

FADING SHADOWS

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The Curse of the sunrise. Bound are we to this beautiful curse. The crashing sound of waves as the sun emerges out of the sky's pocket. Here comes the sun. Damned for eternity casting a spell on its admirers. I close my eyes. I begin to fly towards the sky. The heat intensifies and my breath begins to shorten. I burn in awe as I near this fiery hot star. Flash. I wake up.

As I lay down on the fresh green grass, I stare into the clear blue sky and into the gracefully moving leaves from the trees. I hear a sound emanating from an unknown place. I close my eyes and the illusion begins.

I open my eyes and stare up at the tree. It was fifty feet high up, but I was still able to grab the top most part of the tree and pulled it down towards me. As I let go, a lightning bolt erupted from the tree and shot up into the sky and made a huge booming noise. The sky was now pure black. I stood up and let the downpour soak me wet. I stood up all alone, finding that no one was by me. I was in the landscape of a nightmare yet I felt so peaceful. Despite the nightmare setting, the heavenly music continued to flow through my ears. The whole park was empty. It was now just me and my angelic music.

With the rain soaking my clothes and running down my face, I notice someone standing about twenty feet in front of me. I could only see his back though. He began to speak:

"I know you're here, you're always there, my only fear, you're everywhere. My mind is where I fear you most; I realize you are my ghost. Wherever I run, wherever I go, I'll always know, you'll never seclude. The more I run, the more I fear, the sooner I realize that darkness is here."

I saw the man walking away, disappearing from my sight. I began to feel dizzy, but I looked back up at the sky seeing a lightning bolt heading straight towards me. I kept my eyes wide open and welcomed it. I stood up and called out for the lightning bolt to hit me.

The lightning bolt was about a millimeter away from my face when it struck through me. I felt a surge run through my body as I ended up in a cemetery. This cemetery gave me that *déjà vu* feeling. I suddenly remembered where I was. I was at my father's cemetery. I saw myself as an eight year old sitting in front of his grave. I was visiting myself in a flashback.

I could see my eight year old self standing in front of my father's grave. He had just been buried. We had just come from the church and the skies began to darken. I wanted to cry, but I wanted to be strong for my mom. Suddenly I was transported to another memory. It was three days before the funeral.

A group of about ten people were either standing or sitting in this room where there was some vigil-like remembrance for my father. I stood next to my father's casket. In my hands was a flashlight. I turned it on and began to flash them where my father's closed eyes were. The light gently bounced off his eyes. My mom came over and asked what I was doing. I told her that I wanted to see if he would open his eyes for me and wake up. The room stood silent.

I was back in the flashback where I was standing in front of my father's grave. It began to rain. I sat down on the ground and stared at my father's tombstone. I was transported to another flashback, one roughly when I was about six years old. I was sitting next to my father as he was playing his guitar. I remember feeling that I always wanted to ask him to teach me, but never had the courage. I felt scared that he would be disappointed in me if I wasn't very good. So I just watched and listened whenever he played. The next memory I traveled into was a more recent one.

I was a sophomore in high school. My mom had secretly signed me up for guitar lessons. I was pissed off for about a week because I thought the guitar was incredibly stupid. I took the lessons anyway but stopped after about three months. Since then, I've played about two hours everyday. Whenever I play the guitar, I get this sensation. Sometimes I wonder if I play the guitar because I like it or because my father would have wanted me to like it. I don't think I'll ever know. I'll keep on playing.

I was standing once again in front of my father's grave as an eight year old child. I kneeled down in front of his grave and that was the precise moment I lost my fear of ghosts. Up till I was about eight years old I had been terrified of ghosts, but it was my fault. I kept on bugging my mom to let me watch all the horror movies with ghosts in them. I said that I wouldn't be scared, but I ended up sleeping in my parent's bed every night. The fear just ceased at that defining moment when I was kneeling in front of my father's grave with one arm holding the tombstone, the other hanging weakly as a result from me sitting on it. I just stared into my father's grave now, my eyes intensified as if I were trying to see through the tombstone. I had one more flashback.

