater and he twirled a thin pen between his fingers, head tilted.

“So, sleepy boy, what are you doing?” He asked this as he was flipping over San’s book, his silver bracelets twinkling prettily, not even waiting for San to speak. He raised his eyebrows up, impressed, and he hummed.

“The Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms: Drawn Principally from Protestant Scholastic Theology.” San read out loud.

It was quiet.

“What the fuck.” Wooyoung said.

“What?”

Wooyoung shook his head and he just looked overwhelmed. “Nothing.”

San was still staring.

“Why are you staring at me?” Wooyoung asked, eyes narrowed.

San flushed, “I’m not.”

“Yes you are.”

“No-”

“SHH!”

They both jumped, San almost spilling his over priced coffee on his book, Wooyoung’s sketch pencil flying off the desk.

“Sorry.” San whispered bashfully to the lady, but kicking Wooyoung’s shin underneath the table. He was surprised again to find it solid and real.

Wooyoung thought it was hilarious as the girl stormed away, giggles snuffed into his sleeve, and all San could do was sigh heavily. Wooyoung reached across the table, sweater drooping dangerously, and he flicked San’s nose.

“She will get over it, don’t stress.”

“I stress a lot if you can’t tell.”

“Maybe that is why you can’t sleep well.” Wooyoung said with a shrug.

San swatted his hand away like an annoying fly but Wooyoung kept it there, eyelashes fluttering.

“What are you doing?”

Wooyoung’s finger was paused on the tip of San’s nose and he smiled.

“Trying to see if you have an off button. You don’t. Odd.”
San reached across the table too, resting his weight on his elbows and he put both hands on either side of Wooyoung’s face, thumbs brushing his cheekbones because- well, he had always been curious about the feeling. Wooyoung’s ears turned red and his hand limply fell away from San’s nose, thudding on the table.

“Odd, it seems that you have an off button, didn’t know that it worked.”

Wooyoung had a splatter of freckles, similar to the shape and style of his paint splattered jeans that stuck to his thighs and he found it endearing. His star kisses that lined the bride of his nose reminded San of the spotted flowers back home, and of course, the fireflies. Fireflies rose off of Wooyoung’s smooth skin and they flitted around him in a halo, then back to the Louisiana sky, dancing in the evening.

“That is not fair.” Wooyoung said hoarsely, finally quiet.

“Why?” San asked, head tilted.

“Because.” Wooyoung whispered.

It was comfortably silent as they both worked on their individual parts, the sun slowly going into an afternoon haze, maybe 2 hours before sundown. The rainbow hues worked their way over the walls and across their knuckles as time dragged on, pulling light and the dust motes that floated through the air.

San really liked to sit with Wooyoung, it was peaceful.

When San first thought boys were pretty, he didn’t think anything of it. Because, why would he? Wasn’t that how he felt?

Later, he realized quickly that it may be how he felt but not everyone liked boys. Some liked girls, some liked nobody, and his mom had a girlfriend, so why couldn’t he have a boyfriend?

San’s mom laughed, peonies blooming and curling beautifully.

“San, you can like boys- that is okay.”

“No it’s not.” San said, stabbing his stick in the dirt harshly, mud slinging on his mother’s ankles. She narrowed her eyes, eyebrow raised, and he sheepishly sat the stick down. She hummed a pretty song and she picked him up from the ground, now giving him a view of the world from above. He felt tall, like he was a bird seeing the land for the first time ever.

He stared into her warm brown eyes and she kissed his cheek, “Sannie, you can like anyone you want. Who says it isn’t okay? Other people, all the people in the world? All the butterflies in our garden? Who is to say and make the rules on who you should and shouldn’t like?”

“So it is okay?”

“More than okay.”

It was one of those days where the sun was spilling yellow hues and rainbow tears over the plants,
bouncing off of tree leaves that waved in the wind, a perfect day in the eyes of many. His mother loved sunny days and she would drag San out into the sunshine and they would play for hours.

She crouched down, dandelions tickling her ankles and she plucked one gently from the grass and she handed it to him, his small hands grasping the green stem.

“Make a wish.”

“Why?”

She sighed, “Child, you ask so many questions. Just do it, live a little, you’re only seven.”

He eyed her suspiciously and started to say a wish out loud but his mother shushed him with a vanilla scented finger to his lips.

“Not in the wind, it will hear you and carry it to the sea, then the sea carries it until you need it. You know what happens then?”

“What?” He asked, leaning forward enthralled.

“The sea knows your secret and it will tell the universe and then it won’t come true.”

