

I am he that aches with amorous love

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I am he that aches with amorous love

by [RequiemForTheWolves](#)

Summary

There was a talent Shane had that Ilya found more impressive than anything he could do on the ice. He could find something you didn't even know you needed, something exactly right that unknots each piece of a problem with careful precision, and give it to you as if it cost him nothing. It was something Ilya should have been used to after all these years, but it wasn't.

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When Ilya gets sick Shane takes care of him, even if he should be focused on taking care of himself.

Notes

Title is from the poem I Am He That Aches With Love by Walt Whitman

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

Ilya emerged from the guest bedroom feeling like death warmed over. He'd spent a day throwing his guts up, among other disgusting things, and then an extra twenty-four hours sequestered away just to be sure he wouldn't spread whatever bug he'd picked up to Shane. He still needed to wash the bedsheets and bleach the bathroom, but right now all he wanted was to see his husband. Maybe give him a hug and a kiss if he was allowed. He'd brushed his teeth probably five times since he'd last thrown up, as well as showered and put on new clothes. He could only hope that Shane would take pity on him.

There were soft noises coming from the kitchen, shuffling and bubbling, the clack of ceramic being set on the counter. Ilya's first thought was that maybe Yuna or David had come over to help out while he was sick. The last few months had found Shane's parents on their doorstep more often than not, coming over to help with projects around the house, redecorating, or even just to cook them a meal. When he turned the corner, however, and found Shane puttering around the kitchen, his heart dropped into his stomach.

"*Moya lyubov*," he said, voice scratching out of his sore throat. "What are you doing up?"

Shane looked up from the green onion he was chopping with a mix of relief and annoyance. "I'm not completely incapable, Ilya. I can walk around the house."

"Yes, but this is more than just walking." Ilya stepped further into the kitchen. He held the edge of the island counter in a white knuckled grip. "How are your feet?"

"My feet are fine." Shane put the knife down and waddled around the island. At nearly nine months pregnant his stomach rounded the corner before he did. It strained against the confines of his sweatshirt, even if the rest of the garment hung loosely off his frame. Just to give Ilya a kiss on the cheek he had to angle his body to the side or the baby would be in the way. Ilya ran a hand down Shane's back, knew that it ached just from standing for too long. Shane gently patted Ilya's chest. "Take a seat," he said, "the food will be ready soon," before he toddled back over to his cutting board.

Ilya's stomach was empty, but it churned with anxiety regardless. "Shane, *kotenok*, just tell me what you need done. I will do it. You should sit down."

Shane picked the knife back up, setting to work on the remaining half of the green onion. "I can handle this. It's almost done, anyway. You probably need rest more than I do right now."

It was true that despite spending most of the previous day napping, Ilya was still exhausted. All the muscles in his torso, from his abs to his back, ached every time he made the slightest movement. He was so weak from dehydration he honestly felt a little faint. A few months ago Ilya would have happily curled up in bed and let Shane baby him until he felt better. A part of him still very much wanted that. But the Shane in front of him now wasn't the Shane of a few months ago. This Shane should be sitting down somewhere, preferably with his feet elevated.

"No, I got lots of rest and I am feeling all better," Ilya said. "Please let me do it."

Shane's pinched expression told him just how much he believed Ilya's words. "I said I'm fine," he insisted. "Now sit down before you fall over and I have to pick you up off the floor." Shane used the knife to point to the barstools on the other side of the island.

Instead of moving, Ilya asked, "have you checked your blood pressure today?"

"Yes," Shane said, frustration finally starting to bleed into his tone. "I checked it this morning and it was fine. I haven't felt any differently."

"But you know the doctor said it could jump and you might not feel it," Ilya argued. It was one of the things he had written down at Shane's last appointment. In the notes app on his phone was a list of everything the doctor had told them to look out for. He reviewed it every so often so he wouldn't forget anything. "I will go get the cuff."

Ilya started to move across the kitchen, on the way to the living room where they kept the blood pressure cuff. They had bought it a few weeks ago, when Shane was first put on bed rest. He was diligent about using it multiple times a day, and usually didn't complain when Ilya would ask him to check it again, just to be safe, just so he could see, just so it didn't feel like there was a hand squeezing his heart every time Shane stood up from the couch.

"*Ilya Rozanov*," Shane snapped. He gripped the knife in his hand like he was considering using it to inflict bodily harm. "Sit. Down."

Ilya sat.

Shane watched him for a moment, his glare holding Ilya in place. Finally, he set the knife down and turned toward the fridge, returning with a blue gatorade that he placed in front of Ilya. "Drink," he commanded.

Ilya cracked the bottle open. Admittedly, the cold liquid felt wonderful on his throat and in his empty stomach. That didn't mean he had to like it though.

In the meantime, Shane had turned his back to Ilya and was messing with a pot on the stove. Ilya watched as he used a pair of tongs to extract cubes of ginger and chicken bones and set them off to the side.

"Did you go to the store?" Ilya asked. He didn't remember them having a whole chicken in the fridge.

