

Currency - Chapter 1

I remember everything about the moment I died. The shirt I was wearing. Red. Scoop-necked. Three cherry appliqués along the scoop. The stain on the left knee of my black capris. A grease stain, nearly invisible but seeped in indefinitely. The red polish half-chipped off my nails. The color and models of the cars around me. Black Ram. Gold Camry. White Celica. Black Accord. The exhaust from the highway infused with the ripe yeast of the bread factory nearby easing in through the cracked windows. Tom's cologne, sharp, faintly woodsy like a burned out campfire. Tom's fingers tapping an uneven rhythm on the steering wheel. The song on the stereo. "Oh I! I just died in your arms tonight. Must have been something you said..." An impossible song, but I've been assured that every detail comes crystal clear. That most definitely had to be the song echoing in the Blue Altima mere seconds before Tom slammed on the brakes. Seconds before the steel pipe, the striking metal snake, slid loose of its bearings so fast but liquid slow in memory time. I remember my hands, my chipped-polish fingers, reaching up as if to catch it as it came through the windshield. Like catching a baton. Like catching a sword. Ultimately guiding it toward my neck. *Here*. That's the spot.

I remember how it felt, every last sensation from the sharp sting of the skin of my neck tearing like a wet sheet of paper, the air whispering into the untouched flesh inside my throat, blood rivuleting from its veins, the warm rush of pooling liquid blushing my shirt a deeper red. My tongue moving like a pinned-down snail to form words my open throat snarled away. Last words. What would I have said, if I could? Help? Oh God? Mom?

I know what I would say now, if I were to die all over again. If that were possible. If someone could die twice, knowing the second time what happens after. I would say: It's okay. I'm coming.