

花樣年華

THE NOTES

An English Translation by Courtney Lazore

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HOSEOK

JULY 23

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When I had counted to four, I heard the sound of laughter like an auditory hallucination. In the next moment, the me from my childhood brushed by, holding someone's hands. I quickly turned around to look, but it was just my classmates staring at me. "Hoseok-ah," the teacher called my name. Then I realized where I was. It was math class. I was in the middle of counting the fruits drawn in the textbook. Five, six. I counted again, but as I kept going, my voice shook and my hands began to sweat. The memory from that time emerged frequently.

I don't remember my mom's face from that day well. I only recall her giving me a chocolate bar after I went around the amusement park. "Hoseok-ah, count to ten and then open your eyes." When I finished counting and opened my eyes, my mom wasn't there. I waited and waited, but she didn't return. The last I counted to was nine. I only had to count one more, but my voice wouldn't come out. My ears rang and my surroundings became foggy. My teacher gestured for me to keep going. My friends were staring at me. I couldn't remember my mom's face. It was like my mom would never come to find me, if I counted one more.

With that, I collapsed to the floor.

YEAR 10



TAEHYUNG

DECEMBER 29

I took off my shoes, threw down my bag, and went into the main room. My dad was really there. I didn't think about how long it had been or where he had come from. I thoughtlessly jumped into my dad's arms. I don't remember well what happened next. Whether the smell of the alcohol was first, whether the cursing was first, whether he slapped my cheek first. I didn't know what was happening. There was the smell of alcohol, heavy breathing, and bad breath. His eyes were bloodshot and his beard was growing in uneven. He slapped my cheek with a large hand. He hit my cheek again asking what I was looking at. Then he lifted me into the air. His bright red eyes were scary, but I was so scared I couldn't cry. That wasn't my dad. No, it was my dad. But, it wasn't. My two feet shook in the air. In the next moment, after hitting my head harshly against the wall, I fell to the floor. It felt like my head had burst. My field of vision flickered and soon became pitch black. My head was filled with only the sound of my dad's wheezing breath.



JIMIN

APRIL 6

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I left through the front gate of the arboretum. As the day passed it had become colder, but I was happy. Even though it was a picnic day, my mom and dad were busy. So at first, I was a little sullen. But I received compliments in the flower drawing competition, and my friends' mothers said "Jimin's quite mature isn't he?" From that time, I thought I was a bit cool.

"Jimin-ah, wait here. I'll come here soon," my teacher said after the picnic was over, but I didn't wait. I had confidence that I could go alone. I held the strap of my bag tightly with both hands and walked maturely. It seemed like everyone was watching me, so I straightened my shoulders more. It was some time before the rain started. My friends, the mothers, and people who would look after me weren't there, and my legs hurt. I covered my head with my bag and crouched under a tree. The rain became stronger bit by bit, and there were no people passing by. In the end, I started to run in the rain. I couldn't see any houses or shops. But the place I arrived at was the back gate of the arboretum. The side door was open, and I could see a storage room inside.

YEAR 11



YOONGI

SEPTEMBER 19

The fire raged scarlet red. The house I lived in until this morning was engulfed in flames. The people who knew me came running and shouting something. The neighbors took short, quick steps. They said the fire truck couldn't come in because they couldn't secure an entrance. I stopped and stood at that place.

The end of summer. It was the start of fall. The sky was blue and the air was dry. What I should think, what I should feel, what I should do, I didn't know any of it. However, I thought "Oh... mom." In the next moment, the house collapsed with a thud. The house engulfed in flames, no, the house that had now become the flames, the roof, the columns, the walls, the room I lived in, collapsed like a house made of sand. I stared at the scene vacantly.

Someone pushed past me. They said the fire truck was coming through. Someone else grabbed me and asked something. That person looked me in the eye and shouted something, but I didn't hear any of it.

"Is there anyone inside?" I vacantly stared at that person. "Is your mom inside?" That person grabbed me by the shoulders and shook. I answered without knowing. "No. No one's inside." "What are you saying?" a neighborhood lady said. "Your mom? Where did your mom go?" "No one's inside." I also don't know what I was saying. Someone pushed sharply past me.



SEOKJIN

MARCH 2

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YEAR 19

There was a humid smell coming from the principal's office I had followed my father into. Ten days after I returned from America, it was yesterday I heard that I would have to enter school a year behind, due to the difference in school systems. "Please take good care of him." When my father put his hand on my shoulder, I flinched before I knew it. "School is a dangerous place. We need to have regulations." The principal was looking directly at me. Each time the principal spoke, his wrinkled cheeks and the flesh around his mouth shook, and inside his dark lips it was completely dark red. "Don't you think so, Seokjin?" When I hesitated at the sudden question, my father squeezed the hand on my shoulder. His grip was to the extent that my neck muscles throbbed. "I believe that you will do well." The principal persistently kept eye contact, and my father put more strength bit by bit into his grip. I clenched my fist in the midst of pain that felt like my shoulder bone might break. My body trembled and I broke out in a cold sweat. "You certainly have to tell me. Seokjin has to become a good student." The principal looked at me without smiling. "Yes." When I barely squeezed out the answer, the pain disappeared for a moment. I could hear the sound of the principal and my father laughing. I couldn't raise my head. I looked down at my father's brown shoes and the principal's black ones. I didn't know where the light was coming in from, but it glimmered. I was afraid of that glimmer.



JUNGKOOK

MAY 28

“What are your dreams, hyungs?” At my words, the hyungs turned to look. “I mean, I ask because I have to write about future hopes.” As I spoke vaguely, Seokjin-hyung said “Well...I don’t think I have a dream. If there’s something I want, it’s just to become a good person?” Hyung blurted out his words with embarrassment. Then, Yoongi-hyung, who had been lying on the piano bench, said with an uninterested tone “It’s okay if you don’t have dreams. I don’t have dreams. I’ll just become anything.” At Yoongi-hyung’s words, everyone burst out laughing.

“I’m going to become a superhero. I’m going to save the world from the villains,” Taehyung-hyung said as he stood on a chair and faced the sky with his arms raised in a pose. Hoseok-hyung scolded him, telling him to come down quickly lest he hurt himself while acting up. Then he added, “I want to find my mom and live happily. Becoming happy, that’s my dream.” While hyung was saying that, he had a very happy-looking smile. “So you’re unhappy right now?” It was Jimin-hyung who said that. Hoseok-hyung said, “Is that how it is?” while showing a ridiculous expression like he was worrying. Then, he faced Jimin-hyung and asked him. “What’s your dream?” “Me?” Jimin blinked like he was flustered and answered, “In kindergarten I wanted to become president, but I don’t really know what I wanted to be after that time.”

Now only Namjoon-hyung was left. Hyung, who could feel everyone’s eyes on him, shrugged his shoulders and opened his mouth. “I want to say good words, but I don’t really have a dream either. I wish they’d raise my hourly wage at my part-time job.” I nodded and looked down at my report. The paper about future hopes was divided into students and school parents. What did I want to be? I couldn’t think of anything to write down.

YOONGI

JUNE 12

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I left school thoughtlessly, but I really didn't have any place to go. The day was hot, I didn't have any money, and I didn't have anything to do. Namjoon was the one who suggested we go to the sea. My younger friends seemed to be excited, I wasn't for or against the idea. "Do you have money?" At my words, Namjoon got them all to empty their pockets. Some coins, some bills, we couldn't go. I think Taehyung said "We can walk." "Please think about it." Namjoon's expression said, and everyone laughed while talking about useless things and pretending to tumble about the street. I wasn't in the mood to respond and lagged behind. The sunlight was hot. Because it was midday, the trees along the street couldn't make shade. Above the road without a sidewalk, cars passed in a cloud of dust.

"Let's go there." This time too it was Taehyung. Or was it Hoseok? I didn't see it well because I wasn't interested, but it was one of those two. As I walked with my head down preoccupied by the ground, I almost ran into someone and fell down, so I lifted my head. Jimin stood stuck in that spot. The muscles in his face trembled as if he had seen something scary. "Are you okay?" I asked, but it seemed he didn't hear me. Where Jimin was looking stood a sign that said Flower Arboretum 2.2km.

"I don't want to walk." I heard Jungkook's words. Sweat dripped down Jimin's face. He looked terrified and like he was about to collapse. What is it? I felt weird. "Park Jimin," I called, but as expected he didn't move at all. I lifted my head and looked at the sign again.

"Hey, it's hot today, what is it with this arboretum? Let's go to the sea," I said as if uninterested. I don't know what kind of place the Flower Arboretum was, but I don't think we should have gone. I don't know the reason, but there was a strange sense around Jimin. "I said we're short on money," Hoseok answered at my words. "I said let's walk," Taehyung chipped in. "If we walk to the train station, I think we'll manage," Namjoon said. "Instead we'll have to starve for dinner." Jungkook and Taehyung made crying noises and Seokjin-hyung laughed. After everyone faced towards the train station again, Jimin began moving again. Walking with his head down and shoulders bent, Jimin was like a very small child. I looked up again at the sign. Flower Arboretum, the five characters (of the name) were gradually receding.

YEAR 19



SEOKJIN

JUNE 25

A flowerpot, that I don't know who brought, occupied the space in front of the window in the storage classroom. Among the younger guys, who would bring a flowerpot? I pulled out my cell phone. In the storage classroom that's always dark because there's no electricity, blades of grass could be seen in contrast to the cloudy light that comes through the dirty window. The photo I took with my cell phone didn't come out well. It wasn't just because it was a cell phone. It's something I always think, how pictures can't capture things as a human eye does.

As I approached, I could see the H below the flowerpot. I lifted the flowerpot. The writing "Hoseok's flowerpot" appeared. I chuckled. If you wonder who among the younger guys would bring a flowerpot, it could be no one but Hoseok. After I put the flowerpot down so that it covered everything up to the H, I looked around at my surroundings. I wasn't aware of it until now, but the windowsills were covered with doodles. It wasn't just the windowsills, there were doodles on the walls and the ceiling too. Pass in school, or die. The name of someone's unrequited love. Dates, and countless names that were unreadable now.

This classroom wasn't a storage room from the start. Students came to school here every day, had their classes, and by the end of the day, it would have emptied out. Throughout school vacation, it would be empty, but on the first day of school, students would have noisily crowded in. At that time too, were there students like us who would be late, receive punishments, and skip class? Were there teachers who cruelly inflicted violence, and never-ending tests and homework? And was there someone like me? Someone who talked to the principal about their friends.

In the midst of this, I thought whether my father's name would be here too. This place was my father's alma mater. My father was a person who believed that attending the same high school and college from generation to generation gave dignity to family traditions. As I skimmed over the names with my eyes, I discovered my father's name. Around the middle of the left wall. It was in between several names. Below that, this sentence was written: Everything started here.

JIMIN

AUGUST 30

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YEAR 19

While Hoseok-hyung was on the phone, I played around by kicking the dirt floor covered with hyung's shadow. While smiling, hyung's face showed "Park Jimin, you've grown a lot." It took two hours to walk home from school. If you take the bus, it's not even 30 minutes, if you take only the big roads, it's 20 minutes. Nevertheless, hyung always insisted on taking winding alleys, climbing over low slopes, and crossing over the pedestrian overpasses. Last year, I transferred schools after getting out of the hospital. School was far away from home, and I didn't know anyone. I thought it would be okay. I had already moved schools several times, and since I didn't know when I'd have to be hospitalized again, I didn't think it was a big deal.

But, I came to know hyung. It wasn't long after the new semester began. As if it were nothing, hyung came and walked two hours with me. It was a while before I found out that his house wasn't in the same direction. I couldn't ask him why. I hoped our shadows walking side by side, walking together under the sunlight for two hours, would continue on for longer, even if just a day.

I kicked his shadow again and ran away again as he was still on the phone. He hung up the phone and started to chase me. The hot sun melted the ice cream, and the sound of cicadas pricked my ears. All of a sudden, I was frightened. How many of these days are left?



TAEHYUNG

MARCH 20

I ran and slid in the hallway, making noise. Then I stopped. I could see Namjoon-hyung standing in front of our classroom. Our classroom. Without anyone knowing, I called that place our classroom. Me, the hyungs, and Jungkook, our (the seven of us) classroom, I approached with bated breath. I thought of surprising him.

