

Goodbye, my Love

Von Noiyama

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Kapitel 1: Life and Death

~ "Say good bye
tada good bye
subete no wazurawashisa ni good bye
Say good bye
tada good bye
kawaru koto osorezu ni good bye" ~

I can't get these lines out of my head.
I'm staring into a certain direction.
I see a figure, lonely and sad.
It's kneeling in front of a grave, humming softly.
Oh, this sweet melody is so familiar to me it hurts.
Tears are running over pale cheeks.
Somehow though they don't effecting the soft voice.
As well, this flow of tears doesn't veiling the dark eyes.
They reflect sadness, hurt and longing.
He's looking far away, into eternity.
Him sitting there like this...
It makes me want to be near him so much.
I want to hold him in my arms, ease his pain.
I miss him so much.
His laughter, the cheerful sparkle in his chocolate brown eyes, these soft hands
resting on my cool skin...
But now, this smile, all the happiness I loved so much, it's all gone, drowned in sorrow
and grief.

Jesus, what have I done?
I just wish I could turn back time...
Just let that night vanish!
I kinda saw and feared it coming like this, but I never wanted it...
I'd never wanted to hurt my dears.
Especially not like this.
Why didn't I do anything?
I was so selfish...
Well, now I see...
Seems like he was right.
He kept telling me to stop over and over again.
Somehow I can't even understand myself.
"Stop running, face it!", he told me all the time.
Yeah... I was running away indeed.
But why?
And from what?
Or dare I say whom?

Had I really been that blind already?
Why didn't I notice what happened with me?
And then...
I just left this world...
My fans, my music, my family, my friends...
All the others I used to care about so much.
Even more then about myself.
But I ruined it all.
I hurt them deeply, left them mourning and without any answers.
I made people cry, something I've always hated to do.
My precious dears...
Will I ever have a chance to make up for this?

I walk up to him.
My need to be near him overpowers me.
I take a look into his lovely face.
A sad smile crosses my face.
Slowly, I raise my hand to his cheek.
I imagine to run my fingers across the smooth skin, but I naturally can't feel it.
I want to stroke these tears away, so badly, but I know can't touch him.
"How beautiful you are, even when you cry", I softly whisper, more or less, to myself.
"Why do you shed tears? Why, for someone who hurt you so much? Will you ever be able to forgive me? And I still dared to say I'd love you..."
I wimper, biting back tears.
"Because I still love you", a quiet voice answered.
Shocked, I let my hand drop.
"I know you've been watching me. You don't need to hide from me. I can feel you..."
He turns his head towards me.
My spirit slowly takes the shape of my former body.

Here I stand now.
Tears, in a face, that shows pain and disbelieve.
"How... how...", I stammer, confused.
I'm unable find the words I'm searching for.
He faintly smiles at my confusion.
"'Ai tte ikura deshou?' - Weren't these your very own words?"
He sounds slightly amused.
In return, I try to smile.
"Still...?"
He only nods.
Suddenly he throws his arms around me and hugs me tight.
I hear him trying to stifle his sobs.
Finally, all my suppressed back tears overflow.
Lovingly I wrap my arms around his shaking form, gently stroking his trembling back.
"I miss you so much", he whispers into my shoulder.
"I'm so sorry"
"Please, don't leave me ever again. This world so cold and loveless without you. I can't

bear it any longer"

"You know I never wanted to leave you, but I can't stay, as much as I'd want it", I answer quietly.

"Demo, what are you? What happened... after...?"

The words practically died in his throat.

Silently, I release my wings.

His eyes widened in surprise and relief.

"Oh hide, they're beautiful", he gasps in awe.

Gently he pats the white feathers, the other hand resting over his heart.

"You never saw them before?"

He slowly shakes his head.

Then he embraces me again.

My head is pressing softly against his well shaped chest.

"Gods, if I'd just known..."

"No, don't blame yourself, please. I was the one messing up my life. It was my own fault. But I don't want you to throw your precious life away like this as well, so I'll do everything to make sure you won't."

Carefully, I run my fingers over the deep scars on his arms.

