

# Wasn't I Paying Attention

Amanda Shires

I just had the strangest day of my life  
Worse than the last week with my first wife  
I let John borrow my truck  
He said he needed to get some stuff  
To pay some bills

Nome ain't a city, it's barely a town  
For a place so pretty, it could bring you way down  
He kept his huntin' knife titanium-clipped  
To a nylon belt set high on his hip  
For self-defense

It was a regular mornin'  
No red flags or warnings  
No, nothin' suspicious  
Wasn't I payin' attention?

I didn't see the full gas can he'd set in the seat  
I just nodded and tossed him the keys  
Did I see shakin' in his hands?  
Was he makin' darker plans  
Than usual?

John had been clean for over a year now  
We all thought he was in the clear now  
But it wasn't God talkin' to him that day  
It was a beast that never goes away  
It sleeps in your brain

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No, nothin' suspicious  
Wasn't I payin' attention?

Every Sunday was another doomsday  
He'd say "Last Judgement's not far away"  
He talked about evil in his blood  
He spoke of fire, he spoke of floods  
That's how he was

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John drove my truck down to the square  
He thought he would end it all right there  
He took off his coat, doused himself in gas  
Slit his own throat, climbed back into the cab  
And lit the match