“Principal!” After taking about five steps, I could hear a very urgent voice through the slightly opened classroom window. It sounded like Seokjin-hyung. I stopped walking. Was Seokjin-hyung talking with the principal right now? In our classroom? Why? Then I heard Yoongi-hyung’s name and my name, and I saw Namjoon-hyung inhale as if surprised. As if he had become aware of the noise, Seokjin-hyung suddenly opened the door. There was a phone in Seokjin-hyung’s hand. His surprised and flustered expression was apparent. I couldn’t see Namjoon-hyung’s expression. I hid out of sight and observed the scene. As if he were going to provide a justification, Seokjin-hyung opened his mouth, but Namjoon-hyung raised his hand and said “It’s okay.” Seokjin-hyung’s expression said “What does that mean?” “If you’re doing that, you must have a reason.” After saying that, Namjoon-hyung moved past Seokjin-hyung and entered the classroom. I didn’t believe it. Seokjin-hyung had talked to the principal about things Yoongi-hyung and I had done over the last few days. He talked about skipping class, jumping the fence, and fighting with other kids. But Namjoon-hyung said that that’s okay.

“What are you doing here?” I turned around surprised, it was Hoseok-hyung and Jimin. Hoseok-hyung pretended to be more surprised and put his arm around my shoulder. In the confusion of the moment, Hoseok-hyung dragged me into the classroom. Seokjin-hyung and Namjoon-hyung turned around while talking. Seokjin-hyung got up hastily and left, saying that something urgent came up. I looked carefully at Namjoon-hyung’s expression. Namjoon-hyung, who had looked at Seokjin-hyung leaving, smiled at us as if nothing had happened. In that moment, these thoughts came. If Namjoon-hyung had done that, there must be a reason. Hyung knows way more than I do, is way smarter than I am, and more of an adult than I am. And this is our classroom. I went in the classroom with a foolish smile that everyone else teases me for, calling it rectangular. I thought I wouldn’t talk about that conversation I heard to anyone.

NAMJOON

MAY 15

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As I walked across the storage classroom that had become a hideout to us who had nowhere to go, I set a few chairs upright. While I was at it, I lifted up the desks that had fallen over, and I cleaned the dust off with the palm of my hand. The last time makes people sentimental. Today was the last day I'd go to school. We decided to move two weeks ago. Maybe I won't be able to return again. I may not be able to see my friends again.

I folded a piece of paper in half and put it on top of the desk. I held a pencil but because I didn't know what words to leave, time just passed. As I was scribbling pointless words, the lead of the pencil broke. "We have to survive." As the lead broke, there was a scribble scratched on the paper without me knowing, marks of debris left on it. Between the jet-black powder of the graphite and the scribble, there were scattered squalid stories of poverty, parents, younger siblings, and moving.

I crumpled the paper and put it in my pants pocket and stood up. As I pushed the desk, dust rose up. As I was turning back, I blew against the dirty window and left three letters. No greeting would be satisfactory, and even without saying anything, I can convey it all. "Let's see each other again." Rather than a promise, it was a wish.

YEAR 20



YOONGI

JUNE 25

I burst through the door and took out the envelope left in the bottom desk drawer. When I turned it over, a piano key fell out. I flung the half-burnt key into the trashcan and lied down on the bed. I couldn't get over my boiling heart, and my breathing was a wreck. My fingers were already stained with soot.

When the funeral was over, I went alone to the house that had been destroyed by the fire. When I entered my mother's room, I could see the piano burned beyond recognition. I wavered by its side and sat down. The afternoon sun came through the window, and I just sat there as it began to subside. In the last of the light, several of the piano keys rolled around. I wondered what kind of sound would come out if I pressed them. I wondered how many of them my mom's fingers had touched. I put one of them in my pocket and left the room.

Since that time, nearly four years have passed. The house was quiet. It was so quiet I thought I'd go crazy. Since it was after 10pm, my father was asleep, so I had to hold my breath. That was the rule of this house. Enduring this stillness was tough. It's not easy to keep to the decided time, rules, and formats. But more than that, the thing I couldn't bear was that I was still living in this house despite all of that. I received the allowance my father gave me, I ate meals with my father, I listened to his scolding. I could oppose him, go astray, abandon my father whom I get in trouble with and leave home alone, but I didn't have the courage to practice real freedom, not just words.

I suddenly got out of bed. I pulled out the piano key from the trashcan under the desk. When I opened the window, the night air surged in fiercely. The things that happened today were carried by the wind and came in like a slap. I threw that key into the air with all my might. It's been more than ten days since I've been to school. I heard the news that I had been expelled. Now, even if I don't want to, I may be kicked out of this house. I concentrated on listening, but I didn't hear the sound of that key hitting the ground. I wouldn't be able to know what sound that key would make no matter how hard I thought about it. No matter how much time passed, that key would not be able to make a sound again. I won't play the piano again.

JUNGKOOK

JUNE 25

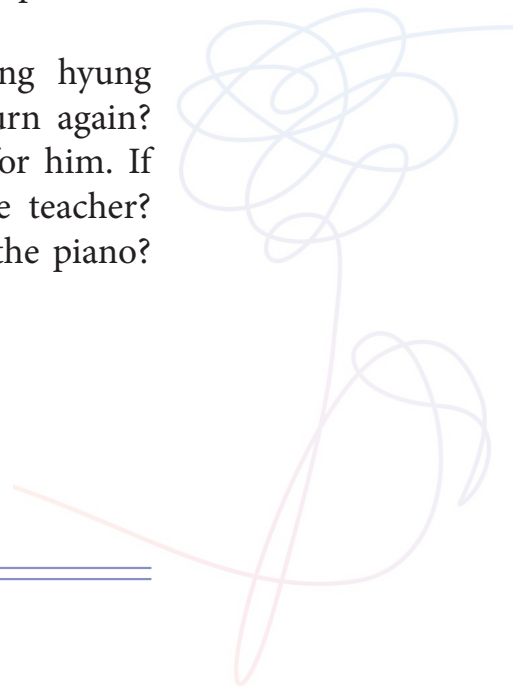
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YEAR 20

When I stroked the piano key with my hand, it was covered in dust. As I put strength into my fingertip, a different sound came out than the one hyung played. It's been more than 10 days since hyung came to school. Today rumors are going around that he was expelled. Namjoon-hyung and Hoseok-hyung won't tell me anything, and I couldn't ask because I'm scared of something. That day two weeks ago, when the teacher opened the door to the classroom hideout and entered, it was only me and hyung here. It was a visiting day for parents. I didn't want to be in the classroom, so I thoughtlessly headed towards the hideout. Hyung didn't turn to look and kept playing the piano, and I placed two desks together, lied down, and closed my eyes pretending to sleep. Hyung and the piano seemed to be different in nature at first, but they were one thing I couldn't even think of separating. When I listen to hyung's piano, for some reason I want to cry.

I turned over when it seemed like I'd cry, the door opened as if it were breaking, and the sound of the piano was cut off. I was slapped on the cheek, backed away, and ultimately fell down. While crouching and enduring verbal abuse, the voice stopped all of a sudden. When I lifted my head, hyung pushed past the teacher's shoulders and stood in front of me, blocking me. Over hyung's shoulders, I could see the teacher's dumbfounded expression.

I tried pressing the piano key. I mimicked the song hyung played. Was hyung really expelled? Would he not return again? Hyung said a few hits and a few blows are common for him. If it weren't for me, would hyung have not opposed the teacher? If it weren't for me, would hyung still be here playing the piano?



SEOKJIN

JULY 17

When I came out of the school's front gate, the sound of cicadas came to me. The playground was crowded with laughing kids, playing around and racing against each other. The start of summer vacation, everyone was excited. I walked between them with my head low. I wanted to quickly leave school.

“Hyung.” Because someone's shadow appeared suddenly, I turned my head. It was Hoseok and Jimin. They looked at me with young, mischievous eyes and big, good-natured smiles as always. “Today's the start of break, but you're just going to leave?” Hoseok asked as he pulled on my arm. I said “yes, yes,” saying words without meaning and just turned my head. The event that would happen that day was an accident. It's not something I intended. I didn't think Jungkook and Yoongi would be in the classroom at that time. The principal suspected I was covering for my younger friends. He said he could tell my father that I'm not a good student. I had to say something. It was because I thought the hideout was empty. However, it happened that Yoongi was expelled from school. No one knew I was involved in it.

“Have a good break hyung! I'll contact you.” As if interpreting something from my expression, Hoseok removed his hand and greeted me more brightly. I didn't answer this time either. There wasn't anything I could say. When I came out of the school gate, I recalled the first day of school. We were late and were punished together for it. So we could laugh. I'm the one who ruined these moments.



HOSEOK

SEPTEMBER 15

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Jimin's mother crossed the emergency room. While checking the name on the head of the bed and the IV one by one, she removed a blade of grass near Jimin's shoulder with a finger. I approached hesitantly to talk about why Jimin was brought to the emergency room and how he had a seizure at the bus stop. Like she had just discovered me, Jimin's mother looked at me for a bit like she was trying to guess something. I wavered, not knowing what to do. Jimin's mother said a word of thanks and then turned around.

Jimin's mother faced me again when the doctors and nurses began to move the bed, and I tried to follow. While saying thanks again, Jimin's mother nudged my shoulder. Rather than nudged, touching very slightly and then removing her hand would be the more correct expression. Suddenly, there was a line between Jimin's mother and myself that I couldn't see. That line was clear and firm. It was cold and solid. It was a line I could never cross. I had lived at the orphanage for more than ten years. I could tell that much through my body, my eyes, the air. In the confusion of the moment, while stepping backwards I fell to the floor. Jimin's mother looked down at me with a blank look. She was small and beautiful, but her shadow was huge and cold. That dark shadow cast over me on the emergency room floor. When I lifted my head, Jimin's bed had been moved out of the emergency room and I couldn't see it. After that day, Jimin didn't return to school.

YEAR 20



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YEAR 20

JIMIN

SEPTEMBER 28

I had been hospitalized for several days and stopped counting. That's something you do when you want to get out or when you have hopes of leaving. Considering the trees and grass I saw far away outside the window and people's attire, it didn't seem like much time had passed yet. More than one month at most. Sometimes I saw people wearing school uniforms too, but now even that didn't feel that special. Maybe because of the medicine, everything was dull and dim. Even so, today was a special day. If I wrote a journal, it'd be a day I'd surely have to write down. However, I don't write a journal, and I don't want to cause a problem while writing that down. Today I lied for the first time. While looking the doctor in the eyes, I pretended to be melancholy and said: "I don't remember anything."



JUNGKOOK

SEPTEMBER 30

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YEAR 20

“Jeon Jungkook. You’re not going there often these days, right?” I didn’t answer anything. I just stood while looking at my sneakers. I didn’t answer and got hit on the head with an attendance book. Even so, I didn’t open my mouth. It was the classroom where I was together with the hyungs. After the day where, going around with the hyungs, we discovered that classroom, there hasn’t been a day I didn’t go to it. Maybe the hyungs didn’t know. The hyungs said they had appointments, or were busy with part-time work, so they didn’t show up. There were times where I didn’t see Yoongi-hyung or Seokjin-hyung for days. But, not me. I went without missing a day. There were also days where no one came all day. Even so, it was okay. Because it was that place, even if it wasn’t today, or tomorrow, or the day after, it was okay because the hyungs would come.

“You’ve learned nothing but bad things while just hanging around.” I got hit again. I stared at them. Again, I was hit. I recalled the image of Yoongi-hyung being hit. I clenched my teeth and beared it. I didn’t want to lie that I hadn’t been to that classroom.

Now, I’m standing in front of that classroom again. I thought if I opened the door, the hyungs would be there. I thought they’d turn around to ask “Why are you late?” while gathered together playing games. Seokjin-hyung and Namjoon-hyung would be reading books, Taehyung-hyung would be playing a game, Yoongi-hyung would be playing the piano. Hoseok-hyung and Jimin-hyung would be dancing.

However, after opening the door, Hoseok-hyung was the only one I saw. He was organizing the items we had left in the classroom. I just stood there, holding on to the door handle. Hyung came up to me and put his arm around my shoulders. Then, he led me outside the room. “Let’s go now.” He closed the classroom door. I realized it then, that those days were gone, and they were never coming again.



HOSEOK

FEBRUARY 25

I danced without taking my eyes off my image in the mirror. There, my feet don't touch the ground, I soared and I was free from all the eyes and standards of the world. Moving my body in time with the music, nothing was important except for having my feelings in my body.

The first time I danced, I was about 12 years old. Perhaps it was at the talent show during the retreat. I was led by my school friends and stood on stage. The thing from that day that I still remember now is the applause, the cheers, and the feeling that I had become myself for the first time. Of course, at that time, I only thought it was enjoyable to move my body with the music. That was euphoria, and after some time, I realized the truth that that euphoria did not come from the applause, but from inside myself.

