

Photographer  
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UNTITLED  
FROM THE SERIES "YOU WHO NEVER ARRIVED"



Writer  
Julia Tagliere

### THE NAVIGATOR

She cannot see the lock over his shoulder; only hears it disengage when he inserts his key card. *This is real*, she thinks. The Boy smiles and holds the door open.

She searches the room for an anchor but finds only the bed. The Boy hops aboard. He pats the mattress, sporting a primeval smile. "C'mere."

She swallows hard and turns to the view out the window. The room is so high up the horizon has disappeared. She presses her palms against the empty vista.

*This is happening*, she thinks. His hands alight on her shoulders, his lips eddy down her neck. She closes her eyes and sinks back into him, helplessly adrift.

"It's okay," The Boy murmurs. "Come on." He guides her to the bed and lifts her. She feels his beautiful shoulders tense as he lowers her into the billowy comforter. "Relax."

Silently she offers her uncharted neck to him, her eyes again seeking the window. As his tongue draws deceptively lazy scallops across her collarbone, she suddenly realizes she can no longer remember why this seemed a good idea. She flinches at her own horizon, shrunken now to the strip of pockmarked ceiling, all that she can see over his shoulder.

When The Boy's lips brush her shoulder, she pushes newly illuminated hands against his chest until he rolls off. Primeval smile gone cold, he demands, "What's the matter?"

She looks around the becalmed, uninspiring room; looks at The Boy, grown even more boy-like in his disappointment. *This is real*, she thinks again.

"This is not me," she finally says. "I'm sorry. I thought it was."

Safe — albeit unforgiven — on the other side of the now-locked door, she squares her shoulders and revels in their strength, feeling her horizon stretch once again.

Writer  
Carrie L. McCarthy

### MIDWAY THROUGH

Midway Hotel  
and midway through  
she realized  
she stopped

stopped caring  
stopped feeling  
stopped loving

Midway Hotel  
and midway through  
she stopped

stopped pretending  
and started living