

i shed my skin in your loving arms

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Additional Tags:	Autistic Shane Hollander , Autism , Hurt/Comfort , Sensory Overload , Panic Attacks , Anxiety , Dissociation , Canon Autistic Character , sorry guys this may be tender but it is definitely Not hopeful , Caretaking , Angst , author is autistic , shane i am so sorry im sending you to therapy straight after this , Ilya Rozanov Loves Shane Hollander , oh to be known and loved in spite of it
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i shed my skin in your loving arms

by [pettytooru](#)

Summary

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Tomorrow. What an impossible thought, when he was currently present in a way that he rarely got to be in his day to day life.

Notes

hi guys!!! it's been a while... i can't believe the gay hockey show was the final straw in making me post on ao3 again?????

anyway, **please heed the tags for this one!** it contains a pretty vivid description of an autistic meltdown/panic attack, with lots of references to health anxiety and spiralling thoughts - so if you think that this could trigger you at all, please look after yourself and click away! it should also be noted that i'm autistic and wrote this totally based on my own experiences, so apologies if it reads a little bit ooc !

i hope that anyone who sees themselves in this fic feels a little bit less alone, as writing it felt like regaining a tiny bit of control over my life. i send you all lots of love, remember to take care of yourself this fine new year <3

fic title from 'Scratch your Metal' by Divorce (most hollanov song ever GO LISTEN!!!)

You would think that by now, having lived inside of this same body with this same brain for twenty seven torturous years, that Shane Hollander would see the signs that he was on the verge of collapse. You would think that he would recognise the lump in his throat becoming a permanent fixture, the ache only growing as the endless days of playing games, talking to teammates, answering questions whilst bright lights shone in his face, all started to catch up with him. Existing became a tiring thing.

And yet, he can't help but be confused when he ends up sitting on the edge of his couch, the feeling of his bare feet on the cold, wooden floor the only thing tethering him from floating away. The lump in his throat felt heavy, waves of nausea washing over him whilst his heart pounded in his ears. His hands might have been shaking if they hadn't been clinging onto the stiff velvet cushion pushed against his stomach. Despite this being a bi-weekly occurrence, Shane's panicked brain *still* couldn't figure out the cause of it. Was he coming down with something? Had one of his teammates been sick during practice? What if one of Hayden's kids had been ill when he ate dinner at their house two days prior? Oh god, what if he had eaten something this morning that had gone bad? Had the yoghurt that he put in his shake gone off? But no, he could have sworn that it looked and smelled fine, he remembers inspecting it just in case. Yet, *and yet-*

He dropped his head into his hands, stomach rolling at the movement, trying to push away the feeling that his palms were dirty, that he was sick and only going to get sicker if the germs transferred themselves onto his lips. He hadn't cleaned that pillow since Rose had been round for their movie night last week, who knows what could have been on her clothes? He shoved it away from himself, the fabric making his fingers twitch. He jumped at the thud it made when it hit the floor. Without something to cling onto, the shaking was indeed worse, but at least his arms were too numb to really feel the ache in his wrists. Shane distantly contemplated how much he would ache tomorrow, the tightness of his muscles already becoming a sure thing.

Tomorrow. What an impossible thought, when he was currently present in a way that he rarely got to be in his day to day life. He had always cursed himself for not responding to the traditional methods of coming down from a panic attack, he didn't need to name what was in the room with him, he didn't want to smell anything or put himself through the torture of listing different textures. It was already too much, he didn't want to be grounded: he wanted to float away and become nothing, no more than a soft breath in a heavy wind.

Perhaps the only mercy that his brain did grant him after what felt like hours of being painfully alive, is that he did get to drift, if only for a little while.

Shane heard a sound, a metallic jingle followed by a gentle thud. A steady rhythm against the wooden floor beneath him. Then there was a voice, too loud, but still pulling at something soft in his chest. There was a quiet groan in response, and only when Ilya was crouching in front of him did Shane realise that it had come from his own mouth. With a new pair of eyes on him, Shane became hyperaware of how he had ended up: sitting on the floor, hands curled under his chin, legs drawn up tight to his chest, pushing himself against the sofa to the point

where it was a good few inches further back from the coffee table than it had been before. He groaned again, feeling the sound vibrate through his throat this time.

‘Shane?’ Ilya spoke quietly, taking care to keep his voice level. Shane was thankful; he couldn’t handle the wet sound and the warm breath of a whisper right now.

Shane didn’t respond. Ilya clearly didn’t expect him to. The other man simply stood up and walked away, the rhythm on the wooden floor lesser now, as if Ilya floated through the room rather than walked. He was glad for the space, he struggled to meet Ilya’s piercing gaze head on even on his good days.

