keep me in your heart for a while

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keep me in your heart for a while

by canadianwolfbird

Summary

If there was one person or thing on earth that could keep him here, it's Shane. Ilya knows he's been lucky to love Shane and be loved by Shane, especially for as long as they have. There's people who go their whole lifetimes without ever knowing or feeling that sort of love, and Ilya was lucky to find it in this lifetime - he prays he'll find Shane again in the next one.

But Shane deserves so much more than the broken mind Ilya is living with. Shane deserves to not have to put up with Ilya's meltdowns and depression spells and crying jags. Shane deserves to be happy. Shane deserves to put his whole focus into someone worth the trouble, and Ilya knows he's not worth the trouble any more.

Notes

This one is HEAVY with a capital H.

There's likely to be a part two (note I did not mark the warning for major character death), but please know this particular portion of this story depicts an on-page suicide attempt by a major character. If this is something that has an effect on you or is likely to do so, please don't read or please take exceptional caution when you do.

No beta on this one - I just needed to channel some thoughts on paper (screen?) and this is what came of that. Apologies in advance for any grammatical or continuity errors - they are completely my own.

See the end of the work for more notes

Shadows are fallin' and I'm runnin' out of breath
Keep me in your heart for a while
If I leave you it doesn't mean I love you any less
Keep me in your heart for a while

-Warren Zevon, "Keep Me in Your Heart"

The November night is cold as Ilya stands on the dock on the lake by the cottage, looking at the lightly rippling surface of the water.

His breath comes out in puffs as a loon calls in the distance. Ilya smiles to himself as he thinks about the first time he was ever here with Shane - that noise had taken him off guard so completely, he had nearly jumped out of his skin. Now, in all the years he's been coming here, the noise is a comfort of sorts. It's familiar. It's safe.

Safe - the opposite of what Ilya feels right now.

He'd left in the middle of the night while Shane was sound asleep, tucked under the down comforter he loves so much. And now, Ilya was standing here, listening to the loons call for each other and the gentle lapping of the water against the wood of the dock.

Of course Ilya had left a note when he left - he wasn't a monster. At least, not that much of a monster. If he closes his eyes, he can still see words on the folded piece of paper left on his pillow for Shane to find in the morning.

Shane -

Please know that if love were enough, you would have kept me here for all eternity.

I'm so sorry. I hope that you can find it in your heart to forgive me.

Forever yours,
Ilya

He just can't do it any more. Everything is too much, and it's time to let go.

Swallowing hard, Ilya kneels down and undoes the laces of his boots, pulling them off and placing them side by side on the corner of the dock. He removes his coat and shirt after, folding them neatly. His pants and socks come next, placed on top of the pile. He may be leaving, but he's going to make sure he only leaves the smallest of messes to clean up.

There's no phone to leave on the dock - Ilya purposefully left it behind at the Ottawa home they spend most of the season at, so if Shane caught him, Ilya wouldn't be tempted back by phone calls or texts from his husband. He has to do this. He has to get out of everyone's way, once and for all.

There's just one final thing before he carries out his plan.

Ilya removes the crucifix from his neck, placing a light kiss to the charm before making sure it's laid visible on top of the clothing on the dock.

Perhaps Shane can draw comfort from the necklace like Ilya had done when he inherited it from his mother all those years ago. His mother, who he hopes to see very shortly.

"Ya tebya lyublyu, mamochka." Ilya whispers towards the heavens. "*Skoro uvidimsya." I love you, mom. I'll see you soon.*

Standing back up to his full height, Ilya looks around to make sure there's no one around him. It's a silly thing at nearly two a.m., but he doesn't want to take any chances. When he's satisfied he's alone, Ilya steels his body and dives into the lake.

The cold immediately takes his breath away, but he lingers as long as he can underneath the water before surfacing.

And then Ilya swims away from the dock, the chill of the water quickly seeping into his muscles and cutting him to the bone. That's what he's hoping for. He's swam in this water what must be hundreds of times now, used to the coolness that comes with the summer, and the downright freezing temperatures that come with the winter.

He knows he usually can only last a few moments out here in these particular conditions before his body gives in and begs him to get out.