San frowned, pulling his lips up and flipping his black hair out of his eyes, “Then how do I make a wish?”

“Well,” His mother stood up and dusted her hands off on her pants, “You think it, and ask the dandelion seeds to carry it across the sea for you. They are the messengers who won’t tell, keeping your secret safe. They guard it and wait for you to be in need and then they tell the clouds, granting it true.”

San nervously shuffled and stated, “So I need to wish carefully.”

She hummed and urged him to wish, cherry blossoms crowning her and creating their walkway with the sun as their light.

San closed his eyes, and he blew.

“You’re smiling.”

San glanced up at Hongjoong, his best friend, and he grabbed both of his cheeks with a petal splash on the apples. He shook his head.

“I am?”

Hongjoong snorted, “You keep smiling, what is up?”

“Do I not smile ever?”

“Not like that.”
Hongjoong smiled wryly in the study room, and he leaned back in his chair with a sort of look on his face. Shrugging, he placed his hands behind his head in a relaxed manner and then pointed at San with one polished finger.

“You have the love bug.”

San spluttered, “We are not five.”

“Bold.”

Hongjoong shuffled forward, dragging his swivel chair with him and he got close to San’s side of the table. San felt the urge to shove him away into the hard, dry erase board- but he quickly changed his mind because he did not feel like getting kicked out of the library when he still had a whole ass essay due tonight.

“You’re thinking about pushing me, I can see it in your eyes.”

“How do my eyes look?”

“Vicious.”

San rolled his eyes and he got back to typing, hoping that Hongjoong’s short attention span would drop the love bug idea and get back to his own work that had been due for days now.

“And... in love.”

“Oh, shut up!”

You have the love bug.

San is thinking about this as he stares at Wooyoung, who is looking down and reading with sweeping lashes that could make a grown man cry.

That grown man being Wooyoung, of course.

Wooyoung has this pretty black hair that is now falling a little over his brows and he has this nose that scrunches cutely when he is focused. He also has dark eyes that sometimes make San’s heart fall to his stomach in a large swoop and crash that rival cymbals in a concerto. The butterflies in his stomach curse him for the interruption.

If San was being honest with himself, he really did have a crush on Wooyoung and that was just not okay because he felt like he didn’t have time to pine and whine over someone at the moment. He has finals, tuition, grades to up-keep, and a job and responsibilities.

Also, crushes are just painful.

So, he decides to ignore it as always.
Christmas had thrown up on the Louisian campus in one big massive heave, and San was not complaining.

Ribbons of crimson and royal blue are strewn across trees and corridor chandeliers that spun in the winter, twinkling fairy lights were wrapped around the thick branches, sprinkled around the eyebrow arches of windows, and the columns of staggering buildings flashed in rainbow. The dining hall already was adjourned with tea light candles- but they had mistletoe dangling like jewelry that seemed to wink at you as you passed by.

Something about Christmas felt magical and even without the snow, he felt like he could still enjoy himself in the willows and crisp air.

“Do you like Christmas?” San asked Wooyoung, who was ogling at the lanterns strung up across buildings in a catty-corner structure, zigzagging and drooping. Wooyoung touched a glass window in the area downtown and his scarf was covering his pink mouth.

“Mmph,” he replied, still looking at all of the pretty lights that filled the city. He spun in a mini circle and pointed at the Ferris wheel that had kaleidoscopic beams flashing up and down the rails and seated cases.

Wooyoung pulled his scarf down from his mouth, “Can we go ride it?”

Downtown Louisiana was filled with several Victorian-esque faubourg’s, and often called the Vieux Carré by locals, but San found it easier just to say “the square” when telling his mom about the heavily French and Cajun mix, the creole of culture in such a small place.

The smell of cinnamon sticks and hot chocolate whispered their way into their noses and Wooyoung and San both ended up with a hands full of both. Wooyoung was even kind enough to offer his cinnamon stick to San, guiding it into his mouth with stupid airplane noises. San tried not to think about how much he and Wooyoung looked like an official couple.

San had been to the Vieux Carré a couple of times during the holiday season but he had always went with a group of his friends, never with just one person this intimately. The soft Christmas music playing over the several speakers littered downtown, the fairy lanterns that were painted emerald that reminded San of home. Green being the color of youth and a fresh start. Which, he did think was fitting. All of it creating a sort of melancholy feeling in his heart that he tried to grasp and hold onto because he hadn’t felt like this in a very long time.

Wooyoung was nervous getting on the Ferris wheel, even though he had been bouncing before, his hair flying up comically.

“Can we fall?”

