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June 2022

## And Your Eyes Open

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## And Your Eyes Open

Cover Page Footnote

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# **And your eyes open**

*By Benjamin Yusen*

**Abstract:** This piece explores the realities of dreams, and the blurring of dreams and reality.

## **Everything is dark.**

You wake up, and everything is a blur. Your eyelids weigh like anchors in the deep seas of sleep. You're slow, lethargy so heavy that the world is a thick syrup you wade through.

You struggle to rise, your body responds to your commands, but slowly, fighting madly. Everything is fine.

You rise. Stumble slowly, dragging to the door. The knob is already in your hand, turning, turning. The door already creaking, settling, opening.

Everything is wrong. The hallway is twists, spinning into the infinite void of the night sky. Stars and comets swirl and shift without end. They are a blur, waltzing through hallway, through the darkness, following a rhythm to which you are deaf. It is dizzying, and disorienting. Your eyes water, and you feel as though you have been staring at the sun. Your stomach wishes to personally greet the night. Suns explode before you, and cosmic winds whisper of the music of the spheres, and it is all so far from you. You are not in the sky, you are in the hall. And the hall is the darkness between the stars, and you, you are deep in that darkness. The light is colder than death, and oh, so far. You are still asleep. And you start, realizing that this is not real. Everything goes dark.

You wake panting, sweating, sunken into your pillows. You are drenched in cold sweat, and your body shivers and itches, that disgusting feeling you sometimes get seeing other people with wet hair. Your teeth ache, and your hair screams to be torn out by the roots. You breathe deeply, trying to hold on, trying to slow down your veering, twisting thoughts. The dream was... vivid. Unsettling.

*Weird.*

But now, you have awoken. Your mind is yet reeling, twisting folding in on itself. Revolving. That hallway is still in your head, waltzing away to some lost lyric. It is a dizzying spectacle of weird majesty. You struggle to tear your mind's eye from it all, for some of the rooms in your head are still dark.

You are not yet fully awake.

Mouth dry, you move for the Nalgene that rests on the floor by your bed. But you don't. Your mind snaps back, like a rubber band. You think you will move, you expect it. You want it, you *will* it to happen.

It does not happen.

It feels wrong. Like a sweet, loving dog snarling and biting you. No. Just, no. But you are stuck; as though the gravity has been turned up to eleven. This is unreal. It has to be a dream. It must be! And yet you feel it to be real. And you panic. You panic. Lethargic still, your brain struggles, wrestling to comprehend, searching blindly to find the pathways which command your languishing limbs. It does not. It finds that this is yet another dream.

The world fades again as shock sets in.

Then, all is black.

Your eyes snap open.

You are breathing hard. Panting. In, out, in out, in out, in out. Your eyes are heavy, mouth of cotton.

The room is bathed in a pink light, a psychedelic mixture of red and orange and

pink, slowly phasing in and out, and you feel as though you are underwater, and you smell the colors, and it smells of lovely forgetfulness and the deep drifting waves of endless sleep. And you know: this is still a dream. Still, you struggle to rise, mind now as body, caught in the glamour of the dream, like a riptide, you are pulled in smoothly, soothingly, into the dark abyss, and yet you still struggle. It seems as though by escaping from your bed, you will escape this dream. You do not.

And your eyes open,

And you are rising. Saliva dribbles from one corner of your mouth onto a pillow.

This *has* to be real. You can taste the metallic flavor lethargy. It is a mouthful of pennies. You choke on the tangy acid of it. You can smell your sweat, feel the chills sweeping through your body like little ghostly gusts of snow, swirling, sneaking across the ground.

You open your mouth to speak, though you don't know to whom. But dreams are not shared. You open your mouth, and instead find yourself swallowing pills you didn't know you had, and you wonder when you became addicted to painkillers.

You realize you aren't, and then...

And then you awake.

*Fuck.*

*Not again.*

Morpheus has broken in, hacked your nervous system. It's all a blur, color and

light flashing like fireworks before your eyes, sonic highways unravelling in your ears. There is panic now, true, unblemished, unfolding like a flower in bloom.

Your mind is not your own. It is a labyrinth of sensations, of shapes and colors, light and darkness. The mad god of dreams has breathed deep into you, claiming you forever for his realm of fog.

You know this now. For your eyes open.

