

In The Tradition Of Nostalgia Before Memory

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Every night I brush my teeth, if I remember to,
I lift up the blankets that hang over the side of my bed and hesitantly peek underneath.
I sigh with relief.
No monsters tonight. I tell myself.
My finger lingers on the switch that turns the night light on.
Part of me knows I'm being irrational.
There is no good reason for a grown ass man to be afraid of the dark.
I tell myself, in my father's voice.
But there's a part of me, much deeper, underneath the fear even,
that enjoys playing this game.
It makes me feel young again.
It reminds me of a time before dorms, term papers,
bosses, deadlines, and death - looming eerily in the distance
Getting closer every year that I look over my shoulder,
before we learned that life wasn't meant to be enjoyed, only suffered and survived.
A time before the march toward Oblivion, in funny looking suits,
with high hopes that we can trick someone into thinking that we belong here
In this grotesque parade of strangers in masks.
I hide under my covers with a flashlight and old comic books.
Holding back laughter, with imaginary fear of waking the ghosts of my parents
who I often thought of sleeping in the other room, just like they did before they died,
One of old age, the other in a mid-life crisis motorcycle accident,
Leaving me the empty house with her romance novels
and his extensive porn collection.
I remind myself that I have work in the morning
which quickly drags me down from my euphoric nostalgia.
I ponder how long I can put off the inevitable slumber,
knowing full well the consequences of being a sleep deprived plastic surgeon.
I smile at the idea of accidentally giving the wrong person a sex change.
It's one of those thoughts meant only for my personal enjoyment
for if said aloud the other strangers might gasp,
at the unveiling of a monster hiding among them.
I put Spiderman back in his plastic case

and stick him in the dresser drawer
full of all my guilty pleasures and memories of yesterday.
I then remove my mask and crawl under the bed,
where no one thinks to look for us anymore,
and drift into fantasies full of all those familiar faces
of my Neverland.



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