

Goodbye, I Love You

By C. Jade Wyton

Barbra Bloom is sick. The treatments are failing her, and her body burns like fire every day. She's going to die. She knows it. Two years of therapy, and the cancer has only spread.... She goes for a walk; to a very special spot that lightens her heart and eases the pain in her bones. And it's here she makes a choice: She'll die on her own terms.

Contains descriptions of chronic pain and suicide.

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*The treatments weren't working.*

Barbra had been sick to her stomach when the doctor had told her the results.  
Six surgeries.

Two years of various therapies.

And it was all for nothing.

The tumours were back again.

Digging deeper and deeper into her body.

Taking over even more of her than before.

The cancer had spread to her bones, now.

*Her bones.*

It made her sick to her stomach.

It was in her *bones*....

Ken had been distraught when she'd told him. He'd cried for hours, while she'd just felt numb.

Though now, in the dead of night as she tossed and turned in bed, she didn't think she felt so numb anymore....

There was no position she could find that didn't hurt.

So, painfully, Barbra pushed herself out of bed.

Every single muscle in her body ached and stung like she'd been laying buried in burning hot coals— And her head was pounding again, throbbing hard with each beat of her heart.

She was tired of being in pain.

*So, so tired....*

She leant against the frame of her bedroom door to catch her breath and let her head stop spinning.

She felt like hell.

And nothing any doctor did was able to fix her.

A glance cast back, to make sure she hadn't woken her husband, and she stumbled into the hall.

She'd lost everything to this sickness.

Her health.

Her beauty.

Her job and her passion.

She'd lost everything—

A murmur caught her attention, and she noticed the door opposite her own had been left open.

*Almost everything....*

Barbra slowly made her way to her daughter's bedroom.

Becky had pulled all her toys off their shelves again and piled them into the bed with her. It was something Barbra had been trying to discourage; the girl's room was a mess enough without her ripping it apart even more! But....

But it didn't feel like it mattered, tonight....

Carefully, Barbra shifted her daughter's toys over, clearing a spot for herself on the bed so she could sit down—

'Mrrp?' a tired-but-affectionate chirp came from the pillow Barbra had put her hand on, and the woman quickly lifted her weight as to not hurt the mimic as it stretched.

'Sorry, Mimi,' Barbra mumbled, stroking the creature down its back. 'Go back to sleep. That's a good girl....'

A tired gurgle escaped Mimi before it dragged itself under Becky's arm and huffed a loud sigh.

Becky didn't seem to notice and continued to quietly doze.

It brought a tear to Barbra's eye, as she watched the girl.

She was already twelve— *Twelve!*

And Barbra barely knew her.

She'd wasted her life away at work, leaving her daughter at home with only the maid to care for her....

*Oh, she regretted it.*

It was the only thing she'd ever regretted; leaving her daughter behind.

She wished she'd never left.

That she'd stayed home, and raised the girl herself.

She had always told herself there'd be more time, but.... Now there wasn't.

She was running out of time.

*Damn her job!*

It hadn't been worth missing her daughter's life!

Barbra wiped the tears away and bent down to kiss Becky's cheek; ignoring the fiery pain that screamed through her as she did.

*She couldn't take it.*

Her body hurt.

Agony jabbed at every inch of her; tormenting her every movement.

She couldn't stand it!

Barbra winced, and tried not to make a sound as she stood back up and made for the door.

'Mmm,' Becky gave a groan; causing Barbra to freeze. 'Mum?'

'Yes, sweetheart?'

'Water....'

'Of course—' Barbra tried to hide the pain in her voice as she made her way back to the bed and searched the floor for her daughter's water bottle.

She undid the lid, and ignored the throbbing ache in her arms as she helped the girl to drink. She didn't bother to tell Becky to open her eyes— It was better if

she didn't wake up.

'Is that better?' Barbra asked, softly.

'Mhm, thank you...' Becky kissed at the air, missing her mother completely before dropping backward into her pile of toys. '*Mmmnnnn-night.*'

'Goodnight,' Barbra said, leaning over to kiss Becky again. 'I love you so, so much....'

'Yeah,' Becky yawned. '*Too.... You. Too. Too you.*'

'Goodnight,' Barbra said again.

She received a quiet snore in reply, and so carefully retreated out of the room.

Hesitating in the hall, she wondered where to go.

There was no point in going back to bed. She wasn't going to be able to sleep.

She was never able to sleep, anymore.

So, instead, she took her phone and coat and limped downstairs.

A walk.

She needed a walk.

Damn the cramps in her legs— She was sick of being house-bound!

She *needed* to be outside again.

Anywhere would do.

Anywhere but home.

Painfully, Barbra made her way through town.

Nobody was out, tonight; which was unusual but welcome. She didn't want to see anyone. She just wanted to enjoy the night alone....

*The trail in the woods.*

She remembered it with a tired smile.

She'd always loved walking that trail with Ken.

*And the lake.*

She could stop at the lake where they'd had their wedding.

It really had been a beautiful wedding.... Quiet and private— Just for them and their closest friends.

Unlike the rest of their life, stuck in the public's eye.

The lake was special.

*And tonight, she thought, it looked as beautiful as it had that day.*

It truly was a sight; the rippling water reflecting the cloudless sky.

Slowly, stiffly, Barbra limped to its edge and sat down; removing her shoes and dipping her aching feet into the stars on its surface.

They disappeared, and she thought it was like they had vanished into the sky itself....

A loud sigh escaped the woman as the aches in her soles faded; sending tingles of relief up her legs.

This was exactly what she needed.

Nothing else had ever soothed her pain like this before.

She could have stayed here forever....

She....

She *could*.

The thought tickled the back of her mind.

*She could stay here... forever.*

Her phone buzzed loudly, and she checked the text.

It was from her husband; worriedly asking her where she was.

She told him: *At the lake.*

He replied with confusion, then— Why was she there? Was she alright? How had she gotten there on her own?

She didn't answer his questions. Instead, she said she was sorry.

*Sorry?* he asked. *Why are you sorry? Are you alright?*

There was no way to explain it, so she simply sent him one last text:

*Goodbye, I love you.*

Barbra placed her phone in the grass, ignoring the buzz of Ken's ringtone as she slid into the lake.

The water cooled her aching joints, immediately relieving her pains.

It was like magic.

It made her feel lighter; picking her up and floating her across its shimmering surface as she lay back to stare at the bright, beautiful sky.

The moon was out and the stars twinkled brightly.

Out here, away from town, there was nothing to pollute the sky and every last star was visible; their constellations twinkled alive and bright across the shimmering dark blue sky as if they were dancing— Dancing for *her*.

There were no clouds, tonight.

It was just her, the lake, and the sky....

Barbra took in a short breath as a shooting star streaked across the night; tears welling in her eyes as she smiled.

It was the last thing she saw before she let the water take her.

—END—

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