

Tcheelanshy Oriza, Age 16

Empty Hospital Bed

I ran out of the waiting room and sped down hallways while nurses yelled at me not to run, but I didn't care. I have to make sure she's okay. I got to her room after an eternity and shoved the door open. The only thing I find is silence and an empty hospital bed. Her hospital bed. Clean and perfect, not a speck of dust or ashes. It's as if she wasn't here today, as if she didn't die, and I wasn't there for her. Before I know it I'm beside her bed, I feel something drip down my face and I know I'm crying. I knelt there and sobbed, my tears making dark spots on the blanket but I didn't care. Time passed as I knelt there, looking at the ceiling, the walls, the monitors, and the empty bed where she died. I remembered how days before we were sitting on her bed at home laughing, her smile lighting up the entire room, now here we are, silence and emptiness. I got up and sat on the edge of the bed. Staring at the plain white wall in front of me, rubbing my hand on the blanket, hoping to feel a touch of life that I won't feel again. I sat there, motionless, staring at the ground blankly. It went like that for minutes until I heard feet shuffle on the floor and I snapped my head up and turned. There was a nurse by the door, blushing awkwardly as if she'd been caught with her hand in a cookie jar. "I'm sorry but... you need to leave, there's another patient waiting and..." She kept fumbling with her words but I saved her the embarrassment. "I understand." I said, my voice abrupt and hoarse "Just give me a minute." The lady nodded and smiled sheepishly before leaving the room. I got up as well and turned to look at the bed. Besides my tears it was made perfectly, just like her. When I left the room I

turned to close the door, but not before looking at the bed one last time, and shutting the door behind me.