Reality Has Only One Equality

The only thing granted equally to all is an unfair reality.

It’s such a boring world.

Ah, I want to sleep.

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Trapped within four white walls, words surround me, but I don’t like these ones. Why say things that can’t be easily understood? There’s really no use in dressing them up, making them roll out of the twisting tongue all silky-like. Words are such a flimsy tool, yet it is said they are one of the greatest weapons. Words and the meanings they carry could drown you in dopamine or crush an organ, make you fall into traps headfirst or find enlightenment. Yet, unlike nukes, we use them all the time. In the end, does it matter if they’re truth or lies? There are so many versions of words.

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I wonder how many white-coated people lied to me. Is it a lie if it’s an omission of words?

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Needles tangled in string pierce the limbs. They’re so clear; I can see the richness in red, the shines of yellow, and the darkness in black – bolded letters that label the tubes.

“Don’t touch them.”

Oh.

Puppets.
Mother comes home in a plastic bag. I never knew an adult could be so light. I heard Japanese cremation has the family members pick out the cooked bones. I retch.

The frost nips at my fingers and skewers me through my nightgown, and my feet burn. Ashes dance in the air, but most land into a lavender marble box. They are not fine, and they are not black. Was this her eye? Or her midnight velvet strands?

No, they would have all burned away.

Then, are the ashes that stubbornly keep dancing part of her arm, the one that embraces me?

I feel cold, no…hot, no…

I hear laughter, but I see no one.

I’m the best sleeper in the house. But now, I sometimes sleep in the afternoons or the very early mornings. Sometimes just touching the bed makes me sleepy. Being asleep means fewer headaches though I wonder if my head has always been so loud; every throb and itch feels so annoying now.
They say sleeping is the closest form to death without actually dying. Sleep is also said to be one of the greatest forms of pleasure. I think it’s funny and then wonder when my humor had gotten so dark.

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I hear words, so seductive, so warming, that I peel back the covers, get dressed, and find well-done eggs on top of a piece of toast. Sliced cucumbers and a Chinese sausage fall onto the plate, along with a warmed cup of organic milk placed next to my side.

“Haiyaaaaa, waking up at this time again? What have I told you about sleeping half the day away? I won’t cook for you anymore if you keep doing this!”

The meal was delicious. I couldn’t even speak.

Am I awake or asleep?

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I think the questionnaires, sprayed thrice with seventy-percent chilled alcohol, that the hospital front desk hands me, are useless - an absolute waste of time - especially those under the bolded “Mental Health.” I don’t even understand my own mind; how could others try to understand mine?

“Have you been feeling down, depressed, or irritable?”

This has to be the stupidest question. Doesn’t everyone feel at least one of those for a millisecond in their lifetimes? Or am I just the outlier? But if I checked “yes,” I would have to fill out more questions and have cooing words like approaching a doe for slaughter directed toward me. It’s not like they can change reality.
I mark “no,” and I don’t think I’m wrong. But if my thinking is wrong, then am I still human?

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My two friends, one who is the mother of the group, and the other who insist on questioning everything, once derailed into a discussion of how we would like to die.

“Not sure, but probably I would want to die from old age.”

“Hmmmm, I don’t want to die in pain.”

“For me, I think I would like to die saving someone.”

“Ehhhhhh, you’re so noble!”

The conversation morphed to something I don’t remember anymore, but a wave of unknown emotion fell over me.

Yes, I think I am still human.

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Once, I did talk to a counselor about these thoughts. Her face became stone-like, and her hand twitched distractingly. She urged for more words and without knowing, I began to cry, and my nose ran. She broke the stillness and quickly gave me a tissue box, looking like she wanted to touch me but didn’t.

“Are you suicidal?”

That’s an even stupider question than the other one.

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I hate pain, and I fear death. I love pleasure. The definition of a coward. Nonetheless, that’s how cowards survive, usually.

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Death is numbers. Every day, we are bombarded with such. The number of casualties from war, an accident, a murder, or just gone – those people – are summed up into a word that wouldn’t even fill a sticky note. They are only remembered as humans by close ones, with the few exceptions called celebrities. Otherwise, they are nameless, faceless, and forgotten.

Some fear being forgotten more than death. Or is it all?

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I guess that’s why people treasure words. It’s a record of them, of survival, and of existence.

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A few days ago, I attended Ryka Aoki’s literature event and asked how to write words. She replied, “To write words, it’s most effective to write about the dark memories as the publishers and the readers are much more interested and can be more emotionally connected to those.”

I didn’t know good memories are boring; I like them much more than dark memories. Nevertheless, it reminds me about Freud’s theory that humans channel death instincts - that we can’t help but be fascinated by the darker side. The things I hate.

Ah, it’s time for bed.