

he'd complained about them. When you made them feel just a little bit crappy they tried really hard to please.

His parents wouldn't send him any cash until the first of the month, even though they could very well afford it. Some bullshit about life lessons.

He pulled on a pair of dark jeans and an intentionally distressed Western button down that he'd purchased at Fred Segal. He found his glasses – square lenses surrounded with sleek black plastic – and the keys to his apartment on the floor next to the front door, and stepped out into the stupidly bright July sun. Why the hell couldn't it ever be cloudy in this God damned city? The sunlight was distracting.

Silver Lake. He'd hated the name of the neighborhood when he'd first moved to the city five years ago for college, thought it sounded like an imaginary place where Barbie Dolls spent all day eating cupcakes and conversing with butterflies, but then he realized that associating yourself with this small subset of hilly roads made the people of LA respect you in the way he thought he deserved to be respected. Living in Silver Lake meant you were an artist, avant-garde, intellectual.

His mid-century one bedroom was two blocks up one of those coveted hills, a short walk from the hip boutiques and wine bars that dotted Sunset Boulevard. His Land Rover was parked a half block down, slightly crooked and too far from the curb. As he approached he noticed that there was a deep dent in the front bumper. When the hell had that happened? He inspected the Toyota parked in front of him, trying to find someone to blame, but there was no matching damage. He kicked the Toyota anyway, pissed off that he would have to drive around with a fucked up car for the next week, until his parents' next check arrived, and continued down to Sunset.