

When my doctor told me that my body would only be able to hold out until the wintertime, I was glad. Winter had always been my favorite season, and my hometown in the Italian countryside was a wonderland of beauty and serenity. I was at peace with my decision; I knew better than to keep fighting an illness that was ~~clearly~~ overtaking my body, so when I was given the official countdown of my life, I felt nothing.

Three months after that fateful visit to the doctor, it was wintertime. I had spent most days wandering through the streets I grew up in, remembering with nostalgic joy all the happiness of my childhood. Life ~~was~~, for once, ~~was~~ peaceful. I made sure to visit all the landmarks of my boyhood, to let the magnificence of the past ~~soak~~ and wash away every regret I might have. ~~In those three months~~, I made peace with life ~~in those three months~~ and was convinced I needed nothing else. Come wintertime, I would be prepared.

But life, in all its complexity, proved me wrong. There was still something I needed to do, some unfinished business that itched in ~~at the~~ part of my brain ~~that where~~ I could not reach. I tried pushing it down, burying it deep ~~within~~ my memories, but like apples that plop to the surface, so did regret.

I knew I had done all that I wished for in life. I studied what I wanted, worked where I pleased, and only entertained friendships with people I ~~actually~~ liked; I was always, constantly, and relentlessly, ~~me~~. I never acted ~~beside~~ myself and always put my needs first, and because of it, though it may sound calloused, I always got what I wanted. My regret had nothing to do with who I was as a person or how I lived my life. ~~No, no~~, my regret was something beyond my control – ~~it~~ my regret was about a person I thought I would never think of again but was now haunting my every waking moment.

It was bitter to think that he only came to mind once I started dying. ~~Once~~ the illness took over ~~everything, and~~ even speaking became too much. ~~In it was in~~ the liminal space between life and death, ~~images that images~~ of him spurred ~~through~~ into my thoughts and moved my weary soul. I couldn't ~~bear bare~~ to look ~~at seeing~~ his face because it reminded me just how spectacular it was to be alive—an unkind reminder when death was at my doorstep.

But I couldn't help it. He visited my dreams every night. ~~He~~ Glimpses of him and our life together replayed cruelly like a broken film. Continuously and never-ending.

The very first dream was of the day we met. My friends had bought me tickets for a concerto; I was not really interested in ~~attending~~, and I went with every intention of leaving halfway. But then I saw him confidently walking to the piano and settling comfortably in the stool—he was at home. Everyone admired him and regarded him as if he ~~were was~~ a display in a museum—a walking, breathing, piano-playing work of art.

 Paola 9:32 PM Yesterday

Consider changing the wording here, changing "beside myself" to something like "for others" or "for anyone" or something similar that maintains the meaning but is more direct and easy to understand.

Reply or add others with @

 Paola 9:35 PM Yesterday

"moved" how? Perhaps expand on this point. Was it sadness? Grief? Happiness? A small line can change this to make it work as an emotional addition to this character.

Reply or add others with @

Though he was an aristocratically handsome man with the most alluring eyes I'd ever had the pleasure of looking into, this was hardly what captured me ~~though~~. It was the way he carried himself ~~with~~, the confidence that oozed from him, and the passion with which he played. Everything good on this earth lived carefully wrapped within him.

Needless to say, I did everything in my power to meet him. Back then, I was a journalist for a big magazine, so it was easily managed. The first time we spoke, there were electrifying sparks all around us. He was forward and direct; he made it ~~very~~ clear he liked me, and I did nothing to hide my ~~own~~ attraction. From that first meeting on, we became inseparable.

Our story began, and the beginning of our love was a sight to behold. In my dream, small glimpses of him would pop quickly like a flash, with no time to process them: *him smiling, him laughing, him at the piano, him writing*—one after another with no break in between.

By the time I woke up, I was sweating ~~and~~; sobbing, ~~and~~ with a hammering heart. I looked around the room, searching for him, thinking ~~he had somehow that somehow he had returned~~ ~~come back~~ outside my dreams ~~too~~, but no. I only saw my desk in the corner to my right, the window to my left, and—*his piano*.

