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Breaking Waves

The calm waves crash with a constant undulating roar. I scan the vast emptiness and for a moment I am struck with an eerie sense of peace. My thoughts that had pestered me like mosquitoes on a hot night, have since been drowned out by the organized chaos of the Pacific. Normally, the struggle to escape my head would be reminiscent of someone trying to wrestle their way out of a bouncy house; but a million grains of sand engulf my toes and remind me that the passage of time is inevitable. My efforts towards perfection become irrelevant as the ocean ebbs and flows, still they fuel my anxiety towards the future, like gasoline in a young inferno.

Since a young age I have always been an anxious person (or so my mother claims). I remember going on a road trip with only my mom and sister to Death Valley in the spring of my 6th or 7th year. This trip would come to be defined by the excessive amount of time spent in the car and my sister's constant pestering to listen to a CD of cultural children's music from "around the globe". At the time, I thought this was all part of my mom's master plan to get one of us to play some sort of musical instrument.

The majority of this eight hour endeavor I spent sleeping, but I have a vivid memory of arguing with my mother before beginning our travels. Arguing with her isn't uncommon; in fact, she often encourages it. I learned early on that when living in a family of smart and opinionated people, the only way to get a word in edgewise is to argue. And

loudly. The argument had something to do with my blanket, mind you this was no ordinary blanket, but THE blanket. My mom had made it for me before I was born and altered it as I grew, so it was extremely sentimental in addition to being incredibly comfortable.

Being the finicky, obnoxious child that I am, I decided that my blanket could not merely be on top of me. No no, that would be much too simple. Instead I wanted it to be inside my car seat as though it were some sort of sleeping bag-onesie hybrid. I expressed this request to my mom and she obliged, fastening me and my blanket into the car seat. I laid back and began to relax, but like the ticking of a clock in the middle of the night, the glaring imperfections were impossible to ignore. My brain involuntarily began to list everything wrong with the situation: the seatbelt was too tight against my chest, I was too hot with my sweater on, my foot was squished, and most importantly, like an overstuffed burrito, the blanket wouldn't wrap all the way around. I proceeded to fuss over the blanket, which displeased my mother, who I somehow convinced to rearrange it; but once again, the blanket wouldn't wrap all the way around me. I asked once more but the answer was a quick and expecting, "No, you can either leave it alone or not have it at all". This response shut me up, but not before some grumbling and annoyed looks in both my mother's and the blanket's direction. In the end I didn't notice the imperfections of my car seat, but 6 year old me couldn't help but entertain the possibility of the future; would I feel trapped in my slightly tighter than normal car seat?, how would this change affect my overall temperature in the next hour?, what would happen when my foot inevitably fell asleep? These questions plagued my mind, adding themselves together,

building to a large stack, and just like that, a spark. The innocent discomfort blazed forward as a ball of anxiety. And like a true Californian wildfire, it would not be put out.

Eventually the passing time caught up to me. The car's swaying on the swift deserted roads fused with the never-ending embrace from by deep pacific blue quilt lulling me into it's depths, quenching my unease, and propelling me into whatever future were to come.