San hesitated, “Technically yes but-”

“I am not getting on.”

Wooyoung said this as he crossed his arms, splashing hot chocolate on the ground. His eyes looked scared and he looked the large structure up and down, then shook his head again.

“That thing is a killing machine.”
San rolled his eyes, “Yeah, one that you wanted to ride like 20 seconds ago.”

“Well that was before I knew it could kill me. And trust me, I like to ride a lot of things.”

San flushed, “Oh.”

Wooyoung looked over and tried to explain himself, “Not like that...well actually- never mind.”

San hummed, and he paused, trying to think of a way to coax him on the ride. He didn’t want to force Wooyoung to do something he didn’t want to do, but he did want Wooyoung to have the experience of seeing Baton Rouge from the top of the world- to be a dandelion seed carrying a message across the earth.

“I will hold your hand the entire time.” San said finally, pushing his cinnamon stick towards Wooyoung so he could have persuasion of sweets and San’s cold hands.

Wooyoung looked over at him, technicolor reflecting off of his amber eyes and he blinked. San tried to keep eye contact, but he quickly glanced away up at the wheel, counting the people on.

“Okay,” Wooyoung said slowly, “I will get on.”

San smiled but tried to hide it behind his hot chocolate cup as his butterflies took flight once more, “Okay.”

The ride up was rocky and cold air was blowing gently on their cheeks, Wooyoung’s hand was gripping his tightly, cutting off circulation, but San didn’t mind. Because, seeing Wooyoung light up brighter than the lights below was all worth it, as he was glad that someone shared the same enthusiasm for the magic beneath their feet.

San tried to ignore the way he felt giddy when Wooyoung squeezed his hand, and he tried to ignore the way Wooyoung’s arm snaked around his like vines up a column, smoothly.

They talked about the world above, and the world below, as soft choruses of bells played, visionary neon lights beamed off their laughter, and music box ballerinas spun somewhere in an attic.

A single dandelion seed floated past.

“I got you a present.”

San groaned, “No.”

Wooyoung was giddy as he bounced forward, scarcely reminding him of a bunny. A very cute bunny.

“Yes!” He cheered, plopping down on San’s bed. His eyes were lit up and his ugly Christmas sweater scratched at San’s skin and arms. Wooyoung revealed a neatly wrapped box and he urged it towards him. San was currently on his bed trying to sleep before his next class, but Wooyoung insisted on coming over.

“I have class so I will have to leave my apartment soon.”
He heard Wooyoung make a *psssh* sound and he could already picture him waving his hand over the phone, “So? I can just chill at your apartment until you get back- you better have hot chocolate that taste like downtown or I am suing you.”

So here Wooyoung was, on his bed, five minutes before San had to leave.

“Wooyoung, I really-”

He interrupted, “Just open it, Sannie.”

San pursed his lips and he took the bright vermillion box with gentle hands and he glanced up at Wooyoung who was still smiling excitedly and bouncing on his mattress.

San unwrapped the present, placing the big green bow on his bedside table and he opened the box to reveal a piece of paper and a CD.

“Go on.” Wooyoung urged happily.

The paper read:

*Dear Sannie,*

_I know I am beside you watching you read the letter so you must make several faces like you enjoy it or I will cry. I am not much of a writer, more of a painter, but I thought I would go outside of my comfort zone and write you something from the heart. Then, I realized that I wasn’t very good at that, I am better at expressing through art and touch. Which, I do a lot to you. You remind me of the color green, and the color of green reminds me of here. I know you miss Korea, and that green is your favorite color. While I did grow up here, green reminds me of Louisiana too. We have big pretty willow trees that can hide, swamps that are warm but quiet, green lanterns that float high up in the sky- and you are like all of those. You can hide a lot of things under your willow leaves, you are warm and quiet, and your mind is often lost in the clouds- glowing and singing about colors. Anyways, I hope you enjoy my gift.*

_Love,*

_Jung Wooyoung*

San laughed at the firefly sticker in the corner, and he felt a tiny tear run down his face but he hid it quickly before Wooyoung could see.

“So, did you like it?”

San surprised him by grabbing both of Wooyoung’s hands in his and he shook his head, “It is the best present I have ever gotten.”

Wooyoung sniffled, looking teary eyed and he glared.

“You’re stupid.”

San hummed and he pulled the CD case out of the box, and Wooyoung pointed to it.

“It is songs that I like, but more importantly songs that I listen to when I can’t sleep.”

“Ah.” Choi San said, tracing his finger down the spine of the case and looping over Wooyoung’s
pretty handwriting over the mirrored surface of the clear.

