

"Connected"

Kristen Falso-Capaldi

On a frigid winter night on the east coast, the five insomniacs drifted from their beds to computer screens, tablets and phones. The news feed was spooky, quiet.

They were five islands, an archipelago that dotted across miles of highway, bodies of water, tall buildings and farm land. They never should have known each other, but technology had changed the landscape forever.

One was a boy, alone in his dorm at a university. He was lonely, exhausted and scared shitless. "I'm working on this paper and it's killing me," he typed.

Another, a wife, spent her days folding laundry and watching talk shows that fueled her fears. "Read this article on immunization," she typed, adding a link.

Another woman had asked her lover to leave again that afternoon. She copied some lines from a song, "You live, you learn/You love, you learn/You cry, you learn..."

A widower couldn't look at his empty bed, so he ambled to the kitchen for a cup of tea. "Is anybody out there?" he typed.

Finally, Tom Ford, a movie star, pretended to be a guy named Joe. He put ice in a glass and filled it with vodka. "Saw the new Tom Ford movie. It sucked," he typed.

Each scrolled and typed, typed and scrolled - not one of them noticing the words were floating into a void - till streaks of pink appeared over skylines, pastures, beaches and suburbs.

In one house, a woman shivered at her keyboard. She pulled on a sweater, put on a pot of coffee and watched the day begin from her kitchen window.

"How amazing that we can all be so connected," she said to her empty house.
"What a gift technology is."