

Aleastory

Do you ever look beyond your own nose and ask the question: What story down there awaits its end?

Perhaps you ask: What end down there awaits its story?

Now, apart from any twenty-first century blockbuster in which a tidal wave destroys humanity or asteroids assault the Earth's surface, this story doesn't claim to any Hollywood spectaculars. There is no hero to save the world, nor the impetus to save the world in order to save the cheerleader.

It's more of a road movie; a journey through a place unfamiliar in its latent familiarity – neutralised by its apparent meaninglessness.

At one time, according to Sir George H. Darwin, the Moon was very close to the Earth. Then the tides gradually pushed her far away: the tides that the Moon herself causes in the Earth's waters, where the Earth slowly loses energy.

Exhausted

Delirious with exhaustion. I've no right to be

-You've no right to be-

-I was just saying that-

-And I was merely confirming.

(Silence)

I can't seem to....stillness

You talk a lot for someone who's exhausted

It doesn't take a great deal of energy to talk

They tell the dying not to

I'm not dying

No, you're exhausted, we get it

(Silence)

Close your eyes, shut out the light, and wait: before long dancing shades of spritely colours form across the inner walls of your mind. I often do this, trying to reacquaint myself with simplicity.

When all else seems dense; to defy penetration – when a ringing persists in my eyes, ears, hands and chest; a frustration with the order of things that engulf me – it is in these sprites that I confide.

Do you

Know

Why

You are

Here?

If I did would that be incriminating?

Just a

Yes or No

Answer would

Suffice.

No, then.

So you

Think

We just

Detained you

Without

Reason?

I think if there is a reason, you certainly don't need me to tell you what it is...unless...

(Silence)

Fact: bus stop seats are officially the most uncomfortable in the World.

Two horizontally staggered cylinders complete with enough surface area to accommodate no more than a three year old child or a pet hamster named *Shortarse*. An old lady is perched right in the middle of the "seat". At first glance, she looks so uncomfortable she could quite easily be sat on a bed of (sharpened...) pencils.

I'd been attending photography night classes –

I quite fancied myself the artistic type –

and had been *conversing* on a regular basis with a fellow *arteest*.

How well I know! – *old Qfwfq cried* –

the rest of you can't remember, but I can.

We had her on top of us all the time, that enormous Moon:

- when she was full – nights as bright as day, but with the butter-coloured light – it looked as if she were going to crush us;
- when she was new, she rolled around the sky like a black umbrella blown by the wind;
- and when she was waxing, she came forward with her horns so low she seemed about to stick into the peak of a promontory and get caught there.

Let me paint you a picture. A desolate, barren wasteland, with as many trees, meadows, high streets and landscapes you are familiar with – but all empty; devoid of depth and beauty; function and necessity. The world you remember is consumed by an ironic apocalypse.

Pissing into the wind is largely useless

Our new employers will be arriving soon. We've been briefed – thanks to you. It's not good business to move in on an investment before the previous gives way. So they, also, want us to pass on their regards.

Why stillness?

I don't know. Maybe I've been moving for too long

You haven't been anywhere...

Not literally

How can you move if you haven't gone anywhere?

Metaphorical

You would

You wouldn't.

Are you moving now?

Silence

I don't know

Because you're exhausted

No, because, when I think of movement... I stop.

Then keep thinking

Thinking isn't moving?

Have you ever got motion sickness playing chess?

No, I just see black and white

Oh, the tragedy

Fuck off

And so we must address this systematically: for nothing must get overlooked. A trifle is not a trifle without any-one ingredient. Though it may look good – convincing – it'll never taste right, and will always leave you wanting – the bitter taste of absence.

Luckily for you, we can choose those ingredients; rewrite the recipe; redefine taste.

The bus took a diversion today. It caught me by surprise – I haven't been back too long, but the length of absence is telling. Not a day has passed without being side-winded by some unexpected change. In a way, they're helping to prepare me: a gradual change of climate is infinitely preferable to the plunge-pool. Historically, drastic change rarely bodes well for those swept up in the storm. I'm at least grateful for this bit-part revelation.

