every minute and every hour, i miss you

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by justhockey

Summary

The scream that rips its way out of Shane's chest is feral, inhuman. A wretched, mournful wail being torn from his body by the bony hands of grief. He collapses to his knees and sobs, anguish pouring out of him like a tidal wave.

Suddenly there are arms around him, but they're not the right ones. Not Ilya.

Or, Ilya's plane goes down.

Notes

Title from *Good Grief* by Bastille.

See the end of the work for more notes

It’s a Monday in August when Shane’s entire world collapses around him.

It spreads like a spiderweb of broken glass, getting bigger bigger *bigger*, until it shatters completely, exploding into millions of tiny shards.

“What time will he be back?” Shane’s mom asks.

“Probably around eight,” Shane tells her, “but he’ll be complaining he’s starving, so I want to make dinner before he gets home.”

He’s got his fingers wrapped around the handle of his parents’ front door and a goodbye on the tip of his tongue. Ilya should be 35,000ft in the air, halfway home from a photoshoot in Vancouver, and Shane wants to be back to greet his husband at the door.

He’s missed him probably an embarrassing amount, given that Ilya hasn’t even been gone for a full day. But anyone who said the honeymoon period wouldn’t last long - who suggested they’d get sick of each other now they’re playing, living, building a life together - couldn’t have possibly been more wrong. Shane misses Ilya every time he walks out of the room. It doesn’t matter how much time they spend together, it still never seems like enough.

Because every single day that Shane wakes up with his husband by his side, he loves Ilya just a little bit more.

He’s not sure how it’s possible - how his heart keeps growing and growing to hold all the love he has for Ilya. It feels limitless, infinite, like one day it will expand beyond the known universe because it is simply too small to contain it. Shane’s fingers itch to reach for Ilya every time they drift apart, his eyes search for him in every room, his heart beats to the rhythm of Ilya’s name in a strong and steady cadence.

They’re so intertwined that Shane’s no longer sure where he ends and Ilya begins.

So yeah, he’s missed his husband, even though Ilya only crawled out of their bed at 3am in order to make his flight. He’d brushed Shane’s hair out of his face, kissed his closed eyelids, then his nose, his freckles, his forehead, and finally his mouth. He’d whispered, *”See you soon. I love you,”* and Shane was back asleep before he even heard the door close.

“Shane, don’t forget to-“ his mom begins, but her voice slowly fades away as his dad frantically begins to turn up the volume on the TV.

”We come to you with breaking news out of Vancouver. Reports have confirmed that a passenger plane flying from Vancouver International Airport has crashed. The 3:15pm flight to Ottawa International…”

“What did they - *dad,* what did they-“

The flight number flashes up on screen and Shane chokes on his words.

His ears start to ring, and his vision goes blurry, and there's static underneath his skin, humming through his veins. He can't feel his body, suddenly. There's just a black hole where a person is supposed to be.

That's not - it's not right. It *can't* be.

That's Ilya's flight number. Ilya's plane. But Ilya is on his way back. Shane's husband will be home soon, walking through the front door with a smile on his face and kissing Shane like they've been apart for years instead of hours. He'll pick Shane up to carry him upstairs, and Shane will tell Ilya to put him down but secretly he'll love it. They'll laugh, and they'll kiss, and everything will be exactly as perfect as it always is.

So this - it's not real. It's not happening.

"Though information is limited at this time, there are believed to be no survivors of the crash…"

"Oh my god," someone - his mom, he thinks - whispers.

Shane laughs. A loud, disbelieving bark. He pulls his phone from his pocket and dials Ilya's number, even puts it on speaker so he can prove to everyone that this is all wrong. But it just rings and rings and rings and-

"No," he says. Laughs again. "No, that's - no. Mom, tell me that's - it isn't. It *isn't*-"

"Shane, I-"

He calls again, again, again. No answer.

For a split second, everything just goes black. There's no light, no sound, no anything at all; for the briefest of moments, Shane's not even sure if he exists.

He throws up, he thinks.

He doesn't quite remember it, but somewhere between staggering from the front door to the spot in front of the TV - where the *Breaking News* banner keeps rolling along the bottom of the screen - he thinks it happens. He hopes it's on the hardwood and not on his mom's new rug; she loves that thing, and Shane hopes he hasn't ruined it. He could get her a new one as an apology, though, if it *is* ruined. It's not that big of a deal. It's a thing he can fix.

