Baby, You're My Disease

 You were invited to a party by a close friend. He always has parties, but this one is a little different. You haven’t seen a lot of your friends lately. You put them all in a really tough place when you asked them to choose. It’s all good though. You’re feeling a lot better. That whole accident is in the past now, or at least that’s what you tell yourself. You’re a different person. You stopped drinking, started attending church. Rehab and prison weren’t exactly a picnic but you’re better off because of it. You’re ready to get back into the world.

 Your car was demolished after the accident and you had your license revoked, so you have to walk to the party. You’re hoping that all the work you put in since you stopped drinking will allow you to rest the temptations that will undoubtedly be around. The people you used to hang out with were pretty big party animals. You heard a rumor that at the New Year’s party that one of them was snorting cocaine off the toilet. That’s not really a situation that someone in your state should be putting themselves in, but you’ve been isolated for months and are starting to go a little stir crazy. You step outside and you immediately start to rethink going. You can see your breath and your pants seem to turn into giant icicles making it very hard to walk. After a couple blocks you get used to the cold and begin focusing on the party. Your mind works in weird ways. You like to think of all the possible ways something can go wrong. It’s not a good way to get over your anxiety, but you push past all the doubt. You set your sights on the best possible event. You get to the party, have a good time with friends, and don’t feel any pressure to indulge in drinking or drugs, don’t relapse and get home without an incident. You think, that’s the goal for tonight.

 When you finally get to the party you’re welcomed by your friend that invited you. It’s an extremely nice house. The tiles on the floor are marble and the living room is bigger than your entire apartment. You walk into the house and a few people rush over to greet you. These are the people who’ve always had your back throughout the recovery process. They’ll probably stand between you and anyone who tries to ruin it. You can see a lot of people eyeing you as you walk into the living room. You lost a lot of trust. One of the friends who came to greet you corners you before you can get too far into the party and tells you something.

 I don’t want you to be blindsided. She’s here.

 What are you talking about? You look around. There she is. Your ex-girlfriend. She’s standing across the room by her friends. One of them looks at you and mouths something that looked a lot like “oh my god”. She turns around and sees you standing there. The cut on her face has turned into a scar and you feel something in your stomach, probably regret. You panic and duck into the kitchen. You didn’t think she was going to be there. You see the friend who invited you and confront him.

 What the fuck!

 Shit. Sorry! You seemed to be doing a lot better and I figured you could handle it. I swear, I wasn’t trying to fuck with you or anything. I probably should have told you beforehand.

 No shit you should have!

 You venture back out into the party. You look at where she used to be but the only people there are her friends. Good, maybe she didn’t see you. You decide to stay relatively close to the door, just in case you have to make a dash. Someone walks up and starts talking to you, mainly about rehab and how glad they were to hear you got sober. You don’t really know who they are so you’re barely paying attention when you see her again. She’s standing in a group of people. You know all of them except one person. You interrupt the person you’re supposed to be listening to and ask them who it is standing next to her.

 Oh, those two? They’re a couple now.

 You hear glass shatter as your heart stops beating for a few seconds. There’s a sharp pain inside of your chest. You didn’t think that she would take you back right away, but you were optimistic that you would rekindle your relationship eventually. You stare blankly at them for a few seconds until her new lover slides their arm around her shoulder and put their hand at her hip. You can feel something inside you snapping. You try to hold it together. The plan was to leave once you started to feel yourself breaking, but you are paralyzed. Something inside of you won’t let you leave. You see their hand slowly go into her back pocket. You snap.

 Images flash in front of your eyes. You’re imagination runs wild, picturing them in bed together, her moaning the way she used to when you were with her. Then the entire image shatters and you’re back in the car. You’re relatively fine, but her face is bleeding. You reach over to her and check on her. She’s out cold and you have no idea what to do. You look out the windshield only to discover that it’s no longer there. You can’t look away though, because you see the blood on the hood of the car. That’s when you snap back into reality and see a bottle of Southern Comfort near and grab it. You twist off the cap and throw it away. The smell intoxicates you, bringing back the feeling that you have been trying to get rid of for months. You close your eyes and put the bottle to your lips and throw it back, letting the golden brown elixir flow in to your mouth. You don’t bother taking breaths, just swallow everything. You can feel the alcohol taking its effect, bringing back that glorious feeling. You have to stop and take a breath. You open your eyes and she’s there in front of you. Her eyes are wide. Now you can see just how big the scar is, going from her right eyebrow right across her nose and ending right above the mouth. She doesn’t saying anything to you immediately, but lets you catch your breath.

 I thought you stopped drinking.

 Things change.

 Why don’t you just give me the bot…

 I miss you. I love you. Come back to me.

 You know I can’t do that.