The me outside of that mirror is tied to many things. I can't lift my feet from the ground more than a few seconds, even if I don't like it I smile, even if I'm sad I smile. Even while I take the medicine that I don't need, I fall down anywhere. So when I dance, I try not to take my eyes off the me in the mirror. The moment I can truly be myself. The moment where I can throw away everything heavy and fly high, the moment when I can have the belief that I can become happy. I try to protect that moment.



NAMJOON

DECEMBER 17

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YEAR 21

The people waiting for the first bus in the cold wind rubbed their hands together. I grasped the strap of my bag tightly and looked down at the dirt. I made an effort not to make eye contact with anyone. A rural village where buses stop only twice a day. I saw the first bus coming in the distance.

I followed behind the people and got on the bus. I didn't look back. When there is something urgent, when it's barely in your hands, when the only thing that remains is escaping, you adhere to these conditions. Don't look back. The moment you look back, your efforts up to this point become bubbles (t/n: are in vain). Looking back. That's doubt, lingering attachment, and fear. If you win against those things, you can finally escape.

The bus took off. I didn't have a plan. I didn't have anything urgent, and I wasn't trying to escape. It was closer to running away blindly. My mother's weary face. My wandering younger sibling. My father's illness. Starting from my family's troubles that got worse as days went by. To my family members who imposed sacrifice and peace, I resigned myself to pretending not to know anything, adapting, and holding myself back. And above anything else, from poverty.

If you ask if poverty is a crime, no one will say it is. But is that true? Poverty gnaws at many things. Things that were precious become nothing. Things that could not be given up are given up. It makes one doubtful, fearful, and resigned.

In a few hours, the bus will arrive at a familiar bus stop. When I left there a year ago, I left no goodbyes. Now I'm returning there with no forewarning. I recalled my friends' faces. We've all lost touch. What has everyone been doing? Would they welcome me? Would we all be able to gather and laugh together like that time? I couldn't see the scenery outside the window because of the frost. I moved my fingers slowly over the window. "[We/I] must survive."



HOSEOK

MARCH 2

I like being around people. After I left the orphanage and went out on my own, I started working part-time at a fast food restaurant. It was work that required me to see many people, always smile, and always be energetic. I liked that work. Truthfully, in my life there's not much to laugh about or be energetic about. I've surely seen more bad people than good people. Maybe that's why I liked that work even more. Even if I force myself to smile largely and talk with a loud voice and converse pleasantly, I had the illusion that I really felt like that. While smiling big, my feelings became good, and while speaking kindly, I became a kind person. There were also tough days. When I cleaned up the store and returned home, it was difficult to take one step. There were also lots of days with customers who made a scene. Even so, when I had friends, it was easier to endure those things than it is now.

Sometimes when I look at the customers that fill the store, I think of my friends. Seokjin-hyung, who transferred to another school without a word; Namjoon-hyung, who disappeared one morning; Yoongi-hyung, whom I didn't receive contact from after he was expelled; Taehyung, who I didn't know if he was somewhere going through some mishap; and Jimin, who didn't come back to school after I saw him for the last time in the emergency room. I've seen Jungkook wearing his school uniform and going to school multiple times through the window, but for some reason he didn't stop by the store. I thought that those times must be gone now.

At the sound of a customer entering, I welcomed them loudly. Then I turned and looked at the door with a bright, healthy smile.

TAEHYUNG

MARCH 29

花樣
年華

The owner of the gas station spit on the floor and then went away. I was lying curled up on the floor. While I was putting graffiti on the back wall of the gas station, I was caught by the owner and hit while he asked what I was doing to someone else's wall. I rolled on the floor. Getting hit was something I was used to, but it's also something I can't get used to.

I started doing graffiti long ago. I tried spraying a wall with a spray can someone had thrown away. I think it was yellow. I just sprayed it carelessly and looked up. While looking at the distinct yellow paint on the gray wall, I lifted a different spray. For some time, I sprayed my unknown feelings on the wall. I emptied all of the spray cans and stopped my hand. I picked up the can, tossed it, and stepped back. I was breathless, as if I had sprinted.

I didn't know what meaning the colors on the wall had. I didn't know what I had done or why. Just one thing, I could guess that it was my feelings. I had vented my feelings out on the wall. At first, I thought it was unsightly. I also thought it was dirty. It was stupid, useless, and pathetic. I didn't like it. I rubbed the paint that was less dry with the palm of my hand. I wanted to erase it all. Instead of erasing it, I crushed different colors and mashed it into different forms. I leaned against that wall. It wasn't a problem of me not liking it. It also wasn't a problem of it not being beautiful. It was just me.

I coughed when I stood up. The inside of my mouth had burst, and blood splattered on my palm. Then I saw someone's hand pick up the spray can. I followed that hand up and looked at the person's face. It was Namjoon-hyung. I smiled. I thought I was seeing an apparition. Hyung extended his hand. I was just looking up. Hyung pulled me up by my hand. That hand was warm.

YEAR 22



YOONGI

APRIL 7

I stopped walking at the sound of a clumsy piano. In the middle of the night at the empty construction site, there was only the sound of the fire someone had lit in the drum container. I knew the song that was being played, but I didn't think much of it. My drunken steps wavered. I closed my eyes and walked more carelessly on purpose. As the heat the fire was emitting got stronger, the sound of the piano, the night air, and my intoxication became fainter.

I opened my eyes to the sudden sound of a horn, and the car narrowly passed by me. In the confusion of intoxication, the glare of the headlights, and the wind from the car, I staggered helplessly. I heard the driver spit out a curse. I stopped walking and intended to curse at them, and I realized that I couldn't hear the noise of the piano. The sound of the fire blazing, the sound of the wind, and the leftover ripples left by the car, I couldn't hear the sound of the piano clearly. I thought it had stopped. Why would it stop? Who was playing the piano?

With a thud, the fire sparks in the drum surged up into the darkness. I stared at its image vacantly for some time. My face flushed in the heat. It was then that I heard the sound of someone's fist hitting the piano keys. I looked back instinctively. For a brief moment, my blood ran wild and my breaths became erratic. My childhood nightmare. It was the same as the sound I heard at that place.

In the next moment, I was running. It wasn't my will, my body turned around on its own and ran towards the instrument store. Somehow it felt like something I had repeated numerous times. I don't know what it was, but I felt like I was forgetting something urgent.

The instrument shop with the broken window. Someone was sitting in front of the piano. Several years had passed, but I could recognize at once who it was. He was crying. I clenched my fist. I didn't want to get involved in anyone's life. I didn't want to console anyone's loneliness. I didn't want to become someone who meant something to anyone. I couldn't be confident that I could protect him. I didn't have confidence that I could be by his side until the end. I didn't want to hurt him. I didn't want to be hurt.

I moved slowly. I thought about turning and going, but without knowing I approached him. Then I pointed out the wrong note. Jungkook turned his head and looked up at me. "Hyung." It was the first time we met after I quit high school.

SEOKJIN

APRIL 11 (HER)

花樣
年華

I came to the sea alone. In the viewfinder, the sea was as wide, blue, and open as always. The sunlight that hit and dispersed on the surface, and the wind that blew through the pine tree forest were as they always were too. If there was something different, it was that I was really alone. As I pressed the shutter button, the view in front of me flashed, that day from 2 years and 10 months ago appeared for a moment and disappeared. That day, we sat side by side in front of this sea. We were worn out, we had nothing, we were forlorn, but we were together.

I turned the car around and stepped on the accelerator. I passed the tunnel and the rest stop. I opened the car window when I arrived at the vicinity of the school everyone had attended together. It was a spring night. The air was warm, and cherry blossoms fluttered around the trees that lined the school wall. Leaving the school behind, I passed several intersections, and made several left and right turns. Some distance away, I started to see the light of the gas station Namjoon works at.

YEAR 22



SEOKJIN

APRIL 11 (TEAR)

With a screech, the car barely stopped. I was lost in thought and didn't see the traffic light change. Students in familiar uniforms crossed the crosswalk and gazed at me through the car window. There were also people pointing at me. I made an effort to smile and lower my head.

I knew what I had to do. However, it wasn't something that didn't bring fear. Could I end all of this unhappiness and these wounds? Don't all these failed attempts mean that I definitely won't succeed? Doesn't it mean I should give up? Is happiness just a vain hope for us? Lots of thoughts came and went in my mind.

Without knowing, I reached the intersection where the gas station was, and the image of Namjoon pumping gas came into view. I inhaled deeply and exhaled slowly. Yoongi, Hoseok, Jimin, Taehyung, and Jungkook's faces all came to mind one by one. Then I changed lanes and entered the gas station. I couldn't give up. Even if there's only 1% chance of possibility, I couldn't give up. Through the car window, I saw Namjoon approaching.



SEOKJIN

APRIL 11 (ANSWER)

花樣
年華

When I opened my eyes, it was April 11th again. Sunlight poured in from the opened curtains. When I got up I felt dizzy so I closed my eyes. My surroundings turned crimson, and I recalled Taehyung's image. He stood alone on top of the platform at the sea. It was May 22nd. The past and the future, it was something that already happened in the past and could happen in the future. It was a moment when I thought everything had been resolved.

It was about the time the sun started setting that I saw Taehyung climb up the platform. The sky was still blue, but a dark red atmosphere was beginning to spread. I turned my head and saw Taehyung up on the platform. Taehyung reached the top and looked down at us briefly. Then he jumped off. Like a bird, like he had wings, he leapt. Then it seemed as if he stopped in the air for a moment, and I felt like a mirror was breaking, as if the cold wind was pushing in through the open curtains.

And when I opened my eyes, it was April 11th.

YEAR 22



YOONGI

APRIL 11

I walked, paying attention to Jungkook who was following me. Containers appeared continuously along the train tracks that stretched out long. It's the fourth container from the back. Hoseok had said he planned to meet Namjoon and Taehyung, additionally he said I should also come. I agreed, but I didn't think I'd really go. I loathed getting involved with other people, and it's a truth that Hoseok knew as well. He probably thought I wouldn't really show up.

When I flung the door open, I could see Hoseok's surprised face. And when he discovered Jungkook, he approached with an expression of mixed emotions in his usual, exaggerated way. I passed by the two of them and faced the interior of the container. "How long has it been?" I could hear the nagging sound of Hoseok trying to embrace an embarrassed Jungkook.

Soon after, Namjoon entered, bringing Taehyung. One side of Taehyung's t-shirt was ripped. When asked how it happened, Namjoon pretended to hit Taehyung. He was late because he had to pick Taehyung up from the police station, because the punk was brought in for doing graffiti. While exaggerating pretending to be sorry and shaking, Taehyung said he ripped his shirt while trying to avoid and run away from the police.

I sunk down into the corner. Namjoon gave Taehyung a shirt to change into, and Hoseok was taking out some things like hamburgers and drinks. In the middle of it all, Jungkook was standing awkwardly, not knowing what he should do. Looking back, our time in high school was like that too. Somewhere in the storage classroom, Namjoon was teased while trying to reason with Taehyung, Hoseok was busily moving things, and Jungkook hovered around not knowing where his place was.

It had been a long time since we gathered like this. I didn't remember well. What happened to Seokjin-hyung and Jimin? I thought something that wasn't like myself. Even though it's a place I've come to for the first time, my heart was strangely at ease.

NAMJOON (HER)

APRIL 11

I searched around through a few t-shirts, but Taehyung reached from behind and picked a shirt up. It was a t-shirt with the same phrase printed on it as the one I was wearing. With an uneasy smile, Taehyung took off his torn shirt. Under the low light hanging from the trailer box, I momentarily saw his bruised back. Hoseok looked at me with surprised eyes. Taehyung put on my t-shirt and looked at himself in the dirty mirror. He laughed.

“This punk was doing graffiti and running wild, I’m late due to getting him out of the police station.” I pretended to hit Taehyung and he exaggerated pretending to be sorry. Yoongi-hyung, sitting in the corner of the trailer, approached Taehyung slowly and smacked him on the shoulder.

花樣
年華

YEAR 22



NAMJOON (ANSWER) APRIL 11

I finished filling the gas and turned around, and something brushed against my face and fell down. Because it was unexpected, I stepped backwards and when I looked down, a crumpled bill had fallen at my feet. I bent down instinctively and reached out my hand. The people sitting in the sedan laughed boisterously. I stopped momentarily. Some distance away, Seokjin-hyung was watching. I couldn't raise my head. What should I do if I meet eyes with people who ride around in groups in expensive cars, ignoring others and making fun of them? I should oppose it. If their actions are unfair, I should oppose it. It's not a problem of courage, self-respect, or equality. Of course, it's something that should be done.

