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## 99 Degrees

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# 99 Degrees

DJ Reinhardt

You and I walked under smoke-filled skies. 7 blocks from your house to the local ice cream shop across from Higgins. 99 degrees and our clothes stuck to us during the trek back. I left to go spend a few hours of the 4th with my family. Lighting sparklers with my niece and nephew, but you said you'd come up afterwards.

I sat at the table on the deck, facing the green mountains that separated my housing development from Lolo. My family ate hot dogs, baked beans, and red-white-and-blue popsicles that melted before reaching our mouths.

"Mommy, the sky's on fire," my 4 year old niece said.

And it was. The sky was on fire. The valley was on fire. The mountains that surrounded us were on fire.

It was beautiful.

You came over with blankets, and we spread them out on a hill by my house. The sky was orange and yellow, with a blood red sun. We watched it sink slowly before the fireworks began. The explosions blazed colors, painting the dark canvas in front of us. I don't remember what we talked about.

The night brought some cool relief as we walked back to my house. There wasn't much to look up at, the smoke left no holes for the stars to shine through. 22 days until you left for college. I held you at an arm's length and we admitted to a string of words you'd never said before. There hasn't been a hotter summer since.