

Forever Relative

By Kristin Boyd

Forever for me only lasted a year and a half, but his forever is sure to last a lifetime. And forever might be that beautiful radiant winter day filled with the laughter and love of everyone you hold dear. And it might be the process of healing from a broken heart. On days when you spend forever with your friends, your sisters, your lovers, you find yourself lost in time and she'll tell you we've been here forever, but forever didn't seem that long. And Granny, who's nearly 90, has been here forever, but for her, forever seems too long. And the lovers on the park bench, they, too, have been there forever in this present state of being.

And forever never seems as long as people make it out to be. Because for me, forever never lasted long enough, and for them, forever always lasted too long. And together we wish that we could transfer forever to those who need it most. But forever chooses you, and chooses to come too soon, or too late, or not at all. And always there is this feeling of dissatisfaction, of regret, of dislike, of shame, for not taking forever when it was there.

Maybe forever lurks in your closet, waiting,

conversing with your skeletons and monsters. Perhaps they're plotting for the most perfect moment to jump out and surprise you, leaving your deepest fears exposed. Or maybe forever reads your diary while you're asleep and decides to make all your dreams last as long as possible-like the one about that dream house out in Colorado, with your perfect dream husband who was born specifically for you, to be with you, to love you and to cherish you; who comes with those three perfect dream children who never do a bad thing in their lives.

But forever has always been relative, and it always seems that the most desirable moments never last too long. That one trip out to California, the beautiful sun, its golden rays showering you with nothing but the purest warmth; those golden rays keeping the clouds at bay because there's no room for rain. Everything you could ever dream of, laid out before you. But the picture of perfection never lasts forever, and it never will.

Because forever, for me, only lasted a year and a half, but his grief is sure to last a lifetime. Because you thought forever was 46 minutes, but for them it was 46 hours, and the pain that they endured will surely last 46 years. Because forever has always been relative and

maybe because forever is the time that it takes to melt the snow on the North Pole, or the time that it takes you to walk down the school hallway after you slept with that teacher. Because forever could still be the time it takes us to find life on other planets, or the time it takes for your father to come back home; the time it takes for him to say, "I love you." Forever could still be the time it takes for your lips to touch before that innocent first kiss. Or maybe the time it takes you to realize that everyone was always talking about you behind your back. Because forever just might be the time it takes to heal.

And forever, for me, only lasted a year and a half, but his forever is sure to last a lifetime, because forever is a relative state of being. And those colors may be vivid for only forever, but forever might not last a lifetime, because forever only lasted five years; and on the dawn of the sixth year, you might forget everything you've ever remembered and it'll seem like those memories were forever ago, but forever has only been twenty minutes.

So how do we define the indefinable? Is there some kind of equation that will help us determine forever? Or will forever always be a year and a half for me, but

a lifetime for him? And will forever always hide in your closet, conversing with your skeletons and your monsters, or maybe read your dreams while you're sleep? And will the lovers on the park bench still be here forever? And will forever still be the process of healing from a broken heart? But forever will always be relative because it is the relative theory of forever, and forever never lasts as long as people say it does.