He should check with her, should ask if-

"Shane?"

He flinches at the sound, like a whip-crack cutting through the isolating noise inside his head.

"Did I ruin your rug?" Shane asks.

His voice sounds coarse, like Ian's - the Centaur's custodian who smokes twenty a day. Except Shane's never smoked a cigarette in his life. Ilya's stopped now, too. Thank god.

Shane had been prepared to nag until he was blue in the face, but Ilya simply never picked up one again after their wedding. After Shane had told him he would never forgive Ilya if he died from lung cancer.

Ilya is the kind of person who's supposed to live forever, after all. He's bright and boisterous, and like if sunshine made a wish to become human. People often think he's stoic and grumpy - and he can be, sometimes, on the bad days - but mostly Ilya is just warm, and kind, and thoughtful. He fills every room like it was made just for him. Shane's not sure what a world without Ilya Rozanov would even look like.

He can't imagine-

"Shane, honey? You need to take a breath."

He *is* breathing. Right? He's breathing, he's - he's not breathing, can't suck the air into his lungs no matter how hard he tries.

There's a burn in his chest, and suddenly Shane is clawing at it. He's wearing Ilya's t-shirt, and his fingers drag over the *81* on his chest as he tries to tear at his flesh, crack open his ribs, reach a hand inside and check if his heart is still beating.

It can't be. It *can't* be. Ilya is his heart, and Ilya is - he *can't.* Shane can't say it, can't even think it.

The scream that rips its way out of Shane's chest is feral, inhuman. A wretched, mournful wail being torn from his body by the bony hands of grief. He collapses to his knees and sobs, anguish pouring out of him like a tidal wave.

Suddenly there are arms around him, but they're not the right ones. Not Ilya.

Shane fights them, but the arms around him just hold on even tighter. Instead of clawing at himself he's clawing at them, now, trying to pry their vice-like grip from around him so he can suck in a breath, so he can climb to his feet, so he can find his fucking *husband.* But Shane…he can't stop crying, and the person caging him won't let go.

It's his dad holding him, Shane realises, rocking him from side to side as he whispers in his ear like Shane is a child. Like his dad's hugs can still make everything better.

"Shane, you're hurting yourself-"

"Honey, please-"

"I need - I need - I can't-"

Can't speak. Can't think. Can't breathe.

His body is being ripped apart at the seams. The skin and muscle and sinew are being torn to shreds, his bones are being broken, his very atoms are being split. That's the only explanation for this kind of horrifying, blistering agony. Nothing else could possible cause such suffering.

This isn't a pain that can be endured. Bodies aren't built to withstand this kind of grief.

The ringing in his ears has dulled to a buzzing sound, his parents' voices blurring into the background as they mumble incoherently. The only thing that reaches Shane is-

"A leaked flight manifesto shows that Ottawa Centaurs captain, Ilya Rozanov, was on the flight when…"

"Turn it *off!*" Shane screams.

He grabs the closest thing he can reach - the TV remote - and launches it. It shatters against the wall with a crack that echoes through Shane's fractured bones.

He curls in on himself, his spine curving beneath the weight of this agony he is suddenly shouldering. Shane's phone starts to ring, stops, starts again. Then his mom's does, and dad's as well, and it's all too much - too fucking *loud.* He can feel it all pulsing in his teeth.

He raises his arms, presses both his of hands over his ears like if he just blocks it all out - if he can't hear it - then it means that none of this real. But the phones won't stop ringing and the voice on the TV won't stop *talking*. It's bouncing around and around inside Shane's head, like an echo chamber repeating the words back to him over and over again.

Vancouver. Plane. Crashed. Ottawa.

Ilya.

Ilya Ilya Ilya.

Shane screams again, so loud his throat aches with the force of it, but it's the only thing that stops it. That quietens the noise.

"I'm dying," Shane gasps. It's the only way this torture makes any sense. "I'm dying, I'm dying, I'm dying…"

"No, Shane. Honey, no, it's - we're gonna find out. It's gonna be-"

"Yuna," his dad says, voice sharp and firm. He shakes his head.