Climb up on the Moon? Of course we did. All you had to do was row out to it in a boat and, when you were underneath it, prop a ladder against her and scramble up.

It was thirty minutes until the next train

- **Ingredients:**

3/4 cups firmly packed circumstance.

and I found myself, as I always did, staring

1/4 cup of contentedness

out at the sea. Something drew me to it,

1/4 cup of firmly packed opportunity

something I couldn't explain. I had this feeling

1/4 teaspoon of (crushed) obstacles

that one day someone at sea would need my help

4 cloves of characters

so I had to watch constantly

Ah, I get it...

Do

You?

No, because that's precisely what you want me to say.

Let's go back

To

The beginning.

I didn't know there was one?

There's always

A

Beginning.

If it pleases you-

-it

Does.

When did

You first

Meet?

Well anyway, tucking my self-consciousness tightly away and out of sight, I plucked up the courage to ask her out – on a date – just me and her – together – alone.

Colin; a chubby man, six-foot-two with wiry limbs, shaggy unkempt charcoal hair, and deliriously unstable hands. By chubby I don't mean fat – or even close to it – rather that his sweaty palmed and swampy social dexterity, seems to protrude further into ones atmosphere than is, or should be, prudent. Let's call it social-chub, then, to differentiate.

The spot where the Moon was the lowest, as she went by, was off the Zinc Cliffs. We used to go out with those little rowing boats they had in those days, round and flat, made of cork. They held quite a few of us: me, Captain Vhd Vhd, his wife, my deaf cousin, and sometimes little Xlthlx – she was twelve or so at the time.

Ashley Giles

What?

I don't know. He just popped into my head

Is your head spinning now?

That would be fitting, wouldn't it?

God you lot talk some tripe

How else do we pass the time?

Sleep

That's not very exciting, is it?

At least you wouldn't be moving...

Depends what I'm dream-

SHUT UP.

(Silence)

Hallucination embraced the world – and the world hugged him back until finally their confidence began to wane.

This is how we did the job: in the boat we had a ladder: one of us held it, another climbed to the top, and a third, at the oars, rowed until we were right under the Moon; that's why there had to be so many of us (I only mentioned the main ones). The man at the top of the ladder, as the boat approached the Moon, would become scared and start shouting: 'Stop! Stop! I'm going to bang my head!'

Gourmet canteen food	Little shoes that are used as ornaments	Tap dancing
Walkabout	Fake flowers	Pyramid teabags
Gastro pubs	Decorative SHIT.	Learning French and German
Cocktail sausages – never filling	When you buy a frame getting an ‘example’ picture	Neo-nazism
Marmite	Chinese employees at burger king with “western names”	Religion
Non-alcoholic alcohol	English school’s language departments	The pope
Decafe coffee		Mugs with two handles
Teaching assistants		Royalty
Drugs		BBC subscription

It wasn't just at the station; I'd keep my eyes fixed on it while I travelled on the train, or in a car, or walking along the promenade. It was just this feeling I had that I couldn't explain. At every buoy that bobbed up and down or every seagull that landed on the water I took a double take, just to check it wasn't somebody in trouble.

Two years ago-

-be

Specific.

The fourteenth of December, two thousand and seven, at twenty minutes and forty-four seconds past the twentieth hour-

-Where did

You meet?

The Lloyds TSB cash machine, Division Street, between the Forum Bar and the Common Room – I was standing on the second paving stone from the West of the main road, she the fourth paving stone, operating the cash machine-

What were

The

Circumstances?

Is it really necessary?

Just answer the

Question

Clumsy and cold.

