Baby Bowheads

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As I came nearer to the Lucky Stone Pub, I began to recognize John’s too-tall and too-lean-to-be-inconspicuous frame idling outside of the brick building. He stood closer to the alley than the entrance. He seemed to carry a tension in hunched-up shoulders that were typically as relaxed as his demeanor, one that bordered between carefree and smug. He craned his neck around in a search for something or someone that I realized was me upon seeing his reaction to finding me. I hurried my pace to meet him at the side of the building. As I got closer, the smell of cigarettes from the idlers outside was quashed by John’s heavy cologne as I approached him. It was a familiar and aggressive citrus which he always applied liberally.

“ Ike! Where the fuck have you been?” he asked.

“Good to see you too. What? Am I late?”

John recollected himself with a deep breath as he glanced back toward the pub. “No. Trivia hasn’t started yet.”

“Cool, then what’s the problem?”

“You didn’t get my texts?”

“No. I left my phone at home. I’m trying to go without it. Be in the now ya know?”

John sighed again. “No, Ike. I don’t know. Okay.” He glanced over toward the bar again and then down the alleyway which was empty save for some homeless loiterers. “So here’s the thing. You remember that job offer I passed on?”

“For that tech startup? Jance?”

“Janus. Yeah, that’s the one. Well, they gave me a second offer. A better offer. And I’m taking it. I leave for San Francisco on Sunday.”

John spoke energetically and with purposeful articulation, one of many traits that made him well-suited to the public relations work he excelled at. While John had been a climber and well-suited to the sharky world of business, my own talent in copywriting had never been enough on its own to propel me out of freelance hell. John was already earning more than I wanted to imagine, and a job at Janus Tech meant even more. So I congratulated him.

“That’s great man. So I probably won’t see you and Laura for a while I guess.”

John looked around again to see if the coast was clear. “That’s what I texted you about. I didn’t tell Laura.”

“Jesus, man. Really?”