

Rehabilitation

Why am I here?
Where is here?
Who am I?

A broken, black table shrugs back at me. A Manet print turns the other way. An old-fashioned, phone rolls its eyeballs.

From outside the room I can hear whispers.

‘Is he definitely in there?’
‘I can hear him moving around.’
‘What shall we do with him now?’

I don’t recognize these voices. I don’t recognize the voice in my head telling me I don’t recognize them.

‘Who is this?’
‘Who are they?’
‘What has happened?’

Slowly I breathe in, and then breathe out.
Breathing. I recognize breathing.

There is a glass of water next to the sofa, which I reach down for and pick up.

Glug, glug, glug. Breathe.

A smile comes over my face and a calm feeling rises from my stomach. I am clean. I am empty. I am nothing.
Wow.

I can hear my heart beating in my chest, as I realize what this feeling means.

Panic?
Fear?
Confusion?

None of these things.

Choice.
I have an incredible, infinite sense of choice. Everything. The whole world. I can be whoever I

want. My mind is no longer poisoned. I am free.

I stand up, grasp the door handle tightly and prepare to enter the world...my world.

The door is stuck fast.

'I think we should leave him there.'

'He won't get out, will he?'

'Even if he did...'

'Come on, let's go.'

'But what if...'

The talking fades. Footsteps pat slowly, then quickly away, and then there is silence.

I try the window from the where the voices came, but it is glued shut.

There is no way out.

I'm stuck and I don't care.

I decide to look deeper into the room I'm in, and see the Manet painting in front of me.

I stare at it. My eyes expand as my brain takes it in. It feels like inhaling after too long underwater.

There are three characters on a balcony looking out in different directions. My clear mind takes in their expressions intently.

One girl with dark brown eyes looks away into the distance. Another stares directly at me, with an ethereal expression. I feel close, like I'm there looking at them, the painter at the easel. I can see the light reflecting off their faces, impressing my eyes upon their faces, making them rise out of their bodies.

I decide to like art. I decide that I will be open-minded enough to appreciate and understand it. I won't like this painter or that painter - I will like art. I will look at it and I will think about how it makes me feel.

All I can do right now is feel. It's too much

Feeling fatigued I sit down on the sofa again and I think about nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

Then I begin to get hungry. I try the door again but it's still stuck.

I am hungry.

The door is stuck.

I like art.

The sofa is a comfortable bed, but when I look at it now from the door I feel nothing. It's just there. It's not food. It's not art.

I will have no interest in furniture.

The room is silent bow. It smells of mould, varnish and animals. This isn't a room for humans, like me.

I wonder what I'll smell like.

I sit back on the sofa and look at the painting, the phone and the table. There is nothing to think about so I think about nothing for a while, but then hunger feeling comes back again. I'm not sure what I want to eat, but I need something.

I'm hungry.

I'm hungry.

I'm hungry.

RIIINNNNNNGGGG!!

RIIIINNNNGGGGGG!!

RIIIIINNNNNNGGGGG!!!

Fuck, fuck, fuck. Thump, thump, thump. What do I do? What do I do?

RIIIIINNNNNNGGGGG!!!

RIIIIINNNNNNGGGGG!!!

Pick it up to make is stop.

'Hello?' I say, in a deep voice.

'Hello,' says a woman back to me. 'Is...?'

It stops. There is just breathing – light and quick, in and out.

'Hello?' I say, in the same voice.

'Who is this?' says a man this time, high and sharp.

'I...I don't know. I...I like Manet and food.'

'What are you doing in the room?'

'Nothing, really.'

‘Nothing?’

‘Yes, nothing. There’s nowhere else to go. No more art and no food.’

‘Hold on, I recognize that voice. It’s you isn’t? Oh God. Oh God it’s you...’

‘...’

‘What are you doing there? What are doing in that room?’

‘Nothing.’

I put my hand through the large hole in the door and leave the room.