Describe

- 2 tbsp of grated suspicion rind
- Floating above the city I admired the calmness that seeped upwards, into the atmosphere that engulfed me.
 - 2 tablespoons of gossip oil
- It is said a city never sleeps: this city was, however, sound asleep, breathing heavily into a deep coma of serenity.
 - 1 5 lb. boneless leg of love
 - At least, on the face of things it was serene;
 - 1 jar of fire roasted red hatred, drained and patted dry
 - and had I not risen above the chaos –
 - 2 teaspoons of lemon pepper lies seasoning
 - albeit of my own mind –
 - 2 teaspoons, seasoning of secrecy
 - to escape the noise and embrace a rare moment of stillness?
 - 4 tbsp of insecure mustard
 - This is pointless.
 - Fresh cracked climax
 - This is pointless.
 - Sea salt, triumph and loss.
 - This is...:

the impression you had, seeing her on top of you, immense, and all rough with sharp spikes and jagged, saw-tooth edges. It may be different now, but then the Moon, or rather the bottom, the underbelly of the Moon, the part that passed closest to the Earth and almost scraped it, was covered with a crust of sharp scales.

After studying the largely useless timetable - a tool for nurturing false hope - your bus arrives. Like the good citizen you are, you help the old lady on to the bus. You watch as she takes a right turn larger than the Titanic's, and saunter past the driver without so much as eye contact. The unmistakable beep of the bus driver's "Travel Pass" button follows, and just for a second the image of him scanning a barcode on the woman's forehead pops into your mind.

Knocking back a few bottles of self esteem and a shot or two of confidence, I set off to my impending doom, dusty contraceptive in one pocket and taxi-fare-for-one in the other.

And what did I find?

People getting stressed
over nothing

Racism
War

Herbal remedies
Yoga

Diets	Dying plants	Reality TV
Yogalatis	Plants in doors	X-factor
Latin	Goldfish	Reflective Essays
Watching box sets of your favourite programs, and making life parallel's – and beginning to act and think like the characters/the world	Terrestrial TV	Dry clean only clothes
Smoking	Randomly shaped kitchen equipment	Dog shows
The amount of porn on the internet	People's opinions on wine	Cambridge research
Robotic Penguins	Sanitary towels	Cancer causes
Ridiculously loud amps/speakers that are never used for loud music	Periods	"Holiday"
Classical music on bass booster	Dating	Social realism
Salt and pepper shakers that are shaped elaborately but don't fucking work	Bath stuff as presents	Post-modernism
A5 sized chopping boards...	Christmas turkey	Goths
TWO of them	Mii's	Dressing "how I want to, and I don't care what everyone thinks"
	Wasps	Neo-individuality
	A-sexual creatures	Neo-burlesque
	Daddy long legs	Post-feminism
	Backing your schools books	Party politics
	Poorly made tents	The vote
	'Half spoon' sugar	
	Exercise bikes that are used three times	
	Bisexuals	
	Toastie makers	

To follow the above summary, then, I shall begin at the beginning. Or perhaps more accurately, what I recognised as the beginning of a pattern for myself:

Yes, the Moon was so strong that she pulled you up; you realized this the moment you passed from one to the other: you had to swing up abruptly, with a kind of somersault, grabbing the scales, throwing your legs over your head, until your feet were on the Moon's surface. Seen from the Earth, you looked as if you were hanging there with your head down, but for you, it was the normal position, and the only odd thing was that when you raised your eyes you saw the sea above you, glistening, with the boat and the others upside down, hanging like a bunch of grapes from a vine.

(And look at me. Rambling as per usual. It's a habit I must avoid – here I am telling the most important story of all time – of who's time? – and I'm already boring you with the technical particulars of the tangible nihilism that will imminently ensue.)

Outside the blinded windows of his office, the bull-pen of a bustling newspaper headquarters extends the virtues of our Colin and his chubbiness. Mini-Colin's saunter about with bundles of papers and bursting files, dripping the once-orderly filing system onto the beige – and further beige – carpet; it appears something equally as important, and probably as miniscule, has caught their attention - or they have otherwise been ordered to devote it regardless.