Time passed, but Shane couldn’t tell how much. He wasn’t quite there to count it. But, eventually, he felt something very carefully wrap around him. The fabric was soft on his arms, soothing the goosebumps that had risen there. His wrist ached as he instinctively pulled the blanket around his head, fingers clutching it tight beneath his chin. Sound started to come back as his temperature slowly rose, but it was not a welcome intrusion. Even with the blanket over his ears, he could hear the telltale ticking of the heating kicking in, the rumble of water boiling in the kettle, the click signalling that it was finished. When another sound escaped him, he grimaced at it. He felt awake, he felt pathetic.

Then, a pressure over his ears. The world got a little quieter. Then it got a little warmer too, as a weight was slid into his lap. The hot water bottle was bliss against his aching stomach, loosening the muscles and encouraging him to gently lean back into the chair behind him. It hadn’t moved back any further, for which he was grateful, and he let his weight slump against it after a moment of hovering. Resting his head forwards, the heat from the water bottle seeping through his palms, Shane let himself go.

Ilya was sitting beside him when he woke up. Not touching him, not looking at him, just sitting there, leaning against the armrest as if this was their usual place to relax, as if he belonged there.

Maybe he does, Shane thought.

‘Ilya?’ Shane spoke. His voice was rough.

The other man slowly turned to him. As calm and controlled as the action looked, Shane saw the inner side of his right eyebrow twitch upwards, the tightness around his eyes. Shane watched Ilya’s face soften in real time, a look so tender that he had to look away. When he glanced downwards, he saw Ilya picking at the skin on his hands. The other man stopped quickly, rubbing away the small burst of blood on his cuticle. Shane mourned the lost skin, a hurt that he caused.

‘Sweetheart.’ Ilya moved his palm face down between them, an offering. Shane wasn’t quite ready to take it, so he didn’t. He traced the veins in his hands with his eyes instead, trying not to look at the tiny strip of red skin on his thumb. Ilya continued, ‘Bedtime?’

‘But it’s-’ Shane cut himself off when he saw the time on the digital watch on Ilya’s wrist. It was already gone eleven. As if time caught up with him all at once, his dry lips started to itch and his stomach let out an awful groan. His heartbeat quickened ever so slightly at the thought of eating. What if he was sick after the next time he ate? What if this was the moment where he realised he was, in fact, coming down with a terrible illness? That the panic had been real, not just a misfiring in his brain?

‘We sit properly, first.’ Ilya said, standing before Shane could argue, ushering him to follow with his hands. ‘Up, up, up, up.’

And, with his brain being so stupidly hardwired to obey his boyfriend’s demands, Shane stood. He wobbled ever so slightly, black spots dancing in his vision as he felt a soft touch on his arm guiding him backwards. The pressure was gone before he could truly register it, replaced by the feeling of the soft cushion sinking underneath him. His sore body sighed at the feeling.

‘There you go, just on the sofa there. Perfect. And they say you are not a good boy, Hollander.’

‘Who says that?’ He whispered, head involuntarily twitching to the side as he heard the offending sound, even muffled through the weight on his ears. He lifted a hand from his blanket and found that Ilya had placed his earmuffs over the blanket. The soft material felt nice against his fingers, so he continued stroking it.

Ilya pretended to think about his answer, tapping his chin and pursing his lips, before settling on:

‘Nobody, actually. You are very good. Apart from your fight with Hunter, but it was hot, so we all forgive you.’

With that, he walked back through to the kitchen, the open plan layout allowing Shane to track his movements. The distant sound of water running and the familiar scent of his dish soap floating through the house calmed him. The fact that Ilya knew where he kept everything, knew what tea he liked to drink depending on his mood, knew that, when times were really bad, he needed to re-wash Shane’s favourite mug before using it, all of it, stirred something warm and fragile in his chest.

Ilya returned with a steaming mug, placing it gently on a coaster on the coffee table, pushing it to the lefthand corner of the table closest to Shane, lining the square edges of it neatly with the table edge. In hindsight, Shane realised that this was the moment that caused him to finally break, to let go of it all. The tears started to fall the moment Ilya sat on the sofa beside him, ever so careful not to disturb the cushions with his weight, that softness on his face that was reserved for Shane only.

‘Oh, *Moy vozlyublenniy*.’ Ilya said, breaking the distance and placing a soft kiss on each of Shane’s cheeks, rubbing his hands up and down his boyfriend’s arms through the blanket. Shane slid off the earmuffs before pressing himself into the side of Ilya’s neck, nuzzling his face just to feel the press of the skin against his nose.

Ilya held him close, rocking them both gently with a grip that felt just the right side of overwhelming. Shane's blanket protected him from any germs on Ilya's hands, an unnecessary precaution due to the fact that he could smell the dish soap that lingered on them, but a comfort that he needed.

For a moment, it didn't matter that days like this were getting more frequent. It didn't matter that something in Shane was crying out, that something had to give.

For a moment, despite everything, Shane felt content to just exist.

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