

EYE OF THE MOON

By Jerold London

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**O Moon, Earth wanderer in ancient silver white,
you've sown a poet's truth.
My Feminine in childhood, pregnant, graying years,
my barefoot in the night,
you filled my eyes with mystery in Maiden youth,
owned love, then kissed my tears.**

EYE OF THE MOON

TIME AND PLACE

Present.

The house where SIR and JACK live.

CHARACTERS

JACK DAWKINS, a child.

SIR, Jack's father.

A LION, named Aslan.

EYE OF THE MOON, an oracle clad in glowing white with a glowing white scarf around her hair.

... in the dialogue indicates a thoughtful break.

SCENE 1 – WEDNESDAY BEDTIME

SIR carries JACK into the child's bedroom, tucks him into bed, and sits down close to him on the bed.

SIR

What are your two questions tonight?

JACK

Snuggles into his father's arms, JACK pulling Sir's open hand up against his face.

What should I confess, when I say my prayers?

SIR

Your prayers are your own, Jack. All your own, with no badgers attached.

No spies and no rules. We never spy. You know that.

Say whatever means something to you. Confession's all right, but not necessary.

Helpful, but hardly the only thing prayers are made for.

JACK

It's so unfair, not knowing what God *wants* to hear me say.

SIR

God wants to hear just what you want to say. That's what God wants.

Just what is real. Just what you feel.

JACK

But I don't know, when I pray,
if I say what I feel.
What I feel I don't show.
What is real, Sir, I don't know.
It's so sad, Sir, I just don't know.
Do you know what I mean, Sir?
I don't. I just don't know.

SIR

What's the matter, Son?

JACK

I don't want Mommy to die.
I'm afraid I'll be so lonely without her,
even if I can see her every night in heaven.
And I don't want children to die, either,
even if we can play together every night when I visit Mommy.
I want everyone down here with us, alive.

SIR

Mommy's in hospital right now, getting better.

JACK

She doesn't think so.
And she's not afraid of dying. That's not it.
We know what heaven is like,
and that we can be together there whenever we want.
But I don't want Mommy to die,
even if I can visit her every night in heaven, for the rest of my life.
I want her with you and me, and our cuddles.

SIR

You've talked with Mommy?

JACK

I see her every night.

SIR

Where?

JACK

In heaven.

SIR

But Mommy's not dead.

JACK

I know that.
And I'm not dead, either.
You don't have to be dead to go to heaven.

SIR

What do you mean?

JACK

Heaven's right out there. Almost in front of us.
Like the moon when it's full and so close.
You can go there when you're completely quiet, anytime you want.
And Mommy's very quiet now.

SIR

I don't understand what you're saying.

JACK

You go there in your mind.

SIR

Oh, in your mind.
That's what you mean.
You imagine it.

JACK

You go everywhere in your mind.
And not *imagine* it.
It's real.
And you know it's real because it *is* in your mind.
And not in your imagination.

SIR

But heaven isn't real like that.

JACK

Why isn't it?... It *is*. I know it is. Because heaven is out there, *and* inside you.

SIR

Both at the same time?

JACK

Yes. Both. At the same time. Like a roller coaster. Or ice cream.

SIR

Who's told you all this?

JACK

I've been there myself.

I know.

I've seen it, and heard it.

But the first person who told me was Aslan.

SIR

Who?

JACK

Aslan.

He comes here every night, after I go to sleep.

SIR

Aslan, the lion?

JACK

Yes.

The lion.

Do you know him, Sir?

SIR

You've been watching Narnia.

JACK

I have not....

What is Narnia?

SIR

It's where Aslan's from.

JACK

He never told me that.

I didn't know where he was from.

I spost it was around here.

SIR

It's better not to lie, Jack.

JACK

I'm not lying, Sir.

SIR

I'm not accusing you.
Just saying....

JACK

You prefer the truth.

SIR

Yes, I do.

JACK

And about Mommy, too?

SIR

[*pause*] What do you want to know?

JACK

I've told you. She thinks she's dying.
At the hospital.
And thinks she's going to heaven to live all the time.

SIR

Why do you say that?

JACK

[*beat*] Can I tell you a story?

SIR

[*beat, a bit puzzled and taken by surprise*] Tell me a story?

JACK

Yes, Sir.

SIR

Okay. Go ahead.

JACK

Once upon a time a poor woodcutter lived at the edge of a great forest. He barely could provide enough food for himself and his wife, not to mention their three-year-old girl. It was so bad that he prayed to God to give him strength to take the child into the middle of the woods, and leave her there by herself.

SIR

Weren't there two children? Hansel and Gretel?

JACK

Not in this story.

SIR

Okay. Go on.

JACK

One morning when the woodcutter went into the forest and began chopping wood, tears filled his eyes, and suddenly a beautiful woman appeared before him. He couldn't see her all that well, with tears in his eyes, but he did see that she was wearing a crown that seemed to shine and sparkle at its tips like the stars. She told him she was the Virgin Mary, and had heard his prayers. That she'd come to take his daughter to heaven to live with her, and raise her as her own, until she was eighteen. And she'd be safe there.