Once, twice, ten, a hundred times, a thousand thousand dreams echo through the caverns of your mind, flooding you with the chaos of a billion exploding stars.

Your eyes open, countless times, and time is irrelevant, unnatural in this place, and your eyes open again, and again, and again. A whole universe has budded, bloomed, withered, and died, in this infinite dimension of sleep; and whole universes shall continue this cycle, time without end.

There is nothing. Only the dream

And your eyes open.

You are in bed, and you desperately shake, barely able to more. This is your only chance. But only breath flows through you.

Nothing more. You cannot lift your arms. Your body is not your own. It belongs to the dream. To sleep. To whatever living, sleeping death this is. You can move enough to shake, and that's a good sign. So you shake.

And you shake, and you shake, and you shake, as though you are willing your body to seize, jerk and bend. And suddenly, you might be, you don't know.

You've never had a seizure before. It's terrifying, you are feeble. Your eyes snap

to the door.

*Help!*

Your voice defies you, latching to the back of your tongue, grasping, as shipwrecked Odysseus to a spar at sea. You shake yourself out of bed, and the rough rug greets your face like a stilted lover.

Cheek burning, you grimace, but your face is still a boulder. Mind grimaces, flesh is frozen.

You fight, shaking and panicking to get to the door, and you are consumed. Fangs of fear drink you deeply. The shape of this is upon you, and it is an utterly overwhelming doom. It is a doom made worse knowing that you have been here countless times. A doom you will know time and again. Forever. This you know. You heave and drag, and your body – insolent, indolent – revolts. But like the conqueror worm you writhe, dragging your fleshy sack of a body, flailing limbless to the door. The five feet from the bed is five million miles. It is all in your head.

Somehow, you are there, sitting, leaning, falling against the door.

Your hand on the knob is that warm, sweaty feeling, the disgusting ghost of someone else's hand. Revolting. Your hand only met the doorknob a moment ago.

Yet the five feet from the bed to here is now a distant epoch, a bygone era.

Your hand is on the knob, and it turns as you wish, and you let yourself fall into the hallway. But your bedroom door opens inwards.

This is not your bedroom.

The hallway is once again the night sky, and it is aflame. It is burning, and dying, planets crumble to dust, carried by a cosmic wind into the smoldering coals of



dim suns, blinking out of existence forever. It is all turning to shadow.

And you realize it is all in your head.

Everything burns. Everything goes dark.

And your eyes open, but only just.

Through slits you see your room.

You are exhausted. Is this even real? You cannot move.

No.

Maybe?

Again, you shake, and again, you hope. You shake. This time, you'll do it. You will wake. You will shake in this dream bed, so hard, that you shake your waking body awake.

And your eyes open. You are awake. Standing on your neighbor's patio door, selling cookies, or maybe buying them. This is wrong. It's November and the peonies are blooming.

*But peonies don't bloom in November. And you're wearing shorts. It's not November, it can't be. It mustn't be.*

That tiny voice in the back of your head itches.

Pleasantries exchange, and empty conversation is blotted out by the molten panic – at first slow – rising calmly. It is deep and viscous, not at all sweet like maple syrup. You could drown in the flavor of it, imbibing deep gluttonous portions of

that dreaming-dread. You cannot fight it. You are full of it, more fear than blood,  
more than water. Your teeth ache against each other, wishing to crash together,  
peals of thunder in your head, wishing to grind into dust.

*Fuck.*

It is endless. There is no hope.

And you awake.

Bed again.

You cannot move.

Shaking.

Black.

You awake, shaking.

*Not enough.*

Black.

Awake.

Bed

Shaking

*Not again*

Awake again,

Shaking

*No*

Again

*No*

Again

*No*

Again

*No*

*No*

*No*

And on, and on, and on, and on, and on, and on,

And on, and on, and on, and on, and on, and on, and on, and on, and on, and on,

and on, and on, and on, and on,

Again and again and again and again and again and again and again and again and

again and again and again and again and again and again and again and again and

again and again and again and again and again and again and again and again and

again and again and again and again and again and again and again and again and

again and again and again and again and again and again and again and again and

again and again and again and again and again and again and again and again and

again and again and again and again...

It is all a blur.

You give up.

Then your eyes open, and you get up. You pretend this is real, that the world burning is normal. That the chaos makes sense. That you aren't stuck in bed.

And then your eyes open.