I cast him a deep glance, meeting his deep, dark eyes.

"Promise me, to never do this again, no matter what"

He unassertively nods.

More tears were running over his beautiful, pale cheeks.

I pull him close to me and into the grass.

He's laying on his back, head in my lap.

Stroking his full brown hair, I show my most loving smile.

"You should know that even though I may not be able to be with you physically, I'm always here, inside your heart. Nobody will ever be able to take away your memories. Keep them in love, and live them. The sad ones, and the happy ones. I'll always be there to watch over you and give my everything to guard you", I softly whisper to his ear.

I see him close his eyes, sinking into memories.

In silence I follow.

~ "Kimi no hoho ni kuchizuke wo... boku ha kimi wo wasurenai
Motto tsuyoku dakishimete boku ga sora ni kaeru made
Kimi no hosoku sukitooru koe ga boku wo hanasanai
Motto tsuyoku dakishimete boku ga kienai youni..." ~

Kapitel 2: What is Love?

- Flashback -

"Ok guys, practice finished for today", Yoshiki's voice called from somewhere behind the drums, sounding a little exhausted.

Oh yes, I do remember.

The time after Taiji left was very hard for all of us.

It felt like having lost a family member.

It had always been the two of us that kept everyone in high spirits, cracking jokes and kidding around like crazed up high school boys.

After he left, the atmosphere was rather uncomfortable.

Without him, everyone seemed kinda lost. Even me.

But then he came and everything changed.

It was break time.

Suddenly, Yoshiki bounced in, obviously totally hyper.

"Guys, I found something!"

Heads were reluctantly turning into his direction, looking rather bored then curious.

But somewhere in the back of our minds we were wondering what the heck had happened to our moody drummer this time.

A bright smile on his face, Yoshiki walked to the middle of the room and called aloud: "'Ladies' and gentlemen... welcome~~~.... Heath!"

The door opened, and 'Heath' stepped in.

Totally perplexed I nearly dropped the guitar busying me before.

Knowing Yoshiki quite well, I honestly expected everything but such an adorable cutey...

Even usually so indolent Pata was gawking like a moose.

It was as if night became day the moment he entered this room.

His openhearted and kind character captured me from the first second, not to mention his smile...

~ "koe wo dashite sakenda anata no namae
kitto todokanai wa newatashi no koe sae mo
demo neima wa sore demo watashi wa ii no
itsukakokoro no naka de anata wo" ~

- a few days later -

As usual, I took quite some time to pack my stuff, which always made me the last one to leave.

Alone.

But as I turned around, I noticed, that I wasn't alone tonight.

Heath had as well just finished packing.

I seemed to have directly caught him, staring at me strangely, absent minded.

I didn't bother thinking much about that back then since I was used to have people staring at me all the time.

That moment, an idea emerged in my previously tired brain.

I got up from the floor, flashing him a cheeky smile.

"Ne, Heath-kun, busy tonight?", I asked cheerfully.

"Eto, not that I know, doushite?", he replied puzzled.

"Well, would you mind going out for dinner tonight?"

"Really? Well, uhm, I'd love to!", he agreed, smiling.

So we ended up in a nice, quiet restaurant, munching excellent dinner while having a lively little chat.

I was sure he'd grown to like me, but I was already wondering if probably there was more then just that.

Afterwards, we went to a bar.

there, we had lots of fun, including karaoke and drinks.

He even managed to make me blush.

You can really believe me, this surely isn't easy for usual.

As a matter of fact I simply wasn't used to anyone swooning about what beautiful voice I'd have before.

The further the night went, the happier was I.

I'd almost forgotten that kind of feeling for I hadn't felt like this for a long time.

~ "Deai nante donna katachi demo

Futari ni wa yokatta ne

Hoshitachi ga hohoendeita tte

Kizukanu mama" ~

Kapitel 3: A Night, just for you

Later this night he was dragging a dizzy, drunken me through the streets, heading for his apartment, since mine was too far and he won't let me go anywhere on my own in this condition.

After almost an hour of way the apartment complex he was living in came into view. He pulled me into the elevator, pressed the up-button. The doors closed and the elevator went up.

