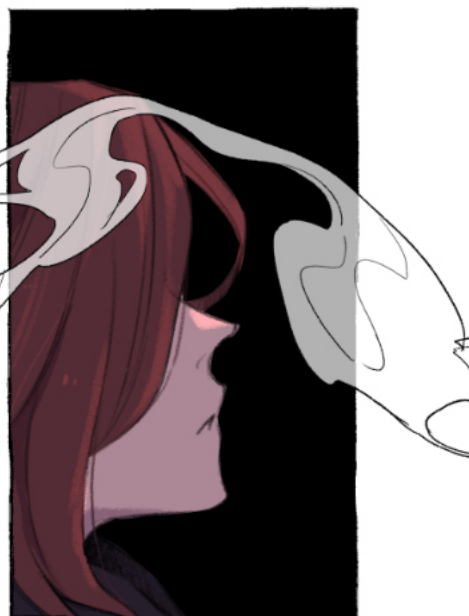


Shallow Sleep

VIII. Absence







*I don't have
anyone left
here, either.*

*I'm a
stranger*

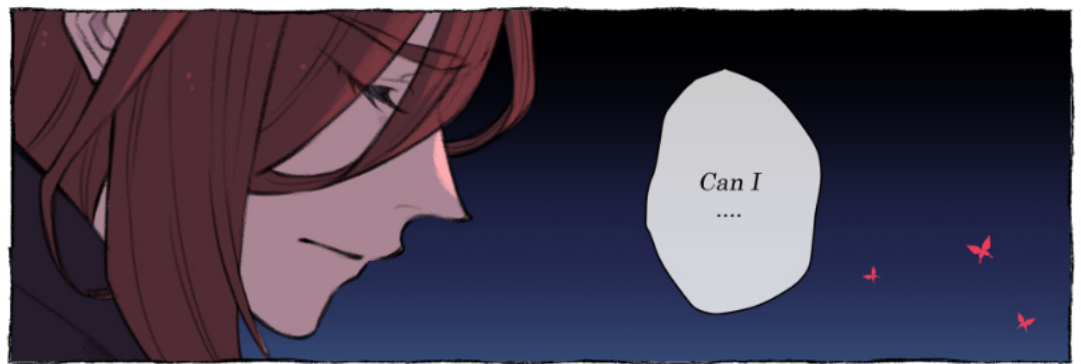
*in this place
I used to
call "home".*





One day
...

... there'll be
no one
around
to listen
anymore.



Can I
....



open
up to
someone?



You always
seem to
know where
I am,

why is
that?



I can
always
feel your
presence.

It is...
familiar,
somehow.

Does it
make you
uncom-
fortable?





M-my brother
Felix and
I...

When we
were kids,

this place
was magical
to us.



The fields
had already
been barren
for decades,

yet this tree
remained,
the grass
always lush
and soft.



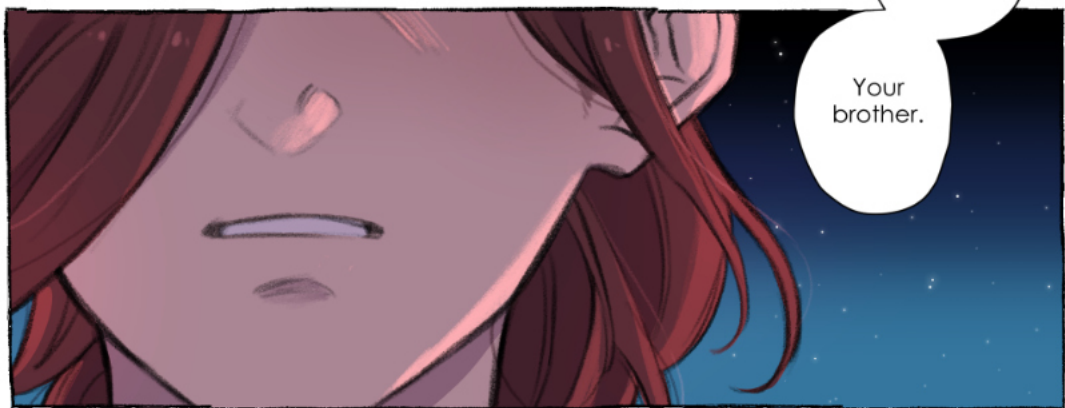
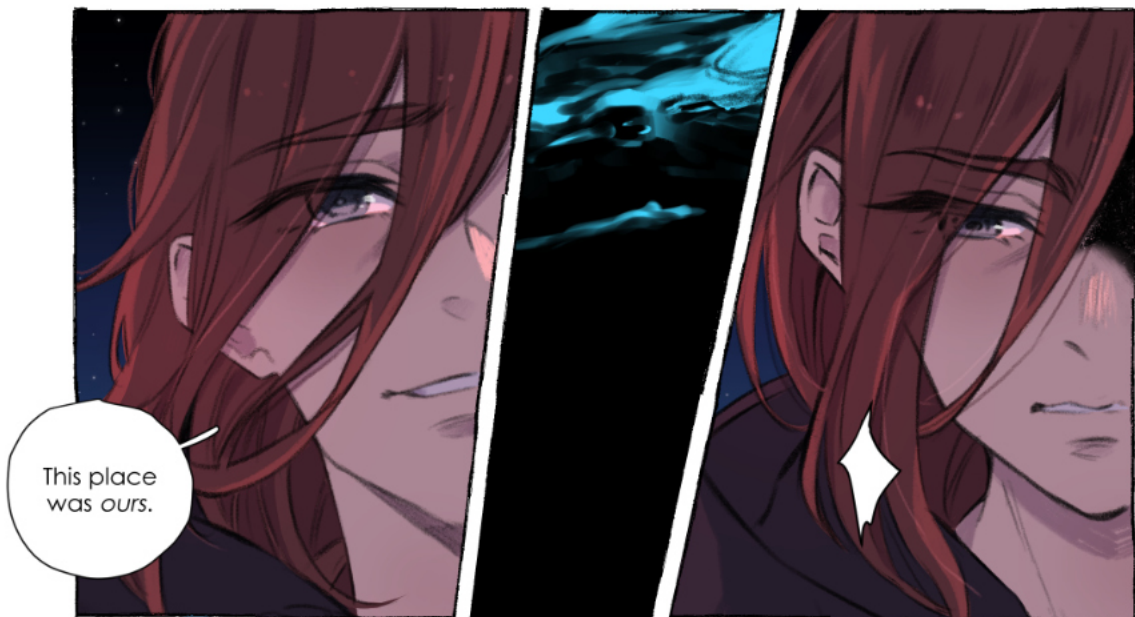
Open
up...

