

Wait

by Zach Dodson

Dearest Albie,

You know I love you like a sister.

I don't mean to scare you, but I'm in the hospital. In the emergency room. Texting you. You are the enduring champion of the micro-heart murmur. You have no purely defensive moves.

The nurse wrote 'stupid' on my chart. The doctor came and added a really bad drawing of what I think is tweedle-dum, but it could be tweedle-dee. They all wear bubbles here.

I'm not dying. What is it called if you think you might have Hypochondria but you really don't? I'm worried that's what I have. Is it cold in here? Or is it me, dying?

You don't like it, but I still thank you for the black on black, and I know You know I see what you see. But I'm in the weeds here now, in the sticks.

Screams from the rooms next to mine. Everyone has cartoon meat cleavers up in they grill. So it doesn't seem real. Like the screams of coyotes.

Did you know they sound just like children, out there in the desert, dying? Like spooked and screaming children. I didn't want to tell you that when we were out there, didn't want to freak you out. One time, when I was teenage, on a handful of acid, we were all out in the chihuahua, outside of Albuquerque. My crush, Bettina, her parents had a split-level ranch-house, we camped just far enough from it to do our drugs. Up all night, poking the campfire, seeing extra people punching in sleeping bags. When the morning light

crawled up, the screams began. They circled in all around us.
Bettina ran up to the house, and loosed her two border collies into
the dawn. They chased em off. Coyotes are chickens.

I feel like the cartoon Coyote, when he runs over the edge of the
cliff, and hangs there for a minute, before plummeting, except I
don't plummet. I just walk back over the same air, back onto the
cliff. Slowly, because my back hurts. The doctor tells me I never have
to do acid again.

That's why tonight it is morphine. I turn it over, and spit it out,
rolling on my back, floodlights on the nightjars. Like water in the
tapedeck.

I know how you die. I know how this ends.

