

I've been in here a while, so maybe I should get up.

But I'm not.

The water is cold and I'm beginning to shiver, and when I rub my fingers together they feel like prunes. Yes, I really need to leave the tub.

But I'm not.

My eyes stay trained on the door expecting my mom to knock—again. I know she's worried. I had stayed in here over an hour letting the shower run, and she's tried to talk to me several times, walking away with each, "I'm okay."

But I'm not.

I don't know. Maybe I should turn the water on again. It should have heated up by now. And maybe if I stand under the warm spray again, I won't notice the tears falling down my cheeks or how the sky is getting dark, bringing an end to the worst day of my life. Maybe I'll tell myself I feel better..

But I'm not.

I hear her footsteps padding down the hallway and stopping at the door. I can almost imagine her face as she brings her hand up to rap on the wooden surface. She had been crying too, but by now she's stopped and has probably started dinner. If I try hard enough, I bet I can smell her Friday night special--lasagna. She only hesitates a moment before lightly knocking. "Katie, honey, when are you coming out?"

"Soon mom. Soon."

But I'm not.

She doesn't move for several seconds, but I finally hear her walking away. I know she wanted to say more, but mom has never been good with words. I close my eyes, wondering what she would think if I just stayed in here forever. If I do, I won't have to face what's out there. I won't have to face he's gone. Yes, if I just stay in here long enough, I can make myself believe tomorrow I'll put my arms around him and tell him I love him like I always do. I can believe I'll see his bright smile shining down on me. That's what I'll do--I'll just stay here.

But I'm not.

I open my bleary eyes and stand up, the chill air hitting my damp skin, the wet tendrils of my hair sticking to my face. I grab the nearest towel and rub myself until I'm dry and wrap the ends around my body.

"Okay, I'm sure I can do this."

But I'm not.

I open the bathroom door and walk out, ready to begin my new normal.

But I'm not.