Wooyoung added, “They are on CD so you don’t have to sit in that stairwell and listen. You can pop them in a CD player in your room and stay in the comfort of your bed... I just thought it would be nice.”

San turned to Wooyoung with a soft smile, his lips pulling upwards and dimples softly making their bed in his cheeks. He nodded his head, “It is wonderful, Wooyoung.”

That early morning, San placed the CD in the player by his window that overlooked the university and he hummed about neon kitchens as he closed the lid. The clock read 3:27AM in big bright red numbers and he sighed as he crawled into his soft sheets, hoping that he could at least catch more than an hour of sleep.

_Dandelion, send you dancing on the breeze and like a stupid little girl, I spent my wishes on a weed thinking it could change my world. Dandelion, a million little wishes float across the sky. But it's a waste of breath and a waste of time, I know._

He soon fell asleep.

_Falling in love was a lot like riding on a Ferris wheel gripping hands._

_Falling in love was a lot like watching someone paint fireflies across a canvas, watching someone tap their foot to music you showed them, and it was a lot like dusting off your old music box._

_Sometimes, San would wind up the box just to watch the ballerina spin in circles with her foot a perfect arch, an Odette of sorts. In the position of _à la seconde_. He would try to picture the melody or piece she was dancing to, and he would wonder why she looked like she was on the brink of falling off of her tippy-toes. He had wanted to be a ballerina, dancing across the stage with his fireflies following behind._

_Liking boys in Louisiana was not simple, nor easy as other places around the world made it seem._

_But, San thinks that falling in love was too easy, and it was easy to like the way someone smiled, to like the way someone sipped their drink, and it was especially easy to like the way they looked at you._

_San did a Croisé, waiting for the audience to cheer._
San was sat in the dining hall, working furiously over his paper, tongue sticking out the side of his mouth in a puppy dog way. He narrowed his eyes at the words, like they would write themselves.

“I don’t think being mad at your paper will get it done anytime soon.”

He hushed Wooyoung and he cranked out another whopping two words. He huffed.

“Sannie!”

San looked up to see a wild Hongjoong appear, his piercings and chains on his pants jingling loudly- a large contrast to his giggles and sweet face. Wooyoung had wide eyes as Hongjoong plopped down next to him, kissing him on the cheek with one swift motion.

“Hey baby.” Hongjoong joked, tossing his arm around San.

Wooyoung looked between the two, “Is this your boyfriend, San?”

San choked on his spit and Hongjoong made a noise of disgust, crinkling his nose and lip up with a sour look on his face. San looked up from his computer to see Wooyoung with a look of concern and something else.

“No,” San said with a bitter taste, “he is just my lame ass best friend.”

Hongjoong did finger-guns, “Plus he likes the pretty ones. I am not his type at all.”

Then he paused, and narrowed his eyes on a very small looking Wooyoung who was fiddling with his paint jeans, sunlight hitting him prettily from the large glass windows.

“Who are you? Are you the boy San has been making heart eyes over?”

They both flushed and protests spilled out of San’s mouth, “Hongjoong- no- sto-”

“Maybe I am.”

San was silent and Hongjoong laughed loudly and he pointed at Wooyoung, “I like him. It is a good thing because you have been ditching me for him, at least he is funny.”

“I haven’t been ditching you, I saw you yesterday.” San said, now going back to work on his paper.

Hongjoong rolled his eyes- he knew this because he knew Hongjoong.

“Anyways, I think you are the boy he has been making heart eyes over. I think he has the lovebug because of you.”

“Alright, that is enough.” San said nervously, trying to shoo Hongjoong away from the topic and hopefully their table. He couldn’t have Hongjoong ruining this.

“I doubt that though, I am a boy.”

San stopped typing and Hongjoong quickly got serious.

“Did...San?” He turned to San with worry, “I didn’t just out you-”

San shook his head, it wasn’t like it was a secret. He wasn’t ashamed anymore, he had pride and he loved being who he was. It was a promise he wanted to keep to his mom. He wasn’t necessarily hiding it from Wooyoung or anyone on campus, it was just easier to tell them if it came up, or if
someone had asked.

“No, Joongie, it’s fine. I don’t care if Wooyoung knows.”

*Because maybe him knowing will finally change things.*

Wooyoung looked frozen and his mouth was slightly open—“I didn’t know that.”

“Is that a problem?” Hongjoong asked, a bit defensive.

“No!” Wooyoung interjected quickly, “I just... just didn’t know. I mean, I am- I. I like boys too.”

