

A Conversation on an Empty Balcony

by Amanda Proscia

“Where are you planning on settling down?”

“Anywhere that isn't here,” I respond, in between drags of my cigarettes. Twenty-two years old and I have no plan; I go with the wind, like the smoke of this Marlboro red as it dances among the palm trees.

“You know your mother had two kids already at this age...”

“Yeah, well, I'm not my mother,” I snap back, purposely blowing smoke in its face. I turn and look at the Intracoastal, “the only good thing about this place is how clearly you can see the stars...other than that, there's nothing...no scene, no culture, just real estate, that's why I am going to be gone in three years.”

“I thought you said that three years ago when you moved here, no?”

I let out a big exhale, “yeah, well, a job's a job and money's money. Gotta save up so I can take off.” I change the subject quickly, “Did you know they say there's more stars in the sky than grains of sand in the world...did you know that? I only know that because I used to watch the Discovery Channel high while I was in Prep School...I was usually numb, but for some reason that stuck.”

“Yeah I know,” it responds, “makes sense though.” Not allowing me to successfully change the subject, it continues, “so what do you write about? Feelings?”

“I am most creative while numb so no, not feelings,” I respond with jaded disdain, “actually most of my fears inspire me.”

“Fears? Like Spiders?”

I roll my eyes, “I'm not afraid of spiders, just allergic... but I do have an irrational fear of birds; I don't write about that though.” I take a long, final drag of my Marlboro and with an exhale, I continue, “my biggest fear is that my lifestyle will catch up with me,

you know? That I'll wake up, be thirty, and still be chasing that cheap high in this godforsaken town."

With that, headlights blur across the driveway, the house owners are home. The key is in the lock, twisting and turning...but I am already at the gas station on the corner laying down five dollars for a forty of Budweiser.