SIR

Is that what happened?

JACK

The woodcutter obeyed, brought his daughter to her, and the Virgin Mary took the girl back to heaven to live....

SIR

And that's the end of the story?

JACK

For years things went well for the little girl in heaven. She had plenty of wholesome things to eat, nice clothes, and lots of attention. But even heaven isn't free of temptation. One day, when she was about fourteen, and Mother Mary wasn't looking, the child found a set of thirteen keys on a gold ring. She asked her mother what they were for, and Mary told her that they were for the thirteen locked doors of heaven, which she was never to open. She asked why, and asked why, and asked why, and in the end they compromised. The twelve longer keys were for rooms where the disciples lived, and she could go visit them, from time to time. Keep them company. But she absolutely could never unlock the door that the small key unlocked....

SIR

[beat] Which, of course, she proceeded to do.

JACK

Of course. And it was nothing.

The twelve rooms where the apostles lived were each filled with divine light.

The most clear and beautiful in all of heaven.

And with the most splendid music.

The best in all of heaven.

But in the thirteenth room there was only an oil lamp, a chair, a plain table, a book on it, and pen and ink alongside.

The girl left the room in disgust, and forgot to lock the door behind her.

A few days later there was a terrible stir in heaven.

The Virgin Mary's diary had been discovered, and it was being talked about throughout the kingdom.

Mary came to the girl and accused her of disobeying her one command.

Not to go into the room the small key unlocked.

"You opened the forbidden door, didn't you?"

"No," the girl answered.

Mary put her hand on the girl's heart, and could feel it pounding.

Once again she asked, "Are you sure you didn't unlock that door?"

"I'm sure," the girl lied.

"You've disobeyed me, and then lied about it twice.

You are no longer worthy to stay in heaven."

Instantly the girl fell into a deep sleep; and when she awoke she was lying on the ground next to a tall tree completely surrounded by thickets and thistle so thick no one could get through without a sword.

The tree had a hollow in it, where she slept and kept warm in the cold weather.

Fruits and nuts were her only food.

And she had no voice. It had been taken away from her.

One day a couple of years later, after all of her clothes had been ripped and torn, and she wore only leaves for cover, someone forced his way through the bushes. It was the king, who saved the girl, lifted her up onto his horse, and brought her back to the castle.

She had grown to be terribly beautiful. And, like I said, totally quiet.

And in time the king fell in love with her and decided to make her his queen.

SIR

Sounds like a proper fairy tale.

Provided she gets over her laryngitis.

JACK

But she didn't.
After a year or so the young queen, still silent, gave birth to a healthy baby boy.
The prince.
Whom she loved more than she knew she could feel.

SIR

Like we love you.

JACK

That night the Virgin Mary came to her in her dreams, and told her:
"If you confess to opening the forbidden door in heaven, you may keep your newborn baby, and have your voice back, too."
But the stubborn girl still denied it; and the next morning the baby was gone.
Rumors began spreading that she was some ogress from the forest, who had eaten her own child.
And, with no voice, the queen had no explanation to give.
However, the king loved her so much that he ordered his people to keep still.

In another year there came a second son, and the same thing happened again.
This time the king had more trouble keeping his people quiet, but did.
Finally, a year later, the queen gave birth to a princess, whom the Virgin Mary also took to heaven when the queen continued to lie.
The king was no longer able to restrain his court, and the queen was sentenced to death, burning at the stake.

As she stood tied to the stake, the fire coming up around her, her heart was moved, and she thought to herself:
"Oh, before I die, I'd like to confess to the Virgin Mary that I *did* open the forbidden door in heaven.
I've been so wicked, denying it to her all along."

The instant the Virgin Mary heard the queen's thoughts, the skies opened and blew the fire out.
Mary descended with the two little boys at her side, and the newborn baby girl in her arms.
Everyone was amazed as she gave them to the queen, and told her,
"Your guilt has been forgiven."
And with her newfound voice, the queen answered, "Thank you,"
and named the baby, "Trinity."

The end.

SIR

Pretty dark, if you ask me.

JACK

There's a strange darkness in heaven about the Virgin Mary and her son.

SIR

What are you talking about?

JACK

I don't know.

You can't always believe what you hear.

It has something to do with broken promises,
and the world not coming to an end.

SIR

People in heaven still want the world to come to an end??? How quaint.

JACK

Not everybody.

SIR

So *that's* the end of the story?

JACK

You want to know my second question tonight?

SIR

Of course I do.

JACK

Who is Aslan?

The one *you* know.

SIR

You can't know the Aslan I know without knowing something of Narnia.
And the reverse is just as true.

Aslan is a creature as immediately beloved as he is fearful.

A lion.

A great lion, with a roar that can scatter the underground.

Terrifyingly wise, with lion kind eyes.

Or, as Mr. Beaver says to the four Pevensie children,

“Aslan is the King of Narnia, and the son of the Emperor-Over-the-Sea.”

