

The Button
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Blurb: A rumination on memory, regret, and the gravitational pull of the past

Where am I? I know this place. This is my apartment. How did I get here? I wasn't here a minute ago. I was somewhere else. And there was a flash. And I am here now.

And the door buzzer is going off. I was sitting on the couch in the living room a few minutes ago. And I was sad.

No. I was sitting in a chair. But I don't see that here.

I pushed a button. And I am here. What am I doing?

I've lived here for three years. I am supposed to push this button.

Why?

The buzzer is sounding off. She's at the door. I know this because I heard her walking up the stairs outside. It's warm out, and I have the windows open. So, why am I cold?

I was in a chair. It was a large, comfortable chair. But, I didn't feel comfortable. I don't see that chair here. Where is it?

I remember looking out the window. There was snow on the ground. I was about to push a button.

No, I am supposed to push this button here on this panel. And the door buzzer goes off again

She is here now. She wants to talk. I met her two years ago. We were at the park. It was a nice day. She kissed me by the underpass.

No.

That wasn't me. We met in a restaurant.

I can hear her walking up the stairs and it makes me happy. She's ringing the doorbell again. I need to push this button to let her in.

How did I get here?

I catch my reflection in the mirror by the door. I look young and anxious. But, when I close my eyes I feel older and sad. For some reason I think there should be more grey in my hair. But it's not there now.

We were sitting on the couch. Her legs were on my lap. My hand was on her thigh. She was eating chocolate.

No.

We were sitting on the couch. She was crying and she took a drink from a glass of water. Her throat was dry. My throat was sore.

But she's not there now. She's outside. And there goes the buzzer again. And I am supposed to push this button.

But I don't want to.

Why don't I want to push this button? If I do, she'll come in. Don't I want that?

I remember her being here before. We were kissing. Over there, in the kitchen. And, on that couch. And we were happy. But, that was a while ago.

The last time she was on that couch, she was sitting by herself. And she wasn't happy. And I was sitting in that chair. And I was angry.

But, the last time I remember sitting in a chair, it wasn't that one. And I wasn't angry. I was nervous. And sad.

And I was going to push a button.

But it wasn't this button here now. It was different. It was surrounded by metal. And I did push that button.

And I am supposed to push this button now.

But why?

She called and said she was coming over. That made me happy.

No.

That was different. It made me nervous. I didn't want to talk to her. I didn't want to see her. I was too angry.

The last time I saw her, she was on the couch.

And the time before that, she was at the park. We had gone there to...

No, we didn't go there.

She did. I wasn't there.

And she kissed me by the underpass.

But, I wasn't there.

I was here.

On the couch.

And now she is here. Outside. Wanting to come in. And all I have to do is push this button and she'll come in. But, I still don't want to. I want to see her. But like that. With her arms around... No. Not like that.

The buzzing has stopped. I can hear her walking away through the open window. I feel good because I didn't push that button. But I shouldn't feel good.

Everything goes white again.

I am in a large chair in a small room. It is a comfortable chair. But I feel dizzy.

There are cables on the floor. There is something on my head and I can see a dial with a date from 17 years ago. There are large metal rings slowly spinning down to a stop with a low groaning hum. There is a small window to my right and I can see trees covered with snow outside.

And I am here because I didn't push a button.

I feel sad.

There is a button in front of me. If I push it now, I may feel better.

I reach out and feel my finger on the metal.

It is cold.

I push...