Only this time, Ilya won't listen to his body. He's going to stay out here and let the cold take him.

There's no need to go far out, and even if there was, Ilya isn't sure he could. The water hasn't completely frozen over yet, but he can feel the slush of the ice on the surface, clinging to his skin. He hovers, treading water as best he can while he looks back towards the dock and to the cottage. It's mostly dark, lit only by the moon, but Ilya doesn't need much light to visualize it.

If he's going to go, he's going to go with a beautiful sight in his vision, a place he's always remembered fondly, though he hates that someone will ultimately find him here. With any luck, it'll be a stranger, so the memory of the cottage isn't tainted too much for Shane.

Each passing minute in the water feels like hours. Ilya can feel the cold sucking the warmth and strength of his body away, His limbs get heavier and heavier, moving slower as the effort to keep his head above water becomes harder.

It won't be long now. It can't be long now.

He remembers reading that exhaustion and unconsciousness usually kick in around fifteen minutes and that the survival time is anywhere from fifteen to forty-five minutes in freezing water. They'll find that search on his phone if they think to look on it, after his recent searches of *how to stop intrusive thoughts* and *least painful ways to die.*

Ilya.

The voice sounds in his head and it sounds like his mother calling him from the beyond. He's heard it so many times in his dreams, and he appreciates that it's one of the last things he'll hear on this earth. He may be hallucinating, but Ilya doesn't care. At least he knows his mother is out there somewhere.

His eyelids droop and his head nods down, and Ilya doesn't fight it. The cold has become painful now, his whole body shaking and doing its desperate best to survive and shunt the blood to his core to keep his heart beating.

Soon. Soon this will all be over. He only has to stay out here just a few more minutes and then, the cold water will take him.

Ilya!

This voice is now more masculine, coming from the same distance his mother's did. It's not his father or brother though. They wouldn't care to call out to him, not his father from beyond the grave. His very alive brother would probably stand on the dock and watch him freeze to death right here and now, still hoping to get a cut of Ilya's estate once he was gone, even if Ilya had written Andrei out of his will years ago. No, the voice isn't his father's or his brother's.

It's Shane.

Maybe it's his mind's way of telling him to stay. Not for the first time, Ilya wishes he could. If there was one person or thing on earth that could keep him here, it's Shane. Ilya knows he's been lucky to love Shane and be loved by Shane, especially for as long as they have. There's people who go their whole lifetimes without ever knowing or feeling that sort of love, and Ilya was lucky to find it in this lifetime - he prays he'll find Shane again in the next one.

But Shane deserves so much more than the broken mind Ilya is living with. Shane deserves to not have to put up with Ilya's meltdowns and depression spells and crying jags. Shane deserves to be happy. Shane deserves to put his whole focus into someone worth the trouble, and Ilya knows he's not worth the trouble any more.

Ilya!

The voice is closer as Ilya's eyes droop completely closed and his head lolls back. Maybe the closer he gets to passing out, the closer the voices become. Whatever phenomenon it is, Ilya doesn't have the energy or brainpower to try and figure it out. He doesn't really *want* to figure it out.

A moment later, Ilya can't bring himself to move anymore - his limbs become like lead weights and he stops trying to keep himself afloat in the sharp, icy water. He bobs there for a moment, and there's a sudden feeling that washes over him where he's not cold, he's not hurting, he's not thinking, he's just *there*, feeling like he's been wrapped in warmth from head to toe.

It's beautiful.

"*Ilya!"* One more call of Shane's voice that sounds like it's near the shore of the lake. It sounds real, as if Shane is actually standing there on the dock, but this far gone, his brain must be playing a trick on him. If it *is* a trick, it's a good one, and that's the way he wants it.

The last thing Ilya manages to do before going completely unconscious is whisper a quiet "goodbye, Shane," to the heavens before he slips below the surface, the lake swallowing him whole with nary a sound to be heard but the piercing sound of a loon crying in the distance.

End Notes

If you're struggling, know you're not alone. You're loved, you're cherished, and someone out there cares about you. <3

series title credit to "set the fire to the third bar" by snow patrol ft. martha wainwright

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