JACK

Aslan is a king??

SIR

Once.

But not tonight.

Tonight he is a traveler with travelers' tales and a mane.

JACK

Go on.

SIR

Narnia is essentially an imaginary kingdom, like a parable, located somewhere between and among the green hills of northern England and the misty mountains of Scotland.

On the other side of them.

The side you can't see with common eyes, or hear with common ears.

The side that is as protected from our world as are plums wrapped in cling film and put in the fridge.

It is inhabited by very strange people, talking animals, mythical creatures like Mr. Tumnus, a faun, a powerful witch, and some magic.

But the single most important inhabitant is Aslan, who isn't always there.

He travels a good bit to other places away from Narnia.

He's a cat.

And all cats are travelers, and artful dodgers.

But, at the same time, his care remains for you and his other people.

He's totally honest, even though it may take you some time to sort through to the core truth of what he tells you.

He comes and he goes, so don't be surprised if some night you don't see him again for a long while.

That's just the way he is.

He doesn't feature being tied down.

But, he'll be there when you really need him.

Just don't press him. He's wild, like I've said.

Not like a tame lion.

JACK

I've never felt afraid of him, Sir.

SIR

And not now, either, Son.

He might startle you at times, but he certainly won't hurt you.

JACK

Sir ... I've not known a thing about him...
Why did Aslan teach *me* to go to heaven, for Mom and me to see each other?

SIR

All I can assure you of is this:
He has his reasons.
And he often does important things through children.
To teach a man's lesson.
Like pulling back the curtain on an emperor's new clothes.

JACK

Yes, but why *me*?

SIR

Enough.
Sleep time.
Why people laugh when they're sad, and cry when they're happy.
Why all that smiles and glitters is not gold.
Why tears might remove the cause, but not the symptom.
Why that which smells rotten may not actually be rotten to the core.
Can be a riddle to me.
Get to sleep, and maybe tomorrow you can tell *me* why.

**SIR tucks Jack back under the covers,
kisses him, and exits.**

SCENE 2 – WEDNESDAY NIGHT

JACK is sleeping.

ASLAN enters and lies down on the rug on the floor, next to the bed.

A significant pause, breathing.

JACK

Are you there?

ASLAN

I am.

JACK

My father told me you're a king.

ASLAN

Those were many years ago.

JACK

Did you like being king?

ASLAN

It was my duty, not my liking.

And I was quite content leaving those duties to others better suited.

Being king is only as good as the good being king can do.

I'm better as a lion.

JACK

Are you a *real* lion?

ASLAN roars.

ASLAN

Any other questions?

JACK

[*beat*] Am I better as a child?

ASLAN

Tonight you are.

JACK

Why did you teach me how to go to heaven? Just to see Mom?

ASLAN

I taught you a first step. A baby step.
So that you would learn on your own to take bigger steps.

JACK

To take what bigger steps?

ASLAN

Like striving for things you know are right.
Even if you have to face Hell to reach them.

JACK

Hell?

ASLAN

Hell wasn't created for nothing. Nor were you.... You *will* face it in your life.

JACK

But why me? Why do *I* have to go through Hell?

ASLAN

Because you have a voice. A fine voice that people listen to.
And the courage to speak out about what things are really like.
Besides, you aren't the only one, Son.

JACK

Speak out as a child, you mean?

ASLAN

Some believe that unless you can think again as a child,
you won't find your way to heaven.
I suspect that they might discover, if they thought about it,
that unless you can see Hell as a child, you'll never understand its purpose.

JACK

Have you been to Hell? Do you know the Devil?

ASLAN

You mean, am *I* the Devil?
Hell no! But, yes, I've been there, a couple of days.
And I learned that the Devil, you call him, lives in your shadow.
Unless you are invited to leave your shadow,
you will never see yourself or your deficiencies clearly.

JACK

And you're inviting me?

ASLAN

You are still young enough to learn that loving Earth and all of its sounds must precede loving more complex things.
Most of you have lost that understanding.

JACK

Lions, you mean. Loving lions, and the Earth.
But I *do* love nature. With all my heart. *And* lions.
Is that what you mean? Is that what you want?

ASLAN

Would you love them all unselfishly if you were forced to?

JACK

You mean, am I stubborn?

ASLAN

If someone in heaven gave you a key to a mysterious door, and forbade you from opening it, would you?

JACK

But I'm just a child. Of course I would.

ASLAN

But if someone in heaven explained to you that in that room, behind the mysterious door, lived a creature with magical healing powers, the only creature of its kind, who could cure cancer, but might escape, would you open the door?

JACK

And maybe not save my mother?!

ASLAN

How delightfully facile a true child's mind is.

JACK

Are you sneezing at me, Aslan?

ASLAN

I am valuing again what I always come back to valuing:
The wonders of the unbigoted child's mind.

JACK

And can you see the future, Aslan?

ASLAN

The future is like seeing in heaven, Jack Dawkins.
What do you see, when you are in heaven?

