

The Dream

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All this - everything - is a dream. In this dream I live and breathe.

In this dream I have a car, a house, a family. This dream has an I, and a car, a house, a family. It is a continuum, this dream, as if it were in conspiracy with time. Time agrees to give its deceptive coherence to the illusion of this dream, that I see everyday, and which I escape only for a few moments at night.

The dream surrounds me. It has become my life.

It drives with me in the morning when I leave my house and get into my car to go to my office. My house, my car, my office. My daily dream.

It is tenacious, this dream. It drives back with me in the evening when I leave 'my office' and get into 'my car' to return to 'my house'. It does not leave me alone. It fills up my senses. It drives me crazy... this dream.

In this version of reality people seem to walk with their feet and work with their hands. They appear to blink their eyes and look at each other, and move their bodies and touch each other. In this version of reality things appear to be how they appear: men strangling their wives, famous people giving interviews, women bearing children. Things seem to become what they become and how they become it. It is a version of reality whose coordinates everybody has agreed upon.

In this version of reality we appear to draw breaths and consequently snarl at each other. In this version of reality there is an 'I' who appears to be who I am. It is a version of reality that has become a reality - the overarching reality of this dream.

In this dream I dream other dreams. I dream of not being in this dream. Of being in some other dream. In that other dream, I dream, I would not have to dream other dreams any more. I would be happy to live in that dream, the other dream, because then I would be out of this dream.

This other dream is the exact opposite of my present state of dream. It is new, fresh. It contains nothing this dream does, not the constant knot in my stomach, nor the gnawing knocking in my head. My present dream induces a knot in my soul. My other dream wouldn't. In this dream I dream of that other dream - no house, no car, no knot. It is a nice dream to dream but there is no substance to it. I don't know what it really consists of. Only blackness surrounds it. And so I dream a dream of blackness in my dream.

In my dream - this dream - everything has the hard edge of reality. Or a version of reality. It hurts. And yet it is nothing but a dream. So much the worse for it.

I rush to touch the colours of this dream, to try to grasp the edges of its contours, but they elude me. It suffers, my dream. Its pain lives deep inside my soul. I cannot capture it but my life has been captured by this dream.

'My life.' Ha! Let me give you an example. In 'my life', I have a family. In this family I have a wife and two children. We live together in this dream and yet all our dreams are different. My wife dreams of the day I would be more caring. I dream of the day I would not have to think so much about what she is thinking. Or feeling. Our children dream about how they would leave us as soon as they grow up and how they would go to live in their own houses. All the house that we have now is this dream and yet we strive to inhabit other dream-houses. This dream is choking us to death and so we escape in fantasies that we label dreams. But this is the dream.

In this dream there is our house. In this house there are four rooms. There is a big room called the drawing-dining room. Then there are three bedrooms, one that my wife and I share, one for our daughter and one for our son. Our dream-son shuts himself in his dream-room and our dream-daughter locks herself in hers. In this dream-world we do not really talk to each other, even when we open our mouths in somebody's direction and appear to speak. It is dream-speak that we speak in this dream-house in our dream-world in this dream-life. That is why none of us hears the other speak. We only see mouths open and shut, and tongues that appear to move. We live in a completely closed reality, our personal, individual realities, and even this is not reality but a dream. We are completely self-encompassed/-encompassing, having no sort of touch with any other, caught in the vice-like grip of our dreams. This grip of vice that we call our lives.

Our lives, our house, our conversations are a dream. But we take them very seriously. I dwell incessantly, as if in a dream, on what my wife has said to me and where exactly and how much it hurt. Her words whirl around in my head and I almost use them to form a wrenching, heart-rending scream, as if in a nightmare. My son, who lives in his dream, does not like what we said to each other and therefore abuses his sister in his dream. Our daughter, living in her own dream, uses her two dream-hands to viciously assault her brother.

In our dream-house we have such plots, such scenarios, such dream sequences.

This is 'my life', my dream-life. In this dream-life I have a dream-everyday. I wake up from my dreams and look into my mirror. What I see there appears to be a dream. It cannot be real, these tired eyes, this sagging jaw line, this ugly stubble, this dull, dead skin. This skin is a dream. In my dream-mirror I see a dream-face that I fail to recognise each morning that is my dream-morning.

I hate the dreams of my dream-mornings and cannot wait for the dream-afternoon to arrive. In my dream-afternoon I have my dream-lunch. I eat it dreamily, awaiting the arrival of

the dream-evening, so I could escape my dream-office and possibly be happy for a while. I dream of happiness in my dream-office.