I'm dying, Shane thinks again. Or maybe he says it, he's not quite sure. *I* want *to*-

"I'm gonna call, well, everyone," his mom says. She rests her hands on her hips but Shane can see the way they're trembling. "I'll call Farah, and the airline, and fucking *Trudeau* if I have to…"

This is what Yuna Hollander does: she fixes things.

She makes spreadsheets and ten-point plans, she schedules phone calls and organises meetings, she sweet-talks when she needs to and she yells if that doesn't work. She's always been a mama bear - always willing to gnash her teeth to keep Shane safe and happy and thriving - and she'd move heaven and earth for her boy. Shane has never once doubted that.

It's why she's jumping into action now, like a phone call could fix this. Like a meeting might send them back in time to before the world ended.

But Shane looks at his mom from where he's curled up on the floor, and he sees the grief settling into the creases around her eyes. He sees the way her bottom lip quivers, like she's trying so hard to stay strong for Shane but her composure is starting to slip.

He wonders what she'll look like if she has to bury Shane, too.

"Shane, buddy," his dad says so softly, "let's get you to the couch…"

Shane makes it onto the couch but he doesn't remember standing. He can't even feel his legs.

Time stops and starts in weird, stilted fragments.

Phones ring, and are answered. There are voices fluttering around him, his parents, but other ones, too - tinny and distant, like they're through a speaker. Shane doesn't know if he recognises them or not, because everything feels so far out of his reach. Like if he stretched out his fingertips for miles in every direction, he wouldn't come into contact with a single thing.

He's alone. All by himself.

And he used to feel like that a lot, as a kid; he had lots of friends and teammates, he was always busy doing something with someone, but it always felt like no one ever really *got* him. Not completely. Not until Ilya, who watched Shane fold his clothes before sex and thought *I'm keeping him.* Ilya, who enjoys Shane's incessant ramblings as much as he enjoys his overwhelmed silence. Ilya, who sees every one of Shane's quirks and rituals and idiosyncrasies, and loves him not despite, but because of them.

Ilya, who is…*no.*

He still can't think it, can't let the words form inside his head. He lets out a quiet whimper, then slaps both hands over his mouth to make sure no one else can hear the breaking.

At some point a bottle of water is placed in his hands but he doesn't remember drinking it. He doesn't remember putting it down, either, but he blinks and then it's gone. He's handed a granola bar, somehow takes a small bite, but it feels like sandpaper tearing his oesophagus as he tries to swallow it down.

He tries to leave. Tries to get in his car so he can drive home - "He'll be back soon," Shane insists, "I need to make him dinner, he'll be hungry…" - and a quiet, choked off sob slips from between his mom's lips as she sits him back down on the couch.

He doesn't fight her.

Shane blinks again, and he's lying down.

Someone is rubbing his arm, and then they're gone. Someone is stroking his hair, and then their hand disappears. It doesn't matter. None of those hands belong to his husband.

He closes his eyes, just for a moment - just to see if this is a terrible nightmare - and when he opens them again, his dad is crouching in front of him. Shane's not sure what he's saying. He watches his mouth, tries to work out the words but he can't. So his eyes trail down to his dad's arms, and the red lines that have been gouged into his skin.

"You're bleeding," Shane whispers, his voice raw.

His dad stares back at him for a second, then glances down to the marks on his arms and blinks slowly like he's surprised. "Yeah, I guess-"

"Did I do that?" Shane asks.

He remembers arms around him while he screamed, and scratching at them to try and break free.

"It was an accident, kid. You didn't mean to."

"Sorry," Shane whispers.

Time warps and twists again.

It could have been hours, but it's probably only minutes before he's back sitting upright. He looks around the room, at the lamp that's been switched on in the corner, at his dad's forlorn expression and his mom's red eyes, but everything is blurry. The tears that have been steadily leaking from his eyes simply refuse to cease.

"I'm trying, honey, but there's still - still no real news," his mom says, her voice breaking under all the strain she's under - all the pressure she's putting on herself to find a way to fix this unfixable tragedy.

"He's my husband."

"We know, Shane," his dad says.

"He's - he's *mine.* I love him. I love him *so* much," Shane cries. "What am I supposed to do with it now? Where am I supposed to put it all?"

If he can't give his love to Ilya, then where is it supposed to go?

Shane's dad looks down at the floor, and his mom covers her face, and all three of them weep like the well of grief inside of them is never-ending.