JACK

I think I don't *see* in heaven. I feel it with my emotions.
Everything is softer. Pastel. And in harmony.
Like the music that is everywhere in the air there.

ASLAN

Life, let's say on planets like this,
is far different from life, let's say in realms more nearly immortal.

JACK

When you see something in heaven, it's not looking at it.
It's understanding it.
It's understanding the joy within it.
Is this making any sense?

ASLAN

Like your mother.

JACK

When I see my mother, I love her from a light in my heart that bursts out of me.
A bright, white light that goldens at the edges as I fly to her.
Which *doesn't make much sense*, does it?

ASLAN

[*in a pensive way*] Oh, yes.

JACK

Because, when you go to heaven you think of it lifting upwards.
Like through the sky and clouds.
But that's not the place it is, is it? At all.
It's like you take a small step away from where you are,
and all of a sudden you're at the center of the universe.
And you feel the pull of it coming from every direction.
And everything is perfectly in order. Perfectly in balance.
As it's meant to be.

ASLAN

When you learn more, you will learn that it is not perfectly in balance.

JACK

I see Mommy dying....

[*beat*] She is dying, isn't she? You can see that, too, can't you Aslan?

ASLAN

Just because a lion knows the future doesn't mean he causes it.

If I had control, do you think I'd ever want to see another child shot in their home, or in church, or at school?

JACK

What else do you see about her?

ASLAN

Soon your father will be going to her, again, at the hospital.

But this time he will bring her white roses, and peach, and won't know why.

Someone will whisper "harmony."

"Is that what they mean? harmony?" he'll ask himself

He loves her so much.

JACK

I know he does. And what makes me love him even more.

ASLAN

He will be holding her hand, at her bedside.

And she'll open her eyes, and smile, and sort of giggle, he'll think, faintly.

And say, "Goodbye."

Maybe to him. Maybe not only to him.

And then he'll get into bed, beside her.

And just hold her there, and sob into her hair.

"I love you. I love you. I love you," he'll whisper to her.

After an hour, or so, he'll feel it. Like climbing a tall, tall ladder.

And suddenly darkness will fall all around. And coolness.

And the soft velvet of their souls touching. Knowing they are together.

And then the light you've said.

And the time will come for him to let her go.

It will be overwhelming for him.

The feeling will be overwhelming.

But he'll know.

When the time has come to let her go.

JACK

Sir's voice is gruff and rough at times. But a fine, sweet melody it is to me.

ASLAN

He depends upon your mother for finding his way.
The roots of their love bind him.
The experiences they share together give his life meaning,
in ways that a child cannot understand.

JACK

Is that bad?

ASLAN

Love was put into life for a priceless reason.
What is bad is not love. It's love's substitution.

JACK

Substitution?

ASLAN

It's looking into a mirror instead of out, through a window.

JACK

I don't understand what you are saying.

ASLAN

It's feeling being loved as though *that* is loving....
When your mother dies, your father will have a choice to go on loving,
or to let love die around his neck.

JACK

[*pause*] Aslan ...?

ASLAN

Yes?

JACK

Do you love me?

ASLAN

Love is where the mind is quiet. And free.
And I find an exquisite quietness in you. And freedom.
Yes.

JACK

And I love you, too.

ASLAN

There's a woman someday I hope you'll get to know.

JACK

Who?

ASLAN

Simply all I can tell you now is that she has three bodies in one:
Like the moon.
Childhood. Motherhood. And Wisdom.

JACK

Like my mother.

ASLAN

Your mother probably knows her.

JACK

And what does she do?

ASLAN

[*beat*] She's a poet who *can* see the future.
But that's all I can tell you now.
For you to understand.

JACK

Three? At the same time?
Like a trinity?

ASLAN

Like a trinity.

JACK

Like my mother?

ASLAN

Possibly more like the mother of your mother. And her mother.

JACK

Will Sir ever get to know her? This three-in-one woman?

ASLAN

Life is often too strange to predict.
Sometimes it's better to fall ill for a while, so you can get well.
Because that way you learn how to take care of yourself and others.
And to better appreciate good health.

JACK

Is my father like that?

ASLAN

Only when a man embraces loneliness can he hope to embrace wholeness.
Children can love people long before they become lonely for them.
But wholeness? A man is most unlikely to know it without surviving loneliness.

JACK

Will I be lonely for you?

ASLAN

Your success in growing up will be saying farewell to me.
Otherwise, I will become only an obstacle in your life.

JACK

But what's the point, then?
Getting to know you like this?
And loving you like I do?

ASLAN

I don't grasp it all at the moment. I'm here in the dark, too.

JACK

I thought you understood everything.

ASLAN

Don't confuse me with someone else....
You'll understand, with enough time.

JACK

Enough time for what?

ASLAN

Enough time to sort through these strange things called life.
Enough time to perceive that Lucifer and his ways once crossed through me, too.
Like everyone else, and the truth, I'm imperfect.

JACK

Then you're not ...?

ASLAN

Courage, dear heart!
The best we are asked in life is to raise ourselves up,
to act at a level worthy of being called human.