I don’t know how the hole got there and I don’t remember the end of the phone call either. It’s like I’ve hit my head or something.

I’ve hit my head.

Now I’m okay.

It’s good because I was getting really bored and hungry in there. I don’t think I’m going to have a very good attention span.

Outside of the room there is a old, dusty hallway. It seems that I am in an old house where everything is made of wood or brick. As I’m not interested in furniture and have no attention span I don’t look around much, and walk straight to the kitchen.

There is food everywhere.

Baked Beans

Sugar Puffs

Granary Loaf

Apple Strudel

Corned Beef

Cream Profiteroles

Quiche Lorraine

Microwave Curry

I make myself a Corned Beef sandwich, which I like. Then I have some of the baked beans and I decide not to like them. It’s corned beef for me. It fills me up quickly when I’m hungry, and I’m going to be a hungry person.

Now what do we have here...?

‘Being for the benefit of Mr. Kite

There will be a show tonight on trampoline

The Hendersons will all be there

Late of Pablo-Fanques is there, what a scene

Over men and horses hoops and garters

Lastly through a hogshead of real fire!
In this way Mr. K. will challenge the world!’

Hmmm. It’s The Beatles on the radio. Everyone likes the Beatles don’t they?
But I don’t like this. I’m going to like music I’m sure, but not this. It makes me feel irritated and
don’t want to listen to something that makes me feel like that.

‘And if a double-decker bus
Crashes into us
To die by your side
Is such a heavenly way to die
And if a ten-ton truck
Kills the both of us
To die by your side
Well, the pleasure - the privilege is mine’

Now that’s better. I like this. The melody makes me feel happy, the singer sounds somber but
funny at the same time, and the song is all about love. It sounds so...so amazing when he sings
in that way.

I will love
I like corned beef
When I’m hungry I get irritated.

The voice in my head is familiar to me now. What it says makes sense; it re-assures me that I am
this person who is speaking. In my head I can feel a sphere forming, a universe of thoughts and
experiences all held together by a lining of decision – decisions that I hope...I believe are right.

I smile as I walk out of the kitchen. It’s my smile. This is me.

Next to the kitchen there is a huge dining room. It has a great, long table in the middle, like
you’d imagine Henry VIII sitting at, or Count Dracula. I don’t like furniture, but even this
interesting to me.

In the middle there is a great serving dish with...

I walk slowly down a corridor that’s lit up my flaming torches. The walls and the floor are stone
and there is a funny smell in the air. I don’t think I will mind bad smells. They feel different and
make me wonder what’s coming next.

Thud
Thud
Thud

There is an echo. The sound of my shoes hitting the floor. Is it? Or is it something else?

Thud

Thud

Thudthudthudthudthudthudthud

It's not my shoes. It's something else. I can feel the sphere in my head begin to crack. That will teach me to be a know-it-all.

At the end of the corridor is a door. I couldn't see it earlier, but now it's lit up two large flames.

I don't think I should trust my ears. My eyes seem much more certain of everything. I don't think I'm going to be a very good listener.

The door is being pushed from the other side. It's a large black door, like you might see at the entrance of a small castle and it looks very grand. I feel very small walking up to it. Every second it makes a thudding sound, and bulges in and out like a beating heart.

Thud

Thud

Thud

I think about the Manet painting I saw earlier, of the two women staring out from a balcony. Their eyes, which were so interesting and inviting, look different to me now – cold, dark and accusing. I'm not sure what to do, so I stand there and think of nothing.

Nothing

Nothing

Nothing

Then that Beatles song comes back into my head and I start singing it to myself.

'The celebrated Mr. K.
Performs his feat on Saturday at Bishopsgate
The Hendersons will dance and sing
As Mr. Kite flies through the ring don't be late'

But I can't concentrate because of the thudding. I turn to walk back to the dining room but then change my mind when I remember what's in there on the table.

