

It is a Thursday afternoon when the woman rises from her deep sleep, trying to drowse away the ringing sounds of the previous night. I hear her wide mouth stretch open, sucking in the cold living room air, just as I open the front door. The yawning woman is my pathetic wife. But I don't see her as anything else, but a woman who swims for happiness in any glass or mug she sees. There is my Mickey Mouse mug on the coffee table, the sunlight pouring little bits of dust on the rim. At approximately 6:30pm last Thursday, it was used for other brews. I can hear the sounds of children shrieking with joy.

Speaking of youth, our angst-ridden son will be turning thirteen in two weeks, and yet all he has to look forward to is a cake made from this woman upstairs, a so-called parent, and a gift bought the day of. That particular gift is from me. You see, I'm his father no doubt. I'm neither hip, nor at peak fitness. But I'm trying, I always am, to stop him from the disappointments life can bring, but it's just so hard. My work hours are never consistent, and I get hungry late at night.

And my wife? There she is! She slowly walks down the stairs and ties her robe. She reeks of sourness as she stumbles toward the kitchen. She smooths her hair as if to pretend she had only took a nap. I think she takes me for a fool. We don't even kiss anymore, just nod to one another.

Perhaps she's right. Personally, I have been in the same position since our son was born. Everyone always off doing their own thing. Everyone talking with such urgency and speed, while I can never keep up to catch what is left of the situation. No one ever takes any time to

slow down, and if they do, it's only to screw with someone else, sometimes literally. For instance, my co-workers and the temps on the first floor some afternoons. It only starts out slow by the way, and usually picks up toward the end. I hear the thuds every time I need more copies, or when I stand directly underneath tile number eight in the ceiling. The dust drifts through the air upon every fevered thud, and the cheers rumble underneath the hum of the printer. In general, no one ever invites me to be a part of their bullshit. But let's be honest, I'm forty-seven and I do have some difficulty.

So what was I saying? Oh right! My job sucks, and my marriage sucks. And sometimes people suck. Life will screw with you, my slightly balding left temple is an example. I sometimes rub the skin at night in the hopes things will have changed when I woke up. But today, this mundane and Thursday afternoon, it did not.

I take my shoes off and hang my jacket upon the banister. I can't believe how cold it is in our house. My wife mutters a confused whimper as she hears my footsteps enter sadly the kitchen. Oh don't mind me dear; just passing through.