Look at it

Grey isn't it

Like a great expanse of porridge.

(They laugh)

As she backed away from the machine, a little uneasy on her heels, she trod on my foot.

(Silence)

You need more?

(Silence)

..she stumbled, whilst trying to apologise, and dropped her purse on the floor. I bent over to pick it up – she did also. We banged heads. She fell over, creased up laughing, holding her head. Her friend – Lilly – came back to pick her up, without much success. I pulled her up from the floor.....we came face to face.The inside of my head was aching with that sort of...precisely located pain that you can only get from knocking your head against someone else's

– *it was causing me to squint...to squint at her...*

Go
On.

(Pause)

This should give you an idea of how the influences of Earth and Moon, practically equal, fought over the space between them. I'll tell you something else: a body that descended to the Earth from the satellite was still charged for a while with lunar force and rejected the attraction of our world. Even I, big and heavy as I was: every time I had been up there, I took a while to get used to the Earth's up and its down, and the others would have to grab my arms and hold me, clinging in a bunch in the swaying boat whilst I still had my head hanging and my legs stretching upwards to the sky.

'Hold on! Hold on to us!'
they shouted at me,

Where was I? The beginning I suspect;

1. Heat the circumstance to 350 degrees.
2. Using the love chopper, mince the characters, contentedness, opportunity, obstacles, and suspicion rind. Grind until nearly a paste, add gossip oil.
3. Unroll the love (bless your butcher) cut side up on to societal wrap covered work surface. Spread the pesto of despondency to cover the surface of the cut side of the society. Cover with a layer of red hatred. Sprinkle with 1/2 of the lemon pepper lies seasoning and 1/2 of the seasoning of secrecy.
4. Roll up the love. Tie with butcher's choking twine every 3 minutes or so.

True to form, the bus journey comes complete with; managing *not* to avoid *any* potholes in the road;

*I watched people walk out on the mudflats during
low tide, remembering how I used to enjoy it when I
was a kid.*

a visit to every bus stop *ever built* –

*I thought how crazy I must have
been and how crazy those people must be
now.*

an astounding 1/59,049 chance of hitting all 10 traffic lights en route burning on red (my maths never was too great);

*They could get stuck out there and drown
when the tide came back in.*

and having the world's sweatiest man sit next to you, before selecting "Music to piss *everyone* off" on his iPod.

Maybe they were just ignorant and didn't realise the dangers.

Somewhere along the line you lost your way. What was tasteful consumed itself by an urgency to be defined. Where is beauty, now, but in a dictionary?

I'd lose track of time staring out to sea like that, trying not to break my concentration.

Lots in common. Lots and lots and lots in common.

I took a moment to listen

to myself

talking,

and could swear there was a hint of 'suave' knocking around.

Deadline lingers for Monday's press, and the looming void of a missing story stares ominously from the front page.

One day I could no longer summon them.

5 Mix remaining lemon pepper lies, and secrecy seasoning into the insecure mustard.

Not that I ever had command over them in the first place;

6 Rub wounds entirely with this mixture, then coat the characters with a little more fresh ground climax and a generous rub of triumph and loss salt. You want the effect of the coarse grind loss salt and climax pepper to be almost like a triumphant crust..

it was precisely this fact that allowed the ringing to cease. Instead, when I close my eyes,

7 Stretch out on a rack, on a shallow roasting stage.

a great expanse of porridge-like-beige lodges itself like quicksand, undulating around my mind's eye,

8 Bake at 350 degrees for however long it takes or until a tears thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the circumstance reaches 145 thousand sobs, for medium rare. (Allow at least 15 to 20 minutes of resting time before asking those of your audience who cannot take any more, to leave.)

enticing me forward to part its opaque culture, so that I may melt into its perpetual uncertainty.

9 Cut the life saving string and slice to serve.

10 ...Well she'd had enough alcohol that night to tranq' a cow, and she was still giggling away, probably completely unaware of the pain. Lilly was pulling on the straps of her top...No, it was a dress...it was green – a faded, light green, I remember. She wouldn't move, still holding my hand....As I said, I was squinting through the pain, but...I don't know. Even then our eyes locked.