"hide-chan?"

"Huh?"

He'd never called me like this before, but my alcohol clouded brain didn't register that and neither the pain in his eyes.

"I've already heard a lot about you and alcohol, but now that I've seen it myself... hide-chan... I'm really sorry if I go too far into your privacy now, but... you really have to stop this or else it'll come to a very bad end. I really wouldn't like having to watch you turn into a wrecked drunkard. It'd be a real pity about such a lovely person like you. I'd be very sad if something bad happened to you, you know, and you wouldn't want that, would you?"

I was pretty surprised by his gentle approach of convincing me that I was about to lose control over myself.

How right he was...

I knew it, and I feared it would already be too late, but I still did neither care nor do anything.

I should've listened to him back then, when I still had a chance, and something to hold on, little later even someone...

Just why did I still not have the strength and courage?

But what did I do? Nothing but stare against the wall.

The elevator doors dinged and opened.

He dragged me out and to his apartment door, leaning me against the wall for support, but I slid to the floor anyway.

He searched for his keys and unlocked the door.

When he tried to pull me up, my legs refused cooperation so he sighed and picked me up instead. Once inside he kicked the door shut with his foot, carried me to the bedroom and set me down on his bed.

Even though he maybe tried to hide it, I could see a tiny smile playing around his lips when he stripped me to my boxers and put the blanket over me.

"I'll sleep on the couch", he let me know and got up.

"Heath..."

He turned around.

"Hai?"

"Please, stay"

Obviously he didn't expect that, because he gave me a strange look and hesitated with his agreement. Eventually though he stripped as well and slid under the blanket beside me.

Apart from quiet breathing the room was awfully silent for a long time, an uneasy tension dominating the whole situation.

Furtively I studied the outlines of his pretty face through the darkish room, my attraction to him deepening all the more.

I had to decide right now. It was now or never.

"Heath?"

"Hmm?"

I rolled over, lightly grazing my fingers along his bare chest.

Barely audible he drew in a sharp breath at that contact.

I could almost see his widened eyes.

"I like you a lot, you know..."

"hide... you're drunk... you don't know what you're doing..."

His voice was trembling distinctly.

I silenced him with a feather light kiss.

"I know fully well what I'm doing. I'm not as drunk as I might seem..."

"This is not a game, hide-kun..."

"I'm serious"

I felt his breath catch, his voice noticeable trembling even stronger now from either, excitement or fear.

"R-really?"

"I love you, Heath-chan", I whispered, nibbling his earlobe.

"I... love you, too"

Suddenly he reached out and hugged me close.

"I'm so glad... I've never thought you'd..."

He was interrupted in his confession when my lips met his again in a deep, passionate kiss, our hands exploring each other's bodies. The world surrounding us drowned in the darkness of this night full of stars and in the heat of our passion.

~ "Tojikometa kasukana koe wo kiku
Fui ni mezameta byakuya no naka de
Kanjiteru nara sekai no hate de
Hitotsu ni nareru" ~

I woke up and right away closed my eyes again, groaning.

My head ached badly and the bright sunlight only made it worse.

I was about to snuggle into a more comfortable position when I suddenly noticed something warm.

Startled I sat up, all of a sudden perfectly awake.

'Wait a sec... Where am I? This is not my room! How did I get here anyway? What happened?', I wondered, looking around.

Someone lay beside me, buried under the blanket, sleeping.

Frowning I wondered just who I'd hooked up with last night.

Since I couldn't remember I decided to take a look.

Carefully I pulled the covers back.

A sharp intake of breath.

For a moment I thought my heart'd stop.

Whatever I'd expected, I surely didn't expect... him...

Plus the fact that we were both fully naked surely didn't help.

'Oh my god... I didn't... did I?', was my first thought.

Hurriedly I peeled him completely out of the covers and frantically started tugging the sheet, desperately seeking for any marks that must have been left.

Suddenly I caught a glimpse of something and yanked roughly, not even realizing that I had nearly hauled Heath out of bed.

In the last moment poor Heath got a grip on the bed's edge.