However, this place was a gas station, and I was a part-time worker. If a customer threw trash, I should clean it up, if they cursed, I should listen, and if they threw money, I should gather it up. My body shook with contempt. I clenched my hand in a fist. My fingernails dug into my skin.

At that time, someone picked up the bill. Then, they gave it to me. The people in the car muttered under their breaths as if they lost interest and left the gas station. I couldn't raise my head even after they left. I didn't have the confidence to meet eyes with Seokjin-hyung. My cowardice, my poverty, my circumstances, they weren't things that Seokjin didn't know. Even so, I didn't want to show him so frankly. Hyung stood at the edge of my field of vision and didn't move. He didn't approach and didn't say anything either.



JUNGKOOK (HER) APRIL 11

Ultimately, it was according to my wish. I bumped into the thugs I met on the street on purpose and was beat up to my heart's content. I smiled while getting hit, so they called me crazy while hitting me more. I leaned against the shutter door and looked up at the sky. It was already night. Nothing was in the jet-black sky. Some distance away, I could see a bit of grass standing. The wind blew, and it laid down. It was like me. I thought I would cry, but I purposefully smiled.

I closed my eyes, and I could see the image of my stepfather clearing his throat. My stepbrother kicked me and laughed at me. My stepfather's family members looked elsewhere and talked meaninglessly. As if I weren't there, they acted as if my existence were nothing. In front of those people, my mother was intimidated. I got up off the floor, dust rose, and I coughed. The pit of my stomach hurt like I had been stabbed by a knife. I went up to the roof of the construction site. The city of the night stretched out with a horrible color. I climbed on top of the railing and walked, spreading my two arms open. For a moment, my legs shook and I almost lost my balance. I thought how with just one step, I'd die. If I die, it'd all end. No one would be sad if I were gone.

花樣
年華

YEAR 22



JUNGKOOK (ANSWER) APRIL 11

I walked on the railing on the roof. The building that was in the middle of construction. Darkness rose from the tip of my foot as I stuck it out in the air. Below the railing, the city spread out dizzily in the night. Neon signs, car horns, and smoky dust whirled in the darkness. For a moment, I staggered due to dizziness. I spread my arms out to keep my balance. Then I thought. It's only one step. One more step, and it would all end. I faced the darkness and tried to tilt my body a bit. The darkness that started at the end of my feet soon consumed my entire body. When I closed my eyes, the dizzy city, the noise, and my fears disappeared. I stopped breathing. Then I leaned slowly. I didn't think of anything. No one came to mind either. I didn't want to leave anything behind. I wouldn't remember anything either. It would just be the end like this.

It was that moment that my phone rang. My mind returned to me like I was waking from a distant dream. My vacant senses also returned to normal in an instant. I took out my cell phone. It was Yoongi-hyung.



NAMJOON

APRIL 28

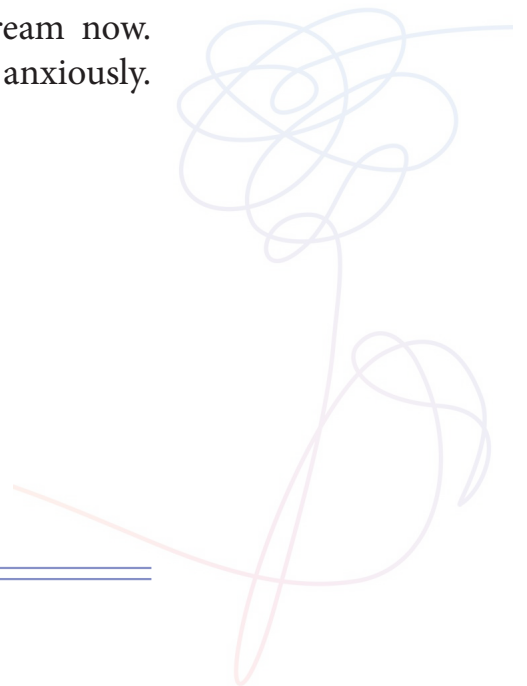
花樣
年華

I suspected that there was something up with Taehyung from a long time ago. Even though he behaved on the surface like there was nothing, his momentary actions or expressions or his way of speaking implied unknown uneasiness that I didn't know what to do about. He frequently went in and out of the police station, and wounds were visible on his body. He also had nightmares.

The reason I didn't ask what was wrong or press him to confess is because I was waiting for Taehyung to tell me himself. And on the other hand, I doubted whether I had the qualifications to listen to those worries. I pretended to be a hyung, to be an adult, but actually in the moments when my friends had a hard time, I couldn't stand by and protect them. Everyone raises me up for being like an adult, but I'm not really an adult. I could only hesitate and not face the reality in front of my eyes.

Yoongi-hyung died. Taehyung had the nightmare today too. He awoke surprised as I grabbed his shoulders and shook, then sat vacantly for a bit. He didn't think to wipe the tears from his eyes, and he muttered some incoherent words. Yoongi died, Jungkook was in an accident, and I was caught up in a fight. He said he often has those dreams and they're so vivid that it seems like the dreams are real, and that it's like he's in a dream now. "Hyung, don't go anywhere." Taehyung's voice shook anxiously.

YEAR 22



YOONGI

MAY 2

The sheet the fire clinged to blazed in no time. In the heat that was hard to endure, the presence of everything that was shabby was lost. I could no longer sense things like the sour smell of mold, the unidentifiable moisture, or the damp light. Instead, the thing left was agony. A physical agony like heat. The skin at the tips of my fingers was so hot, it was like it was getting blistered and melting off. Only then did my father's expressionless face and the sound of the music dissipate.

My father and I were different in many ways. My father couldn't understand me, and I couldn't understand him. If I had put in effort, would I have been able to persuade him? Probably not. The only things I could do were hide, rebel, and run away. There was a time when I thought my father wasn't what I was trying to break away from. Then, I was overcome with fear like a wall. What in the world did I start running from? What should I do to get away from myself? Everything felt impossible.

It sounded like someone was calling out, but I didn't raise my head. Because of the heat, or because of the agony, I couldn't breathe. I didn't have the strength to move. Even so, I knew. It was Jungkook. He was certainly angry. He would probably be sad for me. I just wanted to sink down. Smoke and heat, agony and fear, I wanted to end everything here. Jungkook yelled something at me again, but I still didn't hear him. My field of vision collapsed. Lastly, I raised my gaze. The last scenery I'd see in the world was the dirty and secluded room, the scarlet flames and the rolling heat, and Jungkook's face.



JUNGKOOK

MAY 2

花樣
年華

As I looked up, I was in front of Namjoon-hyung's container. I opened the door and went in. I gathered the clothes that were laying around and curled up to lie down. A chill descended over me. I felt like I wanted to cry as my whole body started shaking. But tears wouldn't come out.

When I opened the door and entered, Yoongi-hyung was standing on the bed. Flames were shooting up around the edge of the sheets. In that moment, unbearable anger and fear filled my whole body. I'm not someone who is good with words. I'm unskilled at expressing my emotions and persuading someone. I was full of tears so a cough came out, and words wouldn't come out even more so. As I dashed into those flames, the only words I managed to spit out were "We all decided we'd go to the sea together!"

"What's wrong? Did you have a bad dream?" Someone shook my shoulders and I opened my eyes. It was Namjoon-hyung. I felt a sense of relief. He felt my forehead and said I had a fever. It really felt like that. It was like the inside of my mouth was boiling, but I was so cold I couldn't stand it. I had a splitting headache, and my throat hurt. I barely took the medicine he brought me. "Sleep some more. Let's talk later." I nodded my head. Then I said, "Will I be able to become an adult like you?" Namjoon-hyung turned around.

YEAR 22



HOSEOK

MAY 10 & 12

May 10 - The narcolepsy didn't distinguish between locations. On the days I collapsed, I dreamed of my mom. The dream was always similar; it was me riding a bus somewhere with mom.

May 12 - I opened the emergency exit door and ran down the stairs. My heart beat quickly and I thought it would burst. The face that flickered in the hospital corridor was definitely my mom's. The moment I looked back, the elevator doors opened and people crowded out. I frantically shoved through people and went forward, and some distance away I saw my mom go through the emergency exit. I ran down the steps two at a time with a nervous heart. I didn't rest and went down several floors.

Mom! Mom stopped and stood. I took one more step forward. Mom turned around. I started to look at mom's face. It was at that time. As my heel slipped on the edge of the stair, my center of gravity shifted forward. I closed my eyes tightly, thinking I was going to fall flat on my face. Someone grabbed my arm. Thanks to that, I barely kept my balance. When I looked back, Jimin stood there with a surprised face. With no time to say thank you, I turned my head around again.

I could see one woman. Her face was surprised. Beside her, a young boy stared at me with large, surprised eyes. It wasn't my mom. While I stared at the woman's face, I stood wordlessly at the top of the stairs.

I don't remember what words I used to escape that situation. I also didn't ask Jimin how he showed up there. My head was too crowded to be curious about the details. That woman was not my mom. I wasn't sure whether I knew that truth from the start or not. More than 10 years have passed since that day I was left alone at the amusement park. Mom would have aged too, and she'd be different from my memory. Even if I met my mom, I wouldn't recognize her. No, now I hardly remember my mom's face.

I turned around. Jimin was following me without a word. In high school, after we parted in the emergency room, Jimin said he continuously stayed in this hospital. When I asked if he wanted to leave, he didn't know what to do. Maybe Jimin was, like me, trapped by binding memories, unable to send them away or catch them. I faced Jimin and took one step closer. "Jimin. Let's get out of here."

JIMIN

MAY 15

花樣
年華

I opened my eyes and Hoseok-hyung was standing there. The familiar ceiling looked down at me in the familiar darkness. When I sat up in surprise, he put his index finger to his mouth. Everyone was asleep, our surroundings quiet. Hyung promptly handed me a t-shirt. Then he gestured outside the hospital room with his chin.

“We all came together.” He said Namjoon-hyung was look-out, and Yoongi-hyung had grabbed a nurse to waste time. Soon after, Jungkook and Taehyung would meet us at the elevator. At first I couldn’t follow what they were talking about. I was bewildered, and hyung extended his hand out to me.

The day I left the hospital. I had dreamed of that day. I wanted to leave the hospital and spend time meeting my friends and laughing and chatting together like we did before. But now, I didn’t know. I wondered if it was indeed a good thing to get out of here. Like my parents, who treat me like I’m not being hidden here. The people who whisper that I have a mental illness. Maybe Hoseok-hyung thinks like that too. Maybe he thinks, deep down, that I’m a weird guy, or that I’m uncomfortable to hang out with.

“Hurry. There’s no time.” Maybe because of hyung’s urging, I could hear the secondhand on the clock, moving strangely fast. The sound of footsteps, like an auditory hallucination, drew closer to the hospital room bit by bit. Hyung and I looked at each other at the same time, after looking at the door. Hyung’s hand was still in front of me.

(from Smeraldo Twitter) “Run, Jimin.” With those words as a signal, we all started to run. I was swept up into that moment and ran together with them. Snack bags and plastic bottles flew into the air.

YEAR 22



JIMIN

MAY 16

Hoseok-hyung's house was up really high. After walking for a while on a main road, winding through a narrow alley, the rooftop room of the last house was hyung's house. As we entered the house that was one room, hyung boasted that it was the highest peak in the city, where the places we grew up were under our feet. As hyung said, from the rooftop room, you could see a lot. Not far away, a train station was visible, and the containers that lined the train tracks were also visible. Among those, Nam-joon-hyung was living in one. If you turned your point of view just a bit from that spot, the school we all attended together appeared.

As I turned my head to find the school, I looked at the opposite side of the city. Following along the foot of the mountains, there was a huge apartment complex lined up. That place was our, no, my parents' house. I ran away from the hospital without saying anything. They probably contacted my parents. Maybe they were looking for me right now. I didn't have the courage to face my parents yet. I came out of the hospital, but I couldn't go home. Even so, I never wanted to go back to the hospital. But I didn't have anywhere to go, and I didn't have any money. Hyung told me, who was standing hesitantly, to follow him, and he led the way. That's how the place we arrived at was here, hyung's house.

Raising my eyes, I looked at the apartment complex again. Someday I'd have to go there. I'd have to meet my parents and tell them that I'm not going to the hospital again. I inhaled deeply. Just the thought of that made me feel like I'd have a seizure. Truthfully, I didn't believe I could endure being in a place that wasn't a hospital. I could be taken to the hospital again. I was so scared I couldn't bear it.