Hongjoong made an *Oops* face and he turned to Wooyoung with a whistle and quick shuffle of his things. “Well, I am gonna go and let you two come to terms. Bye.”

“**Hongjoong-.**”

Wooyoung chewed on his bottom lip and he tapped his pencil into a steady slow rhythm, and he looked like he was musing over what he was going to say. San tried to type coherent thoughts onto the paper but all he got was a scramble of words and an incomplete sentence that didn’t even have a verb.

“Well.” Wooyoung said, finally.

“How do you put two gays together and not know.” San joked nervously, tucking a silver strand behind his ear that had grown out a bit. Wooyoung too, played with his shiny black hair nervously and he laughed too, now seeming to grow warmer. Blooming.

“I am bisexual, but yeah.” Wooyoung said, a smile quirking up on his lips and he twitched trying to hide it.

They both burst into laughter, the awkwardness gone, and the sun shining outside.

“How long have you known you liked boys?” Wooyoung asked, pretending to walk on the ceiling. They both were side by side in San’s bed, looking up at the white above them, Wooyoung with his feet up into the air comically.

“Since like...ever. Um, I dunno.” He said, looking over at Wooyoung. His lashes were long and his nose bridge looked strong, but soft with the litter of stars across the apples of his cheeks. He tried not to stare at the plump of his lips and he quickly looked back up at their main focus- the ceiling. He felt Wooyoung look over at him.

“How about you?”

“Same. It was really confusing when I had a crush on the neighbor girl *and* her brother. I ended up kissing them both.”

San snorted and he rolled his eyes. But then he carefully posed the question, hoping he wasn’t being too intrusive even though nothing felt wrong with Wooyoung. They had grown so close that he felt stupid for even worrying about making him upset on accident.
“Wooyoung- why didn’t you tell me sooner?”

Wooyoung looked over at him, and San looked at him too, trying to resist the urge to brush back Wooyoung’s bangs that were in his eyes almost.

“Why didn’t you tell me sooner?” he shot back, smiling.

San hesitated.

“It’s not easy liking boys in Louisiana.”

Wooyoung hummed in acknowledgement and his hand searched for San’s and he intertwined them both.

“Is this okay in Louisiana?” He whispered.

San knew that it was one of those moments where there is a shift in the air, a shift in plans, a shift in a place that could change a lot of things. He always expected those moments to be big and grandeur with the release of doves into the air, or stars falling- something like that. But these moments were always so real and so quick that it only took a split second to change everything.

“It is okay to me.” He said, squeezing his hand.

The first kiss soon turned to several.

Kisses in the stairwell, kisses in the faubourgs, the library, the Vieux Carré, the moment before class. San wasn’t really sure what was happening or if when Wooyoung asked to hold his hand that was when it changed. He thinks that it had been this way for a long time, but the evening hadn’t came and so the fireflies were not ready to come out just yet.

Between kissing and sighing and Christmas in two days, he wasn’t sure what they really were.

Boyfriends?

Kissing buddies?

“Boyfriends.” Wooyoung said, stirring his hot chocolate and unwrapping his scarf from his neck. He tossed it in the library chair next to him and he settled into his seat more comfortably. San hummed.

“If that is what you want of course, if you’re not ready for a label that is fine too.” Wooyoung said with a soft smile to him.

“That- that sounds good to me.”

Wooyoung rolled his eyes, “You’re so romantic, Choi San.”
“Anxiety.”

The doctor stuffed his pen into his front coat pocket and he clasped his hands together as he sat on the tiny black stool next to the patient bed.

“Anxiety?”

The doctor smiled, “It is not a small thing, San. It is causing you to lose sleep over weeks, it is causing the nervous tremble you always have, it is also getting in the way of things.”

San chewed on his bottom lip and he frowned.

“That is the reason I can’t sleep? Just anxiety?”

The doctor nodded, “Like I said, it isn’t just anxiety, something so small you can ignore. Many people try but it is not very effective. It is an illness, something that can get better as we get older and find coping mechanisms.”

“Why do I have it?”

The doctor laughed, but it wasn’t mocking him or anything. He made San feel a bit better, like he was valid even if he didn’t really understand what was wrong.

“Some people just do. And I hate giving that answer but it is true. Maybe you were born with the proneness, maybe you had something traumatic happen, maybe you just are dealing with a lot of things and it is catching up to you. It is perfectly okay, I promise.”

San squeezed his eyes shut and whispered, “Are you sure?”

The doctor got up and he gave San a warm, bright smile that reminded him of Wooyoung. He put a hand on his shoulder and he tilted his head downwards to give him full eye contact.

