

# The Persistence of Loss

*by* Erin Zulkoski

There are no traces of him left...physical ones, at least. The emotional ones are here to stay.

I packed up the rest of his things today. Irony is the fact I'm still picking up after him, despite the fact he's been gone for two weeks. Some things never change.

I've never dealt with a break-up before, therefore, I don't know if what I'm doing is "normal" or "healthy" or "an appropriate display of my emotions." It started at work, when I took down his pictures...our wedding photo. How desperately I wanted to crawl into the frame and speak to us from seven years ago.

"Hey, dummies! Pay attention! Sure, it seems like the world is fresh and wonderous now, but in a few years, the resentment and anger sets in. You're in for darks days. You can choose to do nothing, to not talk to each other, which is what's going to happen, or you can be proactive and attentive to each other and save yourselves a heap of heartache later."

I wonder if we'd listen.

I wonder if I, at age 21, would look at the 29 year-old me and feel sorry or pity me. Probably.

Or maybe she would look in my eyes, see the pain and loneliness and decide then and there to do whatever it takes to not become another statistic. Fifty-one percent of all marriages end in divorce. Add another hashmark to the count. Zulkoski vs. Zulkoski for dissolution of marriage.

I hate the ups and downs I feel; this fucking roller coaster of raw

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emotion. Someone told me, "well, then get off the roller coaster." Easier said than done, I'm afraid. I don't like these feelings, but at least I'm feeling SOMETHING, anything. I spent the last year of my life despising the man to whom I was supposed to share the rest of my life. I became so detached from him, from this situation, that I wasn't feeling a whole lot of anything. But now when faced with the certainty of it all, all of the things I repressed are coming pounding on my door. Persistent fucks.

Maybe I'll just turn the television up louder in an attempt to drown out the noise. I want him to be as miserable as I am right now. I want him to look around a half-empty bedroom and wonder to himself, "what the fuck went wrong?" But he's not. And because he's not, neither will I. No more feeling like I can't do this without him...because I will do this. I must do this.

Onward I trudge, one foot in front of the other, until one day, it won't be that hard. And the day after that will be a little easier still, and so on and so on.

One step at a time...