If it's real - if Ilya is… - then Shane will never get to see him again. He'll never watch Ilya's face light up when he sets his sights on Shane, will never listen to him laugh at something dumb or whisper sweetly to Anya. He'll never get to hear his name on Ilya's tongue again, never kiss him or hold him or disappear into the comfort of his arms. And they'll never score another goal together or crash into each other as the crowd cheers for them.

They planned to remodel the kitchen in time for Christmas, so all the guys on the Cens who can't go home will at least get to spend it with family. How is Shane supposed to do that on

his own?

How is he supposed to go back to their house, where Anya is probably waiting by the door for him? Where their bed still smells like Ilya, and his curl products are cluttering up the bathroom, and his half-finished bottle of banana milkshake is still in the fridge. Their clothes are mixed together in the laundry basket, and how is Shane ever supposed to wash them now?

How is supposed to sleep in a house that will never feel like home again?

Every single second of Shane's future was designed with Ilya. Every plan was created together. What's left of it, now?

They wanted to have children.

The hard part was supposed to be over. They've done the denial, and the shame, and the secrets, and the hiding. They've done the distance, and the fights, and faced off against a world that wasn't ready to accept them. They found a way to carve a space for themselves, anyway. They did all of that, they survived it; this was meant to be the easy part.

He's going to spend the rest of his life missing his husband. Every day that passes, every hour, every minute, every second. He's going to have to miss him for longer than he got to love him.

"I can't do this," Shane suddenly pants.

His chest is too tight, and his hands don't feel like they belong to him, and the room - the entire fucking *planet* - is spinning while he is stuck in place, paralysed.

Shane grabs at his chest again, feels the smooth *81* on his - *Ilya's* - t-shirt, and he wants to die from the pain that erupts behind his ribcage. He can't breathe; his grief is lodged in his throat and the air can't pass it, it's too big. It takes up too much space.

He needs Ilya. He needs-

"Shane, take a breath," his dad commands, but Shane's body won't listen.

"David…"

"I know, but-"

"Maybe we need to call an ambulance. I don't - I don't know what to-"

An ambulance. Because Shane is dying. He knew it - knew it from the moment the news flashed on the TV screen. There's no Shane without Ilya, his heart can't beat if his husband's has stopped. And oh my *god,* his husband's has *stopped.* Ilya is - he's-

There's a gasp.

His mom, he thinks. He's not sure. Then there are voices again, but he can't make out what they're saying. Shane's vision is going spotty, darkness creeping in around the edges the more starved for oxygen he becomes. He can't feel his feet, can't feel his tongue, and then.

There are hands on his face.

They're strong, calloused, familiar as they cling onto him. Shane knows those hands - would know them anywhere, even now, with his eyes scrunched closed and his mind half mad with grief. A wail spills out of Shane as his hands reach up to hold a pair of wrists with a pulse flickering beneath the surface of their skin.

He can't open his eyes. He's too scared. But.

"Shane. Shane, sweetheart, you have to look at me. You have to breathe."

Shane shakes his head. He *can't.* Can't breathe, can't open his eyes just to find out that he's dreaming. He's too scared.

"My love, please. *Please* just look at me. I'm here. I'm right here, Shane, I promise."

And there's never been a single moment in Shane's life where he hasn't trusted Ilya completely, with his body and his heart and his soul. So Shane opens his eyes, and through the tears he sees him: his *husband.* Alive, breathing, here.

Shane sobs, a violent thing that wracks his entire body like he's convulsing.

And then he's throwing himself forward until he crashes into Ilya's chest. Ilya's arms wrap around Shane, and he is home.

"Oh my god. Oh my *god,* Ilya. *Baby.* You're - how-"

Shane pulls back just enough to get his hands on Ilya's face. He brushes the curls off his forehead, traces the crows feet by his eyes and the mole on his cheek, and then he looks at Ilya, finally. His bluegreenhazel eyes are glistening with tears, and his cheeks are flushed pink with life, and Shane loves him so much that he wants to crawl beneath his ribs. He wants to hold Ilya's heart in his hands just to feel it beating.

He kisses him - messy, and wet from the tears - and he has to keep gasping for breath but he still refuses to stop.

"I love you," he cries. "You're here. I thought - *god.* You're here. I love you. I love you."