“Positive. It seems you have gone awhile with anxiety, and you have managed to stay afloat. It doesn’t have to be crippling, but I am only worried because you are losing sleep and having trouble focusing. Many people deal with it every day and they still have a great day at the end, it doesn’t have to be such a bad thing, you know. Somedays, it may be easier to deal with- it is wishy-washy like that.”

San nodded.

“So what do I do?”

“Anything that helps you cope. You can take medicine to help you relax, you can try new techniques to help you understand yourself and the anxiety, consider therapy, you can find support in friends or romantic partners. Try telling someone how you feel.”

San felt a bit better and he gave the doctor a small smile, with a sigh, “Okay.”

He felt better because now he could pinpoint the issue, he could work on it, and he had people who loved and supported him.

He could do this.
San’s mom used to call him a child of the forest.

She said that he was a gentle soul, kind to the animals, and careful in his step when he crossed into the garden. She said it was rare to be so pure and filled with love.

‘There isn’t much love out there, San, but it is out there.’

She stirred her green tea and she patted him on the head and kissed his cheek before going to curl up in the hammock outside. He followed her out there, like a baby duck, and he got in beside her. She let him have a sip of his tea and they looked up at the pretty Gyeongsan sky that had hues of iridescence in their clouds. She and San followed a butterfly that passed by with their eyes and watched as the green leaves above them rustled gently with the breeze that was coming from the West.

“Do you love me?”

“Of course.”

He frowned and nuzzled into her shoulder, thinking hard.

“I can feel you thinking, your wheels are turning. What is it?”

“Well.” San said, chewing on his thumb, “I think that my wish won’t come true now.”

She stuck her delicate foot out on the ground to sway them more, and she hummed a pretty tune, allowing him to talk.

“I wished to be loved, but you love me already, so what do I do now?”

His mom giggled, peonies whispered, and she threaded her fingers through his hair. “There are many different types of love, not just my love for you, you know. There is love that created the garden, there is love that allowed you to grow, there is love that you will have for someone special, be it anyone you want.”

A dandelion was next to her ankle and she plucked it up, pulling it to her lips. He watched as his mom closed her eyes, paused, then blew it out into the wind. He watched as it floated up towards the clouds with bright eyes.

“There.” She said.

“What did you wish for?”

She looked around, like the universe and sea were watching, and she whispered quietly.

“Neon kitchens.”

She then sipped her green brew, smiling up at space.
The Louisiana night sky was a lot like the one back home.

He thinks that Wooyoung’s stomach freckles are like the stars in the sky, and that the hair falling into his eyes are the inky black that surrounded the waters in the evening.

“You’re staring.”

“There is a naked boy underneath me.”

“I still have my pants on.”

“Not for long.” San said, letting his mouth suck a little bruise on Wooyoung’s hips. He nipped at the skin there and unzipped his zipper, and of course, it was the paint splattered jeans.

Wooyoung giggled and pulled San up for another slow, wet kiss that burned low into his stomach and traveled straight down to his cock like it was a mission. San found it easy to kiss him now, the embarrassment that was there before when they were just two boys tying to make eye contact had long vanished and San could look at him all day. But, there was still a trace of nervousness that San got every time he and Wooyoung would kiss slowly like this.

They had already done lots of things, time not really a concept for them, Wooyoung sticking his hand down San’s pants the first night he asked if boys could hold hands like they do in Louisiana.

Maybe San had sucked Wooyoung off until he was a whining pitiful mess on his sheets, and maybe he wanted to do that again.

“Lemme suck you off.” Wooyoung said, before San could ask if he could suck him off.

“Let me go first.”

Wooyoung shook his head, “If I don’t get your cock into my mouth I will cry.”

San laughed, “You’re so dramatic.”

Wooyoung shrugged and flipped them over, attacking San’s neck with small kisses, then alternating with slow ones that dragged his bottom lip across the skin. San shivered and his hips lifted with the feeling. Wooyoung licked a fat stripe up his neck and planted a soft kiss on his destination.

“You know, I never imagined that I would be doing anything like this with you before.” he said, musing over the hickey he left. San snorted and Wooyoung shimmed his and San’s pants off. He glanced quickly up his body and smiled.

“Remember when you called me pretty?”

San nodded, “Yeah?”

“I was so distressed because I wasn’t sure if you were mocking me, or if you really meant it. Then I was confused about you meaning it because there was no way you were gay- or liked boys. It just never seemed plausible.”

