

Last Sweet Thing
written by
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FADE IN:

EXT. CARE FACILITY PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

A low memory care building sits beneath a fading South Carolina sky. A few windows glow early.

AUGUST, late twenties, sits in a parked car with the engine off. Short hair. Clean shirt. One hand on the steering wheel, one hand wrapped around a bottle of ORANGE SODA.

The bottle label is damp. August rubs one thumb across it until the paper begins to peel.

On the passenger seat: a paper cup of VANILLA ICE CREAM in a plastic bag. A spoon. A folded napkin.

A phone sits in the cup holder. The map app is still open. The route line runs from South Carolina to the care facility.

August looks at the entrance.

They check their reflection in the rearview mirror. Touch the back of their haircut.

AUGUST

Hi, Abuela.

August listens to the sound of the words inside the quiet car.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

It's me.

They swallow. Try again.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

I'm August.

They hold the words in their mouth. Then open the car door.

CUT TO:

INT. CARE FACILITY LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Cool air. Waxed floor. A television mounted near the ceiling. A vase of artificial flowers on the front desk.

A sign on the wall reads: MEMORY CARE VISITORS PLEASE CHECK IN.

August enters with the soda and ice cream.

A NURSE in pastel scrubs looks up from a clipboard.

A NURSE in pastel scrubs looks up from a clipboard.

NURSE
You here for Lucila?

AUGUST
Yeah. I called earlier.

NURSE
You're August?

August nods. The nurse marks the clipboard.

On the clipboard: LUCILA MULLARKEY. ROOM 189. SEVERE
DEMENTIA.

NURSE (CONT'D)
She had a rough afternoon.

AUGUST
Rough how?

NURSE
Looking for her mother. Asking to
go home. It happens more when the
light changes.

August glances toward the hall.

NURSE (CONT'D)
She ate a little. Not much.

AUGUST
I brought her something.

They lift the bag. The nurse sees the orange soda.

NURSE
That might help.

August tries to smile.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Room one eighty-nine. I'll be
nearby.

AUGUST
Thanks.

CUT TO:

INT. CARE FACILITY HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

A long hallway. Beige walls. Half-open doors. A cart rolls somewhere unseen.

August walks slowly. From one room, a game show. From another, coughing. A radio plays low behind a closed door.

They pass a framed notice board. Bingo. Haircuts. Communion service. Family visiting hours.

August stops outside room 189.

The nameplate reads: LUCILA MULLARKEY.

August touches the back of their haircut again.

Inside the room, canned laughter bursts from a television.

August steps back.

Down the hall, an EXIT sign glows red.

The ice cream softens in the bag. August looks at the exit. Then back at the door.

Their thumb rubs the soda label.

AUGUST
I came all this way.

No one answers. The hallway hums under fluorescent lights.

August knocks once. Nothing.

They open the door.

INT. LUCILA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The television is too loud.

A game show host smiles from the screen.

LUCILA, seventies, sits in bed facing the window. Her hands move over the blanket in her lap.

Beside Lucila, a lunch tray: hard bread, applesauce, a spoon, a napkin twisted tight.

August stands just inside the door.

AUGUST

Abuela.

Lucila turns. Her eyes move across August's face.

She does not smile. She does not frown.

She looks.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

It's me.

The game show audience applauds. Lucila flinches.

August crosses to the television and lowers the volume.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

Sorry. Too much, right?

Lucila looks back to the window.

August places the orange soda and ice cream on the tray table. The bottle is bright against the room.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

I brought you something.

Lucila's eyes find the bottle.

August pulls the chair closer. Sits.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

You used to tell me about this.
Orange soda and vanilla ice cream.

Lucila watches the bottle.

August unscrews the cap. A sharp hiss.

Lucila grips the blanket.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

Sorry. I'm sorry.

August waits until Lucila's hand eases.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

I'll go slow.

They pour soda into a paper cup. Add vanilla ice cream.

Orange foam rises. Lucila's fingers stop moving.

She leans forward.

LUCILA
Naranja.

AUGUST
Yeah.

Lucila points weakly toward the cup.

LUCILA
Mantecado.

August looks down. Takes that in.

AUGUST
Yeah, *Abuela.*

They lift the cup. Lucila reaches for it. Her hand shakes.

August steadies her wrist. She drinks.

A small line of orange rests on Lucila's lip. August wipes it with the folded napkin.

Lucila closes her eyes. Her fingers tap the side of the cup.

Once. Again.

A cart rolls in the hall. Its wheels catch the rhythm.

Lucila taps again.

FADE TO:

EXT. AGUADILLA STREET - DAY - MEMORY, AS AUGUST PICTURES IT
Sun. A curb. A bottle of orange soda between two girls.

YOUNG LUCILA sits beside her IDENTICAL TWIN SISTER. They are barefoot and hot from the day. A small cup of vanilla ice cream sweats between them.

Music comes from somewhere nearby. Fast. Spanish. Loud.

Young Lucila pours soda over the ice cream.

Her sister steals the first spoonful.