JIMIN

MAY 19

花樣
年華

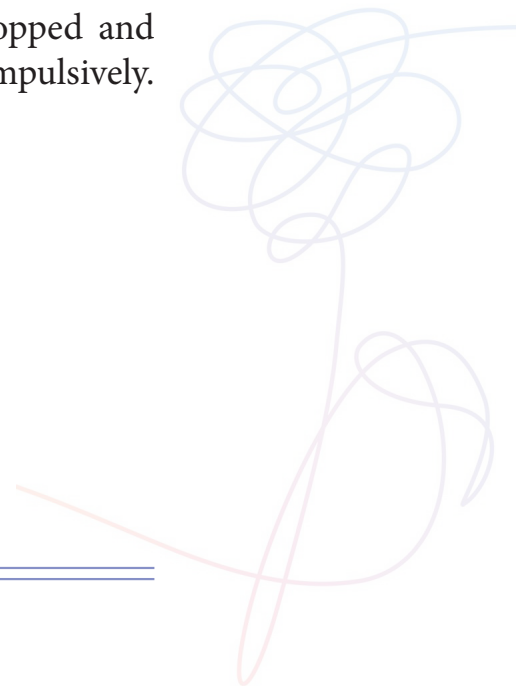
In the end, I had to go to the Flower Arboretum. I now needed to stop lying that I didn't remember what happened there. Hiding in the hospital, having seizures, I needed to stop it all. In order to do that, I had to go there. With that in mind, I came to this bus stop over several days. But I couldn't ride the shuttle bus to the Flower Arboretum.

It was only today after trying three times that Yoongi-hyung flopped down next to me. When I asked what he was doing, hyung said he had nothing to do and he was bored. Then he asked me why I was sitting there. With my head down, I patted the end of my shoes on the ground. I thought about why I was sitting there. It was because I had no courage. I wanted to pretend that I was okay now, pretend that I knew something, pretend that I could jump over this, but truthfully I was afraid. I was afraid of what I'd encounter, afraid whether I could endure it, and afraid of having a seizure.

Yoongi-hyung looked carefree. As if there were nothing urgent in the world, he dragged on with useless talk about the weather being good. After listening to that talk, I realized that the weather really was nice. I was so nervous that there wasn't room for me to look around at the other surroundings. The sky was really blue. Sometimes a warm wind blew too. The shuttle bus to Flower Arboretum was coming. The bus stopped and the door opened. The driver stared at me. I asked impulsively.

“Hyung. Would you go with me?”

YEAR 22



HOSEOK

MAY 20

I came out of the police station with Taehyung. “Work hard.” I said it powerfully with my head bowed, but that wasn’t how I felt. It wasn’t far from the police station to Taehyung’s house. I wonder if Taehyung would be in and out of the police station this often if he lived far away. Why did Taehyung’s parents settle so close to the police station? The world was quite unfair to such a nice, tender, fool-like guy. I pretended to know nothing and put my arm around Taehyung’s shoulders and asked “Are you hungry?” Taehyung shook his head. “Did the police officers welcome you and buy you food?” I asked again, but Taehyung didn’t answer.

The two of us walked in the sunlight. A cold wind blew in my heart. My heart is like this, but what is he feeling? How much was his heart torn and broken? How much suffering did he have in his heart? While having those thoughts, I looked up at the sky because I couldn’t look at his face. A plane went by the cloudy sunshine. The first time I saw the scars on Taehyung’s back was when I met him at Namjoon’s container hideout. He got a t-shirt, and had an innocent smile on his face, so no one said anything. But a part of my heart collapsed with a thud.

I didn’t have parents. I don’t have memories of my father, and only of my mother up til age 7. When it comes to wounds from family and childhood, even when compared to anyone, others wouldn’t envy me. People say you need to overcome your wounds. You have to accept it and get used to it. You have to reconcile and forgive. They say if you do that, you can live. It wasn’t that I didn’t know and couldn’t do it. It wasn’t that I rejected it because I didn’t like it. Some things are not accomplished by putting in effort. No one told me how. I know that there’s not anyone in this world without scars. But why in the world are wounds this deep necessary? For what are they necessary? Why do these things happen?

“Hyung. I’m okay. I can go alone,” Taehyung said at the fork in the road. “I know, you punk,” I walked in front without paying attention to it. “I said I’m okay. Look. Nothing happened,” Taehyung smiled. I didn’t answer. He couldn’t have been okay. He really wasn’t okay, but it would be unbearable if acknowledged. It was avoidance. It had become a habit. Taehyung pulled his hood up and began to follow me. “You’re really not hungry, right?” I asked when I reached the corridor to Taehyung’s house. Taehyung smiled like a fool as he nodded. I turned around after watching his back as he walked down the corridor. The corridor he walked in and the road I turned on were both narrow and desolate. Both he and I were alone. Suddenly, I was going to look back, but my phone rang.

TAEHYUNG

MAY 20

花樣
年華

I looked down at my hand. It was stained with blood. Suddenly the strength left my legs. I was about to sink down to the ground, but someone held me from behind. The cloudy sunlight was coming in through the window. My older sister was crying, and Hoseok was standing with no words. The dirty furniture and blankets were as scattered as ever. There was nothing where my father had been standing. I couldn't remember how or when he left the room.

The moment I ran towards my father, that unbearable rage and sadness remained in me. The moment I tried to stab my father, I don't know what was holding me back. I didn't know how to calm my wild heart. Rather than kill my father, I wanted to die. If I could, I wanted to die in that moment. Tears didn't come out. I wanted to cry, wanted to scream, I wanted to kick, break, and destroy it all. I wanted to ruin it, but I didn't know how to do any of it.

“Hyung. I'm sorry. I'm okay, so you can go.” Unlike my wild heart, my voice came out dry. It wasn't like my voice. I sent off my hyung who didn't want to leave, and I looked down at the palm of my hand. Blood was oozing out of the white bandage. Instead of stabbing my father, I hit the floor with the alcohol bottle. When the bottle shattered, the skin of my palm was torn. I closed my eyes, and the world spun around and around. What should I think? What should I do? How should I live? When I came to my senses, I was looking down at Namjoon-hyung's phone number. Even in this situation, no, even more because it's this situation, I desperately needed him. I wanted to talk with him. Hyung. I, my father, the father who created me, the father who beat me like a dog every day...I almost killed him. I really almost killed him. No, actually, I did kill him. I killed him countless times. I've killed him more times than I can count in my heart. I want to kill him. I want to die. What I should do now, I don't know anything. I just want to see (Namjoon-hyung) now.

YEAR 22



NAMJOON

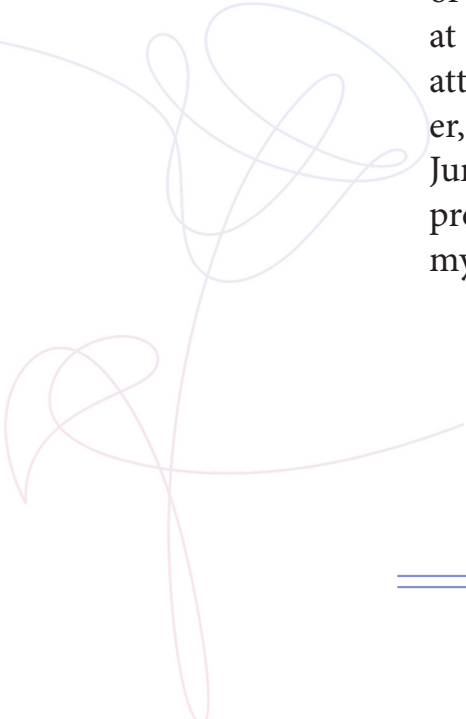
MAY 22

“It’s barely a one-year age gap. No, someone said that. I’m the older one. I know. But he won’t be a kid forever. I’m just saying isn’t it time for him to know a little. I understand. I said I understand. No, I’m not mad. I’m sorry.”

I hung up the phone and looked down at the floor. A tepid sea breeze swept through the pine forest. My chest was stuffy and felt like it was about to burst. Ants lined up and went somewhere on the floor that was a mix of sand and dirt. If there were someone with a much larger existence than mine in the physical and symbolic sense, would they see where I’m going, why I’m going there, and how it turns out in the end?

It wasn’t that I didn’t love my parents. It wasn’t that I didn’t worry about my younger sibling. If I could, I’d want to disregard it, but I couldn’t help that I am me, so I definitely couldn’t do that. If that were the case, what’s the meaning in this struggling, getting angry, getting frustrated, and wanting to break away?

I could see his back, standing there transfixed like I was. It was Jungkook. Jungkook once said, “I want to become an adult like you.” At that time, I couldn’t say anything. That I’m not that good of an adult, no, that I’m not even an adult. It felt cruel to say that at that time. I couldn’t tell a young friend who could not receive attention, trust, and affection that getting older, getting taller, and living a bit more did not make one an adult. I hoped that Jungkook’s future would be a bit kinder than mine, but I couldn’t promise to help in that process. I approached Jungkook and put my arm around his shoulders. He lifted his eyes and looked at me.



TAEHYUNG (HER) MAY 22

It was when I was passing the pine forest that I saw hyung fall behind to answer the phone. There have been a lot of times like that recently. He goes far away to use his phone so that other people can't hear. I purposefully delayed my steps and hid myself towards the sea. Hyung passed by and couldn't see me. "He's only a year younger than me. No, I don't particularly care. Anyway, it's not something for me to take responsibility for. Please use your judgment."

Something cold went down my spine. It was like everything in the world collapsed suddenly. I felt like I was floating in the deep sea alone. I was fearful and scared. Dismal and insignificant. I got angry. I got angry and couldn't stand it. I wanted to do something bad. I wanted to smash, hit, to become a mess. I was always scared. My dad's blood runs in me too. I thought that I also didn't know whether violence was inherent. I felt like something was going to slip past the firmly wrapped shield and come out.

(from Smeraldo Twitter) It was the same as the last scene in my dream. The only thing that was different was that Seokjin went up (on the platform) instead of me.

花樣
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YEAR 22



TAEHYUNG (ANSWER) MAY 22

“Hyung, is that all? There’s not anything else you’re hiding from us?” The surroundings became quiet at once. Everyone’s gazes turned to me. I glared directly at Seokjin-hyung. Hyung looked at me too. In that gaze, there was some exhaustion, awkwardness, and regret. The moment I tried to push once more, someone grabbed my arm and stopped me. I didn’t look back, but I knew. It was Namjoon-hyung.

“Hyung, why do you care? When you’re not even my real brother.” I felt Namjoon-hyung looking at me. Without turning my head, I shook hyung’s arm off. I knew it too. I was pointlessly angry at Namjoon-hyung now. I said I was angry and really hurt, while repeating hyung’s words from the conversation he had with someone else. Nothing hyung said was wrong. I’m barely one year younger than hyung. And I’m not his real younger brother. It’s also true that I should know and take care of my own stuff. But I was hurt. I had nothing to rebut with, so I got madder. I wanted hyung to understand my feelings like this.

“Taehyung. I’m sorry. Let’s stop talking about this here.” The one who opened his mouth was Seokjin-hyung. It was Seokjin-hyung who has said “Taehyung-ah,” called my name, and told me he was sorry. Namjoon-hyung didn’t say anything. “Stop what? Since we’re talking, let’s talk about it all. Hyung, there’s something you’re hiding from us, right?”

“Let’s go outside and talk.” Namjoon-hyung said this while grabbing my arm again. I shook him off again this time, but hyung put more strength in his hand and tried to pull me outside. As I endured, I said “Let me go. What right do you have to stop me? What do you know? While knowing nothing, hyung, you think he’s a great person don’t you?” It was then. Hyung let go of my arm. I faltered a little at his reaction. No, the reason I faltered wasn’t because of his reaction. The moment hyung let go of my arm, it seemed like the middle of the ring snapped. It was like everything that supported me cracked and collapsed. Maybe I didn’t want hyung to let go of my arm until the end. Get mad, pull me outside. Perhaps I wanted him to scold me more, like I’m his real younger brother, like I’m a person that’s too close and important to step away from.

But hyung let go of my arm. I just laughed. “What’s so important about being together? What are we to each other? In the end, you know we’re all alone.” It was that moment that Seokjin-hyung hit me.

JUNGKOOK

MAY 22

花樣
年華

I thought my body was up in the air, but in no time I was on the hard ground. For a moment, I couldn't feel anything. My whole body was heavy so I couldn't open my eyes. I also couldn't swallow or breathe. As my consciousness shattered, my surroundings gradually became faint.

