

MY BROTHER IN THE FUTURE

**DANIELLE
MITCHELL**

They call the drug Spice. When my brother inhales it, he is expecting a normal high—maybe the first of his life. His heart rate erupts in his chest, suddenly thirsty. He crawls to the toilet, attempts to drink from the bowl. His friends bring water. He drinks so fast he is both vomiting & swallowing at the same time. When they go for more, he rummages below the sink, opens a bottle of bleach. In the future, my brother will be the one who cuts the fingers off our gloves so that we look properly apocalyptic in our leather jackets & dirt faces. We will reassemble English through our '90s-era movie references. He will say *Cowabunga!* every time I somersault from harm. The doctors tell us he may never be the same, just before he breaks out of psychiatric & walks barefoot down the road to a church, attempting communion. He says the two video cameras in his room telecast his image to the devil & god. That the doctor's coat whispers distrust of its wearer. When in his mind, my brother dies, he is worried our family will visit. They strap him to the bed for another 24 hours. It is so much easier to show love in the future. You just put an ice pick in the skull of the nearest threat & that saves the one you run with & he knows how deep your feelings go. You don't have to say it. In the future, there's simply no time.