"What the fuck are you doing?!", he snapped at me, understandably displeased with this harsh rouse.

A large bloodstain was sprawled on the otherwise nicely white sheet clutched in my shaky hands.

I was completely on the ropes.

I couldn't understand myself anymore.

How could I just have stained my sweet angel?

How could I have used him like this?

"hide...?", he asked, his voice quavering with anxiety.

"Oh god..."

Abruptly a sob passed of my lips.

His face went blank.

"I can't believe it", he spat, seizing the sheet from my hands.

Rising from the bed he covered himself himself and went right on venting his anger.

"So that's how it works for you... Getting boozed, cootchie-cooing someone into your bed, throwing a tearful I'm-so-sorry performance the morning after to relieve your remorse and be done with it! Man, you've got some nerve, really! Not even shrinking away from your band mates... never knew you were so bloody desperate, would've thought to know you better! That's the god damn limit, sheer lunatic..."

Heath railed against me without intermission.

"I'm so sorry... I... I didn't mean to...", I accomplished to sob despite my crying fit.

He nearly jumped out of his skin. I had never seen him so infuriated.

I was almost frightened as he shouted at me.

"Shut your fucking trap! I've had more than enough! Next time you get rat-arsed find yourself some bloodied hustler instead of messing with your damned band mates! And now just fuck off before I lose it for real! Get the hell outa here right fuckin' now, you bloody prick!"

Trying to calm myself somewhat I stood up from the bed, dressing myself while I was still shaking and sniffing.

Without another word I turned around, headed for the door.

Just as I was about to close the door behind me I turned my head one last time.

"I love you...", I whispered, my voice choked by tears.

The door fell shut behind me, but he stood there as if lightening has struck him, staring at the door wide-eyed.

Then finally he grasped what I had just said and dashed after me with lightening speed.

"Is this... true?", he panted as he finally caught up with me, looking me in the eye.

"Yes goddamn", I sniveled, "I never intended hurting you... but I obviously did... why else would I be so upset, duh!"

"Good lord!", Heath whined, dropping his head on my shoulder.

"hide... I'm so sorry... I've been an idiot, haven't I? Will you ever forgive me?"

A tiny moment of eye-locking and before they even knew it, they were already sharing

a tender kiss.

"I love you, too", Heath breathed as they parted and their dispute was forgotten.
All that mattered now was them, and their newly found love.

~ "Hitorikiri ja nai shinjirarenai mada mayotte
Kimi wo shiru made sou jibun sae mienakatta
Hitori de aruita kizukanakatta kono mabushisa
Subete to fureau koto sou nazeka kowakute" ~

Kapitel 4: Tears in the Rainbow

The happy memories have passed and we find our selves back on the grass again.

I smile at him.

"Wonderful times indeed... but never forget our bad times either..."

With a nod he closed his eyes again, clutching my hand.

-Flashback-

The door fell shut.

I walked - actually more stumbled - in, managed to pull my boots off and made my way to the living room.

"Heath-chan?"

He leaped from the couch where he had been sitting and looked at me, with eyes, that seemed darker as usual.

"Where the heck have you been?", he hissed, "I was worried to death, and you drank away your brains once again! You never even bothered to leave me a message or maybe call! What the _fuck_ got _into_ you, Matsumoto Hideto? Is alcohol really that important? More important then me?!"

"W-whatchah talkin~ 'bout", I slurred, fighting for balance.

He give an angry snort and dragged me to the bathroom.

I faintly tried to protest.

"Eehh... wha-tch~a doin'? Lemm'h go!"

I waved my arms around clumsily, tried to shrug him off, push him away, but he didn't let go.

Pressing me against the door he turned on the tub.

When the tub was about half full, he grabbed me and pushed my head under the icy cold water.

Few moments later he tugged me up again and let me catch some air before he repeated it again, again and again.

When he though I've had enough, he pulled me to my feet, threw me into the shower, fully clothed and turned on the cold water.

After a few minutes of fighting back, I gave in.

Knees growing weak, and I slid to the the floor, covering my face with my hands.