Then, my whole body convulsed at something like a shock. Without knowing it, I opened my eyes at an uncertain pain and thirst. Something glimmered in my field of vision, uncomfortable as if full of sand. I thought it was a light, but it wasn't. It was bright, large, and indistinct. It did not move, and floated in the air. After looking for a while, it gradually took a definite shape. It was the moon.

As if my head was twisted back, the world was upside down. In that world, the moon hung upside down. I tried to cough and breathe, but I couldn't move. Then I got a chill. I was scared. I moved my mouth, but no words would come out. Without closing my eyes, it began to get increasingly darker. In my consciousness that was far away, someone said something. "Even though living is more painful than dying, you still want to live?"

(from Smeraldo Twitter) At one moment, we were all running along the beach road. I was breathless, sweating, and my head was splitting, but since the hyungs didn't stop, I didn't either.

(from Smeraldo Twitter) I didn't tell anyone, but that day, it was like I got a family. It was like I got real brothers, real siblings.

YEAR 22



HOSEOK

MAY 31

As a result of suddenly being out of breath, I reflexively avoided my gaze. I thought it was from dancing for a long while and being short of breath, but that wasn't the case. I thought (she) resembled my mother. No, it wasn't a form of thought or recognition, nor could it be explained or described. I couldn't look directly at the face of my friend whom I've already known for over 10 years. We learned to dance together, failed together, got discouraged and encouraged. We lied down on the floor covered in sweat, played around while throwing towels. As if I had been touched by something I never knew the feeling of, I quickly got up from my seat. I stood against the wall after turning the corner. I tried to calm my breath that wouldn't settle, I heard the sound of "Where are you going Hoseok-ah?" A voice. I didn't know whether or not it was a voice. A voice that calls "Hoseok-ah." Now something I couldn't recall, a voice that takes me back to when I was seven.



YOONGI

JUNE 8

花樣
年華

I took off the t-shirt again. The me in the mirror absolutely was not like me. The t-shirt with the word “DREAM” written on it was not my type in any way. The red color, the word “dream”, the tight fit, I didn’t like any of it. Since I was annoyed, I took out a cigarette and looked for a lighter. It wasn’t in the pocket of my jeans, and I realized it as I went through my bag. They took it away. They took it out of my hand without any hesitation. Then they threw a lollipop and this t-shirt at me.

I ruffled my hair and got up, but I heard the sound of a text message. In the moment I looked at the three characters of the name on the cellphone screen, my heart fell with a thud as my surroundings became bright. I broke the cigarette in half and checked the message. In the next moment, the me in the mirror was smiling. Wearing a tight-fitting red t-shirt with the word “DREAM” written on it, I smiled as if there were something good.

YEAR 22



SEOKJIN

JUNE 13

After returning from the sea, we were all alone.

As if we had arranged for it, we did not contact each other. Only through the graffiti left on the street, the brightly lit gas station, and the sound of the piano coming from the shabby building could we guess each other's existence. On each occasion, the after-image of that night was revived like a ghost. How flames seemed to drip bit by bit from Taehyung's eyes. The eyes that looked at me as if hearing an unbelievable story. Namjoon's hands that stopped Taehyung. Me, who couldn't stand it and let fists fly towards Taehyung.

I couldn't find Taehyung after he ran away, and no one was left at the seaside lodging after I returned. A broken drinking glass, bloodstains that had started to congeal, and pieces of crumbling snacks were all that was left of what happened a few hours ago. In that interval of time, one picture had fallen. In that photo with the sea as the background, we were together and smiling.

Today too I passed by that gas station. Someday, the day we meet again will come. A day will come where we smile together like in that picture. A day will come where I will have the courage to face myself. But now, it's not yet time. Today too, like that day, a damp wind blew. In the next moment, as if it were a warning, my phone rang. The photo hung on my mirror shook. Hoseok's name was on the screen.

“Hyung, Jungkook was in a car accident that night.”

YOONGI

JUNE 15

花樣
年華

I couldn't perceive anything except the pounding music in my head. How much I drank, where this place is, what I was in the middle of doing. I didn't want to know, and it wasn't important. It was night time when I staggered outside. I swayed and walked. Whether it was a passerby, a newsstand, a wall, I carelessly bumped into them. I didn't care. I just wanted to forget everything.

Jimin's voice still stood out. "Hyung. Jungkook..." The next thing I remember is climbing the hospital stairs like crazy. The hospital corridor was abnormally long and dark. People wearing patient gowns passed by. My heart was pounding. Everyone's faces were so pale and without any expression. They were all like dead people. The sound of my breathing faltered violently in my head.

Beyond a slightly opened door, Jungkook was lying down. Without my knowledge, my head turned sharply. I couldn't look. At that moment, I suddenly heard the sound of a piano, fire, the sound of a building collapsing. I covered my head and dropped. They said "it's because of you." "If only it weren't for you." My mother's voice, no, my voice, no, someone's voice. Those words tormented me countless times. I wanted to believe it wasn't so. But Jungkook was lying there. On the corridor where patients with faces like dead people were coming and going, Jungkook was lying there. I absolutely could not go in. I couldn't confirm it. As I stood up, my legs wobbled. I came out, but tears fell. It was laughable. I couldn't remember the last time I cried.

As I crossed the crosswalk someone snatched my arm and I turned around sharply. Who was it? No, I don't care. No matter who it was, it's the same. Don't come near me. Go. Please leave me alone. I don't want to hurt you. I don't want to be hurt either. So please, don't come near me.

YEAR 22



TAEHYUNG

JUNE 25

I slowed down purposefully and concentrated on listening to the small footsteps running behind me. Today was the third time I bumped into them at the convenience store. If anything was different today, it was them running out as soon as they saw me. Then, they stood in a small vacant lot at the back of the convenience store, and when I appeared, they hid again. They appeared to have hidden, but their shadow stretched out long in front of the vacant lot. I laughed. When I walked, pretending not to see them, they started to follow me.

I entered a narrow alleyway. In this neighborhood, this was the sole place that streetlights weren't broken. The alleyway was long, and the streetlight was positioned about halfway. When a light source is in the front, a shadow forms behind you. So now my shadow was cast long behind me. Perhaps it would reach the feet of the person who was following me while holding their breath. As soon as I reached the foot of the streetlight, my shadow was hidden underneath me. I started walking a bit faster. As I moved beyond the streetlight, my shadow started to overtake me. Not long after, a shadow that wasn't mine appeared on the dusty cement road. When I stopped walking, the other person also stopped. The two shadows that differed in height stopped and stood side by side.

"I'm going to wait until you come here," I said. The shadow jumped, surprised. They held their breath as if they weren't there. "I can see it all." I pointed to the shadow. Shortly, the sound of deliberate steps started to come closer. I laughed.



NAMJOON

JUNE 30

花樣
年華

I watched with a sense of wonder as my hand pressed the open button of its own will. It was this moment. It was a moment I felt like I had repeated countless times, but it was definitely the first time. The elevator door which had been about to close opened again as more people came in. My eyes found a person who had their hair tied with a yellow rubber band. It wasn't that I had pushed the button knowing that person was there, but I thought that that person was there. I went back step by step. I reached the cold wall of the elevator and as I lifted my head, I could see a yellow rubber band.

A person's back tells a lot. I only understood some of it at that time. Some things can only be guessed at vaguely, and others are left not understood at the end. I thought only when you can read everything from the back can you say that you know a person for the first time. If so, wouldn't there be a person who can read everything from my back? As I looked up, our gazes met in the mirror. I avoided my eyes in an instant. This happened often. When I lifted my head again, the only thing I could see in the mirror was my face. I couldn't see my appearance from behind.

YEAR 22



花樣 年華

YEAR 22

JIMIN

JULY 3

Ultimately, I sprawled out on the floor. The music cut off and all at once, my surroundings became quiet. I couldn't hear anything above the sound of my breath and the sound of my heart racing. I took out my phone and played the video of the choreography I had learned that day. In the video, hyung's movements were smooth and precise. I knew that was due to lots of time and sweat, the result of practice, and I knew it was greed to me. But because comprehension and wishes are different things, I repeatedly sighed. I abruptly got up again. I imitated the turn again, but my steps were again messed up. At the part where we have to match movements and switch positions, I kept making mistakes. I intended to check it tomorrow, but until then I wanted to somehow try to do it properly. Rather than playful compliments of "you're pretty good," I wanted to be acknowledged as an equal and serious partner to hyung, someone who could match his breaths.



JIMIN

JULY 4

花樣
年華

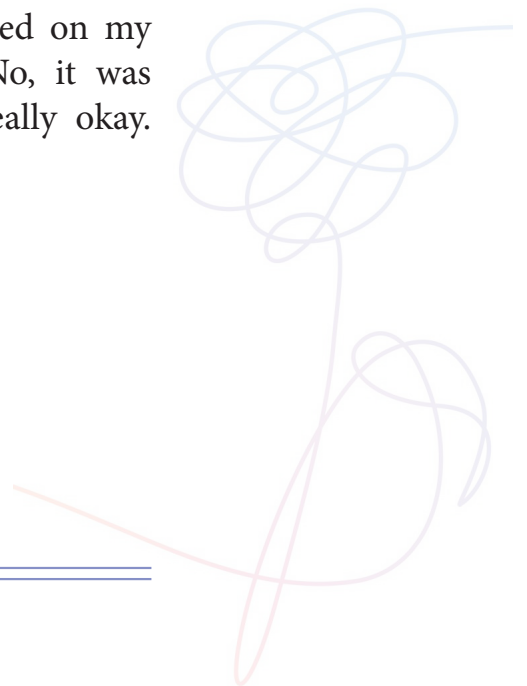
When I came to my senses, I was washing my arm to the point of peeling off skin. My hands were trembling, and my breath was fluctuating. Blood was running down my arm. The eyes in the mirror were bloodshot. What happened a moment ago emerged in fragments.

For a moment, my concentration became messy. I was dancing with an older girl from the dance club, our positions tangled and we crashed into each other. I tumbled haphazardly onto the rough floor and blood came out of my arm. At that moment, something that happened at the arboretum emerged. I thought I had overcome it. But it wasn't so. I should run away. I had to wash it off. I had to disregard it. In the mirror, I was still the 8-year-old kid who ran away in the rain. It suddenly came to my mind. The older girl had fallen too.

There wasn't anyone in the practice room. Beyond the slightly opened door, it rained furiously. I saw Hoseok-hyung running. He was completely exposed to the rain. I took off with an umbrella. I ran. In the end, I stopped.

There wasn't anything I could do. All I could do was fall down and hurt others, right, I'd shake at my pain and abandon them. I was running too late, all I could do was stop. I turned around and walked. With each step, rain water splashed on my sneakers. Car headlights passed by. It wasn't okay. No, it was okay. I wasn't hurt. This much isn't a wound. I'm really okay.

YEAR 22



HOSEOK

JULY 4

I went out into the hallway during first aid. Even though it was night time, there were quite a lot of people in the hospital hallway. Water dripped down from my hair soaked with rain and sweat. While I was brushing off my hair, I dropped her bag. Various things fell out. Coins rolled, a pen and a towel all scattered about. In the midst of it all was an e-ticket for a plane. As I picked it up, I glanced at it.

Then, the doctor called to me. He said it was a minor concussion and nothing to worry about, and she came out after. “Are you okay?” She said she had a slight headache and tried to take the bag from me. When she saw the e-ticket sticking out, she looked at my face. I pretended to know nothing while switching the bag to my other shoulder and urging her to go. When we came out the front door, it was still raining. We stood side by side at the door.

“Hoseok-ah,” she said. She looked as if there was something she wanted to say. “Wait a moment, I’ll go buy an umbrella.” I ran blindly out into the rain. There was a convenience store. I knew she had entered an audition for a foreign dance team a while ago. Her having the plane ticket meant that she got in. I didn’t want to hear what she had to say. I didn’t have the confidence to congratulate her.



NAMJOON

JULY 13

花樣
年華

I leaned my head against the bus window. From the library to the gas station. The street I come and go on daily, the scenery I'm so familiar with I'm sick of passes by. Will the day come where I break away from this scenery? It felt impossible to judge tomorrow or expect anything.

A woman with her hair tied in a yellow rubber band sat in front of me. As if she sighed, her shoulders lifted up and down. She leaned her head on the window. For a month already, she studied at the same library and took a bus from the same stop as me. Though we hadn't spoken even one word to each other, we watched the same scenery, lived in the same time, and sighed the same. In my pocket, there was still a hair band.