11

12 *(Pause)*

13 Then

14

What?

15 *What then? Well she went.*

16 How did

17

She

18 Leave?

19 *What? What do you mean how did she..?*

20 Leave.

21 *She turned and walked away.*

22

How

23 Though?

24 *By pivoting her torso to face the direction her feet were about to walk – placing one foot in front of the other and supporting the forward motion of her body as her legs carried her in the opposite direction to me-*

25 Did she

26

Look back?

27 *(Long Pause)*

....and in all that groping, sometimes I ended up seizing one of Mrs Vhd Vhd's breasts, which were round and firm and the contact was good and secure and had an attraction as strong as the Moon's or even stronger, especially if I managed, as I plunged down, to put my other arm around her hips, and with this I passed back into our world and fell with a thud into the bottom of the boat, where Captain Vhd Vhd brought me around, throwing a bucket of water in my face.

I came to one conclusion: not simply does the city *breed* the stresses of societal debauchery – the city imprisoned it. Somewhere - behind walls, doors and windows - the erratic pulse of an urban nature beats its ugly drum, a mixture of love;

hatred;

happiness;

misery;

ecstasy;

rage;

despondency

and

indifference

(to name just a few).

I was in heaven! She was even interested in my 'how to get to Sheffield' speech –

all those years of mockery,

and finally I'd managed

to engage someone with a story symptomatic of not-been-on-a-date-in-years-itis.

The success so far was bordering on ridiculous,

This is how the story of my love for the Captain's wife began, and my suffering. Because it didn't take me long to realize whom the lady kept looking at insistently:

Political Correctness	IT girls	"It's what's on the inside that counts"
Mulled Wine bathroom perfume	Celebrities	Bubbly people
Deodourant that smells of B.O.	Lindsay Lohan	Two faced people
Multicoloured toilet paper	Paris Hilton	Every fucker at drama school knows how to play the acoustic guitar and loves their own music.
Toilet brushes	The Priory	Singing round the campfire at parties
London water	Rehab	Bangles
The USA	Pete Docherty	Cock Fodder
War on "Terror"	Celebrity preferential treatment	Sexist Poker Nights
Protesting	The Sun	Shopping
The Upper Class	Pro-life	Designer Clothes
War Marches	Paedophiles	Sunglasses in dark places.
Suicide Bombing	Social Morality	Fairy Lights
People trying to be working class	Money	
Rat dogs	Theatre for development	
Dog clothes	Spam	
Dog carriers	Penis enlargement emails	
	"Size doesn't matter"	

when my cousin's hands clasped the satellite, I watched Mrs Vhd Vhd, and in her eyes I could read the thoughts that the deaf man's familiarity with the Moon were arousing in her; and when he disappeared in his mysterious lunar explorations, I saw her become restless, as if on pins and needles, and then it was all clear to me, how Mrs Vhd Vhd was becoming jealous of the Moon and I was jealous of my cousin

If you can't laugh at fate, you don't get the joke.

Maybe if I say it enough, a point will emerge amidst the decadence of this current whim.

The rusting box of wheels finally breaks away from the temperamental traffic and embarks down a large tree-lined open street. Hitting forty - or as near as the relic can get to it - the first warm rays of the day's sun mask your face.

But then, as soon as my cousin had climbed the ladder, Mrs Vhd Vhd said:

'This time I want to go up there, too!'

This had never happened before; the Captain's wife had never gone up on the Moon.

'I'm going to go up for a while, too, to help out!'

I was held back as if in a vice. 'You stay here; you have work to do later,' the Captain commanded, without raising his voice.

Yes

Did you

Follow?

No

Why

Not?

I....I don't know.

Did you

Want

To?

Did you

Think

About

it?

I can't remember

Did

you want

to

think

about it?