He went back to paying attention to San’s body and he pulled San’s underwear off, pressing a small kiss to the tip of his cock and San made a noise.
“You’re pretty. You’re pretty. You’re pretty.” He said, watching Wooyoung’s lips slowly stretch over him, spit now falling down his shaft and onto his skin. Wooyoung’s eyes flickered up at him, cat eyes sexy and languid.

“Oh.” San said with a whisper.

San threaded his fingers through the silky hair on Wooyoung’s scalp and he scratched lightly, pulling a soft hum from the boy down below. Wooyoung closed his eyes and took him deeper, velvet throat closing around him in a vice grip and San cursed. He forgot how good it had felt to have Wooyoung’s wicked mouth around his cock.

It felt amazing.

Wooyoung liked to take things slow, but sometimes he was quick and desperate and whining around San and into his mouth. He may be taking him slow right now, but San knew how to rile him up to the point of spit and tears that pooled down his face and open mouth.

San liked how melodic Woo’s voice was, but he loved it when it was into high staccatos of moans and whimpers- he never knew someone could sound that fucking sexy.

San now gripped Wooyoung’s hair tightly, not too hard just yet, and he tugged him deeper and Wooyoung’s groan was snuffed by his mouth being full.

San pulled him off and sat up, pulling his boyfriend into his lap. Wooyoung squirmed around, ass rubbing up against San and he held back a moan. Wooyoung looked up at him through hooded eyes that sent an electric shock straight down and he leaned in to kiss him again, knowing how much comfort they both found in kissing each other.

They both sighed and then Wooyoung let out a squeak into San’s mouth when San’s finger trailed down to his hole. But San quickly pulled away.

“Did you prep already?”

Wooyoung looked sheepish, “Yeah. I knew I was getting demolished tonight.”

“Wooyoung,” San said, exasperated, “you know I like fingering you.”

“I like you finger blasting me too but right now I just want you in me.” He surged forward and captured San’s lips and rocked against his one finger that was resting around him. San laughed and shushed him by letting a finger slide in (with spit and lube of course) and then another. San still wanted to make sure he was ready, and like he said, he liked fingering him open.

“Hurry.” Wooyoung said, sweat lining his temples and chest. San hummed and slid a hand over Wooyoung’s cock to help him with the impatience, letting his wrist flick and he leaned forward in between them to let spit fall into his fist. They both watched San’s hand glide over the head of Wooyoung’s cock, the tip glistening with precum.

Wooyoung wiggled his hips around San’s fingers, letting himself adjust and he whispered into his mouth, “Okay, I am ready now I promise.”

San kissed his cheek and let Wooyoung sit up on his knees, crawling over the tip of San’s cock, San held his breath waiting for the pleasure to hit.

“Gonna ride you,” Wooyoung breathed, sinking down over him- Wooyoung whimpered and San let out a hiss.
“Holy fuck, Wooyoung.”

Wooyoung lifted himself up slowly and sank down again but faster and San stopped him,”Careful, let yourself adjust more baby.”

Wooyoung huffed, “I think I know when my asshole is ready.”

“Fair enough.”

San gripped Wooyoung’s soft sides and Wooyoung wrapped his arms around his neck and tops of his shoulders, allowing himself better leverage, and San kissed the freckle on his chest, then let him mouth a trail over to his nipple.

Wooyoung whined and his body twisted as he came back down on San’s cock- “Not fair,” he breathed loudly into syllables, “You know I am sensitive.”

San ignored him and nipped at the bud and soothed it quickly with his wet tongue, making sure to leave shiny spit behind in his wake. San wrapped his arms around Wooyoung now, both gathering a rhythm that made them both clench and speed up.

“You always feel so good, Wooyoungie.”

Wooyoung keened at the playful tone of his name and he only bounced even more, moaning out San’s name with a small cry.

It only took a second for San to find his prostate, as he leaned back on his elbows and shifted his legs up so Wooyoung was resting his back against his thighs.

“Ohohoh-” Wooyoung said breathlessly, legs tightening up and his muscles straining.

“Ri-r-right there Sannie-”

“I know baby,” San choked out, voice and stomach feeling low from the intensity of the moment. It was perfect wank bank material for later, that he would be happy to use.

Wooyoung was stretched out above him, nipples and cock glistening with precum and spit, and his mouth was bitten red from pleasure, his thighs shaking around San’s middle. His hair stuck to his forehead and he hung his head low, cursing San.

“Best cock of my life, I swear to fucking god.” His voice was choked and tears were now running down his cheeks

San leaned forward to flip them over, Wooyoung sighed, “My legs were hurting.”

