# Goodbye, Brother

*by* T.R. Wolfe

My brother died in his sleep almost two months ago. He was 25. He was addicted to pharmaceuticals. Two days before he died, he fell asleep at the wheel and crashed his truck into a highway sign. It was the last thing he owned. He had been living with my parents for two years, until they told him enough was enough. The night he passed away, he took pills and drank heavily. Coroner said it wasn't on purpose, which is nice, but I know he died alone. He had, in the last few days of his life, reached out to everyone he knew, and everyone blew him off, because we all had had to deal with him and that state he was in, for years.

Earlier this year, he was at my apartment. I offered him a place to stay. I told him he had two weeks to find a job. I kicked him out after the first night. That was the last time I ever saw him. We talked a few more times after that, on the phone and online, but the last image I have of him is through my peephole, walking away, dejected, abandoned, gripping a pillow and blanket he expected to use that night. He slept in his truck that night. I am happy to say that right before shutting my door on him, we hugged. I won't ever forget that. Nor will I forget the look on his face, the look in his eyes: that fear of the unknown, the last option dwindled down to nothing. But I had to kick him out. *I* was scared. I didn't know what to do. So I did the only thing I knew how to do, and that was to push him away, to keep him at my arm's length and further. I will never forgive myself for that, but I hope he realizes that that was the hardest thing I've ever had to do….

I'm sorry, brother. I'm sorry you passed away in your sleep, completely alone, probably scared, probably sadder than anything I'll ever experience. I would like you to know that you weren't alone though; that because of your situation, many people were *always* thinking about you, even though probably not with the best intentions. I rest comfortably knowing—believing—that you know that the people you called your friends and family actually did care

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about you, did love you, we just had to take care of our business first. Yes, you came second, but it was never a malicious second.

I will hopefully someday meet up with you again, in whatever form that comes in. For the rest of my life I will try to make a positive out of the complete tragedy that was your life. I will name my son your first name, or, if my wife demands something else, it will be his middle name. I hope you just smirked reading that. I will be the father you will never get to be, and I will have the family you will never get to have. And that is how I will honor your time spent here, and the people you've touched, even though, in your final moments, you may not think that we cared. We did. We do. Goodbye, Tim. Goodbye brother.