Delusion Lake

Part 1: The Beginning

*The lake is always in the same place, surrounded by a forest with trees as tall as skyscrapers. The lake is always in the middle, shining like a diamond but at closer inspection it is speckled with bits of black, little imperfections that do more damage than good. This is where it lives. I’m not sure what “it” is, but every time I close my eyes I find myself in this area. It is foggy and musty, and the lake gives off a slight humming sound that rings in my ears long after I wake up. The air smells of dried leaves and moist rain droplets cover the ground. It’s so loud that it hurts my ears, the pressure of my eardrum trying to make out what the sound is pulsates in my head. I always try to get closer to the swamp, but the ground around it is as thick as quicksand. My feet move slowly and heavily, not being able to be lifted off the ground almost like I am swimming on solid land. This time I have gotten closer to the lake than ever before. The fresh smell of the air turns to a rusty dirty smell. I can hear something in the lake, the humming is morphing into a flatline of screams, slow and steady and never changing pitch. Forcing myself through the muddy landscape I can almost peer my head over the edge of the lake. Finally, I get there, slowing bringing myself to a kneel I investigate the water. At first all I see is the mirror reflection of my face, but its all distorted and discolored and bloated. I move closer to the image of my face and suddenly I get pushed in and immersed in the lake…*

I jump at the sound of the blare from my alarm clock. Its 6am on a Monday, and I need to start my day. I have had that dream every night for the past 6 months and every time I get closer and closer to the lake. This time I was pushed into it, but I woke up before my whole body went in the water. I grab the red notebook on the nightstand next to my bed and relive the details of the dream. My therapist says this way I can track the dream and see if anything can be traced back to things that I am doing in real life to see if I can stop the recurring nightmare. I can barely get myself out of bed every day. When I finally drag myself out of bed its nearly 6:30. I lazily grab a mug and put two-day old coffee in it from the pot. My cat winds itself around my feet and purrs at my presence. I bend down to pet her and she continues to purr. Outside it is raining, it always rains. The pitter patter on the window gets louder and louder as the storm starts to become directly over my house. Once I am dressed, I leave my little house in the forest and head for my job. I live in a small town in Washington state called Eatonville, which is right by Mount Rainier. I work at a gift shop near Mount Rainier, and the whole city is covered in beautiful forests, small restaurants and shops. It’s a quiet place, not much activity goes on, just the usual tourists and hikers coming in and out of the park. I haven’t been sleeping well ever since I’ve been having these dreams. I don’t know what they mean, but all I know is that every morning it is a struggle to get to work on time. As I pull up to the parking lot I see that my manager is already there. “Shit,” I sigh. I keep getting this feeling that time for me is moving backward, while in the real world it is still moving forward. Walking into the store I notice how eerily quiet it is. The fog is thicker today than usual and there is more humidity in the air than usual. It is the middle of June, and this is the time of the year where it is the hottest, but I can’t help but to feel like something is watching from the forest as I walk up to the shop. “You’re late again Polly,” says my manager Martin. “I know I’m sorry, I’ve been having trouble sleeping and my motivation has been affected terribly,” I say as I grab my name tag from the back room. “Well, try not to let it happen again, I’d hate to fire you over having trouble sleeping.”