

NOW I LAY ME DOWN

Written by

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A bedroom. Night. A WOMAN enters. She is young.

A MAN stands in the corner of the room in the shadows. He is older. She doesn't appear to notice him. She undresses and puts on a robe. She sits at her dressing table in front of the mirror and stares at herself as he stares at her.

She begins to brush her hair. As she pulls the brush through her hair in long slow strokes the Man moves into the light, enough to get her attention. She continues to brush her hair. It now becomes apparent that he has a gun and is pointing it at her.

She slowly turns to look at him, all the while brushing her hair with long slow strokes. He puts a finger up to his lips to indicate silence.

MAN

Don't scream.

WOMAN

Why would I scream?

MAN

I don't want to hurt you.

WOMAN

Of course you don't.

MAN

I just want...

Silence.

The Man falls back into a chair. He closes his eyes in pain and puts his free hand to a wound at his belly.

He breathes deep but continues to hold the gun on her. She continues to brush her hair.

WOMAN

You're hurt.

Pause. He looks up at her.

MAN

I'm tired.

WOMAN

Is that why you came here?

MAN

It's cold out there.

WOMAN

It's always been cold out there.

MAN

It never used to bother me. I always knew it would get warm. It didn't.

WOMAN

It's warm in here.

MAN

Not really. It only feels that way.

WOMAN

What's the difference?

MAN

I don't know anymore.

The Man winces and his gun slips a little.

The Woman starts to get up to help him and he sits up holding his gun out toward her.

MAN

Stop. Don't come any closer. I don't want to hurt you.

She walks slowly toward him and kneels in front of him.

WOMAN

You can't hurt me. And I can't come any closer. Let me have a look.

She makes a gesture toward his belly  
and he holds up a hand to stop her.

MAN

No. It's OK.

The Woman stands.

WOMAN

It's not OK. You should see a doctor.

MAN

I don't need to see a doctor.

WOMAN

You don't want to see a doctor. You don't want to save  
yourself.

MAN

It's too late for that.

WOMAN

It's never too late.

MAN

It's never too late for you. You have all the time in the  
world. Not me.

WOMAN

The wound is superficial. It doesn't have to kill you.

MAN

This time it will.

WOMAN

There's barely any blood.

MAN

Because I barely got any blood left.

WOMAN

What happened?

MAN

It don't matter.

The Woman stares at him.

MAN

It didn't happen the way I thought it would.

WOMAN

Nothing ever does.

MAN

Ain't that the truth. As far back as I could remember things kept messing up. And it just keeps happening.

WOMAN

Then stop it.

MAN

I tried.

WOMAN

The you just have to try again.

MAN

I'm tired.

The Woman turns.

WOMAN

I'm going to call an ambulance.

The Man stands and walks toward her holding the gun out. She turns and faces him.

MAN

Don't do it. Don't make me hurt you.

WOMAN

Don't be silly. I can't make you do anything. For instance, I can't make you give up your gun.

The Woman holds out her hand. Silence. They are eye to eye. He does not relinquish his gun. He shakes his head.

MAN

I'll lose all my control.

WOMAN

The gun doesn't give you control. It only makes you scary.

MAN

Are you scared?

WOMAN

No.

MAN

Then why should I give it up?

WOMAN

Because you think it gives you control.

She takes the hold of his hand with the gun.

WOMAN

Just let go.

MAN

I can't. I'll put it away though...

He puts the gun in his pants in front of him.

WOMAN

That wasn't so hard, was it?

He steps forward and hugs her. She doesn't hug back, but doesn't resist.

MAN

I just wanted to touch you.

WOMAN

But why? What good can come of it? I'm the past.

MAN

All I've got is the past.

WOMAN

All you see is the past. But you can't really touch it.

She walks out of his grip, as though walking through him and sits at her dressing table. She goes back to brushing her hair.

MAN

So this is how it is?

WOMAN

You came here - as you always do. Why aren't you out there?

MAN

I'm hurt.

WOMAN

You can heal.

MAN

Not this time. It's different this time. I used to heal fast. And even if I didn't, the pain didn't bother me. Not so much. And then it did. And now it's all I feel.

The Man puts his hand to his chest.

MAN

I got a pain in my chest.

WOMAN

I thought the wound was in your belly?

MAN

Yea, but the pain is in my chest.

He sits.

MAN

It's getting sharper. I can't fight it no more. I got no strength left. I got nothing left.

WOMAN

So you come here?

MAN

You want me to leave?

WOMAN

My wants are irrelevant. You're the man with the gun in his pants. You can do what you want.

MAN

(Laughing ironically.)

Because I got a gun in my pants?

WOMAN

No. It has nothing to do with the gun. If you'd only see that.

The man falls to the ground in pain.  
The Woman comes over and holds him.

MAN

I just wanted to see you.

WOMAN

So you've said.

MAN

Thought maybe it would help. Thought maybe coming here I could find something to take with and start over.

WOMAN

And how is that working out for you?

The Man screams in pain.

MAN

There's nothing here worth anything. Nothing I can take with. Anyway, I can't start over again. I'd just end up right back here. As always. In pain.

WOMAN

Maybe. But then you'd be no worse off than you are now.

MAN

I can't move. I can't feel my legs. I can feel my chest. The pain in there is really bad now.

WOMAN

I can't help you.

The Man tries to lift his head to kiss her but she remains stiff and out of his reach. He slumps over in her arms.

WOMAN

It's almost morning.

MAN

I'm so tired.

WOMAN

You're dying.

MAN

It's OK.

WOMAN

It's sad. You spent so much time in here you missed all that was out there.

MAN

No one wanted me out there.

WOMAN

No one wants you in here. It's about where you want to be.

MAN

But it's too late now?

WOMAN

Alas...

The Man closes his eyes. The Woman takes her brush and begins to brush his hair. She hums the tune to "Greensleeves."

THE END.