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DOA
By Elyse Hauser

He was about to move away anyway, so what was one more \$30 cab ride to go to his house and make-believe we were lovers? A small price for one more chance to pretend that he was staying in Seattle, that we had a future. To imagine that the mother of his child hadn't found a rich husband way out in the suburbs of southern California, that she wasn't leaving and he wasn't following. That things were different.

It was summer, but it felt cold, and it was very dark out. A storm was just blowing over, the sky purplish with shredded clouds. Even in the car, the air was shiver-damp. As the cab driver pulled onto the on-ramp for I-5 going south, a raccoon crossed the wet and shiny street in front of us. She had something limp in her mouth and she was shaking it over and over again. I looked closer—the limp object was a baby raccoon. It was dead.

I knew then, without knowing that I knew, the answers to the questions I hadn't yet learned how to ask myself. What was between me and him was already gone. I was trying to shake life into a dead thing.

The cab driver saw it too. "She's saying wake up, wake up," he said. "Wake up, wake up."