

When I Dreamed

I had a dream the other night that I had a book of everyone I'd ever met.
Each page was another face,
Preserved by time, just the way I saw them in my mind when I looked
At the memories I had lovingly hung on the walls of my ribs.
My ribs, they tighten everytime I see that face again and I hold my breath too long because
I crave the blackness that suffocation grants, allowing me to numb myself just one more time.
I didn't know the past would burn this badly, but this is a forest fire.
I'd rather a flower on fire than a heart though, for flowers grow back with time, but a heart will
scatter in ashes... as mine is right now.
Right now, as I thumb through pages every one of them found a way to break the bonds, hoped
that we would laugh about it but instead
They too became fractals in the gray, windowless world I slumber in.
Another dogeared page to read each morning.
Another dogeared page and I pour myself out again, staining the pages with my bloody fidelity.
I think about how I am slipping on my own blood, drinking my tears, smoking my thoughts these
days.
How these days, every reflection looks different, every face a void of the unsung future we never
grasped.
Stories I am afraid of, stories I thought I wouldn't survive, stories I'd give anything to relive,
Pages of more people I miss, people who miss me and people who scare me.
People I wish I never lost and people I wish I never met.
How these days, every effervescent memory swirls around my white ankles like the ocean in
march.

I had a dream the other night that I had a book of everyone I'd ever met.
Each page was another face,
A flame illuminating another locked chamber of my mind,
All the strangest tapestries lining the darkened corridors, woven from features I had forgotten
Frayed by rats clawing at the past, tangible once again under dusty chandeliers
In an empty castle echoing with bittersweet laughter.
I turn the pages faster so there is wind blowing from the kingdom on a hill to my face.

I see more faces, and the wasps that live inside my chest rattle in their paper nests
Irritated by my sentimentality they begin to sting- pins and needles! Pins and needles!
My memory is the antithesis of asleep.

I see more wrinkles, more kind eyes, the first person who said they loved me and meant it.
I see mountaintops and Crayola crayons and sick days with chicken soup and Scooby Doo.
I see stained glass choir concerts and trick or treating and chairlifts in a blizzard.
I see Oreos with the frosting eaten out, Gucci cologne, teapot wallpaper, the last words she ever
said to me:

“That’s every sweet of you.”

I see bus drivers, lovers, camp counselors, cashiers, raabis, librarians, friends, teachers
I see my city from an airplane window and I see my best friend hugging me tight
I see blurry basements and street signs and concerts and favorite sweaters and carousels
I see the Grand Canyon, breaking and entering, secrets weighing down the bags under her eyes
I see a funeral, city rooftops, his slanted ceilings, her beloved rubber tree plant
I see him crying and I see hurricane clouds blowing over a choppy ocean
I see hazel eyes, Christmas ornaments, the bracelet she always wore
I see pearl earrings and lighthouses and old records and a black and white pony
I see chiffon dresses, a fourleaf clover, a dock drifting in a lake
I see fireworks, gravestones, dimples, her beloved orange cat: Moth
I see clippings from her favorite book, the Breakfast Club, a hidden tattoo:
“It’s from this poem,” she had said.

I see lemon tea with honey, snowmen, his crooked smile, the dreamcatcher hanging from the
rearview mirror

I see beat up red converse, a homemade piercing, his face when I asked what happened to us:
“What do you mean?” He had said.

I see the bed of a pickup truck, wet leaves on a winding lane, a tree swing, paw prints
I see the heartlines on palms, endings that never happened, plans that we never carried out
I see sunrises we missed because we were still asleep, dreaming
I don’t dream that often anymore, perhaps I have scared myself with the nostalgia of my
subconscious.

Perhaps I would rather be numb than feel pins and needles up my spine, in my mind, emotional
puppeteers.

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I don't dream that often anymore, perhaps I have scared myself with the nostalgia of my subconscious.

Perhaps I would rather be numb than feel pins and needles up my spine, in my mind, emotional puppeteers.

But I had a dream the other night that I had a book of everyone I'd ever met.

And when I woke up I realized that it is not years I shared with each face but the moment

The moments are what had stuck in my cobwebbed memory, light enough filter the sunlight for years

Unforgettable idiosyncrasies, bad ideas, favorite things floating in the galaxy above my shoulders

I breath the past into the present, orbiting a lifetime of faces who form a constellation

My name in the stars.