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Paperclip

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PAPERCLIP

by

Zach T. Power

this is the story about michael. he is a novelist. or was a novelist. it's hard to say, seeing that he could be anything by now. but he was the kind of novelist that would take a rather large and wide piece of paper and sharpen a tiny pencil. he would start to write a story on his paper. but when michael started to write his story, he didn't know what to write. he looked out the window and saw a bird fly by in the sky, and wrote down on his paper a bird flew by in the sky and then someone knocked at his door, and he wrote someone is knocking at my door. well, the person at his door kept knocking, and he wrote this person at my door is knocking persistently. he rather liked that line. so, gaining courage from a mediocre line, he wrote about the person who was knocking at his door. with his tiny pencil, he wrote that it was his mom knocking at the door, whom he invited inside his house and asked her, what are you doing at my house. and she said that she wanted to run a race with him. michael hadn't run any races since he was a boy, and he was caught off guard. mom, he said, I can't run a race with you. I am writing a novel. he folded his arms. so his mother held out running shoes and asked, what's a novel. and he told her that it's a story on

a really big piece of paper, sort of. she said, well, what is your story about. it's about a dragon that goes into town and eats a bunch of sheep, michael said as he walked back to his paper. oh, dear—how morbid, she said. michael looked at her. mom, the story is about a dragon. dragons aren't morbid, they blow fire and fly in the sky and besides, this dragon was getting sleepy after eating so many sheep, so he went to his cave and he fell asleep and then he started to have a dream. the dragon started to dream about a herd of goats that were climbing the mountain and looking for a little boy goat. and the little boy goat was at the top of the mountain painting a picture. his mom and his dad were looking for him because they wanted him to eat his dinner and go for a walk around the neighborhood, but he was painting a picture of a man who was trying to catch a really big salmon in alaska. and the man who was fishing had his son next to him. his son was trying to catch a shark, and his dad laughed and said, son, I love you, but there aren't any sharks in alaska. and then the son started to reel in his fishing line. it was really tight and the boy was trying so hard to reel the shark in, and the dad said, woah, son, I think you are catching a shark. and the son said, dad, this is a big shark. and the dad said you can do it son, and the son did it and they took the shark home and they ate it for dinner, and the dad said that catching a shark in alaska reminded him of his grandpa, and the dad started to cry, and the boy wanted to know what a grandpa was and told his dad that he was okay. it's okay dad. we caught a shark and I love you. and the dad said thanks son. they listened to the stars and then the boy asked his dad, what is a grandpa. and the dad told his son about his grandpa. who was an old man who had a library of books and

the books were all sorts of colors. there were blue books and red ones, and books that had every color on the cover and there was even a book that wasn't any color at all. and the old man would stand at the front of his library with a smile with lemon drops in his pockets, which are little candies that look like magazines. and the old man would give lemon drops to all the people that came to his library, but nobody came. and the old man would smile even though he was alone without any friends. and sometimes he would eat his own lemondrops, and sometimes he would stand on a box and read his favorite books out loud with his voice so everybody could hear him tell a story about a lonely pillow. you see, this lonely pillow lived in a lonely place called an orphanage. and in the orphanage there were lots of little boys and little girls who didn't have moms or dads. they were just kids, and they loved being just kids, but they missed their moms and dads. and they would sit around in the dark with all their little heads on this lonely pillow and tell each other stories about how they were going to find their dads or meet their moms at a park that had a pond that had a boat, and a little orphan boy would go on a boat with his mom and the mom would hold his head and tell him that she loves him. and a little orphan girl would say, yes. and I would see you, little orphan boy, at the park with your mom, and I would say hi and my dad would say hi to you, but I would yell hi really loud and not with my hand because I have ice cream in my hand and my dad does too and his other hand is holding mine and we can't wave because our hands are holding ice cream and family. and my dad would take me home on his shoulders and he would tell me stories about my mom as we walked home to meet her. and the dad would tell the

little girl who wasn't an orphan anymore, you have the best mom in the world. one time she went to your brothers house and knocked on his door, because she wanted to run a race with him, but he never answered the door. we went inside and he was spilled all red on a large piece of white paper. he had shot himself in the head. after the funeral I saw that he had written: dear mom, a bird flew by in the sky. I thought of you and the dragons we slayed together when I was young. I thought about the time you and dad found me in the mountains, I thought about the fishing and the books, and, now that I am grown, about how absent I . . .