My mom and I had just returned to Chicago after my father's funeral. During that first week home, I had dreams about him. They all took place in the church. The one I can most vividly remember is when my father was standing in the middle of the altar. I was sitting down in a pew and saw a yellow light coming from the roof of the church and into my father's body. When I looked back down at my father's brightened soul, I saw that he had wings. I knew what had happened. I took a long deep breath.

Suddenly I felt this sharp pain inside of me. I was back in the empty field with the dark cloudy skies and the heavenly music. It was still pouring rain and a lightning bolt was right in front of my eyes. I smiled and laughed. That's when the lightning bolt finally struck me.

I heard a voice that whispered, "Wake up."

I opened my eyes. The heavenly music was still here. I looked up at the sky and saw clear blue with clouds and a rainbow; there were also several doves soaring around. Fresh tall trees were abundant around me. I stood up and looked around. There was no one there. Illusion had become reality once again.

Simplicity can deter oneself from reality. We look for signs that don't even exist. It's a world of illusion that we desire. But why? Why escape from a reality we know is true? Perhaps it's so we'd never be alone.

Donnie Darko got it perfectly when asked if the search for God was absurd. He replied, "It is if everyone dies alone." We all have felt alone at some point in our lives. Anyone who says they haven't is lying. Whenever someone dies, we feel alone. Whenever someone breaks our heart, we feel alone. When someone leaves and never comes back, we feel alone. Have you ever tried to cry when there was no reason to? You just walk up to the mirror and stare at yourself. You think of the entire saddest thing in

the world: people crying, people dying, children parentless, worldwide starvation, good and evil continuing to fight until both eradicate each other until there is nothing left, imagining all the people you know and love and seeing them die in an explosion, realizing that you will always be alone. That's when the giant bunny rabbit appears and hits you in the face with a soccer ball. Then you realize that you aren't alone. You forget all that's happened and continue living your life until you get all depressed and emotional again.

I'm at the park where it all began. It's so peaceful. Memories will always haunt us. I just keep telling myself the same thing over and over. Don't lose hope. Don't lose faith. All of us together we'll keep each other safe. A phone call away, everyday; never forget the words our friends would say. A new tomorrow, sunrise, sunset, just remember to never forget. And so we move on, there's no more wait, we can all relate, that it's just fate.

Sometimes when we say goodbye, it's forever. You might try to hope that it's just a dream, but you never fall back and wake up. Sometimes you do realize you're dreaming and it's a happy dream. You want to stay asleep forever. You try to forget that you are dreaming and try to trick yourself into thinking that the dream is reality. But you always wake up from dreams, nightmare of good. That's when you really say goodbye. That's when you are awakened into a world you already knew. You dream. You awaken. You say good bye.

My father's ghost will haunt me for the rest of my life and I'm glad. The shadows of memories that I have of my father will always remain in some dark corner in my head waiting to reemerge once again. I just hope those shadows never fade away. I get transported one final time to my father's grave. I am there not as an observer but rather as an eight year old boy. I finally cry. I have something to say.

"I need to ask you where the time has gone. Strangeness all around me, I don't know how it was done. This never ending nightmare is where I don't belong. An escape from these dreams is what I really long. I've climbed flights of stair higher than you can imagine. Somehow time went obscure and I'm back to where I started. A spark is all that's needed to bring the dead back to life. Spirits that need guidance wake you with a dagger and a knife. I'm haunted by these dreams that I seem to have forgotten. What I once knew is lost and seems forgotten. These memories feel as if they're not even real. It's like the whole world lives but never really feels. Shadows of emptiness, does that life even make sense? Sooner or later, you're back in the dream that never ends. Hello, Hello, where can you go? Shadows haunt you down below. Heroes die saving other lives not by trying to get high fives. I know that you're there, but I don't really care. All my life has been one big scare. A whole world apart, soon fear will start. All's too different to trust the heart. We're haunted. We're haunted. We'll always be."