JACK

How can I ever?...
You have to teach me, before *you* say Goodbye.

ASLAN

I tell you: Courage, dear heart!

JACK

That's it?
Just have courage?

ASLAN

I haven't come to you to make you safe, if that's what you want.
Of course life isn't safe. But it's good.
And for some ... I suspect your father ...
some are destined to witness Hell at the center of the Earth,
before they can find the three-in-one woman, or true comfort in heaven.
But that's all right.
It's your father's way to pay his dues.
Now it's time, Lad, to get yourself to sleep.

JACK

Goodnight then, dear Lion.
But I must say:
You've begun to frighten me.

ASLAN

Each soul's journey can be frightening.
None the same as others.
None much worse than your father's will be.
Now, Goodnight, Jack, and get back to sleep.
I will see you again.

SCENE 3 – FRIDAY NIGHT

A writing desk in Sir's house.

JACK is sleeping in his bedroom, upstairs.

SIR enters, an almost broken man in dress and posture.

He picks up a nearly full bottle of whisky and sits at the desk to begin writing.

His thoughts are heard through his voice as though from offstage.

SIR

Son, I have something to tell you.

Something so awful I don't know where to begin.

I don't know if I can go on....

Jesus God! Your mother's dead, and where am I without her?

She's in heaven and I, I feel,

I feel I'm going to Hell.

I feel I'm falling, through a crack in the earth that's empty without her.

A hole that doesn't stop dropping until madness.

My heart is breaking, and all I can see is shadows and suffering.

I see people everywhere, suffering with no way to stop it.

My mind's powerless to do a thing but weep and fall.

She gave me the courage, before, to go on living in all this.

And shadows are following, all around,

pecking at me.

Pecking at my eyes like birds.

And the noises.

These sounds in the night. Can you hear them?

The howling? The wailing? The screaming?

Like life is coming to an end for me tonight.

Like my mind is coming to an end and falling out of my body.

And the faces.

The faces I see, lying on the ground, and floating in air.

Stuck in trees, burning, and screaming in torment.

They're hanging there, in the trees,

and spread out on the ground, where I'm stepping on them.

Heads, underfoot, yelling at me.

Buried in the ground from the neck down.

Flies on their faces. And hornets crawling over them.

It's horrible. Unspeakable.

SIR

[*pause*] She's dead.
All I lived for, and she's gone.
I felt her lifting away from me....

Jesus God, Jack!
Your mother's gone.
And all I see now is people marching.
People being marched in the twilight, beaten by ropes and whips.
By
By insects.
Giant insects, beating people in an endless line of punishment.
The ground steaming on both sides.
The ground burning and stinking on both sides.
On all sides.
Walking in step into a lake which is on fire.
People preying on the bodies of each other, like cockroaches in a mindless frenzy.

[*beat*] I'd rather die than live like this.
Hell and torture plastered on my eyes for the rest of my life.
Is there nothing else?

Oh! A hill. Above the pits.
I can see a village in open space.
Away, thank God, from the vile insects.
On the prairies, far away.
People, living in teepees.
Plains Indians. Women and children.

But innocence is no shield from the guns of Hell.
Guns are at war, like Satan, with human decency and morality.
Every woman and child I see is being slaughtered in a massacre.
Except for one Lost Bird left alive against her mother's heart.
Shot through and defenseless.
The Earth and Wind God for whom they lived is defenseless against Hell's
invasion.
Like school children.

And it's my fault. My inheritance.
Death. I inherit death. *We* inherit death.
Death, thy greatest sting is thy having no reason.
My love has died, and for no reason.

SIR

She's dead, and fault is raining in the air.
I breathe it in, in every breath I take.
I am guilty to the core.
But what earthly use is all this punishment in Hell?
We're all guilty.
What does eternal punishment prove?

And the banner in the clouds above Hell?
How does it read?
I cannot make it out, through the film in my eyes.

**As throughout, but this time a larger
gulp, SIR drinks directly from the bottle.**

SIR

Punishment is not of the guilty.
It is of the living.
Abandon all hope, you who enter life.

She's dead, and I am living.
And I am to be punished by her loss.
Punished in a slaughterhouse.
Another and another slaughter fills my mind.
Where Tutsis live, so they can be hacked to death by friends and neighbors.
In their gardens. By sharpened Hutu knives and machetes.
By husbands, priests, and relatives in a circle of Hell named Rwanda.
A million murders after it could never happen again.
Just as it could never happen again after Sandy Hook.

Or after Vietnam.
My Lai.
Americans.
Slaughtering unarmed women, and children, and old men.
Preparing their breakfast rice.
I can see it again. Like the first time. And forever.
Over and over again.
Americans with automatic rifles.
American soldiers killing the people of My Lai village.
Mothers, shielding their children and infants.
Charlie Company. Not a single shot fired against them.
Mutilating their bodies. Five hundred? A thousand?

