

The Midnight Sprint

(With Delivery Cues)

[Slow, reflective tone. Look down as if staring at the closet floor.]

I am staring at a pair of old, grass-stained sneakers sitting at the bottom of my closet.

[Pause. Heavy emphasis.] You don't keep a pair of shoes this broken

Unless you're trying to remember exactly what it felt like to shatter.

[Shift tone. Shifting into a memory. Voice gets steady, building momentum.] I remember the night the pavement finally gave way.

It started with the frayed laces snapping under the pressure of a packed suitcase,

[Speed up slightly] leading into a frantic midnight sprint

where the heels bit into my ankles

and the rubber soles memorized every crack in the highway out of town.

[Accelerate delivery. High energy, breathless pacing.] The midnight air tasted like exhaust

and rain as the laces unraveled like loose nerves.

The concrete screamed under my weight...

[Staccato rhythm, mimic the sound with your voice] The rubber soles engaged in a frantic squeak- slap against the highway—

[Intense, high energy] a tornado of adrenaline ravaging my chest.

[Sudden stop. Drop the volume significantly. Lean toward the audience.] I wasn't running from a monster in the dark.

[Whisper, emphasize "comfortable"] I was running from the terrifying thought of becoming *comfortable*

In a town...

That prefers its ghosts

[Let the word hang in the air] quiet.

[Rhythmic, steady cadence. Like a marching beat.] We walked the midnight blocks under neon clocks,

banded and bruised by the burden of staying.

[Build intensity with each line]

But you don't keep a pair of shoes this broken.

No, you don't keep things this broken

[Strong, declarative] unless you're finally ready to build.

[Slow down. Bring the volume back down to an intimate, conversational level.] So I leave them there, split open and useless on the floorboards.

Because whenever I feel myself slowing down or forgetting why I fought so hard to escape, I look at the dust on the canvas.

[Final, powerful revelation. Make direct eye contact with the audience.]

They are a monument to the version of me that had the courage to shatter...

[Take a deep breath] just so I could learn how to breathe.