I had kept it after all these years, hoping that one day I'd find him sitting there like he used to, playing his melodies as he tuned out the world. But now, all the good memories it once brought me were being tainted with regret, so I looked away and vowed never to look again.

After all those years, I couldn't comprehend why he was visiting me in my dreams. It was a cruel occurrence to see the *one* thing I held precious in the days before my death. But, I couldn't do anything about it; ~~he~~ was somewhere else with someone else, and I thought I'd made peace with that—apparently not.

My next dream was ~~a simple one~~; there was no storyline nor complicated plot – it was just him. Him sitting at his old Steinway playing a delicate melody in our old apartment on the coastline of Normandy. He had bought the old piano from a sketchy reseller, but when it ~~actually~~ arrived, he played until it turned dark. ~~He had written~~ ~~it was~~ a subdued and somber piece—a lullaby—~~he had written~~ for me. It was early in the morning when we liked opening the windows; I could almost smell ~~the scent~~ of the coffee and freshly picked fruit that wafted into our cramped, but intimate apartment. This blissful dream brought me more ~~relief~~ ~~relieve~~ than any of the drugs I'd been taking for the pain, and I wished it would have taken me to death's embrace. I couldn't stand waking up anymore. ~~These~~ dreams reminded me ~~just~~ how much ~~lack~~ I felt lacking in my heart.

 Paola
9:46 PM Yesterday

Consider expanding here. Although you state it was easily managed, it would be helpful to know how. This could be a good chance to add to their story.

Reply or add others with @

 Paola
9:48 PM Yesterday

Expanding here can help readers sympathize with the inevitable loss that comes later.

Reply or add others with @

After I woke up in the morning, and the only nurse assigned to me gave me my daily dose of drugs, the lullaby he wrote all those years ago played endlessly in my mind. Sadness crept in as the realization that I would never hear the song again hung over me like a ghost — the regret now ballooned in my chest.

Night came quicker than usual, and I was transported back to the happiest years of my life. This time, I was taken back to the time we ~~traveled~~ used to travel around the world together. He would play in concert halls all over Europe, and I would gladly stand to the side and admire his undeniable talent. The love and passion he felt ~~while~~ for playing would fill up within him like a reservoir, and, with every key he pressed, ~~the room~~ would slowly overflow ~~from him~~ like lapping waves until he was left empty, ~~the audience soaked with his magnificence~~ soaking everyone in the audience with his magnificence. He was a master at his craft, and ~~all~~ everyone recognized it.

The melodies he played throughout those years melted together ~~into~~ one — they became a cacophony of sounds and disturbing off-key tunes until finally, as if by some miracle, all that noise slowly ~~but surely~~ turned into the lullaby he'd written me, which pulled my perturbed mind into a calmed ease. Everything always came back to that melody.

Suddenly and altogether, I started to feel the life slipping out of my body. Laying down in my bed, it became harder and harder to open my eyes, and the line between life and death became blurry and confusing. I stopped understanding which was which, and all my brain ~~would ever~~ hoped for was rest.

From the window by my bed, I could see snow falling ~~ever so~~ gently on my green garden. ~~Watching the snowfall, t~~ime seemed to ~~be~~ slowed down, and for a moment, it felt like I had all the time in the world, like I could get a chance, like I could get to live. But the clock on the wall said otherwise, and reality hit me like a bullet. I cried myself to sleep—no one heard me, no one consoled me—I was silently going away.

Remember me, remember us.

My last dream was a quiet one. ~~It, it~~ was like watching a silent film of my ~~own~~ memories. It was the last time he and I saw each other in the ~~last~~ house ~~where~~ we shared ~~our~~ final goodbye.

Our relationship ~~suddenly~~ began to wane and wither over time, and our wisdom told us it would be better to part with dignity than to let it go on and resent each other in the future. We loved each other too much to watch the love we had built molder in front of our eyes.