“I got you,” San said in between kisses, pausing to give him a slow languid kiss that dragged their heartbeats down slower from the moment before. Wooyoung and San sighed happily, and San lifted Wooyoung’s hands above him. He clapped them between his, and their fingers intertwined.

San gently nudged Wooyoung’s leg up with his knee, and Wooyoung threw a leg over San’s shoulder- immediately letting out the loudest moan yet.

“Oh.”

He quickly lined himself up and slammed back in, both of their voices pitching higher and Wooyoung clenched and desperately tried to put his hands down to relieve himself on his cock. San kept them there and slammed him even further into the mattress, Wooyoung’s body sliding
upwards from the force.

“I love you.” Wooyoung said, tears falling down his face and San swooped down to kiss him, heart thudding wildly.

Wooyoung’s heart was rapidly thumping and his cock was bobbing in between them, San throbbing deep in him.

“I love you too- like so fucking much.”

Wooyoung let his head fall back, bangs fluffing up and he groaned, “That wasn’t how I wanted to tell you but fuck-” he whimpered, cut off by the pleasure.

“It’s okay, I think it is romantic.” San said teasingly, now skillfully thrusting up, rolling his hips deeper and Wooyoung smiled.

“I’m close,” his boyfriend managed to choke out after San was wrapping a hand around his cock, both their cheeks flushed out beyond control.

“Then finish.”

With Wooyoung shaking around him, San gasping into his neck talking about stars and butterflies, they came.

*I’ll paint the kitchen neon, I’ll brighten up the sky*

Her voice was crooning into his ears, spilling sugar in and sleep out. He was back in the stairwell, looking up at the dust bunnies and cracked ceiling with tired eyes.

“I thought you might be in here.”

Wooyoung came up the steps and stopped in front of him, “Are you having trouble sleeping again?”

“Mmm, no.”

Wooyoung tilted his head, and then he sat down in front of him. The cold looked good on him.

“I am actually really tired, but I wanted to come back here before I forgot about it.”

“You think you’re gonna forget where the stairwell is?” Wooyoung said, giggling.

“Maybe. Is the stairwell even real?” San said, tiredly. He always felt like reality was altered in here, the buzzing LED lights and stone walls weren’t exactly comforting, and the echo of nothing, but something was eerie.

The word for it was liminal, meaning, relating to a transitional stage or occupying a position at both sides of a boundary. You weren’t really stuck between the worlds of reality, but it was when one spent too much time there thinking that time should be moving, but since it was such an odd place, one felt like time wasn’t moving at all.
Wooyoung rested his head on San’s shoulder, the glass doors below watched silently and the cobwebs in the corner said nothing.

“Do you think you’re real.”

“Maybe.”

They both laughed and San traced his thumb over Wooyoung’s, speaking quietly.

“I hate being so sappy, but I never imagined feeling okay. Like, I wasn’t sad before but I just felt so displaced and I think sitting here in the stairwell gave me comfort because it too felt displaced. That’s why in the beginning, when I first met you, I was so out of it. You didn’t belong in a place filled with things that didn’t have time.”

Wooyoung listened patiently and he hummed a song about painting kitchens neon.

“I like being around you. You make me feel like I can have a place, but I promise I am not relying on you too much.”

Wooyoung giggled, “I know.”

They both continued to talk like old times, but this time it was a different kind of talk. It was talks about love, about each other, about Wooyoung’s painted jeans. They talked about San’s fireflies that he would catch in his palms, they talked about San’s mom who made green tea in gardens too. Wooyoung talked about Ferris wheels that made him scared but then he told him about a boy who held his hand and fed him cinnamon sticks to coax him on.

Wooyoung spoke about San’s friends being match makers and chaotic messes. San whispered about Louisiana magic and Christmas lights that lit up the stars and the stars on Wooyoung’s nose. They giggled, cried, kissed, and let the morning wash by, spilling over the glass.

As they were walking back to fall into sheets, Wooyoung pointed at a firefly resting on a dandelion, soaking up the warm sun and cozy winter.

San was humming a pretty song.

Dandelion, a million little wishes float across the sky, like fireflies.

End Notes

WOWIE THAT WAS FUN! I am not sure where this came from but I used to cry in the dorm stairwells at 3am so, that is that. I wish a Jung Wooyoung would have sat in front of me too lmao. Please leave a comment if you enjoyed, or drop a kudos if you thought it was cool or something. And if you didn't like it, that's cool too

TWITTER: @wooyooungies (Follow me and cry with me please, we can be friends)

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!