 You don’t like that answer so you take her in your arms and you press your lips against hers, hard. You missed the feeling of being drunk and kissing her. It happened so much before and then stopped after that night. The feeling of her lips against yours increases the feeling of intoxication that is filling you. You didn’t really notice that she was trying to push you off until her new lover comes over and separates you. You don’t like that they ended your moment with her so you reach back and throw your weight into punching them in the face. The punch connects and they stumble backwards. She runs to her new lover as your friend grabs you and throws you out of the party. The friend that was concerned for you before follows you outside.

 Holy shit are you okay?

 Get the fuck away from me.

 Jesus Christ, are you fucking DRUNK?

 Don’t start fucking judging me right now. I just saw my girlfriend...

 EX-girlfriend

 …with someone else. She’s fucking replaced me!

 Well, you had to know this was coming.

 You don’t understand how that fucking feels. Have you ever had your heart ripped out? Of course you haven’t. You’re still a virgin.You don’t understand what real love is. You haven’t even had a real relationship.

Wow. Really? You’re going to pull this shit now?

 You’re just a sad person who sits in their house all day living vicariously through other people’s relationships. Why don’t you get a relationship and live your own life and then you can fucking judge me. Until then, get the fuck out of my life.

 Fine, fuck you. I’ve been there for you this whole time and now you’re just going to shut me out? The hell is wrong with you? You’re hurt; I get it, but fuck you for taking it out on me. I haven’t loved before, that’s a load of shit. I’ve been in love more than you, you asshole. And now you see her moving on with her life, like you should be, and you freak out and make a gigantic ass out of yourself. I’m taking you back to rehab.

 The hell you are. I’m going home and you’re staying away from me. I don’t need your fucking help. You’ll just fuck everything up like you always do. You knew she was going to be here and you knew she was going to be with someone new, why the fuck didn’t you tell me?

 I was trying to spare your feelings.

 Spare my feelings? Bullshit. You’re just a goddamn idiot. You didn’t think that seeing her with someone else would affect me in this way? You’re supposed to know me better than anyone else and you couldn’t see this ending badly? What a great friend you are. You know what; don’t do me anymore fucking favors. I’m out of here.

 You walk away before they can get another word in. You don’t really want to go home, that would just lead to you dwelling on what happened the entire night. You stumble around for a few minutes before you realize that your buzz is starting to wear off. The cold has a way of being a real bitch. Luckily there’s a bar between here and home. You start walking in the direction of the bar after much deliberation on where you were. There is a golf course between your friend’s house and the bar, and you decide that cutting through part of the golf course is a good idea. You didn’t realize that cutting through the golf course meant waddling through a foot of snow that had accumulated the week before.

Instead of the shortcut that you had planned on you end up spending almost an hour walking through the golf course. When you finally get out of the golf course you notice a cop car driving towards you. As you had just trespassed on private property you decide it’s a good idea to dive behind a snow bank, hoping the police hadn’t noticed you walking through the golf course. You land in a small puddle, but don’t get up because of the cop. You lay face down in the puddle for several minutes until you’re completely sure the cop car is gone and then get up. The water has soaked through your multiple layers and is freezing you to the bone. You decide it’s time to haul ass to the bar so that you don’t catch pneumonia. The bar is only a few blocks away, and being drunk you start to sprint. You can feel yourself starting to heat up from the exercise but at the same time the wind is taking its toll. You get to the bar and open the door.

The bar is a tiny dive bar run by hyper religious people. There’s a list of rules on the wall that reads like the Ten Commandments. You sit at the bar and the bartender comes over. It’s a twenty something year old girl who isn’t wearing the typical bartender clothes. She’s got a red t-shirt and baggy jeans on, with an apron that covers almost her entire body. You think that it’s probably one of the rules, that bartenders can’t use their sexuality to get tips.

 What can I get you, honey?

 I’ll have a Seven and Seven.

 I’m sorry, we only sell beer here. We didn’t renew our liquor license because the owners decided they didn’t want to contribute to alcoholism and sinning.

 Are you fucking kidding me?

 Uhm, you can’t swear in here. That’s rule number one. I’m going to have to issue you a warning.

 Wow, I’ll guess I’ll just have a Bud Light then.

 Okie Dokie!

 She skips away to get your beer and you turn to look at the wall where the rules are. Rule #1: No Swearing. You roll your eyes and whisper to yourself “jesus fucking christ”. You don’t bother reading the rest of the rules. You turn around in your chair and the bartender is back with your beer.

 That’ll be $3.50, hun.

 Do you take debit cards?

 I’m sorry, no we don’t.