"I love you, Shane," Ilya promises. "I'm here. I'm so sorry. I'm right here with you."

"Is this real? Please. Tell me - is this-"

"It's real. God, I promise, it's real Shane. My love."

Shane slides his hands into Ilya's hair and grips hold of his curls. He burrows his face into Ilya's neck and breathes him in - stale airplane air, sandalwood, and IlyaIlya*Ilya* - pressing

his lips the spot beneath his jaw where Shane can feel his pulse thrumming. He can't let him go, can't pull away, because he's so scared that if he does then Ilya will disappear. Scared that he'll wake up on the couch, and his parents will be looking at him like he's a ghost, and Ilya will still be gone.

Ilya just holds him. His hand trails over Shane's head, his neck, his back, over and over again until the rhythm of it begins to settle the frantic pounding of Shane's heart. He whispers quiet reassurances, and kisses Shane everywhere that he can reach, and Shane feels his body come back to him in increments.

When he finally feels steady enough to pull back from Ilya, Shane starts crying again just from the sight of him - a sight he thought he would never see again.

"You're alive," Shane whispers, as he cups Ilya's cheek in his trembling hand.

He leans in close, rests their foreheads together, and breathes in the air that Ilya breathes out.

"I'm alive. I'm sorry. So sorry you were scared, Shane."

"How - what - I mean, what happened?"

Ilya is still on his knees in front of Shane. He presses another kiss to Shane's damp lips, and he groans as he stands up. Shane doesn't let go of him, though. He keeps both hands on Ilya until he's seated again, and as Ilya pulls him back into his arms, Shane melts into the touch. His body responds to Ilya in the same way it always has: complete and utter surrender.

Shane is vaguely aware of his mom and dad sitting close by, both of them still crying, but he can't look away from Ilya long enough to check on them.

"The traffic was bad on the way to the airport," Ilya begins. "I was rushing and dropped my phone. Someone accidentally stood on it and broke it, and then I missed my flight but I couldn't call you to tell you."

Shane tries to laugh, but it comes out like more of a sob. It was all just coincidence. Bad luck that ended up saving his husband's life.

Shane presses his forehead to Ilya's collarbone and takes several slow, deep breaths as Ilya's hand cards through Shane's hair. He slides his hand up Ilya's stomach, only stopping when he can feel the beat of Ilya's heart beneath his palm.

"I was already in the air when the other plane crashed. Once we landed I just rushed through the airport on autopilot. I didn't know what had happened until I got in the car and turned on the radio. I went home first," he explains, "but you weren't there, and I *still* couldn't call you, so I came straight here."

"We're so glad you're okay," Shane's dad says, his voice thick with emotion as he pats Ilya's back.

"God, Ilya. It was…" Shane's mom can barely even speak. "We love you *so* much."

“I’m sorry,” Ilya says again. “I’m so sorry you were scared. So sorry you thought-“

“It felt like I was dying. Like - like my heart was being ripped out of my chest. God, *baby,* I can’t - I can’t do any of this without you.”

“You don’t have to,” Ilya assures him. “I’m never leaving you, okay? You’re stuck with me.”

Shane remembers the first week he and Ilya officially lived together.

It was after they’d been outed, after the playoffs were over for both of them, and their lockers had been cleared out for the season, and their team obligations had all been fulfilled. Shane had known he wasn’t going back to Montreal, and while he hadn’t signed the contract yet, he already knew the Centaurs were about to be his new team.

He’d been so excited to finally live with Ilya - properly, without having to hide - that he almost felt nauseous.

His parents, Hayden and J.J, and even Rose had all tried to warn him about *growing pains.* They told him it might take a while for him and Ilya to properly get used to actually living together, without one of them always having to rush off somewhere. They all said he and Ilya would get on each other’s nerves, would fight about the small stuff, would need to find things to do separately from each other to give them space. Give them room to settle into their new life and find their rhythm.

It had seemed absolutely absurd to Shane that he would ever want to be apart from Ilya again. Unthinkable, honestly. Everyone had laughed, told him *just you wait.*

So Shane waited, and he waited, but the things they warned him about never came.

Sure, there were tiny things that they would bicker about, like the temperature of the thermostat, or who’s turn it was to decide what they watched on TV, or which park they should take Anya to that morning, but. That was the extent of it. And still, even now, they rarely ever argue.