In my dream-office I move through my work as if through a dream. It has the same sense of unreality. None of it makes any sense and yet one cannot help being there, being guided by forces one cannot hope to control. The dream moves of its accord, shifts terrain according to its own will, takes over my waking life. I move from one scene to another, from my boss's room to my own cubicle, with the same sense of unblinking wonder at the dream. I marvel at the absurdity of the dream at the same time that I cannot help being caught in its absurdity. In my dream I am helpless. I cannot shape or guide it. I hunch in front of my computer screen and wait for the next dream-mail to arrive, from my dream-boss, containing dream-instructions about the next dream-step to take in my dream-line of work. I dream of the future.

In my dream-evening I experience a deep dream-depression. The twilight reflects my dream-anguish in its gathering darkness and the evening birds echo it in their dream-cacophony. I seek to extend, for as long as I can, the dream-interval between my dream-office and my dream-house. Sometimes I venture into a dream-bar, among dream-people, to have a dream-drink. The drink relieves the anguish of the dream, and the chattering of the dream-people is soothing to the dream-senses like the dream-cacophony of the evening birds before they lie down to rest. The dream of the bar is a dark, dank dream. Only occasional lights flash in this dream as cigarette-smoke populates its air. I dance a dream-dance with a dream-woman that I do not know. I gulp down more dream-drinks.

This dream is a dream full of nausea and flowers, made up of psychedelic, flashing, shifting lights and scents. I feel my dream-dick rise in my dream-pants as I involuntarily wet my underwear in this dream, just like a dreaming child in the night.

I have a dream-stumble that I employ each time I exit the dream-bar to make my dream-way to my dream-house. My dream-wife almost kills me with her bare hands as she dream-smells the whiskey in my dream-breath. She has been dream-drinking herself but not as much as I have in my dream. Our two dream-children stare at us with hate and wonder from the respective locations of their dreams.

We pass another dream-night. My wife and I make dream-love to each other; love that we cannot feel or touch, love that is not real, makes no sense, leaves us feeling empty and terrible in our dream-mornings, and yet has managed to produce two children. What is this dream-love in this dream-night of lovemaking? Why does this love make us feel like a dream of criminals instead of a dream of lovers? What is this dream? Where does it end?

I dream these questions in the agonised dream-silence post our dream-lovemaking, before we fall off to sleep and dream other dreams. And then the dream-morning arrives and the dream looks into its own mirror. What the dream sees when it looks into the mirror is not very clear, because it is a dream-mirror, uncleaned for ages, spotted, hazy.

This, then, is 'my life', the dream.

The mirror looks into it.

Sometimes I hammer at this dream, trying desperately to break it down, smash it to pieces, have its glass-texture shatter to the floor. If it were properly shattered, into a million glittering silvery pieces, then I would not be able to pick them up any more, to gather them in my arms and reconstruct my dream. That is the force of the destruction that I desire. It is almost death. Because my life is a dream.

Sometimes I try to gather the force required to force my death-wish to its conclusion. And then I begin to dream of the conclusion. I imagine my arms raised in agony and terror, coming down with the might of that hammer, on the febrile delusion of my dream. My dream pulsates, and pullulates, with the horror and despair of its own impending doom. It shivers with almost religious ecstasy. I raise my arms to force the issue to its conclusion. ... Upon which I wake back into my dream.

The dream that is my life.

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In the morning of that arising everything seemed fresh and different. The air breathed a new scent and the light wore a new colour. I saw with new eyes. My blinking had become different. The texture of the hair on my chest had altered. I groped with my hands into space that was unfathomable.

In the morning of that arising I began to act different, as if out of a dream. No one could understand me. They looked at me as if I were crazed. I must have looked a little crazed for they could not help staring at me with wide-open eyes. My family could not understand my behaviour. They could not understand the ending of that dream. They kept looking at me, as if in a dream.

I went about as if I was blind. I stumbled over objects in my path. Time and again I was miraculously saved from smashing open my skull against the floor. I would have said it was a dream except that this was not the dream. I was able to see through my own skin. I began to see what empty spaces consisted of. I began to smell space, feel it in my lungs, breathe it in and out.

All continuity was broken. Time lay shattered and smashed at my door. Coherence seemed to have flown out of my life and I was panic-stricken for a while. The coherence seemed to come back with the panic; and then both vanished. I was left empty without a soul. Nothing to call my own. I saw my erstwhile dream as if it were a dream. I saw my erstwhile family and could not understand that they could still dream.

Everything seemed strange for a while; now; always. Everything was strange for now and always. Everything was always and now, strange. As if in a dream. I was in a dream out of that dream. A dream that was constantly being bruised and broken. So that it was no more a dream. It was what was, at this moment, now, the waking up more terrifying than the dream.

The dream closed its eyes - in the shape of 'my office', in the form of 'my family' - and went back to its sleep. In that sleep the dream was dreaming itself, and I was looking at that dream.