 You stare at her and wonder why in the world there is a bar that doesn’t accept debit cards. You think that it’s pretty clear that these people live in the 1950s and haven’t moved into the new millennium. You take the five dollar bill out of your wallet and hand it to her. You tell her to keep the change and grab your beer. The cold liquid flows down your throat and starts to bring back that feeling that you had missed for so long. It had faded on your walk through the intense cold. You look around and notice that there are only a few other people in the bar. There’s a man in the corner who is eyeing you up. You get the feeling you’ve seen the man before, but you can’t place it. It’s probably the alcohol’s fault, you think.

 Hey, asshole, what the fuck are you looking at?

 HEY! There is absolutely no swearing in this establishment. I’m going to have to ask you to leave. The waitress is back and staring you down.

 Well what the fuck!? This guy is eye raping me and you’re kicking me out? What a load of shit.

 You take the beer bottle and throw it full force at the man in the corner. He ducks and the bottle shatters on the wall. The bartender is now yelling at you to get out or she’ll call the cops. You flee the building and start jogging home. Getting away from that bar as fast as possible seems like a good idea to you. You look around to see if anyone is following you. You can see someone coming out of the bar, but you don’t know who it is. You think to yourself, fuck it I’m too far away for them to come after me.

 You get home a few minutes later, breathing fairly hard after the jog home. The apartment is completely silent. You’re left alone with your thoughts which haven’t strayed away from what happened at the party. You can still taste her on your lips, with a hint of Bud Light and whisky. Your mind is racing. You kissed her and she rejected you. Then you punched her significant other and was kicked out of the party. Then one of your best friends tries to show you some sympathy and sincerity and you chastise him for it. You’re starting to have a panic attack. She’s really not going to come back to you. You had a chance to show her that you’ve really changed and you fucking blew it.

 You start pacing around the house with your hand on the back of your head, grabbing your hair as you try to fight off the feelings you’re getting slammed with. The pacing becomes more erratic and you start flinging your arms around as you slowly start crying. You walk over to your computer chair and grab the back of it. You put your head on the back and let the tears come. You are never getting her back.

 You start to shake the chair, letting the emotions flow out of you. You’re pissed at yourself for letting this happen. You had a handle on the drinking and yet you let your emotions get the best of you and fucked up. You were going to show her that you had changed and that you were ready for a relationship again, but you fucked up and now she’s gone forever.

 You throw the chair across the room and scream at the top of your lungs. You grab the nearest thing, a remote control, and throw that as hard as you can at the wall. It smashes into the wall but doesn’t break. You look for something that will give you the satisfaction of breaking. You look around and through the tears you see that there is one of those candles in a glass container that you can buy at Walmart. You grab it and throw it at the wall with all the force you can muster.

 The glass shatters and the wax candle bounces off the wall, leaving a purple spot where it hits. You look at all the glass on the ground. There are a couple big pieces lying near you, so you pick one up. You always used to see people cut themselves with glass, but you never really believed they were that sharp. You put it up against the tip of your index finger and drag it down. The sharp pain indicates that you broke the skin, and the little red speckles that show confirm this. You look at the piece of glass for a few seconds.

 You write a not to your ex, explaining how sorry you are for acting the way you did. You tell her that you are going back to rehab. You promise that you’ll stay away from her from now on. You tell her that you’re considering moving out of state, maybe to go stay with your Dad in Ohio. You tell her that you’ll always love her, but that you’re not good for her. In rehab they told you that some people are triggers for your disease, and you explain in the letter that she might be one.

 You put the letter in the envelope and lick it close. You grab your coat and go to the door. The second your hand hits the door knob the door explodes backward and you hear your nose snap as the door hits it. You fall backward and smash your head into the cabinet behind you. You look upwards and see the man from the bar standing in the doorway with a gun in his hand.

 What the fuck!

 All the man says is, This is for my son, and he lifts the gun and points it towards your chest.

 Now you know where you thought you had seen the man before. You saw him at the trial, when you plead guilty to vehicular manslaughter. The judge gave you a mandatory rehab stint and six months in prison. The judge was so lenient because the kid that you hit was also drunk and had stumbled into the road. The man who was now pointing a gun at you had not been happy about the judge’s decision.

 Maybe if you had been a better person, and not a drunk, this wouldn’t be happening right now. She would still be with you, you wouldn’t have gone to jail, and you wouldn’t have been in rehab. If you had been a better person, this man’s son would still be alive.

 You look at the man in the eyes as he pulls the trigger three times. The first bullet rips through your body, going through your right lung. The second bullet is slightly more centered, hitting your rib cage and getting lodged in your spinal cord. The third bullet is right on the money. It rips through one of your ribs and tears through your heart. It all happens so quick that you don’t even feel the pain. The man checks your pulse, which slowly stops, and then leaves the apartment. He takes the gun apart and dumps it in the storm drain outside of the apartment.

 You’re still holding the letter to your ex when you die.