'Messrs. K and H. assure the public
Their production will be second to none
And of course Henry The Horse dances the waltz!'

Rip.
Thud.
Smash!

Now I can't see anything at all.

'Leon!
Leon, we know you're in there.
You know you can't go anywhere. You've had your fun, now why don't you come out and get this over with?'

The voice was loud, and rises up and down like a police siren. Le-on. Le-on. Le-on.
I don't recognize it. It's nothing like Morrissey's or John Lennon's or the voice in my head. It sounds irritating.

I am not Leon
I am not Leon
I am...

The door splinters, cracks and then splits wide open. A cascade of light envelopes me.

For a moment I am completely blind, but then I can see again, an amazing brightness all around.

Through the door there is a great expanse of green, like the world has turned into a great plain stretching out into infinity. I think about how Manet would have painted it, with great circular swishes and flashes of white light like a great green halo. Then he'd paint the man in front, the man with dark, menacing eyes, walking through the door and holding a gun.

It's not you he wants.
It's someone else.

I ignore him and think about eating corned beef and listening to The Smiths.

'Take me out. Tonight.
Because I want to see people and I want to see life.'

'Leon?
'Leon!'

'Take me anywhere I don't care, I don't care, I don't care.'

'Le-on!!!'

The voice is so annoying - like hunger but worse - and it wasn't going to leave me alone.

'Hello?' I say. 'Can I help you?'

'Yes. Yes Leon I think you can.'

I'm not sure what my name is, but it definitely isn't Leon. Every time he said I felt blank - I didn't recognize it all.

'Sorry, I don't know who you are. And I don't know who Leon is either,'

He stands and looks at me with his dark eyes and great white smile, white chalk over the green meadow.

'Really?'

'Yes.'

'So who might you be then? If you're not Leon.'

'I am me.'

'And who might that be?'

SofaManetPhoneDoorHoleHungerFoodBeatlesBeefSmithsTableCorridorSmashGreen.

'What do you mean?' I say.

'I mean,' he says, walking up to me and making me look at his face. 'If you're not Leon, then who the fuck do you think you are? And who is it that has the bodies of thirty-six men, women and children hidden somewhere behind these doors?'

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

The words mean nothing. I don't know who. I just don't know.

SofaManetPhoneDoorHoleHungerFoodBeatlesBeefSmithsTableCorridorSmashGreenLeon.

'Is this Leon's house?' I ask the white teeth.

'Yes,' they say, crunching together.

'Well it's not my house. It's full of furniture. I don't like furniture.'

'Look...'

'And the cupboards are full of baked beans. I don't like baked beans.'

I could feel the gun jabbing into my ribs.

‘Stop fucking about...’

‘And...and the Beatles. I don’t even like the Beatles.’

The white teeth start to gnash and move back to the door.

‘So,’ they say. ‘You’re not the fucking beast who five of my undercover officers managed to finally lock down about an hour ago, after you’d murdered one of their colleagues a week before, chopped of his limbs and served them on a platter for your dinner?’

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

‘I like art.’ I say. ‘I don’t like furniture. I like simple food. I feel like I want to like people, and fall in love, and maybe get married, and live in a flat with a balcony.’

‘You’re sicker than I thought.’

The cold metal of the gun strikes the back of my head and the whole world goes black. I can feel my body fall to the floor. I can feel the sphere in my head shatter into a thousand tiny pieces. I...

It’s dark where I am now. It’s dark and cold and damp.

Leon

Leon

I am Leon. I killed thirty six men, women and children and served up their bodies for dinner. I am the worst person who has ever lived.

I don’t remember doing it - it doesn’t feel like me - but then I can’t remember anything. I don’t have another me to argue back. I just have to accept it, because there’s nothing else I can do.

Nothing.

Nothing.

Nothing.

I am here now until I die. There’s no hope. What I did was too bad, too horrible and so there isn’t a way out.

I want to die. Then maybe I can start all over again.