

I Wish I Was Wade Watts

That night at the diner,
the one on the end of your street
with the waffles you like
but the service is always sluggish
and the coffee is always lukewarm,
you gave me an ultimatum:
I could follow your shadow
to the shimmering reflections of the west coast,
or I could continue to chase my own shadow
in the forgotten wasteland that is Columbus, Ohio.
It was quite simple, really.
Or at least you made it seem like it.

You asked me what I was thinking about.
I wish I was Wade Watts, I think that would be fun.
The contested eye roll that followed built a wall
between us.
Why, cause he was lazy?
No, because he went from zero to hero,
won the scavenger hunt, had the entire world in his grasp,
and somehow STILL got the girl.

Scoffing at the absurdity to live
the lifestyle of a fictional character from a dystopian novel,
you grabbed the salt shaker, and shook your head in disbelief.
You can't spend your life in the Oasis
and run away from all problems like he did.

Maybe. But is there much affinity between that
and the shallow empty shell I hide myself in now?

But beyond the trifles of the fork
you used to stab your eggs,
past the reflections
waving off the side of my glass of pepsi,
there lived a singular moment-

A flashing image,
Me on your front step
blowing up a condom like a balloon
as your pink fingernails strip the snowy
hat off my head.
You call me immature,
the timidly painful reminder why
we were doomed before it even began.

Yet you let me stay,
let me eat your ramen,
watch your netflix,
use your kitchen counter
for actions better suited for the sheets.
You put me to bed, leave little notes on the fridge.
You kiss me goodbye when you leave,
only to return home to find dishes still stacked
in the sink, dirty socks on the floor,
and that condom balloon wedged under the fridge.

But as cut open your omelet,
glancing at me,
I realize that despite all of that-
you still asked me to come with you.
I may not be Wade Watts,
but you're certainly no Artemis,
so let the broken ones fall
together when their oasis gets blown to bits.