They live together, work together, play together, room together on the road, and Shane has still never gotten tired of Ilya. Never gotten bored of his company, or frustrated with any of his habits, and never - not once - has he ever wanted *space.*

Ilya is his first and only love, he’s his Captain, and his husband, and his very best friend in the world. He loves him more than anything, and he likes him, too. So much that it’s actually a little bit embarrassing. Shane has a crush on his husband, and he doesn’t ever want it to go away. He wants to spend the rest of his life exactly as obsessed with Ilya as he’s always been.

Ilya is everything in the world to Shane.

“I never want to be anywhere else. Wanna be stuck with you for the rest of my life,” Shane tells him. “Take me home? Please? I need - I need our home.”

I need to see you in the place we’re building our life together. Need to see you gulp down water as you stand at the sink, and watch you ball up your socks and free-throw them into the

laundry basket. I need to see your nose twitch when I light the candle you hate, and your eyes squint when you try to decipher the notes I attempt to write for you in Russian. I need to see you in our room, in our bed, between our sheets. I need to know that this is real - that you exist outside of this room, and that I haven't gone insane with grief.

"Anything you need, Shane."

Ilya hugs Shane's mom and dad for so long that they all start crying again, then they hug Shane, too. He doesn't have the words to thank them for the hours they kept Shane alive when it felt like he was dying - he barely even has the energy to *stand* - but he knows that they know. He can see it in their eyes.

The drive home is only fifteen minutes or so, but it still takes too long, even with their hands laced together on Shane's thigh for the whole journey. They keep the radio turned off. Neither of them need to hear the unfolding details about the crash.

Tomorrow Shane will feel guilty for being so relieved that it wasn't *his* person who died today, but right now there is only relief.

Shane cries when he watches Anya greet Ilya with excited kisses and tail wags. He cries when Ilya takes a swig of the banana milkshake he left in the fridge at 3 o'clock this morning. And when Ilya says, "Oh, by the way, I think I found a contractor for the kitchen," Shane's legs almost give out beneath him and Ilya has to hold him up.

When they crawl into bed, their skin warm and pink from the shower where they used Ilya's sandalwood body wash, Shane pulls Ilya down on top of him.

Ilya blankets Shane's entire body, the weight of him pressing Shane down into the mattress. It settles some of the frantic terror still lingering in his bones, but it doesn't eradicate it - he thinks, probably, that this will stay with him for a long time. Forever, perhaps. But that's okay, because he will have Ilya with him forever, too, always ready to remind him that he's here. He's real. He's not going anywhere.

"I love you," Ilya whispers quietly, his lips brushing against the hollow above Shane's collarbone. "So fucking much, Shane."

"You can't leave me," Shane tells him, his voice wobbling. "I mean it. You can't - I almost died, Ilya. You were gone, and I *wanted* to-"

"No, my love. Please. *Please* don't say that," Ilya murmurs.

He props himself up so he can look at Shane, and he ever so tenderly trails his finger down the side of Shane's face, beneath his bloodshot eyes, across the freckles on his cheeks. He looks at Shane with so much love that it still makes his breath catch, even after all these years. But Ilya's own eyes look wounded, like even the thought of Shane no longer being here is too much to bear.

Shane understands; he lived it.

“If you promise to never leave, I’ll promise to never say it again.”

“I promise, sweetheart. I swear it. I’ll never go anywhere without you again. I’ll never leave you.”

Ilya leans down to kiss him, slow and sweet and filled with all the things they feel too fragile to say right now. Shane can’t believe he almost lost this - can’t believe bad traffic and a broken phone caused all of this chaos.

“I love you,” Shane says.

And the grief is still rattling around inside of him, a wound that is still raw and aching, but it’s already starting to heal, the edges of it beginning to knit themselves back together. With Ilya looking down at him like this, kissing him so softly, touching him with such reverence, Shane feels himself being slowly pieced back together.

There will be people to call and things to deal with tomorrow, but for now nothing else in the world matters but this. Them.

“Are you okay?” Ilya murmurs softly.

And Shane thinks: *you are here and you are looking at me, how could I be anything else?*

“I’m perfect.”

End Notes

this one hurt a little to write :(i tried to make it read as frantic & anxious as shane's thoughts would have been, so i hope that paid off! love u.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!