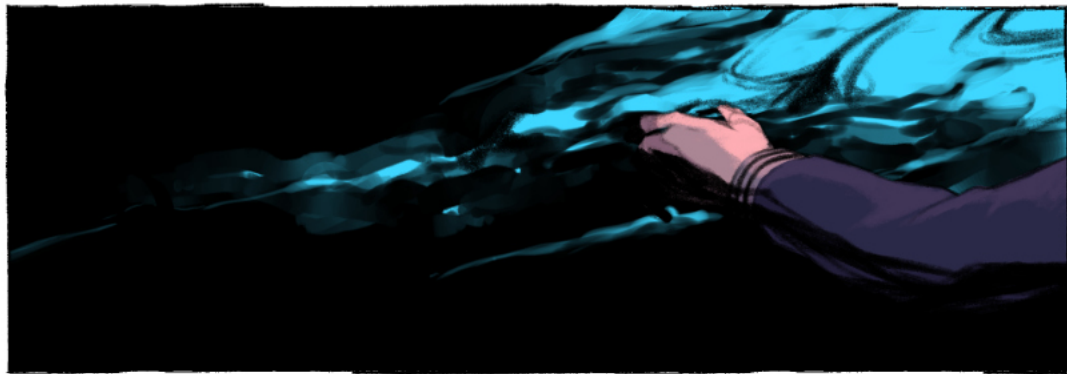
to
some-
one...



The town
looks so
small from
up here.

Only he
and I
existed
here.

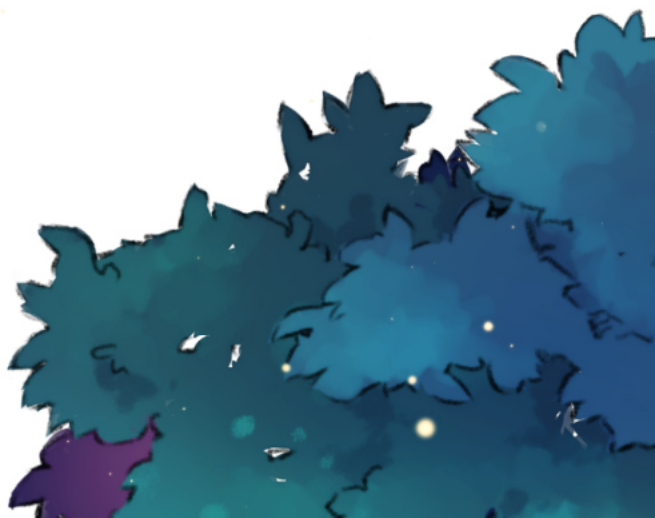




One morning, when we were kids,



we snuck out of the house to come here.



We had built
little furniture
for him out
of clay and
building blocks,



and we wanted
to start building
a real house
for us and Dino.





and I heard a splashing sound at some point but I didn't think much of it.

Until...

I suddenly felt like something was off.



A breath
that left my
lungs wrong,
somehow.

Like something
small was being
ripped out of
my very core.



And then
I saw him.

