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Creative Writing #1
Crash

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He was lying down. The room was dim, but the overcast light of morning was filtering weakly through the dusty purple curtains. It was warm and the room smelled like sleep. He didn't want to get out of bed yet, so he rolled over, pressing his face into the dark cotton pillowcase to block the wretched light. The pillowcase had been freshly laundered and smelled of fabric softener. He could feel the pill of the flannel blanket grazing on his skin.

As his mind fought his body about weather or not to get up for the day he could hear the chirping of birds in the tree outside the window. Those perky little bastards.

He settled himself on the pillow, but he heard a slight rustling outside the door. A cat started to cry softly, signaling him to wake up and allow her access to the room she loved more than any other in the whole house. He knew this was a losing battle. The cat would not stop making noise until she was let in. He grudgingly made his way to the door, turning the handle to open it an inch. As he made his way back to the bed, the blonde tabby pushed herself through the crack in the door and gracefully jumped onto the bed with a joyful trill.

The cat strode straight over to where he laid his head on the pillow and began to walk on both. He could smell the kibble on her breath as she sniffed at his face. Eventually she made her way down the length of his body. She curled up near his belly, purring softly as she cuddled next to her human.

Suddenly his alarm went off and he snapped his eyes open in panic. The cat pushed her claws into his flesh. He frantically reached over to slam the snooze button while the computerized sound of an ocean wave echoed through the relative peace of the room. He caught sight of the bright red numbers proclaiming the early hour. He did not want to get out of this bed! It was warm and soft and safe... no, he would just go back to sleep for a few more minutes. He *once again* buried himself in the blankets trying to find the comfortable groove he had made in the mattress.

Several minutes later a woman flung the door open, startling both man and cat. She was consummately average: average height, average weight. Neither tall nor short, fat or thin. Her hair fell to her shoulders in gentile waves of golden brown. Her green eyes flashed with irritation as she took in the scene before her, her crooked mouth turning in a scowl. The look was odd on her normally affable face. The cat, sensing the disturbance of the peace, promptly got up and left the room to try and find some elsewhere.

He groggily tuned over to see who had entered the room, registering her annoyance. She looked at him and thought she might explode. How could he have forgotten that he needed to wake up on time today, of all days?! They were going to be late! Traffic was already starting to pile up on the interstate. Soon there would be no way that they would make it on time. Panic rose in her throat. The smell of the coffee she had made an hour earlier came into the room, mingling with the haze of stale sleep; it made the oatmeal in her belly turn uneasily. She grabbed at a pillow and her fingers curled into the cottony downy flesh of it. She hurled the pillow at his head.

“Get up!” she yelled at him. He made a noise beneath the pillow that conveyed a muffled sense of anger at being so rudely disturbed. “Get out of bed!”

He pulled the pillow from his face as he sat up. His eyes blearily glared at her. “I was just about to before you came in,” he said through a yawn. “My alarm only just went off. Get a grip.” He began to stretch out his arms to shake off the sleep that lingered there.

“No, your alarm went off forty-five minutes ago. We should have been walking out the door already!”

He looked at his clock and the bottom dropped out of his stomach. She was right. He hadn’t hit the snooze button, he had hit the off button! “Oh shit!” He flew out of bed, tossing the blankets back haphazardly to reveal his nakedness. As he did so a cloud of blonde cat hair flew into the still dim air. “I’m so sorry! Give me five minutes…” he said as he began to rummage for his clothes.

“I don’t know if we have five minutes. Traffic is already a mess.” She plopped herself down on the bed and buried her head in her hands. “I’m probably going to miss my flight. If I miss this meeting I could lose my job! This client is so important.” She let the panic overtake her and she began to sob into her hands.

“No! No, I’m going to get you there on time.” He came around the side of the bed and knelt in front of her. He placed his hands gently on her knees and said calmly, “I promise that you will make it to this meeting on time. Come on hon, look at me.” He began to coax her hands from her face. He could see the tracks that her salty tears had made on her fresh makeup.

She sniffled as she looked at him. His jeans weren’t buttoned. He wasn’t wearing a shirt. He was covered in cat hair and the pillow had left a long reddish indent across his right cheek. His hair stood up in the most absurd cow-lick she had ever seen, and he gazed at her like a

starving basset hound. He looked so silly that she couldn't help but to laugh at the sheer ridiculousness of the scene.

“Alright, well, lets get going then.” She kissed him on the forehead and they prepared to leave.

Hours later he sat on the couch in shock. How could this have happened? He was startled back to reality as the cat jumped up on his lap to demand the attention that was her rightful due. Suddenly he clutched the cat to his chest, burying his face in her silky fur as he sobbed. The cat squirmed free of his grasp and bounded away indignantly. He looked up at the television once again.

Everything seemed to be on fire. He could see first responders struggling to quell the flames that burst out of the mangled fuselage. Others were sifting through trails of smoking detritus that surrounded the horrific scene. Spontaneous engine failure they said. No survivors expected they said. They were just grateful the plane hadn't gone down in a populated area. He broke down again.

Traffic had been a nightmare on the way to the airport. He still held out hope that they might make it until they had hit a three-mile backup. He was furious when it only turned out to be because of a fender-bender. Seriously? A fender-bender. His fiancé was going to miss her flight because of a stupid fender-bender. Well, really it was because he was being a lazy asshole, but he didn't want to confront that feeling at the time. Easier to blame the morons on the side of the road.

They ran up to the ticket counter, but he already knew it was too late. He looked over at her and could see the blank stare of bewildered panic on her soft features. He had to make this right. He just had to! He knew how much her job meant to her and it was really his own fault that they hadn't made it on time.

He approached the ticket counter and pulled out his wallet. "I need the next flight to San Francisco. I don't care about the price." He handed the counter agent his credit card as she came up behind him and wrapped her arms around him.

"Thank you," she whispered on the back of his neck and gave him a soft kiss.

Now, even hours later he could feel her lips on the back of his neck, the squeeze of her slender arms around his chest. He breathed slowly as he looked down at the text on his phone: *Got here safe. Checked into hotel. First class was great! Love you XOXO.*

His heart pounded with relief. She was safe. She was alive, and all because he was too damn lazy to get his ass out of bed. He wasn't sure what kind of angel had compelled his fingers to slip on the alarm buttons, but he was damn grateful for it. He said a prayer for the souls on the flight that had gone down while he took a shot of whiskey to calm his nerves. He texted her back: *I'm so glad hon! Good luck at your meeting. You're gonna kill it!*

He turned off the television. He would tell her about it later after she had had her meeting and she was back home safe, but not now. Now he needed to crawl into bed and crash for the night. The cat followed him into the darkened room, her tail flicking back and forth. She was satisfied.