Shane hummed. "I went this morning."

It was a good thing Ilya had placed the cap back on the gatorade, or his white knuckled grip around the bottle would have had it spilling all over the counter. If he thought about what Shane just said too hard he might pass out. His husband wasn't even supposed to be out of bed, nevermind walking around the grocery store *by himself*. Anything could have happened and Ilya would have been miles away. For years, Ilya's preferred place to be was either in or around Shane, but for the past few months if he wasn't breathing the same air as Shane it sort of felt like he wasn't breathing at all.

“I see,” Ilya said instead of lifting Shane into his arms and locking him away in their bedroom. It wouldn’t be the first time he had physically removed Shane to a bed or a couch and forced him to rest. He would do it now if he thought for a moment he had the strength to carry Shane without collapsing halfway through and hurting them both.

Finally, Shane turned back to him, and Ilya did his best not to look like he was having a panic attack. Shane’s raised eyebrow told him he wasn’t doing a very good job, but oh well. These days, while Shane was usually some mix of tired, grouchy, hungry, and nauseated, Ilya was usually a mix of anxious, panicked, and nervous. Having gotten used to it, Shane declined to comment and instead simply set a still steaming bowl down in front of him.

“It’s rice porridge,” Shane explained before Ilya could even pick up his spoon. “As a kid, when I was sick and my parents couldn’t stay home from work, I would stay with my grandmother. She always made this for me. You’re supposed to eat it plain, but I figured you could use the protein so I added chicken, and the ginger should help your stomach.”

Ilya took a bite and nearly melted onto the counter. Normally he wouldn’t like food so bland, but right now it was exactly what he needed. The warmth was a balm on his throat, and the rice and chicken were broken down into small pieces that were easy on his stomach.

“It is very good,” Ilya said around a mouthful.

Like any complement that wasn’t about hockey, it brought a slight flush and a tentative smile to Shane’s face. He was doctoring up his own bowl of porridge, adding a dash of white pepper, a drizzle of sesame oil, and the chopped green onion. “Thank you.”

When he was done, he waddled around the island counter to take a seat as well. As he passed Ilya he stopped to press a kiss to his husband’s forehead before continuing on his way.

There was a talent Shane had that Ilya found more impressive than anything he could do on the ice. He could find something you didn’t even know you needed, something exactly right that unknots each piece of a problem with careful precision, and give it to you as if it cost him nothing. It was something Ilya should have been used to after all these years, but it wasn’t. When a familiar lump grew in his throat, he swallowed it down with more porridge.

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Later, after Shane had begrudgingly let Ilya wash and put away the dishes once the pain in his back and legs had become too much, they relaxed together on the couch in the den while the Toronto v Buffalo game played on the TV. Mostly it was an excuse for Shane to verbally tear both teams apart. Shane was lying on his side, the only way he could be even remotely comfortable these days, with a pillow pushed under his stomach. Ilya sat with his husband’s feet in his lap, digging his knuckles into one of Shane’s heels to try and bring him some relief. Being on his feet all morning had them swollen up like balloons, and Ilya periodically stopped to poke at the top of Shane’s feet, reassured every time the soft flesh bounced back

into position. While he trusted Shane to know his own body, he couldn't hold back his own need to poke and prod. Every reassurance that Shane had not yet tipped over the edge of danger was as good as gold.

Shane scoffed at something on the TV. When Ilya looked up he saw multiple players lying flat out on the ice. "Well that was embarrassing," Shane said with the kind of derision that only someone with as many cup rings as he had could truly mean.

Ilya must have been so in love he was sick with it, because Shane's comment had affection flooding his chest. He took a deep breath, trying to wrangle his emotions back down into something he could put into words.

"Shane," he said gently, drawing his husband's attention. "If I am sick again before the baby comes, please call your parents to come help. Do not do it all on your own again."

Shane's brows drew together. After so many years Ilya could recognize the face of an argument before it had even begun. "Ilya-

"Listen to me," he said, still gentle, but now firm as well. He leaned over until he could poke a finger at Shane's chest. "This is my heart. I need you to take care of it, and keep it beating."

Over the last few months it had become familiar, the sight of Shane's eyes welling up with tears. Sad commercials, lonely animals, and movies with cruel parents were enough to have him reaching for a box of tissues. Videos of young people coming out to their loving parents had to be banned in their house for how they made Shane openly weep. So, Ilya did not panic at the sight of his husband's tears, or the way he said Ilya's name again with a voice that wobbled. Shane reached out a hand, gripping Ilya's shirt and pulling him closer.

He ended up lying on his side, his chest to Shane's back. Shane kissed each of his fingers before clutching Ilya's hand to him, placed where he could feel his heart beating strong and steady in Shane's chest.

End Notes

Originally this was just supposed to be a little fluff piece, but it ended up kind of angsty, oops...

The "videos of young people coming out to their loving parents" is a direct reference to [this video](#) that had me ugly sobbing when I was pregnant during pride month last year.

If you want to talk hollanov, you can find me @requiemftws on twitter.

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