Exiting the tunnel, my bike roars into life. She's ready; I'm ready. Overhead, the sky darkens as the demon arrives. They'll never let me get away: it's a fight to the death. "Come on!" I spit through gritted teeth. Enormous, earth shattering bullets begin firing at me. I ride. They're close, too close…but I ride, I ride because *their* lives depend upon it. My stare is fixed and resolute. Every ounce of me feels alive, electrified. Bang, bang, bang, bang! They're so close, I feel the air near my cheek move. So close. Is this how it ends? This is it…I reach for my sword. Electricity crackles, buzzes and runs through it. We face off. Goodbye old girl… I jump. My bike hurtles toward the ground.

At that moment…I close my eyes and picture *her* standing next to me, *her* perfume washing over me like the warm ocean. I drink it in. She turns to look at me. Her smile–her beautiful smile—fills me with joy. How could I ever live without her? Sunshine pours through the windows of our kitchen and dances around the walls of our apartment. Life is good: it's been such a prosperous year and it is only going to get better. Giggling in her highchair, Asuko is happily eating her breakfast. She's growing up so fast…she's our whole world. I ruffle the top of her hair and she squeals in delight. I smile, broadly, to myself and turn to face my wife. But then the smile fades as the light stops playing on the walls, and the sound of laughter can no longer be heard, and I am here, alone, as my sword plunges into the back of the beast.

It shudders and shakes, crackling and jolting as shockwaves overload its system. Fizz. Hiss. Electrocuted. Tumbling uncontrollably to the ground, we land in a pile. I release the blade from its juddering metal body. My heart thuds audibly in my chest and my hands tremble around the hilt of the sword. Maybe one day my luck will run out, but not today. Today I will continue my quest. I will find them…

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