

Anemoia

You can't get down.

The bench from which your legs hang is too tall. The wood is glitching, the touch of the varnish losing texture. You swing your legs. Forward, back. Like a clock tower's pendulum. Not much else to do now.

The night is cold. No matter. The smell of the meat on the grill is enough to make the stay worth it. The adults' laughter cuts the chill wind from the gaming table nearby. Blue forget-me-nots and a thin layer of snow cover the backyard.

You can feel another hand near your own. But its owner's face is

blacked out

by memory.

Or is it the low-poly graphics?

What's her name? It's kinda stupid to ask now, right? It's been so long.

You search your mind –trying to uncork, unwrap, understand. But the name is gone.

You hear something about a thief from the gaming table. Then their voices grow fuzzy again. Are you lagging?

Or forgetting?

The meat's almost ready. Oh, my bad, it's still raw. Aren't you cold? Nah, I'm fine.

The voices

melt together.

Take a seat.

How much longer?
Aren't you tired?
I can drop you off.

What do you mean
you don't
want to leave?

It's all going to...

But there are no voices.
None addressing you.
The bench glitched so much it turned into
a folding chair.

The night is so cold it became
a bedroom that has never seen
sunlight.

The chill wind is
a cheap fan.

Her face and her hand are
as fake as
a three-dimensional character

model.

Your memory
as programmed as
anemoia.

Then you turn off the screen.