A couple of tears were spilling as the water was pouring down on me, as the rain was wetting streets and trees outside.

Suddenly the water stopped running, I was being pulled out of the shower, out of the bathroom and into our bedroom.

He stripped me, towel-dried me and packed me into bed.

"Clear again? Satisfied now?", he growled.

"Heath.... look... I'm... I'm sorry...", I whimpered.

His eyes were just as cold as before, though a bit of the furry had already vanished.

"You always say that..."

"I mean it.. really..."

"You'll never change, will you?"

This was too much.

A sob and my tears were flowing freely again.

Tears that've been held back for too long.

"I... I don't have the strength... I know... I'm such a fucking coward... I'm so sorry, Heath, so sorry for doing all this shit to you...."

His expression softened a little and he sat down on the bed beside me, stroking my hair, wordlessly.

As silent this gesture might have been, the comfort provided was greater than words could ever do.

Slowly I calmed down, feeling heavy, but at the same time empty, and I was very tired. He still held me in his arms, gently petting my hair.

It didn't take long and I was fast asleep.

He softly laid me down and stuffed the covers around me, stroked my cheek, shaking his head before he stood up and walked back into the living room again.

For him it would be another sleepless night he'd spend wondering just what to do with me.

- 2nd may 1998 -

It was months after the first night we shared.

Since I was returning from a US-trip today, my brother insisted on fetching me from the airport and celebrating my return.

I knew the both of us well enough to know, that we won't be back before morning, so I called Heath to tell him.

The night was heavy like the delusive silence before a storm.

Heath's sleep was uneasy.

He was tossing around all the time, claspng to the sheets, breathing heavily.

In his dreams, the phone rang, but he was afraid to answer it.

He saw a trail of blood running from between my lips, heard laughter, the clatter of bottles and splitting glass.

He didn't know whether he was asleep or awake anymore.

~ "dakishimete kowareru no nara sore demo ii to omotta
sonna kako ni sayonara wo tsubuyaite

kurikaesu kotoba dake mune no naka o kasumeru 'kimi ni aitai'
dare yori mo taisetsu na futari ni naru tame ni tada soba ni itai dake" ~

A ringing phone....

Heath shot up, panting hard.

Yes, the phone was really ringing.

He crawled out of the bed, crossed the already slightly illuminated hallway into the living room.

Before picking up he took a deep breath.

"Moshi moshi?"

"Heath, this is Yoshiki"

"Yoshiki?! What the heck makes you call at this time?"

"I'm at the airport, trying to catch the earliest flight back to Japan..."

"What? Why? What happened?"

"Heath... promise me to keep calm now... better sit down..."

Yoshiki's voice sounded strangely hoarse and restrained.

Heath sighed and flopped onto the couch.

"Ok, now tell me, what happened?"

A muffled noise that sounded like a suppressed sob could be heard and Yoshiki took a view moments before he was able to continue speaking.

"hide... he had...", another sob, "dammit... Heath... you have to go to the hospital..."

hide had...", he seemed to search for the right word, "something like... an accident..."

Heath's hand went limp, his eyes clearly reflecting the shock and disbelief.

The phone hit the floor and broke into pieces.

Suddenly he jumped up, grabbed his keys, sped down the staircase, and jumped into his car.

He drove like a madman until he reached the hospital.

He parked his car, and immediately ran in.

At the emergency ward he grabbed the nearest nurse.

"Where's hide? Tell me, where's hide? What happened?"

"You have to be Morie-san", she stated, "please, follow me"

She led him to a room, where Pata, Toshi, and even Taiji were already waiting.

Shutting the door, she left the men on their own.

Heath inspected them, one after the other.

They looked horrible.

Tired faces, wet from tears, reflecting the same emotions as Heath's. Shock, disbelief and grief.

Eyes teary, reddish, even slightly puffy.

"What happened?", he whispered.

Pata approached him, leading him to a chair, a compassionate hand resting on his shoulder.

Toshi turned to face him and started talking with a raspy, still tremulous voice.

"Hide was drinking with his brother the whole night. They arrived back at his brother's apartment at 6 AM, both totally drunk. He put him to bed, but... when checking on him half an hour later, he found him sitting on the floor, unconscious.

