

Smells of a Non-Place

I smell certain things. Not physically, no, but then again I don't know where the difference lies. I hadn't been home for a while. No incentives, inclinations to book an overnight bus - let alone a flight. Is "Home" the right word? By now I had made peace with the fact that my parents weren't culprits, in the traditional sense. An act of bad conscience, as to make me feel unloved, a dangerous unstableness, shipwrecks in the middle of calamitous oceans. Puppets, maybe? Already intoxicated - culture, caregivers (the offshoots of culture), and the rest surrounding: mediators and furtherers of it.

Is it her I smell? Nostalgia was something I never yearned to feel. And so strange was this, a going back non-existent in the cards. Neither did I want to. She did approach me after, but there was nothing there anymore. I had changed, she had not. Sometimes tailbones of the past exist as remnants, irrelevant to now and to the future, mere tools to serve memories; it makes you wonder. A pursuit of the lack seemingly evidenced by its presence.

Backpacking through the coast, nothing particularly new but a change from the recent metropolitan dwellings - there I was before the post-midnight bus ride. No expectations in finding, efforts none to search. A few days passed in introspective walking. Cafes, one-day Gyms, and hostels. That night I had my meeting, tentatively planned to attend in one such cafe I found comfortable.

A couple sat across the room from me. The tensed performative face, a double-check to confirm to the other that I have been paying attention - the glasses adorned

woman. The man was scouring up stories, hand movements and expressiveness, I could confirm: A first date.

Meeting passes, a couple of lines written, I glanced over them once again. High fives, as if engaging in play, the inhibitions dissipate. The tinge of awe-ness, exhibited in watching pups and kittens play, was overcome also by jealousy and anger. What's it like to be loved? I didn't know. Maybe I will never know.

The room. After twelve, having lights on disturbs my sleep. Darkness eases my eyes, contrary to expected soreness. It feels as if I'm interacting with robots and zombies, every action preprogrammed, every single utterance the most probabilistic thing to fall out. Mother, father, home - all empty words. And even her, her name, the idea of her - physically non-existent, a material gap in reality.

I don't know what it is like to be loved. I have forgotten, but then again what I felt, was it love? I long for it, even a violent outburst of gruesome killings to the end of the world would justify falling asleep in their hands. But who are 'they'? I don't know. I can't see it, feel it. A string without end, a car ride without destination, nullness at its complete form.

Sometimes I imagine her laying on me, hugging into me. Schizophrenics have it lucky, the thought crosses my mind sometimes. An extent, the limits of imagination still exist. In the most random conversations, the deterministic mundanity of it helps, along with my parents she happens to be the invisible, the only-visible to me, visitor.

Generative capability of computer programs help. Textual descriptions, my strong suit, rendered me a near-approximate almost-perfect rendering of how she would look like. After all, I could never get the perfect, the real, the non-existent.

We have a place of our own. Just you and me. And I love that - she once said, uttered with solemn melancholic tone. As I changed, the place was no more, even her returning seemed foreign. Everything is indifferent. The void-of-light black room, parents and others. Only smells of a non-place remain.