

SO... MY UNCLE ZEKE. SHORT FOR EZEKIEL. HE'S BEEN DEAD TWELVE YEARS NOW.

HE LOVED TO SAIL. HE WASN'T A PARTICULARLY HAPPY GUY ON LAND. THE JOBS HE WORKED EITHER WERE TEMPORARY OR WOULD LET HIM LEAVE FOR WEEKS/MONTHS AT A TIME SO HE COULD GET OUT ON THE WATER. HE SUNK A LOT OF MONEY INTO HIS BOAT, WHICH - AS I SAID - WAS A PIECE OF SHIT, BUT IT WAS HIS PIECE OF SHIT, AND IT STAYED AFLOAT, AND IT TOOK HIM WHERE HE WANTED TO GO. HE'D ALSO SAIL RICH PEOPLE'S BOATS - PEOPLE WHO NEEDED SOMEONE TO TAKE THEM FROM BAJA TO SEATTLE IN THE SPRING, BACK DOWN IN THE FALL, THAT SORT OF THING. REALLY SWEET BOATS. HE LOVED DOING THAT.

HE WAS MY FATHER'S YOUNGEST BROTHER. THERE WERE TEN YEARS B/W THEM, SO MY FATHER HELPED RAISE HIM. LOVED HIM. FELT RESPONSIBLE FOR HIM. IN A SHEPHERD/LOST-SHEEP KIND OF WAY, I THINK, ALTHOUGH HE'D NEVER ADMIT THAT BECAUSE THAT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S MOTIVATED BY PRIDE OR HUBRIS OR SOMETHING SIMILARLY INTOLERABLE.

ZEKE WOULD TAKE ME OUT SOMETIMES. A FEW HOURS AT A TIME. WE ALWAYS STAYED PRETTY CLOSE TO LAGUNA VERDE.

FOR SOME REASON I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND, I GOT TERRIBLE INSOMNIA WHEN I WAS 16. AS IF I'D COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN HOW TO SLEEP. MY GRADES TANKED, AND EVERYONE STARTED HARASSING ME, WANTING ME TO TELL THEM WHAT WAS WRONG W/ ME. I HAD NO IDEA, OF COURSE. I STARTED HAVING BAD PANIC ATTACKS. I WENT TO DOCTORS + PASTORS + SOCIAL WORKERS, AND STILL: INSOMNIA, PANIC, DEPRESSION, GUILT. THEN ANGER, TOO - AT MYSELF, AT EVERYONE AROUND ME, AT THE WORLD - AND AT ONE POINT I APPARENTLY DECIDED IT WAS A PERFECT TIME TO TELL MY PARENTS I DIDN'T SHARE THEIR RELIGIOUS VIEWS (+ HADN'T FOR YEARS, EVER SINCE I'D STARTED THINKING ABOUT HOW FUNDAMENTALLY IMPLAUSIBLE IT ALL SEEMED, HOW IT WAS SO OBVIOUSLY A FANTASY, A FABLE - OR ONE OF THE CONTROL NARRATIVES THAT STRAKA