YOUNG LUCILA
Ay, *dame.*

Her sister laughs and jumps up. Young Lucila chases her. They run into the street.

They dance. Bare feet on pavement. Soda on their hands. Music from an open window.

INT. LUCILA'S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Lucila opens her eyes.

The room is beige. Dim. Small.

Lucila's mouth lifts slightly.

LUCILA
Con mi hermana.

AUGUST
With your sister.

Lucila looks at the cup.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
You told me that story. You and
your sister on the curb.

LUCILA
Mi hermana.

AUGUST
Your twin.

Lucila nods once, not quite to August. Maybe to the window.

August lets the moment sit.

LUCILA
¿Tú eres?

August opens their mouth. Nothing comes out.

Their thumb searches for the soda label. Rubs.

AUGUST
I'm...

They stop. Look at their reflection in the dark television screen.

Short hair. Jaw. Shoulders squared too hard.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I'm your grandchild.

Lucila waits.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

Lyndsey.

The old name sits there.

LUCILA

Lyndsey?

August nods. A small practiced nod.

AUGUST

Yeah. The one and only.

They try to smile. It does not stay.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

But I go by August now.

Lucila looks at the window.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

August.

They touch their chest.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

That's my name.

Lucila says nothing. The game show host moves silently on the television.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

You don't have to remember. I just wanted you to hear it.

Lucila looks down at her own hands.

LUCILA

Luci.

August leans forward.

AUGUST

What?

Lucila presses her hand against her own chest.

LUCILA

Luci.

AUGUST

Yes. You're Luci.

Lucila looks frightened. She presses harder at her chest.

LUCILA

Luci.

AUGUST

You're Lucila. You're Luci.

Lucila stares at him. Her breathing changes.

LUCILA

¿Dónde está mi mamá?

August goes still.

AUGUST

(gentle)

She's home, *Abuela*. Resting.

Lucila nods like that makes sense.

August looks at the tray, the muted television, the untouched bread.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

You should have music.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

You always had music.

August takes out their phone.

A list of songs. Reggaeton. Salsa. Spanish pop. Adele. Elvis.

They scroll. Stop. Scroll again.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

I don't know which one.

Lucila's fingers move on the blanket.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

I hate that I don't know.

They choose a salsa song.

Percussion. Horns. A dance rhythm.

Lucila's foot shifts under the blanket.

August notices.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

There you are.

Lucila looks at them.

August stands. Looks toward the door. No one there.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I don't dance like you.

Lucila's fingers tap.

August moves their shoulders. Small. Awkward. The rhythm keeps going.

They try a basic step. Stop. Laugh at themselves.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
Don't judge me.

Lucila's mouth moves toward a smile.

August tries again. Shoulders. Feet. Hands.

The room remains: bed rail, tray, muted television, pale walls.

August keeps moving.

FADE TO:

EXT. AGUADILLA STREET - DAY - MEMORY, AS AUGUST PICTURES IT
Young Lucila dances with her sister.

They clap. They spin. Music spills out of an open window.

Their bare feet slap the road. The sister grabs Young Lucila by both hands.

They turn and turn until the street blurs.

FADE TO:

INT. LUCILA'S ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

August dances. Not beautifully.

Their breath catches.

August wipes their face with the back of one hand but keeps moving.

AUGUST
This is me.

Lucila watches.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I know you knew Lyndsey.

They take another step.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
You held her. You fed her. You
kissed her face before she knew
what her face was.

August stops dancing for half a beat. Starts again.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I was ready to say goodbye to that
name.

Lucila's fingers tap the blanket.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I wasn't ready for you to say
goodbye before you ever said hello
to me.

They touch their chest.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I'm August.

A breath.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
Your grandchild.

Another breath.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
Your grandson.

Lucila keeps her eyes on August.

August stands still now. The music continues.

Lucila lifts one trembling hand.

August goes to her. Takes it.

Lucila studies his face.

LUCILA
Qué bonito niño.

August kneels beside the bed and presses his forehead to her hand.

AUGUST

Gracias.

Lucila's fingers rest in his hair.

August closes his eyes.

A soft knock on the open door.

The nurse stands there with a small paper cup of pills.

NURSE

Sorry. Medication time.

August wipes his face quickly and stands.

AUGUST

Yeah. Of course.

The nurse enters. Lucila looks toward the window.

NURSE

Lucila, sweetheart, I have your evening meds.

Lucila does not respond.

NURSE (CONT'D)

She likes you.

AUGUST

She doesn't know me.

The nurse looks at Lucila, then back to August.

NURSE

Some days are harder than others.

The nurse offers Lucila a pill and water. Lucila turns her face away.

AUGUST

Abuela.

Lucila looks at August.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

Agua.

Lucila takes the water. The nurse watches, kind but tired.

NURSE
You can stay a little longer.

AUGUST
Thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. LUCILA'S ROOM - EVENING

The nurse leaves. The song has ended. August sits beside the bed.

The cup is nearly empty. Orange and vanilla have melted together.

AUGUST
One more?

Lucila opens her mouth a little.

August helps her take a spoonful of the melted float.

