

## THE SHORT STORY

### WORDS NEVER SPOKEN

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This morning, I heard big, fat snowflakes tapping on the windowpanes, thrashing around like headless chickens. And now, as I am trudging through the snow, my bare feet are getting used to being the prey of those ostensibly benign flakes. Walking in the snow in sandals is not a good idea, but I am not doing this by choice.

I don't care about the cold or the fact that my feet are benumbed because today is the day that I'm going home. I am a few hours away from stepping into my cozy living room and sitting at a big wooden table with my Dad's glasses on it.

I have just left rehab, the place where you are supposed to kick one of the deadliest habits you may have. I managed to sneak out after a few days of planning.

I am wondering if my parents will be happy when they see me. They are the ones who turned me in. I think they will say that they did it out of the kindness of their hearts. I can't blame them. They were scared that I might do something that would put me behind bars for the rest of my life. They had to choose between my being sent to rehab or accepting the fact that they'd never see me again. I think my parents will be happy to see me. But the joy they feel may be replaced with the realization that this happiness will be cut short sooner or later.

I don't know why I am walking so slowly. Passers-by must think I am crazy. I tried to steal a pair of the nurse's shoes, but they were high heels; so I did what I do best, I trusted my sixth sense, which told me that everything would be all right.

The reason that I am walking slowly is because I am uncertain. It might be better for me to go back. I can make up something to convince the rehab staff of my good intentions. I am quite good at thinking up excuses. I already have one up my sleeve for my parents.

The road is very slick. Hail is making it even more difficult to maintain my balance. It's not that I will get injured if I fall; it's just that I don't want to be laughed at anymore. I don't want to get any more fingers pointed at me.

And in my attempt to be normal once again, I found myself walking in the snow in sandals and my pajamas. I am normal. Why couldn't this be normal? If I think this is normal, then there might be someone else who thinks the same way. Because I believe it's not about what the masses think of as normal, it's all about what makes me feel special and happy. That's what I call normal.

I passed the alley leading directly to my house. I need more time to think about some things. This is the most difficult situation one could ever be in, asking for a little more time to wallow in self-pity.

Being unable to take any more self-flagellation, I changed my mind and turned into the alley. My fingers were so numb that I couldn't open the gate. I can tell no one has opened it for a long time. But I am happy to see the light coming from the living room window.

My heart is about to jump out of my chest. Some beats are louder than others; some can hardly be heard. Opening the gate, I couldn't resist shouting to my parents from a distance.

"Mom, Dad, I am home."

I saw my dad peeking from behind the curtain and my Mom looking hurriedly for her hat. It broke my heart to see her struggling to walk, even with a cane.

They hugged me. Their tears mingled with mine. They both started praying aloud. The tone of

their prayers froze my blood. The warmth of the room shook my veins.

My Dad rushed to the other room to get the washing-up bowl. He filled it with hot water for me to warm my feet. As they were crying, I hung my head in shame like a kid who had just been taught a lesson.

They wouldn't be able to tell me exactly why they were crying. They didn't ask for any explanation from me either. No one could interrupt this powerful, nameless bonding, which filled the room with the echoes of my parents sobbing.

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People are saying that this is the token  
That all our dreams started aging.  
Looking around, everything's broken,  
Listening again, everyone's raging.

Something's telling us it's high time  
we loved more...loved more than ever.  
It's your time... yours and mine.  
Let us color our dreams. Fading? Never.

And now I'm telling you, this is the token  
That we should speak colors with words never  
spoken.