SIR

Jesus God, Jack!
Your mother's dead, and where am I?
She's in heaven and I'm in Hell

She called me her angel. If she only knew.
O God, I loved her so! Like only an angel could.
Like only the fallen angel I am.
My life is nothing without hers.
It's too painful.
It's too dark in here.
It blinds me.
The darkness is blinding me.
O God, turn down the pain of this darkness.

I always believed in God.
I always believed in God's kindness.
I always believed in her kindness.
She was the bravest person in the world.
And I am nothing.
Diana is dead.
She's dead.
The moon is dead and I am nothing.
It's all a bridge of lies.
Being sucked down into the burning.
It's so monstrous, the punishment of living.
O God, it's such a lie.
Life is a lie.
Broken promises are a lie.
A brief respite before I am sent to witness Hell at the center of the Earth.
The most perverted circle of Hell.
Holocaust is its name.
And Auschwitz, and others, are its serpents.
I never told you, Jack. I never should.
Millions starved down to skin and bone, with barely muscle left to their bodies.
Millions emaciated, brutalized, and exterminated.
Beyond imagination before a devil called Hitler came to show us the extremes of human cruelty.
The innermost circle of Hell: Man's immonstrous inhumanity to man.
That's what the nine million were created for.
With eyes to behold the horror of their genocide and Satan in the form of Hitler.

SIR

Hitler *was* Satan. And came to the end his world.
For I can see it now:
The end of the world people pray for is Satan's doing.
And the sight of it at Auschwitz is enough to drive a man crazy.

What do I do?

**SIR takes another sizeable drink from
the bottle.**

SIR

Punishment is not of the guilty. It is of the living.
[beat] But is the darkness lifting?
I see it lifting.
There's a sun in Hell.
It's morning, and the sun is blazing hot already across an endless sand.

**SIR puts his hand up to shield his eyes
from the sun.**

SIR

I see a machine, lying in the desert.
A harrow.
In three parts.
There's a bed, resting in the sand, that the rest of it rests upon.
And a top, a man's height above it,
supported from the bed by four blazing brass rods in the sun.
In between hangs the guts of the machine, on a band of steel,
with needle-like teeth.
I see it all. They put people down, inside.
Down on the bed that's covered with cotton balls.
And tied down.
Strapped down, hand, foot, and neck.
And the needles
O, my God, Jack!
The needles write words on their bodies.

There's a denim lump, with a cord attached,
that's meant to be shoved into their mouths,
to keep them from biting their tongues off.
The denim comes out later, when they're too exhausted to scream anymore.

SIR

The bed quivers, side to side and up and down,
while the needles, screeching like a rusted sewing machine, inscribe a message on
their bare skin.

The rotten thread of Hell is our sadism.

There are two sets of needles.

The long ones do the tattooing.

On the skin.

The short ones wash the blood, onto the cotton balls,
and squirt a liquid that numbs part of the immediate pain so that it can be
prolonged as long as possible.

The machine runs by itself.

It has its own separate brain.

It's automatic.

Without feeling.

And there's a line, of school children, printed, one by one:

Sandy Hook.

Uvalde.

Stoneman Douglas.

Columbine.

Blacksburg, Virginia.

Never again.

Jesus God, Jack!

Your mother's dead, and where am I?

She's in heaven and I'm on fire in Hell.

I can't take it anymore.

**Darkness, except upstage, where the
image of a hanged man swings back and
forth in the shadows.**

SCENE 4 – EYE OF THE MOON

Jack's bedroom, and on a riser next to it.

Jack is asleep in his bed.

EYE OF THE MOON enters on the riser in glowing white, with a glowing white scarf around her hair, and her appearance awakens JACK.

EYE OF THE MOON

It takes no oracle, Jack, to prophecy that war leads to loss, scars, and wastelands.
And that loss leads many a man to wish to end it all.

I look down, and see three significant species in my travels.

One is woman, who feels a poet's truth.

One is peaceful man, who kisses away a woman's tears.

And one is Mars, across his fields of desolation.

It is said that an oracle is a person, or a spirit,
who provides wise counsel and prophetic knowledge.

Some believe the oracles have been portals through which gods speak directly to
mankind.

I'm sorry, but I cannot own the truth of that.

All I can tell you is that the most important oracles of all time were the oracle at
Delphi, the prophetess at Cumae, and myself, Eye of the Moon of Egypt.

But so what? you may ask, if prophecies do so little to change Fate.

Or to save the lives of mothers.

The great fire of London in 1666 was foretold.

And burned anyway.

The sinking of the Titanic was foretold.

And it sank with less than a third surviving.

The French Revolution was foretold.

Both World Wars were foretold.

The atomic bomb over Nagasaki was foretold.

The 1929 Wall Street crash was foretold.

Parachutes and helicopters were foretold.

The end of the world has been foretold legions of times,
by people too frustrated to continue trying to mend it.

From where I look down, the single most effective prophet was Jeanne d'Arc.

Joan of Arc, who predicted that *she* could end the siege of Orléans.

That *she* could lead the French to victory against England.

And that *she* could see Charles crowned King of France.