 Paola
2:25 PM Today

This word is quite jarring against the rest of this paragraph. A word like "worried," "weary," or "troubled" might fit better in this context.

Reply or add others with @

 Paola
2:26 PM Today

This does not feel necessary for the narration, consider removing it.

Reply or add others with @

In my dream, I saw us hug and kiss goodbye. We looked into each other's eyes as we tried to ~~find~~ look for a reason to stay, but there ~~weren't~~ ~~wasn't~~ any. He caressed my cheek, and I kissed his lips. We wiped each other's tears and made quick promises never to forget ~~each~~ the other; it was the best we could do ~~then~~.

It was a rushed farewell, but it was closure.

As soon as he turned his back, I woke up with a jolt. I missed him as if he was leaving me all over again.

Some new feeling ~~There was some new feeling, though, something that told me this that that~~ was the day—my body felt numb, and my brain was hardly functioning; I ~~wouldn't~~ ~~wasn't~~ going to last long.

I looked ~~started to think~~ back on our ~~lives and life, on~~ the happiness we shared living together. He was my only regret and my only delight. I remembered him in all his glory, playing his piano with a deep frown and ~~irregular~~ breaths, suddenly stopping to cross things out in his music sheet. I remember him composing my lullaby, looking up to me ~~every~~ now and then with childlike glee when he got a chord right — this was the closest to heaven I had ever felt. I remember his hair, eyes, smile, and the way he said things. I was content that his image was going to be my send-off.

I closed my eyes and let the heaviness take over me; I was ready. I began seeing images of my past, not just of *him* but of everything I had ever done that brought me joy. It was a glorious feeling ~~to remember only~~ ~~only to remember~~ the good parts as I parted with life; it brought me comfort to know that what I did, ~~felt, and said~~, was enough.

I thought about my lullaby, my song. I would die with the itch of "what if" burned in my brain, but I couldn't hold out any longer. ~~I decided to replay~~

The song ~~replayed~~ one last time ~~through~~ in my mind. ~~to remembered how special I once was to someone and how special someone was to me.~~

The tune started flowing ~~in my brain~~; it was quiet at first, but it was there. Halfway through, ~~it the song~~ started to grow in intensity. ~~It, it~~ was an overpowering crescendo that brought tears of ~~pleasure~~ to my eyes. The music felt so vivid ~~and, so~~ moving; it felt like he was ~~there~~ in the room with me, playing ~~me~~ the song he wrote me all those years back. I could feel his love. ~~I, I~~ could feel it all. It was a high of the most intense emotions I had ever felt in my entire life. The tune carried me through all my memories, the highs and lows of my tumultuous life, and I held on to every key like a lifeline.

The room ~~was~~ filled with the quick and ever-changing piece, and I felt complete. I reconciled with life and could feel the closure, the goodbye. It was so close.

The tune began to slow down; it was ending. When the song ~~slowly~~ faded, the time between each note became longer and longer, ~~and~~ the melody ~~growing~~ sounded

 Paola
2:39 PM Today

Maybe words like "stuttered," "uneven," or "staggered" would sound better here. "Irregular" gives the impression of a medical issue.

Reply or add others with @

 Paola
2:42 PM Today

Adding just a few of the moments the narrator mentions could make this line make sense; otherwise, removing it would be best as it does not add to the rest of this paragraph.

Reply or add others with @

uncertain. I was done with life right then and there. I surrendered to the sound and let go.

Slowly, as I went, the words '*I love you*' hung in the air. At first, I doubted his presence, thinking that maybe my dying brain was playing tricks with me, letting me see what I so desperately wanted to see — but he was there. Through my heavy eyes, I saw his figure, tall and proud. He sat at the stool and played as he did all those years ago, with the same passion and fervor ~~aslike before~~. I was so thankful for him, so grateful he'd remembered to remember me.

Goodbye, his melody said, and I passed with the satisfied smile of someone parting the earth without a single regret.