

We can start when you're ready.

We can start.

I'm closing my eyes.

I'm closing my eyes.

I'm imagining a heart.

A Heart. <3

A human heart. Not a drawn heart. Say "My heart." The right and left ventricles. Corresponding atriums.

My heart.

Imagine the sky. And the ocean, imagine the ocean. I'll describe the sky now. It looks and feels like a piece of mylar was stretched over it. A low-lying formation of silver clouds. A blanket of Stratus. Similarly, there is a membrane lying taut on the surface of the Pacific Ocean. This membrane is barely containing the great rupturous force of the water. You live between two chambers of sky and ocean. The walls of which beat like a heart.

My heart.

Propulsing droplets of water between them, sucking up particles in thin invisible climbing strands.

The right and left ventricles.

The dust trapped in your lungs is vacuum sealed in place until... your whole form unclings one day. You lose your structure, the togetherness you once had. You separate fully into dust. Gone is the binding unity of magnetic proximity. That dust, which used to be you, then weightlessly travels between the chambers of sky and ocean like music.

Someone asked me: is there music in heaven?

Well, is there?

When you get there, there will be.

My communications professor told me: "After you say 'I love you' for the first time to someone, you can't say it to them for the first time again. That context is gone forever."

What did you say? When he said that.

I said I love you.

Okay.

Just kidding. I said okay. I'd rather say I love you for the thousandth time to you then say it again for the first time. Are we done imagining things?

They were done imagining things. His grandmother's first husband, Herb, had been a hypnotist. He used to watch Herb's videos, the cadance and stage presence were mesmerizing but that was the extent of Herb's powers. Herb's videos did not help him quit smoking, or learn Spanish while he slept. The idea of hypnosis was more magical than the reality of it, so he had decided to make up his own version. That's what they were doing now: sitting in a corner booth, the last patrons at the bar, playing hypnosis. At his insistence they would do this every so often. He would sit in front of her and speak in a warm rhythmic voice about how death would separate them or how they couldn't trust themselves and everything else he was afraid of. He thought this would numb her feelings for him, or at least make her reasonable. He thought this was necessary. She was in a permanent blush. Whenever she wasn't holding something, her arms would rise above her head and fall around his shoulders. Each night he counted her breaths, while they landed softly on his neck. His hypnotisms had not yet worked. Maybe because she always interrupted him.

Taking on his chant-like tone as long as she could muster, she would summon a scenario where one of them was a hollow glass bear and the other was the honey that filled it, or some such thing. He had learned his lessons on love from psychoanalysis and modernist literature. He knew this was a broken world replete with cancers, lies and other disorganizations of vital membranes. But when he looked at her, he saw milk and moonlight. He thought about grandparents and brown bag lunches.

Ken? What are you thinking about?

Tumors. Barbie?

Yes?

I love you.

23.09.2023 – 14.10.2023

"Two artists walk into a bar"

Rosa Aiello & Dylan Aiello, Elise Corpataux

With a text by Milo Conroy

Curated by Luigi Amato and Isabella Zamboni

Solutions!

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