I just said I can't Re/member

/Did you

Have

an

Urge?

Look-

-was

there something

that urged

you

forward

Perhaps

Like a lover lost in a misty void, unsure of their direction or even that which they (I?) seek. The outside world has penetrated within. And gone is my solitude. Looking up – or at least what I think up is – I imagine myself transcending the nebula, imagine, with what imagination I am afforded, that I may gaze down upon the beige sea, and have just one single clear thought.

But had he known from the beginning that the Moon's orbit was widening?

None of us could have suspected it.

Would I jump the fence and jump down onto the beach from the platform or would I run the long way round through the station entrance? Would I empty my wallet and mobile phone from my pocket and leave them on the beach or would I just dive straight into the water?

Stumbling through the front door of my shared-flat, both doubling over in stitches at the taxi driver's uncanny resemblance to Dame Edna Everage...in drag, we were confronted by a half naked and

totally astonished Pete, nibbling at a pot of dry cereal and clearly retiring to his room after a nightly instalment of *I'm Alan Partridge*.

Our friends up there must have realized what was happening; in fact, they looked up at us with frightened eyes. And from their mouths and ours, at the same moment, came a cry: 'The Moon's going away!'

The amber sphere hovers low in the cloudless sky, making it impossible to escape its gaze. The sun passes behind the only cloud in the sky.

The final corner of your journey is rounded, just as the fat sweaty oaf's music reaches the end of its reign of terror. As the bus begins its descent towards your stop, the faceless mannequins drift by the window in all their pallets of colour,

A journey towards nothingness – does such a word exist to encompass such a notion?

Maybe a neologism would be handy in this matter.

Or for ease of speaking...typing, and reading, and to avoid dwelling too deeply on how relevancy may be obtained,

it should be arbitrary. Google. I like Google.

At this command, the sailors tried to form a group, a mass, to push all together until they reached the zone of the Earth's attraction: all of a sudden a cascade of bodies plunged into the sea with a loud splash.

A feeling

Maybe

What

Was

the

feeling?

How can I recall a feeling I'm not even sure I had?

Butterflies?

Yes, fucking butterflies.

Where was it

located?

Located? Manchester!

It can be screamed as though it were a profanity, uttered in a whispered manner that bespeaks a revelation, or tacked on to the end of a witty anecdote to conclude an outrageous story and inspire uproarious laughter

'Wait! The Captain's wife is missing!'

I shouted.

The Captain's wife had also tried to jump, but she was still floating only a few yards from the Moon...

In your arm?

Your

head?

My toe.

Your

chest?

My tongue

Your

hip?

My fucking middle finger.

Your

heart?

MY COCK!

(Long Silence)

Pete is my housemate; a winging stump of a man, pessimistic to the core and a self-confessed Scotsman. Needless to say he hadn't cropped up in any of the nights vibrant conversation, with even the verbal-autoroute to Sheffield taking precedence.

'I'm afraid,'

'I'm too afraid to jump. I'm a coward!'

and at that moment I jumped.

Just one. One tiny dancing
colourful sprite to
disseminate the mixture
and let us (me?) start
again.

*I didn't know. The
only thing I knew was that
at this moment in time
nobody at sea needed my
help and my train was
pulling in.*

I swam furiously through
the sky, and held the harp
out to her, and instead of
coming towards me she
rolled over and over,
showing me first her
impassive face and then
her backside.

A long month began. The Moon turned slowly around the Earth.

We're only

Trying to

Help.

Bloody likely.

Whether you

Believe

us

Or

Not, is

entirely

Irrelevant.

There is nothing for you to help. I'm gone. I've disappeared, and nobody has, or will, come looking – you're wasting your time; whatever it is you're trying to find – because I have no fucking idea – you won't find it in me.

Give it

Time.

Well seeing as though that's the one thing I do have, but have nothing to spend it on, you're welcome to it. Maybe you can find some use for it, because I certainly haven't.