EYE OF THE MOON

“I was chosen by God,” Joan declared.
And her belief in the voices within led to her miraculous military victories.
And to her braving the fire at the stake which consumed her body at age nineteen.
What was left in her ashes?
Pure, unbroken, diamond-like spirit which has been an inspiration to thousands
of women and girls across the ages.
So says Ko Takamine. Be You.
Joan was not born as a saint.
She was not born as a hero.
She was born as child, a girl, like anyone else.
But carrying her unique spirit to remain relentlessly true to the voices within.

Jack ... you and Joan are alike.
Every six hundred years.
She, too, was a genius.
She, too, was unafraid to correct the erroneous ways of her elders.
She, too, had contempt for the law’s delay and the insolence of office.
For the oppressor’s wrong and the proud man’s arrogance.
For the pale cast of thought that turns awry the name of action and makes
cowards of mankind.

If she had been older, Joan might have had time to acquire the outward arts of
humility and flattery, and thereby soften the negative effect she had on men
whom she humiliated by being right when they were wrong.
Although ... it *has* been my experience that superior minds far too often fail to
grasp the fury their intelligence engenders in the hearts of lesser wits.
How long can any man of wealth or power be expected to endure being shown up
as a nitwit every time Joan opened her mouth?

Don’t misunderstand what I am telling you, Jack Dawkins.
Or what I am forewarning you of.
Joan was not out to make fools of men, as easy as that may have been.
Or intentionally wound their vanities.
She was out to take action to fulfill her god-directed purpose in life.
Joan of Arc was a woman of action. Some might say, of impetuous action.
But it was action, and only action, that really mattered to her.
And must to you. Tonight.

JACK

What?
So that I will be burned at the stake?

EYE OF THE MOON

If you were Joan, back then, what would you have done?

JACK

I would have fought the English, if I were brave enough.
But I didn't know military leaders, or other soldiers, were burned at the stake for simply fighting the way soldiers were supposed to do.

EYE OF THE MOON

She was a woman.
That was a big part of the problem.
And not educated in the ways of the Church.

JACK

Women weren't raised to take action?

EYE OF THE MOON

Not in France, at Joan's age, in the fourteen hundreds.

JACK

What are you telling me?

EYE OF THE MOON

You are a genius, Jack.
Meaning you see farther and probe deeper than people who will get to know you will ever expect, or understand.
And because of that, you have a different set of ethical values.
And a burden to bear because of what they make you see.

JACK

And hear voices?
Will I hear voices like Joan of Arc did?

EYE OF THE MOON

Do I really have to answer that?

JACK

I guess not.

EYE OF THE MOON

I didn't think so.

JACK

And will I have to cross-dress?

EYE OF THE MOON

Young Man, don't think stupid questions like that will get you out of this.

JACK

I didn't think so.
I was just asking.

EYE OF THE MOON

You eat because you have a life-necessity appetite to eat.
You ask questions because you have an appetite for evolution.
For knowledge, with wisdom, is the food of evolution of your species.

JACK

It's all in the mind, isn't it?
What's at stake.

EYE OF THE MOON

There are a billion trillion fiber connections between minds and souls in the universe. Yet only a precious few really count for anything.

Music.
Joy.
Children.
Their loving parents.
Kittens and puppies.
The landscape of the human mind.
The enormous landscape of the human mind, dotted by divine emotions.
By a passion for life.
By the virtually limitless panorama of human possibility.
The astronomical vastness of inter-human connectedness.
The bottomless potential for love from the human soul.

JACK

But if what I see is not right, what right do I have to change it?

EYE OF THE MOON

No one person is going to be successful forcing even the most worthy standards of sanity on society.
Societies are too much founded on intolerance.
What you do is to lead by example; and if it is pure, people will eventually follow.

JACK

Whether it's good or not?

EYE OF THE MOON

You. Will. Be. Good.
Just as Joan was.

Her prayers were as much conversations with her three voices as they were words to God.

Her piety was beyond human.

And her steadfastness to God's will as she heard it was unbreakable, even in the face of the greatest church force of all time, and its threat of burning at the stake.

JACK

And for that her skin was roasted to a crisp, with her in it?

EYE OF THE MOON

Now you are talking corruption.

Not limited to the Middle Ages.

Satan, as a man, as a spirit, as the Nazi political party, as an institution, is a monstrous force of evil that can hide in every man's soul.

Even yours, Jack.

Children are imbued with pillars of love, of God-seeking, and of evil.

What they do with them is what forms their character in life,
and what some believe creates their karma for lives to come.

JACK

How am I to fight the Devil?

On my own?

EYE OF THE MOON

You have two parents blessed with experience.

Your mother has shown you heaven.

Your father can tell you what you need to know about Hell.

But he needs your help tonight.

Take that with gratitude, and live up to the blessings you've been granted.

I see a brilliant future for you, Jack.

And I hear your voice in halls to come.

Now it is time I bid you Good Night.

JACK

You're not leaving, are you?

EYE OF THE MOON

I must.

