Maeve woke up to the familiar sound of the hall alarm signaling it was 6 AM. Waking up at 6 AM was not something anyone would enjoy but something that was even more unenjoyable was the hallway. The beige hallways that encompassed you and made it feel like you were going insane. It made you feel like you were walking with no end point in mind. With everything being one ugly color of beige, it was hard to be optimistic about your future. Other factors contributed to the impending sense of doom of course, but the color of the walls was a much larger factor than one may think. Despite the maddening walls, Maeve found herself quite fond of her little world. She found herself fond of the routine; wake up, take meds, get ready for the day, breakfast, school, snack, group sessions, lunch, individual sessions, snack, group activities, dinner, meds, free time, snack, get ready for bed, sleep. Wake up and repeat, everyday. And somehow despite the fact that Maeve was no longer in control of anything, including basic things such as bedtimes and when she woke up, she found herself comforted.

This is not saying that Maeve was happy, quite the opposite actually. She hated where she was and the fact that she was there, but the routine kept her from ripping her hair out, which was all she could really ask for. She knew why she was in there but she chose to act like she didn’t. It was easier that way. It was easier to sit through group sessions and meals if she blocked out the real reason she was here. When she first arrived she acted like she was on vacation, but soon that wasn’t working. After all, vacations don’t typically last three months, so she had to come up with something else. This time around, Maeve’s therapist decided that it was time to accept the truth about her situation, Maeve was sick. She was sick and needed help, and with how sick Maeve really was, the hospital was the only option.
Maeve stood at 5’6” and weighed in at a whopping 100 pounds. Her body mass index was 16.1 and her heart was beating at just under 40 BPM. But, no one would notice that because Maeve chose to wear black baggy clothes, never wearing anything form fitting. Maeve would say that it’s because wearing form fitting clothes is a societal construct of beauty, but deep down it was because she knew how bad she had gotten. All of Maeve’s clothes hung off of her skeletal frame, but that was the way she liked it. Maeve liked the shock that inevitably appeared on everyone’s face as she walked by. She liked that when people saw her sunken in cheekbones, icy gaze and empty smile they knew to back away. They knew that she was the face and embodiment of “don’t mess with me”. Maeve liked that, you could even say that she thrived on that. Unfortunately, not everyone was scared of Maeve which is how she ended up in the hospital.

Maeve denied her problem from the moment she stepped into the hospital. She refused to listen to her doctors, refused to eat her meal plan, refused to participate in group sessions and activities, which wasn’t uncommon for newcomers. It was expected, and for Maeve who always wanted to do the unexpected, that was unacceptable. She wanted to be the one that didn’t quiver with the threats of being “tubed” or being bound to a wheelchair. She wanted to be remembered as the “best” one in the hospital. She wanted to be the sickest, the frailest while also being the toughest, and the most unpredictable. She was difficult and everyone knew that.

“So Maeve, how are you doing today?” Her therapist, Jayne, of 3 years asked.

“Y’know I’m doing amazing.” Maeve said sarcastically while picking at her chipped black nails.
“Maeve, you know that you’re allowed to be honest with me.” Jayne said taking off her glasses and rubbing her eyes.

“Ummm, I don’t think I can actually.” Maeve said with conviction in her voice.

“Care to tell me why you feel that way?” Jayne asked knowing that Maeve could go on and on when it came to her opinions.

“Well as you may have picked up, I am not doing amazing, and frankly, I am not alone in that. No one in here is doing well, and no one is getting better. We all lie to make you and your team feel better about themselves. And somehow no one has figured that out yet.” Maeve said switching from picking at her nail polish to playing with the ends of her bleached hair.

“If I may, I think it is very bold of you to speak for everyone.” Jayne replied noting the change in Maeve’s body language. Maeve rolled her hazel eyes in response and crossed her arms over her chest, huffing, similarly to how a small child would refuse broccoli. “Maeve, I know you’re intelligent and I know how badly you want to be right, trust me I do, but for someone who seems to have it all figured out, you have no idea what road you’re going down and you have no earthly idea how that road is going to end.” Maeve’s eyes shot up from their previous point of focus and gave Jayne, an experienced therapist, a look that scared her.

“We’re done here.” Maeve said through gritted teeth, before walking out of the small office abruptly, making sure to slam the door behind her. Maeve stormed down the beige hallway, slowly feeling herself slipping into madness, despite the fact that she had a destination in mind. Her feet were no longer moving in accordance with Maeve’s head but on their own, allowing Maeve to fill her head with countless other thoughts.
Every Road Ends 4

How could she say that to me? Of course I know where my stupid road ends, I am not an idiot. She doesn’t know me if she thinks I’m blindly walking along. I’ll show her, when I make it out of here without ever giving into the stupid rules, she’ll be the sick one not me.

Maeve’s feet brought her to their destination of her room, and she walked in slamming the door behind her, not giving it a second thought. Before Maeve could comprehend what was happening to her, she felt hot tears prick up in the corners of her eyes. She tried to gain composure but felt herself being pulled into the dark void of despair. The reason she was in there you may ask, is because Maeve had realized that Jayne was right. Maeve wasn’t walking towards some shiny new place that she had never seen before, but she was really walking into something that she knew far too well. She was walking into darkness, a hole that threatened to swallow her up and never let her out. But the part that had Maeve on the floor of her bedroom holding her knees to her chest, pulling on her hair, shaking all while still trying to remember to breathe, was that she wasn’t scared of that darkness.