Everyone’s Best Friend

By Hector Camps

The realization set in. Like a year full of anxiety, wrapped up in one day. Like running head first into a concrete wall. Like the inking you get during a horror film, knowing that something bad is about to happen. You close your eyes hoping, praying. Hoping and praying that any, and all of this, isn’t real.

You hold her head lovingly upon your lap. “Everything is going to be fine.” you tell yourself, “Nothing bad can ever happen, we’re meant to be together forever. That was the plan.”

You can cut the tension in the air with a knife. Everyone is silent. Mimicking sleep but fully awake.

Her breathing is labored. She moves as little as she possibly can. Her hours are numbered. She’s pale, sick and fighting. She’s fighting to keep herself alive.

We’re close to our destination. She’s leaving you here, Hector. You’re trembling, you haven’t stopped crying and there are no other options.

You begin to think back on everything. Every attempt at a hug she could give you when she heard you parking in the driveway. Every smile she ever squeezed out of you. Every ounce of fun and every decibel of snoring you two shared. Every person she ever had the “Awww!” effect on.

We’re here. You help her out of the van. You can do nothing but carry her. She knows. She knows what’s going on. The lingering stench of sadness. She limps out of the car, nearly lifeless. We can’t stop crying. We walk through the main lobby. She’s in your arms. You make your way to the back of the building. We ease her on top of a table. You’ve never heard so many “I love you” said in one place at one time. Her tail stopped moving weeks ago. We stand here as she gazes at each of us with eyes full of tears. She breathes heavier and heavier with each passing minute. There are three syringes on the table. They’re ready and waiting the word. We say our final goodbyes. They begin to proceed. We stay there with her for every second. She’s leaving us now. The longest ten minutes of your life are present. She takes her final breath. Her body lays still. Figures of crosses made with our hands over her, just like your parents do before you went to bed. Now she sleeps.

The ride home has never been so quiet. The only positive thought you can muster out of your empty mind is that she was not alone.