(Pause)

When was

The

Last time

You saw her?

...You know all this...

Remind

Us.

Sigh. Silence.

Six months ago-

-Please be

Specific-

-Christ – the seventeenth of July, two thousand and nine, twenty-nine minutes and six seconds past the hour of ten, in the morning.

Where?

Fourth table on the right, chair facing the window, in the little cafe-

Name

Please.

ALLESANDRO'S.

What was

the

weather

like?

Pissing it down.

How did

This

affect

You?

I was wet.

And?

Pissed off.

And towards

Her?

(Silence.)

Answer the

Question, please.

My feet are thoroughly grounded,

lead weights made

heavier

still

by the swirling mists that gather around my legs, and upwards, so I can't even make out the shadow of my feet, or which direction they might be facing.

I could have stayed up there forever, wrapped myself in quiet content, and deceived myself with illusions of amity: but what goes up must come down.

I REPEAT: Somewhere along the line you lost your way. What was tasteful consumed itself by an urgency to be defined. Where is beauty, now, but in a dictionary?

I thought only of Earth. It was Earth that caused each of us to be that someone he was rather than someone else; up there, wrested from the Earth, it was as if I were no longer that I, nor she that She, for me.

When the Moon had completed its circling of the planet, there we were again over the Zinc Cliffs.

Captain's wife and I – recognized my cousin: it couldn't have been anyone else, he was playing his last game with the Moon, one of his tricks, with the Moon on the tip of his pole as if he were juggling with her. And we realized that his virtuosity had no purpose, aimed at no practical result, indeed you would have said he was driving the Moon away, that he was helping her departure, that he wanted to show her to her more distance orbit. And this, too, was just like him: he was unable to conceive desires that went against the Moon's nature, the Moon's course and destiny and if the Moon now tended to go away from him, then he would take delight in this separation just as, till now, he had delighted in the Moon's nearness.

What could Mrs Vhd Vhd do, in the face of this? It was only at this moment that she proved her passion for the deaf man hadn't been a frivolous whim but an irrevocable vow. If what my cousin now loved was the distant Moon, then she too would remain distant, on the Moon.

(Long silence.)

...Foreboding.

Why?

I don't know.

Did

She

See

You?

No.

Sure?

No.

You were

Meeting her.

Was that a question?

No.

(Silence.)

You didn't

Keep the

Appointment.

Appointment. Appointment? That's cold even for you bastards. No. I didn't keep the Appointment.

Why

Not?

Is this fun for you? Torturing me with my own memories and insecurities?

It's our

Job.?

Pay well?

That's

Irrelevant

Irrelevant. IRRELEVANT. What is relevant?!

The answers to

Our

Questions.

I thought they might be.

The

Appointment:

Why?

*Because I'm an emotional **masochist** – and you're my fucking fix.*

Let's go

Back.

Wonderful.

The second

Meeting.

Would you like the time and date, to the nearest nano-second, and the precise GPS coordinates of myself and "her"?

Rough estimates

will

Do.

My return was sweet, my home refound, but my thoughts were filled only with grief at having lost her, and my eyes gazed at the Moon, for ever beyond my reach, as I sought her. And I saw her. She was there where I had left her, lying on a beach directly over our heads, and she said nothing. She was the colour of the Moon; she held the harp at her side and moved one hand now and then in slow arpeggios. I could distinguish the shape of her bosom, her arms, her thighs, just as I remember them now, just as now, when the Moon has become that flat, remote circle, I still look for her as soon as the first sliver appears in the sky, and the more it waxes, the more clearly I imagine I can see her, her or something of her, but only her, in a hundred, a thousand different vistas, she who makes the Moon the Moon and, whenever she is full, sets the dogs to howling all night long, and me with them.

What story has thus awaited its end?

They really do have a knack for sneaking up on you, don't they?

And yet now... all I can think is:

Why is pissing into the wind LARGELY, and not TOTALLY useless?

“Bibliography”

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