

The Reluctance To Sleep

Mr. Black failed to conquer his fear, to the surprise of no one. The exercise-induced asthma that had gone undiagnosed for twenty-two years erupted in breathless waves as Mr. Black scaled the icy façade. His red handled pick ax was not withstanding his weight and Mr. Black knew that he would have to call it a day. Flanked by a physically ambiguous looking individual nicknamed, *femme*, Mr. Black reluctantly turned his substantial frame from the rest of the expedition and retreated down the mountain.

The night before, “Mr. Black”, a formal name for sure, but one said out of necessity when his first name proved to be elusive, had completed the arduous task of cross country skiing four miles uphill with a fifty pound sack strapped to his back and was confident that his ascent to the summit was a mere formality. Mr. Black’s mother had warned Mr. Black that morning that this weekend excursion up Katahdin might be too difficult for him to undertake and that his tendency for overconfidence might be to his detriment.

“You never want me to succeed. You just see me as little [insert an appropriate name for Mr. Black here], crying whenever I would go on that dinky rollercoaster in the shape of a dragon.”

Mr. Black was right. Whenever his mother looked at him, she saw her five year old child, running towards her from the scary dragon that had attempted to lift him into the air before his gray Velcro clad feet were firmly planted on the ground. Mr. Black’s mother would hug her sobbing son and hold him. She would hold him until the image of the menacing dragon left his mind and it took everything inside of her to not cry too.

It was this memory of childhood that flooded Mr. Black's mind when he was back at camp. It was the dragon, whose flame breathing nostrils gave him nightmares into adulthood that he couldn't shake. It was his mother's nurturing embrace and how being enveloped in her arms, made the situation better for reasons not discernable to Mr. Black then, or now. It had been two years since his last altercation with the dragon and as Mr. Black looked up at the mountain, to the spot where he made the decision to turn around hours previous, Mr. Black was terrified to close his eyes.