

NVWVS (Unrelated 1)

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Hot fog covers the inside of a dirty window. The outside is kept as clean as gold by a small boy with eyes. Every Wednesday night he stands on his wooden crate looking in the barn's back window, on the tip of his toes, catching more sounds through the cloudy glass than anything. With his soft eyes he watches blurry boxing gloves bigger than his head being thrown around. The dumb glow of the window holds his complete attention so tight that it becomes the only light inside the stone black earth.

His best friend is a moon. A moon no bigger than the fists of those colossal fighters that he watches go into the barn every Wednesday. And every Wednesday watches then come back out. They stammer out either deranged and defeated or victorious and deranged. They're either holding a loose toothed smile and a crowd, or two black eyes and a crown made of stars. As they clumsily dance into the night, the excited screams that once lived inside the steamy barn fade slowly down the road towards the town anticipating the festivities of the wakening night.

He runs back to the window after watching the boxers leave. Knowing "I knew he had won!" picks up his crate while his moon follows him, orbiting around his fidgety body. On his walk home, at times he sets down his crate and while his moon spins around him he is a boxer. Dodging and swinging his tin fists at the tiny brave moon. At times tapping her softly with his toy palms until she wobbles back into a clean orbit. He recites the progress of their boxing match with the voice of a muffled loud speaker. The moon glows and leads him safely to his tree house.

High up a tree his small wooden room keeps him comfortable. He sets his crate, that also serves as a table, in the center of the room and places on it a tall cracked vase-like lamp with no lampshade that wouldn't work even with electricity. Around the broken lamp he sets the softglow moon into orbit. She keeps his room lit and he lays against one wall where his blankets rest. Laying down with dreams already in his head he stares up at the night in the cracks of the roof. His moon flashes in and out of his fantasy as she spins above him. Around the room. Breaking out of his thoughts as if disappointed with himself, he bats at his partner, half upset and half playing with a smile. She wobbles for a round or two until she stabilizes again and smiles back.

Her light comes from within. She doesn't reflect the light of other things. She is real. Waning and Waxing in periods. Stirring up his heart every time that he steps into the real world and looks at her. Every time he can't believe how genuinely beautiful and tangible she is. He can't stay focused. Her perfect detail, small and delicate like caress, gradually disintegrates into a hazy Wednesday night boxing match through a window. He throws a rag over her to dim the light and she flies on in circles above the fights in his head.

The Zoo with a broken back and its single janitor, keeper. Ythgimla Dog. Titanic and mechanic like the Zoos of other times. Perhaps this is another time, another world.

Instant bestfriends like third grade, Lucas and Ythgimla walk like plastic ducks down well kept paths. The first cage holds in its steel hand a miniscule cumulus cloud, nonthreatening. The second a bitten off chunk of night, silent.

"Mr. dog?" asks Lucas. "Why...?"

"Seems like things must be in cages in order to get any attention," sighs Ythgimla disillusioned. "Oh... and call me Ythgimla."

A boulder of blue sky sleeps in the next cage.

"You know why people dream, don't you?" asks Ythgimla dreamily. "Because they despise the real."

A pace turns a jog into a run. On the other side of a bridge they run past cages holding fire, fog, rain, rocks, voices, etc. October, like a Wednesday stares from its cage as they run by. Panting in blue uniform broom Ythgimla runs on. Lucas following, noticing that the people that came to the zoo are in cages too.

"Don't mind them. They like it."

"What's in those?" passing what seems like empty cages.

"Temperatures."

Winter, a waterfall, wind, water, voices, sand and grass in cages. Infinite paths they never travel branch from the one they're on. Like a bare tree the zoo opens into one million decisions. A stream, 13, a kite, a kiss, a storm, a star, etc. They land in a part of the zoo that has no teeth to smile. Exhausted, Ythgimla must stop. There is a crowd. The things in the cages unfamiliar to Lucas, are not as alive.

"Political ideas," then Ythgimla points to an overprotected cage made of good steel, glassed up and fenced. "That's communism. Have to keep it there. Makes folks uneasy."

Reclining with his elbows on the railing while a piece of hay plays in his mouth. Contemplating like a kid what to show off next. Spectators, cramped in their personal cage, flock anxiously around these cages, barking and yipping at the cages, hoping for answers. Then, both like kids, run from the crowds to the next section.

"Danger just had a baby!" Ythgimla pants pointing at a cage they stop before.

"And safety?"

"You silly. You can't have safety in a cage." Ythgimla laughs so loud that it sounds like god and all creatures join in laughing.

Lucas never remembers his dreams. The week goes by like usual. In the mornings he does the shopping for some of the tired old people of the town. His small body running, carrying and lifting. At times when he's at work in town he hears a fighter's name running through the people like a plague. They speak of him as if he were a great monarch. If there was a throne in that small town it would surely be reserved for that champion boxer. The whole town would sink to their knees before him and admire his swollen hands.

He receives some pay and a few compliments and runs out of town to his house. His moon has been spinning up in the sky around his house while he worked. They both head for the barn. They have races around the empty barn and the moon almost always wins. Then they run into the grassy hills and meet a glass blue sky. They run until the air gets thin and the town is very small. Lucas lays down with a flower in his mouth and

one arm lifted up so his moon has something on the barren green knoll to orbit around. And he dreams.

Up on his toes, hearing shouts and bruises form, hearing the vulgar uproar of the thundering spectators. He can only see the glamorous blurs and shadows through that window, the rest he adds himself. The announcer's voice guides him through the glory of it all. A tight scream always loaded in his stomach just in case he gets the nerve to let it loose. He never gets the nerve but his insides cheer. His moon circles wildly inside his enormous sweatshirt keeping him warm from the cool winter kiss of the air he forgot to notice. The cold light from the window warms his small face and he strains hard to imagine what it is to be a boxer.

He follows his routine until Wednesday. On Wednesday Lucas comes for his moon, but instead of racing around the barn and laying in the hills, they box. He practices for the day when he can go into the barn to fight. For the time when it will be his name that storms through town. Wednesday turns another week over and the excited boy, after playing boxing with his moon, heads to the barn. He waits near the front for the fighters that up close look like tanks to come in from town. Long after the champion arrives there is no sign of his contender. Lucas and his moon still wait out front.

"Kid. Psst. Kid. You wanna fight?"

Lucas begins nodding wildly before a heavy mustache with a cane.

"Meet me inside" and the man is already gone. The child fanatically takes his baby moon, and knowing damn well that she can't go in there with him, hurls her far beyond sight into the sleepy sky forever.

The gloves are a loose fit. He jumps around in his corner and tries hard to ignore the unfamiliar laughing faces smeared perfectly clear with age. He thinks they are laughing at him but they are only, like always, laughing amongst themselves so as not to cry. He tests his left jab on an inconsistent cloud of cigar smoke. Beer, sweat and vulgar spit make their way to his nose and he tries not to breathe. The air is so heavy with obscenity that Lucas has trouble holding himself with skinny legs.

Over a wind of shouts he barely hears the loud speakers announce the champion. Climbing into the ring before him, a disproportionate monster already glowing, is jovially greeted by hoggish howls. The next thing he hears is a bell. The first glove numbs his whole face and miraculously he remains standing. The second blow topples him with tears filling his eyes like water in buckets.