Lucila closes her eyes.

FADE TO:

EXT. AGUADILLA SHORE - SUNSET - MEMORY, AS AUGUST PICTURES IT

The curb is near the ocean now. Young Lucila and her twin sit with orange soda and vanilla ice cream between them.

Older Lucila stands barefoot in the sand. Her hair white. Her hands strong.

A place has been saved beside her on the curb.

Young Lucila pats it. Waiting.

August stands several feet away in the clothes from the care facility.

AUGUST
I didn't say goodbye.

The waves come in.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I need you to know that.

Young Lucila listens. Her sister watches the water.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I didn't stop calling because I
stopped loving you.

August's hands shake.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I stopped because every time you
didn't know me, I felt like I was
losing you again.

Older Lucila looks at him.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
And I didn't know how many times a
person could lose their grandmother
while she was still breathing.

The music softens.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
But I'll call.

He nods.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I'll bring you music.

He looks at the cup on the curb.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I'll bring you orange soda.

His voice breaks.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
And when you're whole again,
wherever that is, I'll dance with
you right.

Young Lucila smiles.

She reaches out. Not far enough to touch him. Far enough for
him to see her hand.

Her twin sets the float between them.

Older Lucila sits on the curb beside the girls.

For a second, all three versions of Lucila share the same
sun.

August stays where he is.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
Save me a place, okay?

Young Lucila pats the curb again.

FADE TO:

INT. LUCILA'S ROOM - EVENING

August blinks. Back in the chair. Lucila's cup rests in his hand.

The air conditioner hums.

AUGUST
Abuela.

Lucila looks at the window.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I love you.

Lucila's lips move.

August leans closer.

LUCILA
Otra vez.

August smiles. Tears fall anyway.

AUGUST
Yeah. Otra vez.

They press play on another song. Fast. Bright. Loud.

August stands. Lucila watches.

August dances again. Smaller this time.

The room remains a care facility room: bed rail, tray, muted television, too-white walls.

Lucila's fingers tap with him.

The song continues.

CUT TO:

INT. CARE FACILITY HALLWAY - EVENING

August steps into the hallway with the empty ice cream cup and orange soda bottle.

The hallway is darker now.

The nurse passes with a laundry bag.

NURSE

You have a good visit?

August looks back at Lucila's door.

AUGUST

Yeah.

The nurse smiles and keeps walking.

Through the cracked door, Lucila sits facing the window. The music plays softly from August's phone on her tray table.

August reaches into the room and turns it up a little.

Lucila's fingers move on the blanket.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

Bye, *Abuela*.

Lucila's lips move. No sound reaches the hallway.

August steps closer.

LUCILA

Luci.

August nods.

AUGUST

Luci.

He touches his chest.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

August.

Lucila looks toward the window.

August does not correct the moment.

He leaves the door open a few inches.

They walk down the hall.

At the front desk, the nurse looks up.

NURSE

She can have visitors any day until eight.

AUGUST

I know.

August pauses.

AUGUST (CONT'D)

I haven't been good about coming.

NURSE

A lot of families say that.

AUGUST

Does that make it better?

The nurse does not answer right away.

NURSE

No.

August nods.

NURSE (CONT'D)

But coming today counts.

August holds the soda bottle. The label is nearly rubbed through.

AUGUST

I'll come again.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARE FACILITY PARKING LOT - EVENING

Cold air. Rows of cars. A sky losing the last of its color.

August sits in the driver's seat and closes the door.

The empty ice cream cup rests in the passenger seat, collapsed at the rim. The orange soda bottle is half empty.

August does not start the car.

They take out their phone. Their hands are unsteady.

They open the calendar. Create a reminder:

CALL ABUELA
Repeats weekly.

SUNDAY, 5:00 P.M.

August stares at the screen.

Their thumb hovers over SAVE.

They press it. The reminder locks into place.

August leans back against the seat. The car is quiet.

Then the phone buzzes.

CALL ABUELA has been created.

August laughs once.

The laugh turns into a sob. August covers their face.

Outside, the care facility windows glow. Dozens of small squares.

One of them is Lucila's room.

August lowers their hands. They open the music app.

The same salsa song fills the car, soft through the speakers.

August looks at themself in the rearview mirror.

AUGUST
Hi.

Their reflection looks tired.

AUGUST (CONT'D)
I'm August.

The song continues. August lifts one hand. A small movement.
Then the other.

They dance in the driver's seat.

Not much.

FADE TO:

EXT. AGUADILLA SHORE - SUNSET - MEMORY, AS AUGUST PICTURES IT

Young Lucila and her twin dance by the curb.

Older Lucila sits between them now.

Whole. Laughing.

The cup of orange soda and vanilla ice cream sits in her hands.

She looks toward a place beyond the frame.

Music rises. A space waits beside her.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARE FACILITY PARKING LOT - EVENING

August dances in the parked car. Tears on his face.

The care facility glows behind him.

In one window, a shadow moves.

A hand against glass.

Maybe. Maybe not.

August keeps dancing.

FADE OUT.