He had ripped a towel and tied it around his neck and the doorknob. He immediately called the ambulance, but hide... died on the way to hospital."

Tears were running down Toshi's cheeks again, Pata hung his head and Taiji covered his face with his hands.

"No", Heath whispered, "No, he can't... he can't be dead... he can't leave me..."

He jumped up, shoved Pata away and ran down the corridor.

"I need to see him. Bring me to hide, now!", Heath yelled at the next best doctor, shaking him.

The doctor refused cold heartedly.

"I'm sorry, but I can't do anything for you, Morie-san..."

"Please, let me see him..."

The doctor sighed, failing to resist this tear stricken, pleading voice.

He lead him to a bleak, chilly hall, where my body lay on an operating table, covered by white cloth.

He pulled away the cloth and left Heath alone with this pale, cold corpse that was supposed to be his hide-chan.

He walked closer, looking into the pretty face that was so familiar and dear to him, which was by now as pale as chalk.

He gently touched the bright pink hair, that had so often rested on his chest, which's smell he'd loved so much.

He traced a finger over the skin that had once been so soft and warm, which was now as cold as stone.

Lying there like this, I seemed to be just sleeping to him.

Heath's legs gave in.

He sank to the floor, buried his face in his hands and cried.

Quite some time must've passed, until the door opened and Pata came in, covering my corpse again, before kneeling beside Heath, holding him close to comfort him.

When Heath finally stopped crying, Pata helped him to his feet and brought him back to the room, where they all hugged each other, and went their own ways.

Only Taiji remained, seemingly hesitant to leave, tough as well, to approach his replacement.

"Will you be ok?", he asked unsure of what to say or do.

Heath only threw him a glare.

Taiji sighed, feeling uncomfortable in this situation, so he just started babbling to ease the tension.

"Hide-kun was such a great man... I really don't understand how that could've happened... I mean... he had you, and I'm sure he loved you very much... he had the Beavers, he had success, he had fans... he should've been happy... but somehow he obviously wasn't as happy as it seemed... gezz... I'm so stupid... I really don't know what to say... just... Heath... I'm sorry..."

His eyes were tearful when he slowly opened his arms to hug Heath to his chest, tightly.

"Shall I give you a ride?", he asked, more clam now.

Heath shook his head.

"N-No, it's ok... I'll be ok... I guess... but.. thank you"

He managed a weak smile before leaving the room.

"Take care...", Taiji called after him.

As soon as Heath stepped on the corridor, his peace quickened until he was running, once he was outside the hospital.

He climbed into his car, pausing a view minutes to calm down, before the started out.

As soon as he arrived back at his apartment, he limply collapsed onto his bed.

He just wanted to sleep.

Sleep forever and never awake again.

~ "ki ga tsukeba mata hitori yoru no sora wo mitsumeteru
sukoshi zutsu kieteyuku our memories
kizu tsuku dake kizu tsuite wakatta hazu no kotae wo
doushite mada toikaketeru?" ~

Kapitel 5: Love Goodbye

- Flashback -

The ringing doorbell woke him from his long, deep slumber.

With an unwilling growl he lifted himself out of his bed and padded to the door, half naked as he was.

He opened the door a crack to see Taiji standing in front of the door, nervously toying with his long fingers, head bowed.

He opened the door a bit wider.

"Taiji-san... what brings you here?"

Taiji lifted his head, obviously taken aback by this response.

"Today is the funeral... didn't you know that?"

Heath just stood there, blinking.

"Darn...", Taiji muttered and pushed him back into the apartment, following suit.

Heath was dragged into the bathroom and given a towel.

"Take a shower, I'll look for clothing and coffee. Hurry up, or we'll be late", Taiji ordered in his authoritative voice.

Heath nodded and closed the bathroom door.

Taiji went back to the kitchen, searching for coffee.

While the water was being heated, he went to the bedroom, searching for clothing, that'd fit the occasion.

Soon, he found a black suit, picked out a white shirt and everything else needed.

