

America For President

I don't remember how exactly it started. Someone called somebody else a cunt. She, I think it was a girl, called him a motherfucker. Their faces curled in the defiant sneers of righteous freedom fighters, so close if you took it out of context you might wonder if they were about to kiss. They called her candidate a liar, a fake. His was a propagandising populist with no sense of how the world worked. Somebody punched someone else. Their faces vanished behind a mass of limbs. There was nothing but darkness and the taste of blood. It didn't hurt though.

That's the funny thing, when I think back to that summer night in the massive auditorium with the bright LEDs pulsing gentle red, white, and blue waves over our faces. It didn't hurt like you would expect it to. The thing that hurt was that I hadn't expected it, that it came so suddenly. One second you were sitting in a comfy red cushion, feeling the swell of what some might call patriotism coursing through your veins. You had a vision then, of green lands, snow-capped purple mountains, and a wide blue sky. A city in the distance lit up by tiny specks of yellow light, the sound of engines, footsteps, and mingled voices humming in unison. So real you could taste it.

Then it was ash. All of it.

And you knew it was ash. I knew it was ash. We had never wanted to believe that. But we knew it, had always known it, and still know it.

Then the sneering faces. Cunt. Motherfucker. *Eiah--*.

Blood in your mouth. A fist in his gut. So that's what it feels like to have your fist sink into someone's stomach fat. Wait is that my blood or hers?

I found in the aftermath that my blood tasted a little sweeter than most people's. At the time I couldn't tell the difference. It was all so fresh.

Where did Erica go?

Someone screamed order. That whipped the frenzy up even more. You could feel hearts beating against one another as if in time to the arrhythmic pulse of fists.

Order. Order. Order.

A call for something we didn't, we could not, want anymore. To sit in aligned rows and bask in tranquil nothings as the sands of time slipped through our Grasp.

Fight!Fight!Fight!

It wasn't a command. Thank goodness it wasn't a command. The call sounded louder in its silent affirmation. Actions speak louder than words. And the master at the center of the stage had come armed only with words. Perhaps an assault rifle would have been a better weapon of choice.

Up in the balcony you could hear even louder shouts.

Asshole!

Communist!

Dumbass!

Bitch!

Fucker!

(Democracy?)

Anarchy! That one had a ring of joy to it. I felt the smile light up the man's eyes. He was nearer than I expected. Something about the way that red LED glinted in his iris irritated me. I gripped his head. My thumbs dug into those reflective lights. We tumbled over the side of an aisle. I don't remember if it was slippery because eyes are just slippery or if—He laughed and laughed and laughed. Then he didn't.

The balcony was even louder. There were fewer of them and they were louder! How could that be? No, no. In our unanimous dissent we fought to show who the true masters were. A yell ripped from my throat. I jumped back in to the body mass.

We rocked back and forth. It was soothing. You didn't even have to relax. The people around you did that for you. I could have gone to sleep. I might have. It's hard to remember.

Eventually the zeal to fight spilled out through the buildings doors. There was not a soul lingering in the abandoned auditorium.

Somehow there was an even greater mass of people (where had they come from?) outside, doing the exact same thing.

Fists. Hearts. Shouts. No pain.

But you felt it in your bones, as if everything was flowing like a river and you were just a tiny molecule running along. Nobody could see you; nothing in the entire universe could tell that you even existed. Not even yourself. Yet there you were, one of many...so many. Such an unintelligible pity.

Sirens wailed for no one.

No one was there.

We didn't see much. It's hard to know where the river's taking you when you can't see where you are.

It replaced everything else. Stepping out into that cool air for what felt like the first time in my life. It touched everyone that night I think. We haven't been the same since. At least I haven't.

Everyone felt it. You didn't need to be *there* to feel the change. You knew it. *You*. Me. Everyone around the world. We knew it. Beyond ----.

And you could feel it all. That was the really strange thing. Every little shift in motion from the impact of a head onto the pavement to the last gasps of air escaping a thousand lives at once. It wasn't painful. It just happened. And you knew it. Everyone did. I don't know if it was the worst there. I don't know if it was worse at all.

I found Erica slumped against a tree.

The cold steel of our locket. The coarseness of a picture inside. Feeling nothing is different than feeling empty.

My forehead ramming against someone else's.

Their fist in my groin.

My pen entering their neck.

Our hearts in our hands.

Blood mixes with the dark liquid from the pen.

Ink for a new constitution.