The woman always got off three stops before I did. Each time I saw her get off the bus, I wondered if she was going to hand out the flyers again. What would she have to experience? What kind of things would she have to put up with? How often would she feel that tomorrow won't come, a sense of desolation that it wasn't there from the beginning? I thought those things.

The bus stop the woman would have to get off at started getting closer. Someone pressed the stop button, and soon the passengers got up from their seats. However, the woman was not sandwiched between them. She was just leaning her head against the window, sitting down. It looked like she fell asleep. Should I go and wake her? I was conflicted for a moment. The bus reached the stop. The woman remained the same. People got off the bus. The doors closed, and the bus took off.

The woman did not wake up as we passed three bus stops. I was conflicted again as I approached the exit. It was clear no one else would pay any mind towards the woman if I got off the bus. She would be far away from where she gets off before she wakes up, and I didn't know how much more tired she would be today due to it.

I left the bus stop and began walking towards the gas station. The bus took off, and I didn't look back. I left a hair tie on the woman's bag, but that was all. That was neither the beginning nor the end. It wasn't anything from the start, and there was no reason for it to be. So, I thought "it's really nothing."

(from Smeraldo Twitter) A few days ago, I got off the bus here and there was graffiti. Without knowing, I looked around the area, but Taehyung couldn't be seen. I looked up at the wall of the bus stop that was full of graffiti for a long while.

YEAR 22



花樣 年華

YEAR 22

JUNGKOOK

JULY 16

Standing by the window with my earphones in, I gradually sang along with the song. It's already been a week. I can now sing it even without looking at the lyrics. With one earphone pulled out so I could hear my own voice, I practiced. They said they liked the lyrics because they were pretty, but I scratched my head because the lyrics were embarrassing. Through the large window, the July sun shined fully. The wind blew, and the green leaves sparkled while shaking slightly. Every time, the feel of the sunlight that fell on my face changed. I closed my eyes. I sang while I watched the yellow, crimson, and blue colors spread across the inside of my eyes. Whether because of the lyrics, or because of the sunlight, something billowed inside my heart while I experienced an itching, prickling sensation.



TAEHYUNG

JULY 17

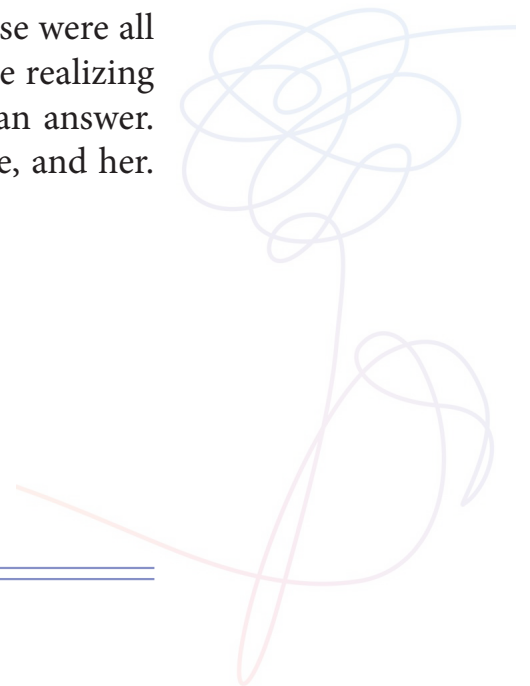
花樣
年華

I had a splitting pain in my side. I was dripping with sweat. The train tracks, the empty lot behind the convenience store, under the overpass, no matter where, she wasn't there. I ran to the bus stop, but as expected, I didn't see her. The people at the bus stop looked at me strangely. What happened? We didn't have a plan to meet, but it was strange. She always appeared suddenly out of nowhere and followed me. Even when I'd say it's bothersome, it was no good. But even in the places we went together, she wasn't there.

As I approached the familiar wall, I stopped walking. It was the graffiti we drew together. It was also the first one she drew. There was a huge X mark drawn over top. It was her. I didn't see it, but I knew. Why? I didn't have an answer. Instead, there were several afterimages overlaid on the wall.

The image of her laughing at me as I laid on the train tracks and hurt my head. The image of her helping me up when I fell, while helping her run away. Her angry face when I ate the bread I took. Her expression that clouded over when we passed family photos hanging outside a studio. Her gaze that followed the students passing by without knowing. While spraying this wall together, I said, "When it's hard, don't complain about it alone. Tell me." The X mark was drawn over all those memories. It's like it was saying those were all fake. It's like it was saying those were all lies. Without me realizing it, I clenched my fist. Why? As expected, I didn't have an answer. I turned around and walked. I was alone again. Both me, and her.

YEAR 22



I flipped through the ads in the magazine and raised my head. On the other side of the table in the window seat sat a different face for several days. The heavy book, large bag, and white paper cup were the same, but it wasn't her. I lowered my gaze down to the magazine again. I had been looking at the same page for more than an hour. In my repeated thoughts, the letters were barely visible. Why am I sitting here? The answer did not occur to me. In the midst of people who were absorbed in something, I was only lethargically fumbling through a magazine. I was impatient that I should start something. It's also true that things don't work out like this.

I returned the magazine and entered through the bookcases. On the bookcases that were lined up taller than me, books were stacked up. The wind that blew through the open window caused the smell of books and dust to rise into the air. I recalled my high school days. The time when my friends and I hung out in the storage classroom. The books I read at that time also had this smell. Did the "present me" grow up from the "me of that time" even just a bit? I couldn't readily affirm that. Maybe everything that's mine stopped at that time. I moved to the bookcase on the opposite side. Then I picked up the book that I studied at that time. I had to start again. One by one, starting from everything that I gave up on back then.



JUNGKOOK (TEAR) JULY 26

I secretly plucked flowers from the hospital's flower bed. Because a smile came out frequently, I kept my head lowered. The mid-summer sunshine was dazzling. I knocked on the hospital room door, but there was no answer. I knocked again and opened the door slightly. Inside the room was chilly. And no one was there. There was only a very quiet darkness.

I turned and came out of the hospital room. Feeling weary and stuffy, I pushed my wheelchair across the corridor where I met her. At a sudden appearance, I was barely able to stop; there stood a girl with her hair tied back. After coming out of the hospital, I could see that bench. I remember sitting there together with her and listening to music and drawing. And on that rooftop, we shared strawberry milk. There were still wild flowers in my hand, but now there was no one to give them to.

花樣
年華

YEAR 22



JUNGKOOK (ANSWER) JULY 26

When I looked back, the hospital was quite far away. The wildflowers left behind, the bench, and the window I looked at the river at together with her were no longer visible. Looking back, she gave me space to breathe during that stuffy hospital life. When we sat on the hospital bench together in the late afternoon and talked about this and that, the sun went down in no time. I talked about playing around at the hideout, about the trip to the sea, and even about walking to the train station. She talked about every nook and cranny of the hospital. About from which window you could see the river, which staircase you could go up to secretly enter the roof. There wasn't anything she didn't know about the hospital.

Her hospital room was empty. Whether she had been discharged, or moved to a different room. I asked the nurses, but I couldn't find out anything. For some reason, a part of my heart was empty. I turned and started walking again. I could see the school far away. Come to think of it, most of the stories I told her were about the hyungs, and I had started most of what I said with "the hyungs." To the me who was always alone, the hyungs had become friends, family, and teachers. All of my stories were inside the hyungs' stories, and I only existed in my connections with the hyungs.

However, from some point in time, I had these thoughts. Maybe a day would come when the hyungs won't be by my side. One day I'll look for them, but they won't be there and they won't let me know the reason. No, more than that, I don't know if something more severe would happen.

I recalled that night. The night when the large moon was floating in the sky, the upside down world, the light of the headlights coming into my vision that had been turned around, the form of the car that passed me and disappeared, the red light of the taillights, the sound of the engine that had become familiar for some reason. I didn't want to make useless speculations. However, that moment repeatedly came to mind.

JIMIN

JULY 28

花樣
年華

Again today, I was left in the practice room alone. It was past 12 and the public transit has already cut off. Actually, I waited for the transit to stop running. Because then I could really use the practice room completely alone. When we all practice together, my eyes only go towards my deficiencies. So I was restless. I was also scared. But still, I wanted to achieve it somehow. So, every night I stayed alone.

As days passed by, it was interesting that my scared heart disappeared. The only thing that remained was the truth that dancing was fun. I went on for a long time believing that the small, weak, and lowly me that I created in my head was the real me. While dancing, I thought ceaselessly about the weight of my body, the length of my arm, the speed and strength that I could make. The me who danced was not small or weak. My dancing skills honestly increased as much as I practiced. The movements that at first were rattled became connected after I repeated them many times. I was growing. It was only the amount of a fingernail, but even so, I was growing. I also realized that I was quite a talkative person. I felt like, when I danced, I was pouring out the stories I couldn't say, or didn't say. While starting to dance, I also began to like myself for the first time.

YEAR 22



YOONGI

JULY 29

What is the reason for that melody repeatedly coming up after losing a person to perform it together with on guitar? I laid buried in the sofa and looked at the piano sitting there. After I was expelled from school, I threw away my mother's piano key. The sole item I took from the house that collapsed in the fire, I threw the half-burnt key away with all my might through the apartment window. I thought that was the end of it. I decided not to touch a piano again.

It was dawn of the next day when I ran down the stairs because I couldn't wait for the elevator. I thought I had just fallen asleep, but the sun was already rising. Suddenly, the events of last night came to me. There was nothing in the flowerbed below the window. The security guard said the trash truck had come by not long ago. That's how I lost my mother's piano key.

After that day, I gave up on music countless times. Now, I don't do it. I won't return again. Music is nothing. But even when I ran away, I knew. That in the end I'd lose my footing, like that time I ran down the stairs, and I'd start music again. For me, music was that sort of target. In music, I was in pain, but I was also that much free. It was confusing but clear at the same time. Fear and self-confidence, hope and despair, I felt like I was living in all those conflicting emotions.

Suddenly, I wanted to play the piano. In that, I wanted to meet the me who only pretended to be strong, but who was actually really afraid and a coward. I wanted to curse and be sarcastic, hurt, hit, break, pull in and embrace, and cry. And I didn't want to run away. I wanted to complete the melody that had been made for the piano and guitar. I thought I could do it this time.

SEOKJIN

AUGUST 3

花樣
年華

YEAR 22

I opened the door to the storage classroom and went inside. It was a mid-summer night, the air that hadn't cooled was mixed with the smell of mold and dust. Several scenes crossed my mind momentarily. The image of the principal's shoes shining. Namjoon's expression as he stood outside the door. The last day where I disregarded Hoseok and returned alone. Suddenly my head hurt and I got a chill. A complex emotion, that could be called annoyance and fear, surged in like pain. The signal I felt in my body and my heart was clear. I had to get out of here.

Taehyung became aware of my expression and grabbed my arm. "Hyung, just try a little more. Try to remember what happened here." I shook off Taehyung's hand and turned around. I had already been going around for several hours in the sweltering heat. I was beyond exhausted. My other friends looked at me with expressions that showed they didn't know what they should say. Memories. The memories Taehyung spoke of were meaningless stories to me. The things I did, the things that happened to me. The story of what we had done together. It could have been like that. I think it was like that. But memory isn't comprehending or understanding. It's not something you comprehend through experience. It's something that has to be rooted deeply inside your heart, mind, and soul. But the only memories I have here are of bad things. They were things that distressed me and made me want to run away.

A quarrel arose between me, who was trying to go back, and Taehyung, who was trying to stop me. But both of us were fatigued. The acts of hitting, avoiding, and blocking were like being in a viscous, hot liquid, where things were sluggish and heavy. Mine and Taehyung's feet were briefly tangled. I felt my shoulder hit the wall, and in the next moment I lost my balance and staggered.

At first, I didn't know what happened. I couldn't open my eyes or breathe due to the thick dust. I coughed without a break. Are you okay? At someone's words, I realized I had fallen down onto the floor. When I stood up, I noticed the thing I thought was a wall had collapsed. Beyond that wall, there was quite a spacious expanse. For a moment, nothing moved. "Oh my God. How many hours did we spend here?" someone said. I couldn't have imagined that this sort of place would be beyond the wall. But what is that? As the dust settled, I could see one cabinet in the center of the empty space.