The water boiler was whistling.

He hurried back to the kitchen, dropping the cloths in front of the bathroom door.

Meanwhile Heath stood under the flow of the shower, trying to let the water wash away the emptiness inside him.

He stepped out and stared into the mirror.

A young man was facing him.

Emptiness, a hint of confusion drawn in a handsome face and big, dark eyes mirroring sadness.

For a few moments he just stared at the reflection, trying to relate himself to it.

Then he sighed and started getting ready.

A couple of minutes later he stepped into the kitchen, where Taiji was already waiting for him.

They sipped their coffee in silence.

He felt Taiji observe him, and looked up.

"Shall we go?", Taiji asked quietly.

Heath nodded slightly and followed Taiji to the car.

The funeral went on and on, but Heath's tearless emptiness still remained within his heart.

He couldn't pay attention, neither to all the speeches, nor to the acts, until he suddenly found himself on the stage, together with the other ex-X Japan members.

Yoshiki sat in front of the piano and Toshi was singing, his voice quivering and throaty

from repressed tears.

Pata's long hair concealing his face, as he hung his head, fingers tenderly stroking the strings of his guitar.

He spotted Taiji leaning against a column, staring at the picture of mine hanging above the huge guitar collection.

~ "Ah subete ga owareba ii
owari no nai kono yoru ni
Ah ushinau mono nante
nanimo nai anata dake" ~

Toshi's raspy voice threatened to break, Heath was tightly gripping onto his bass, Pata was fighting to keep his hands still, Yoshiki played the piano like a doll pulled by invisible stings, and Taiji, who'd calmly been leaning against the column up until now, suddenly slid down a few centimeters, hanging his head, as the last notes of "Forever love" began to fade into sorrowful silence.

After Yoshiki's tearful speech, Heath took the first opportunity to run out, without drawing too much attention.

All the people crying their eyes out about someone they barely knew, without wasting a single thought on the person's loved ones, all this must have brought him to the edge of breaking.

I wished I could just have walked up to him, telling him that I was there, that everything's alright and that I'll never leave him, but it was too late.

Too late to change anything anymore.

If just the time could be turned back....

- Back to presence -

One year has passed since then, a year in which my feelings haven't changed, a year of always being with him, though not physically, a year in which I could feel all his pain and grief, a year in which I've always wished to show myself to him, even if it was just once, a year in which I wished to be able to touch him once again, talk to him, explain everything, ease his pain.

Now I finally hold him in my arms, stroking away his tears, this once, and in my heart I feel his latent strength, all the emotions flowing through him.

I hold him to my chest, tightly, stroking his back.

"Cry... cry it all out... I'm here... I'm here, love..."

I wish I could hold him like this forever, but in my heart I feel the heavens calling for me again.

As his sobs have calmed down, looks deep into my eyes.

"Thank you... for everything you did for me...", whispered.

Tears burn in my eyes, as I lean in for our last kiss.

As we part again, he smiles softly, reaching for my hand.

"I know an angel can't stay here for eternity, but even though I don't want to, I have to let you go. I've learned, that truly loving someone means to set him free. I'm glad you've found your wings and the freedom you've always wished for. I know, that you're always with me, even though I might not see you. Fate might be able to take away the one I love, but it won't ever be able to take away my memories. And within them, you'll always be here, deep inside my heart. I know the heavens are calling for you, my little bird, so fly, fly to the sun, but never forget, that I love you."

His words moved me deeply.

So brave, still smiling under pain that others wouldn't bear, that's the Heath I know and love.

With tears in my eyes, I hug him the last time.

"Thank you so much, beloved. May you live your life better than me, and don't ever forget, that I'm always there."

I release him, take a few steps backwards and I smile at him, slowly vanishing, like I've appeared before.

He remains sitting on the grass for some time, looking to where I've vanished from, reaching out to the sky.

When he finally stands up, he smiles and gently traces a finger over the cold gravestone before he turns around and walking away. Into a new life.

~ "kono mune wa itsumo ame furi de
kimi wa yure nagara kasunderu
itsumademo kitto furueteru hateru hi made" ~