Tell Me When

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There comes a time when you reach the top of a large mountain that you’ve been climbing, and finally, after months and months, you’ve done it. You’ve done it, yet something still feels incomplete. The people all around you whisper your name over and over as if it’s sparkled with fairy dust, and they say “Look! Look how far you’ve come!” But you don’t look and you don’t see what they see. You just see their faces, animated with scripted smiles and wide eyes and bobbing heads and puckering lips, but you hear no words. You see the man who gave you a walking stick when you were struggling to keep on moving; you see the girl who showed you the way when you were lost; you see the friend who hugged you and pushed you uphill when you wanted to give up.

They’re all here, proud and beaming. You’ve done it; you’re done. You’re done. But still, you don’t see it. You see the sky, such an endless, perfectly deep, wet turquoise. There’s not a cloud visible. Just sky. And you wonder why everyone seems to think something’s been accomplished here, because to you, all you see is the untouched sky. You feel empty. You feel alone. You feel nothing.

They stand there in a group, each looking at their own sky, smiling up at the sun, and maybe they feel something; maybe they see something different. But you? You’re scared, scared to move even an inch, lest you should fall into that never-ending abyss of blue velvet. Scared to face the idea that you will never return to the simplicity of just walking, one foot in front of the other, waiting for someone to tell you to stop.