SEOKJIN

AUGUST 3 (continued)

Namjoon opened the cabinet door. I took one step closer. In there, there was one notebook. Namjoon picked up the notebook and opened to the first page. My breath stopped for a moment. On the first page of the old notebook, a name that I could not have expected was written. It was my father's name. Namjoon was going to turn another page, but I snatched it away. Namjoon looked at me in surprise, but I wasn't concerned. I turned the page. I went through the pages like the notebook would crumble between my fingers.

The notebook written in my father's handwriting was a journal of my father and his friends' experiences in high school. It wasn't daily stories. Months were skipped over, and there were pages that couldn't be read in their entirety due to something like bloodstains. Even so, I knew. That my father experienced the same thing as me. Like me, he committed mistakes and errors, and he ran and ran in order to make up for them.

A record of failures was what was written in my father's notebook. In the end, father gave up and failed. He forgot, turned away, and avoided. He betrayed his friends. On the last page written in the journal, only jet-black ink smudges were left. The smudges permeated through the next page which had nothing on it, and on the next page, and up until the last page. The stains spoke of my father's mistakes.

I didn't know how much time had passed and all my senses had dimmed. The wind blowing through the window became cold, so it seemed like the darkest hour of the day. I think it was just before the sun would rise. My friends, like Namjoon, were scattered here and there, asleep on the floor. I raised my head and looked up at the wall. I've seen my father's name written somewhere here. This sentence was below it: Everything started here.

The moment I intended to fold shut the notebook, I felt something tap at my fingertips. On top of the ink stains, dim writings were visible. From outside the window, I began to feel a cloudy energy. The sun was about to rise. However, night had not yet ended. It was a time that was neither night nor dawn. In the jet-black stains, as darkness tangled with hazy light, writings appeared faintly between the lines.

SEOKJIN

AUGUST 3 (continued)

花樣
年華

The notebook contained more than just recorded memories. Above the letters, in the margins and blank spaces, the things my father forgot and the things he didn't want to remember remained. The color had dissolved, but the marks remained pressed in like typeface, my father's countless experiences and fears beneath my fingers. Despair that seemed like it could not be conquered swirled together with weak hope. The map of my father's distorted soul remained on the notebook.

When I closed the notebook, tears flowed. I sat like that for a while and when I raised my head, my friends were still sleeping. I looked at them one by one. Perhaps we had to come back to this place. This is where everything started for us. I knew the meaning of the things we did together and the happiness of the laughs we shared together. The first of the wrongs I committed, the first mistake that I could not acknowledge with my mouth was once again left as a wound.

I had the thought that all of this was not a coincidence. This was a place that I had to finally arrive at. The mistakes and errors I committed during that time. Through those, I discovered the meaning of the agony and torment I experienced. At last, I could take the first steps to finding the map of my soul.

YEAR 22



TAEHYUNG

AUGUST 11

Turning around, I discovered small writing under the X. Someone scratched a small sentence into the wall: “It’s not your fault.” It was her. It’s not something I saw directly, and even though I didn’t know what her handwriting looked like, I knew it was her. It was like a final greeting. It said, I didn’t leave because of you. The many things that have happened to you are not because you’re a bad person. So it was like it was saying “don’t blame yourself, don’t be tormented, be brave.”

As I got a hold of myself, I was soon in front of the house. Through the door, I could hear my sister scream. All of a sudden I opened the door and went in. Familiar scenery stretched out. I fended off my father. I grabbed his arm and looked straight at his face. It was like my father was surprised at first, but he soon swung his fist. I was knocked out multiple times. The sound of my sister’s crying got louder. My jaw hurt. A rusty iron smell came from inside my mouth. Even so, I didn’t give up. I clung onto my father’s waist. My father shouted with an angry voice. He poured ruthless blows on my back and shoulders, but I grabbed on to father more tightly.

It wasn’t that it wasn’t painful. It also wasn’t that I wasn’t afraid. But if I were to let go, the same day would repeat. I wanted make it different. I wanted to change it.

No. I’m different than my father. I’ll protect our family.



HOSEOK

AUGUST 13

花樣
年華

Jimin and that kid were standing in the middle of the practice room. The stillness of the five-second pause while they held their starting positions felt endlessly long. When music trickled out of the speakers, the both of them started the first movement. It was a choreography that myself and that kid had practiced not long ago. I sat down on the floor of the practice room and observed them.

It was actually really difficult for me when I found out I wouldn't be able to dance for a while due to my ankle. It was frustrating to have to watch someone who wasn't me dancing. But I realized it while helping Jimin practice and, as a result, watching him mature. That me not being able to dance directly was not a big problem. If I can continue dancing in some way, I can be happy.

When I practice with Jimin, I can't move past even a small mistake. Jimin subtly misses his timing or does his movements smaller than I expected. Every time, I stop the music and check the movements one by one. However, sitting on the floor of the practice room sort of like part of the audience while focusing and watching them, Jimin's dance looked different. Rather than seeing each individual step, I could see the larger things. The things I thought of as only mistakes when we practiced now approached differently. The small mistakes, rather than inexperience, worked in a distinct way. He was definitely different from me, but Jimin had timing and expressions that were his alone. With that itself, Jimin shined and moved hearts with his dance.

The music ended. Jimin's dance also ended. I could see Jimin's face shining with excitement and joy. Beside him stood that kid. Not long from now, she'll leave to go abroad. Suddenly, our eyes met. I raised my thumb, and she laughed loudly. It was strange. There was nothing about her that resembled my mom. I don't remember my mom's face well, but why did I think she resembled her? Suddenly, there was pain somewhere in my heart. My ankle that wasn't fully better yet was sore.

YEAR 22



SEOKJIN

AUGUST 15

After escaping the blocked intersection and starting to accelerate, I stopped suddenly without knowing. The car behind me sounded their horn and passed nervously, and I think someone spat out a curse, but I couldn't hear it well in the noise of the city. I saw a small florist on the corner of the right-hand alley. It wasn't that I saw the store and stopped suddenly. Rather, it felt as if I had discovered the shop after stopping suddenly.

The owner, organizing documents on one side of the flower shop that was under internal construction, approached me and I didn't have any big expectations. I had already been to a few flower shops, but not even the florists were aware of that flower's existence. They only showed me flowers of a similar color. But I wasn't looking for something similar. It had to be only that flower. When the owner heard the name of the flower, he looked at me for a bit. The flower shop wasn't officially open yet, but they could do deliveries. While saying so, he asked, "Why do you have to have that flower?"

I thought about it as I turned the door handle and went back into the street. The reason why I need that flower. There was only one. Because I want to make someone happy. Because I want to make someone smile. Because I want to show a good side of myself. Because I want to become a good person.



SEOKJIN (TEAR)

AUGUST 30

花樣
年華

Who can remember the moment when love starts? Who can predict the moment when love will end? What is the meaning of the human inability to recognize these moments? And for what reason was I given the ability to undo everything?

The car stopped suddenly, the headlights shined, it crashed and bounced, then she fell. In those uproarious moments, I only stood there defenseless. I didn't hear anything, and I couldn't feel anything. It was summer, but the wind seemed cold. There was the sound of something tumbling down the road. Then, there was the smell of flowers. At that time, a sense of reality returned to me. The bouquet of smeraldo flowers fell from my hand. The girl was in the middle of the street some distance away. Blood oozed out between the strands of her hair. Dark red blood flowed down the street. I thought, "What if I could turn back time?"

YEAR 22



SEOKJIN (ANSWER) AUGUST 30

She looked at the diary that was thought to be lost, and she seemed flustered. The movies she liked, the places she wanted to go, the flowers she liked, and the dreams she had for the future appeared each time a page turned. There were also the things that I had done for that girl. The words “I’m sorry” didn’t come out well. The red diary lay between us like a traffic light at an intersection.

I wanted to make her happy. I wanted to make her smile. I wanted to be a good person. I thought it would turn out like that if I followed the words written in the diary. But, it wasn’t like that. The more I tried to become someone different, the more I became afraid. Won’t the image of the real me be discovered? Wouldn’t she be disappointed and leave me? I desperately concealed myself, and turned my head away from myself. However, like I can’t put a period on a sentence that has lost its subject, I lost the real me and lingered, not being able to advance.

I know now. My shortcomings, mistakes, and failures are part of me. No matter how cruel and agonizing, only after I’m honest with myself can I step forward. I got up from my seat, and she didn’t hold on to me.

I came out onto the street and took my hat off. As I swept my hair up, the times where I had exerted myself trying to be someone different escaped through my fingers. I turned my head and locked eyes with the me reflected in the glass window. The pale face, ashen lips, and thin shoulders. I looked infinitely shabby. I laughed. The me in the glass window laughed along.



Smeraldo Tweets

July 23 Year 10 – Hoseok

My mom handed me a chocolate bar and said, “Hoseok, count to 10 and open your eyes.”

September 28 Year 20 – Jimin

Today I lied for the first time. While looking the doctor in the eyes, I pretended to be melancholy and said, “I don’t remember anything.”

April 7 Year 22 – Yoongi

The car narrowly passed by me. In my drunkenness, I couldn’t come to my senses for a moment. Then I realized that I could no longer hear the sound of the piano.

April 11 Year 22 – Namjoon

Seokjin-hyung still hadn’t moved one step from outside my field of vision. He didn’t approach me or say anything.

April 11 Year 22 – Jungkook

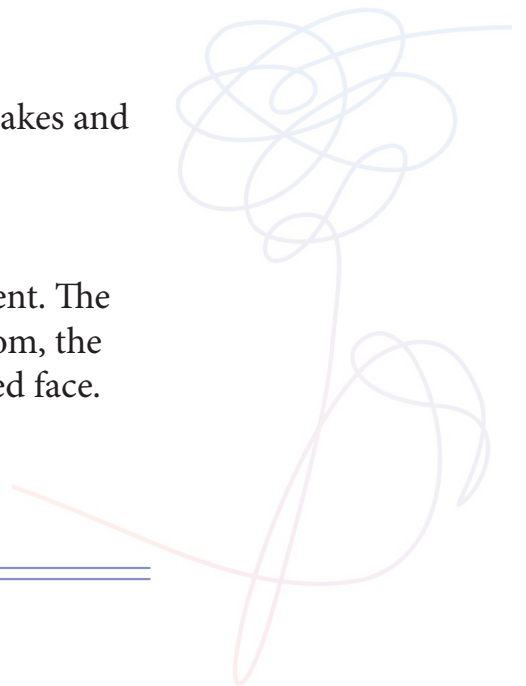
It was then that the phone rang. Like waking from a distant dream, my senses came back at once. I took out my cell phone. It was Yoongi-hyung.

May 2, Year 22 – Seokjin

Could I save everyone and straighten out all of these mistakes and errors? I couldn’t imagine the weight of this question.

May 2 Year 22 – Yoongi

The sheet caught on fire and went up in flames in a moment. The last scenery I’d see in this world was the dirty, isolated room, the crimson flames and swaying heat, and Jungkook’s distorted face.



Smeraldo Tweets

May 10 Year 22 – Hoseok

The narcolepsy didn't distinguish between locations. On the days I collapsed, I dreamed of my mom. The dream was always similar; it was me riding a bus somewhere with mom.

May 15 Year 22 – Jimin

“Run, Jimin.” With those words as a signal, we all started to run. I was swept up into that moment and ran together with them. Snack bags and plastic bottles flew into the air.

May 20 Year 22 – Taehyung

Rather than my father, I would rather kill myself. If I could do that, I'd want to die right now.

May 22 Year 22 – Jungkook

At one moment, we were all running along the beach road. I was breathless, sweating, and my head was splitting, but since the hyungs didn't stop, I didn't either.

May 22 Year 22 – Taehyung

It was the same as the last scene in my dream. The only thing that was different was that Seokjin-hyung went up (on the platform) instead of me.

May 22 Year 22 – Jungkook

I didn't tell anyone, but that day, it was like I got a family. It was like I got real brothers, real siblings.

July 13 Year 22 – Namjoon

A few days ago, I got off the bus here and there was graffiti. Without knowing, I looked around the area, but Taehyung couldn't be seen. I looked up at the wall of the bus stop that was full of graffiti for a long while.

August 30 Year 22 – Seokjin

The bouquet of smeraldo flowers fell from my hands. She was in the middle of the street a ways away. Dark red blood flowed down the street.

Thank you for reading my translation of the HYYH Notes.

You can find more information on the Bangtan Universe, as well as analysis posts, at the link below.

<http://tiny.cc/btsuniverse>

Should there be any corrections to this PDF in the future, a new version will be uploaded on that site and on my Twitter, with notes left on the website about any edits made.

You can find me on Twitter [@writer_court](#). You can also find my blog with BTS-related posts [here](#).

updated: 3/25/2019

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