

Remarks on the Occasion of The Third Annual Memorial For Everything That's Ever Happened Ever

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There was something I meant to tell you.

There was something that I didn't actually need to tell you, because it sounded so much better untold. It lived in pauses. It lived in my head. This thing, it started out the size of a pea, then it was a baseball, now they tell me it's about the size of a grapefruit.

There was something I meant to tell you.

We went to specialists. We got better. We got worse. We got better again, or we learned how to tolerate those things that were worse. We learned the treatments. We took precautions and vitamins.

At the time of this writing the sun is coming into my room. I want to tell you the sun is also shining clarity into the room, that it is piercing and painful. But it is not piercing or painful clarity. It is not compassionate. It is not anything more or less than the sun, a burning mass millions of miles away that has no consciousness to care about our presence in and rotation around it.

There are a lot of facts that we think are ugly but that are not unlike that indifferent sun. There was something I meant to tell you. I did not phrase it like this, someone else said it, but I have said it before, in different ways. This thing someone else said, he said:

“Love is giving something you don't have to someone who does not want it.”

Love is trying to find compassion in the sun. We want to prove ourselves worthy of a warmth that we received for no reason, no reason at all. But it does not want anything of us. It does not shine for us. It may not even shine. It may burn. It may not burn for any other reason than to burn.

Everything in this world is old, once you get down to the small parts of it. And everything is small parts. Even the things you think are too big to fail, like nation states and movie stars and infinite justice, even those things are actually very small.

An hour is small. There's an hour we're going to lose tonight when we change our clocks. This hour, this missing pocket of time, we can't hold onto it. Which is different from saying we can let go of it, because we were told to hold on.

We were told to remember everything—memorize facts, collect objects, keep a diary. We grew up and saw all that we were trying to remember slipping from our hands like fishes, like fishes that jump back into streams and disappear forever. We grew up, and we wanted to be like the fishes disappearing. We wanted to be in the cold water. We wanted to forget. We tried a lot of things to make this happen. Alcohol, affection, New York—these things worked all right for a time. But then we saw that wasn't what the fishes were doing, not really. They weren't leaving a place. They weren't even going to another place.

At our best, we can remain in motion.

There was something I meant to tell you. It was before the Terror became the Crisis, sometime in between those phrases. When we were all still comfortably indignant, feeling powerless but hardened, still superior. Now, we don't even know what we're resisting, we don't even comprehend the forces that may or may not be imposing their will on us. We hear about fictions being written to save fictions, we hear about riots. We hear about the end of borrowed time. Don't you think it's strange that the riots came after the Terror? Do you sometimes hope for the riots to come here, too?

Before the Crisis but after the Terror we thought it was a temporary pain. Now we know better.

I was supposed to tell you about the size of the world and all the things in it. I don't know if it is working. These things happen.

There was something I meant to tell you and what I meant to tell you is this: no matter how much you don't want this love, this small useless love like a love for a sun that just burns because it can, it's here. And as much as we can try to remain in motion, it will remain. For no reason.