JACK

No.
Stay, please, just a while longer.

EYE OF THE MOON

Why?

JACK

Tell me the rest of the story.
Tell me what I don't know about Joan of Arc.

EYE OF THE MOON

Very well. A few moments more. Then I *must* go.

Joan was humility itself inwardly, but her actions failed to teach it. She was a country girl, totally devout, and afraid of little or nothing, although she often said that the only place free from danger is heaven. Daily she would converse with her voices ... Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret, and on occasion the archangel Michael, all of whom brought her God's messages.

JACK

For real? Or in her imagination?

EYE OF THE MOON

In her imagination, of course.
That's how messages of God always come to a person.

JACK

Oh.

EYE OF THE MOON

Her first great battle was freeing Orléans from English siege. After that, five more military victories culminated in her recapturing Reims, where Charles was then crowned King of France in Reims Cathedral, with Joan at his side. Following the coronation of Charles, Joan participated in a siege of Paris, which failed miserably. She was later captured, and put on trial for heresy. Essentially for claiming to have direct contact with an angel and saints in heaven, which common people were not permitted by the Church to have.

JACK

People couldn't talk to people in heaven? Like my mother?

EYE OF THE MOON

The leaders of the Church were afraid:
What kind of world would it be if the Church's accumulated knowledge, and experience, and worldly power could be baited like a bear by any ignorant farmer or dairymaid having the monstrous self-conceit to think she's inspired directly from heaven?

JACK

What conceit indeed!

EYE OF THE MOON

Indeed.
Heresy to insecurity to the moon and back.
Say, they would say, what if a man gives all his goods to feed the poor, and puts on the garb of poverty himself, but claims to do so, obeying a personal command from Lord Jesus Himself? Why, that might make him the founder of a heresy that could wreck the Church. And even worse than that: Joan wore the armor of a man, wielded a man's weapons, dressed like a man, and rode alongside men into battle.

JACK

There's always danger for a woman like that, isn't there?

EYE OF THE MOON

Maybe for Joan, life without danger was dull.
In any event, when trial came Joan was alone.
At age nineteen.
Accused of heresy of the spirit and heresy of the dress, she stood alone pleading innocent, facing cremation at the stake.
The soldiers she had fought alongside, and the king she almost single-handedly got crowned ... not a one of them lifted a finger to help her.

JACK

Why?

EYE OF THE MOON

She no longer suited their purpose.
And, to be blunt about it, she frightened men by her strength.

JACK

Men are frightened by strong women?

EYE OF THE MOON

Yes.

JACK

Oh.

EYE OF THE MOON

Nevertheless, at trial she was implored by the prosecutors to take pity on herself, and renounce the voices she claimed to hear.

Which, of course, she could not do.

And even then efforts were made to avoid burning her.

She was given the option of lifetime in prison, as an alternative to burning at the stake.

Which she almost acceded to.

But the voices raised their voice in objection, and, in the end, she chose death over lifetime incarceration.

JACK

I'm sorry, but that's stupid.

EYE OF THE MOON

In her mind, in prison she could not do her work. She would be a rat in a hole.

JACK

She could do her work another way.

EYE OF THE MOON

Though God slay me, she said, yet will I trust in Him.

But I will maintain my own ways before Him.

JACK

She could have been a writer, in prison, and left the words of her voices to the world remaining.

EYE OF THE MOON

She never learned to write.

Not even to tell the difference between A and B on the page.

JACK

Then she could paint.

EYE OF THE MOON

Paint?

JACK

Paint.
Like my mother.

EYE OF THE MOON

Paint?
We never thought of that.
Like William Blake.

JACK

Like da Vinci.

EYE OF THE MOON

Like Akiane Kramarik.
Why did we never think of that?...
She could paint what she pictured in her mind.
Save it all for posterity.
It would have been as good as words.
Better, actually.
And generations could learn, instead of trying in vain to picture the flames and
darkness that were going through her mind at the end.

JACK

But would she accept it?
Being shut off from the light of the sky?
The hills to climb?
The wind in the trees?
The lambs and the larks?
The moon at night?

EYE OF THE MOON

Probably not.
But we could have tried.
And promised less than life imprisonment, I think....

JACK

Promised hope.
With brushes and canvas.
And bells of tender mercy to listen to, along with her voices.

EYE OF THE MOON

[*beat*] At the very end ... she heard the voice of Jesus, talking to her.

JACK

What voices is my father hearing?

I'm afraid to think.

I'm afraid, all of a sudden, for my father.

For the sounds of hollowness and emptiness he must be hearing.

EYE OF THE MOON

It's time for you go to him, and for me to leave.

EYE OF THE MOON begins to exit.

JACK

Good Night, Eye of the Moon.

EYE OF THE MOON

Good Night, Angel.

EYE OF THE MOON exits.

JACK gets out of bed and goes down to his father, who is asleep, his head in his arms on the desk. JACK awakens him, and hugs him like their lives depend on it.

SIR responds with tears and hugs of his own.

SIR

O my dear son.

We love you so much.

END