

The Conversation

Written by:

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FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

JOHN MARION, 52, jolts out of a deep sleep. He sits up, not knowing where he is. He lies back down again, dozing. Sunlight filters in, almost obscuring the room.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

John is in the shower, eyes closed, enjoying the hot spray. He has been there for some time.

He gets out and dries off, taking his time. He is in very good shape with great definition. The light is hazy and soft.

He checks himself in the mirror and decides to shave. This, too, is done with no sense of haste. The phone rings and John turns off the water to listen. The phone rings several times. A female voice (O.S.) is heard leaving a message.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Hi, John, it's Suzanne. I'm just calling to tell you that I think what you are doing is amazing. I believe in you and you're going to be OK. Call me later when it's done. I love you.

John grins and yet there is something behind the grin. He turns the tap back on to finish shaving.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Finished shaving, John puts on deodorant and leaves the bathroom, leaving the door open.

INT. HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

John walks down the hallway, past the phone. He is still naked, very comfortable in his body.

He looks down at the phone, pauses and then moves on to the stairs that go down to the living room.

He walks down the stairs, through the living room into an open kitchen. The living room and kitchen flow seamlessly together. The hallway and stairs are completely visible from that floor. Everywhere there is wealth and beauty on display.

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Expensive art and furniture are tastefully arranged. Morning light shines in the many windows. It is dreamlike, creating a hazy transparence that softens all definition.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

SERIES OF SHOTS

There is COMPLETE SILENCE in the house. John makes espresso, the grinding of the beans shattering the quiet.

He drinks it black, staring out the window at the morning sunlight, deep in thought.

John washes his cup and puts it away.

He walks back up the stairs towards his bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

John opens drawers and pulls out socks and underwear.

He throws his socks on the unmade bed and puts on his underwear which is bright pink. He walks into a large walk in closet.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

John comes out of the closet with black jeans and a black t-shirt. He goes to the bed and throws the clothes on it.

He puts on his pants and socks and then hesitates. He goes back into the closet and comes out with a white t-shirt. He looks at both shirts.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

John is wearing the black t-shirt and black shoes. He has made the bed and put the white t-shirt away.

He sprays cologne on himself and then walks out of the bedroom.

INT. HALLWAY/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

John walks down the hallway and down the stairs again. He walks past the kitchen to a closed door. He hesitates, uncertain.

He walks back to the living room, sitting on a couch. He stays there for several minutes, staring into space, conflicted. He softly sings the nursery rhyme, 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat.'

He finally gets up and goes back to the closed door. He opens it, walks through and closes the door behind himself.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

John walks down a flight of stairs, turning on the lights. He opens the door at the bottom and walks through, closing the door.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

John walks down another flight of stairs, turning on the lights. He opens the door at the bottom and again walks through, closing the door.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

John walks down yet another flight of stairs, turning on the lights. He opens the door at the bottom.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The basement is pitch black. John is silhouetted against the light. He turns on the lights and closes the door. The basement is very large and is open and airy, the walls and ceiling painted pure white. There is beautiful white carpet on the floor. It is almost empty but for a few comfortable looking chairs in the middle of the room, which are also white. On all four walls are closed doors seeming to beckon.

The light has a sublime, ethereal quality. It is almost celestial in its softness.

John walks to the door opposite to him, almost appearing to float slightly above the carpet. He turns on the light and opens the door. There is a kitchen from the 1970's, with a green fridge, stove and dishwasher.

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The table is metal and acrylic. He stares at the fixtures, seemingly in a trance. Finally, he closes the door.

He moves to the door to the left of the kitchen, and opens it. Inside there is a bedroom with a bed, dresser and night tables. Leaning against one of the night tables is a prosthetic leg. On that night table is a PICTURE of three small children. John fixates on the picture, lost in memories, and finally pulls himself back to the present. He closes the door.

John walks to the middle door on the left wall and flicks on a switch. He hesitates for quite awhile and then opens it and enters the room, closing the door.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

John looks around the room. He sees a large room filled with many childhood things. There are posters on the walls, a desk and chair, a bookshelf full of books, a couch, an upright piano, model cars and airplanes, and toys and sports equipment lying around. The light here, too, is beautiful, soft and vaporous.

He sits down on the couch, facing the far wall.

JOHN

Well mom, mother, mommy dearest, I am finally going to have a conversation with you that I have waited my entire life in which to engage. You are just going to listen. It couldn't happen when I was conceived or when I was born, obviously. Nor could it happen when I was eight years old or when I was thirteen. And there was no way in hell it could happen when I was nineteen. No, it had to happen after a lifetime of soul searching, of figuring out what the fuck it was that was wrong with me. Don't even think of looking at me with those judgmental, shaming eyes. I will say Fuck as many times as I want to, as many times as I fucking feel like it. Fuck, fuck, fuck it, fuck you! Are you shocked, mommy dearest, that I can say that about you? I can imagine you're saying, "How can my son talk like that?"

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JOHN (CONT'D)

What is wrong with him?" Well, after all these years, I'm finally going to express exactly what is wrong with me... Imagine, if you will, a woman born on a small farm far away from any large city. Think of this woman growing up with a sister who was six years older than her, who hated her just for being born. This woman grew up thinking she was better than a farm girl and deserved better than a farm boy. Somewhere along the line she grew arrogant. She believed she was going to meet a handsome prince who was going to whisk her away and make all her dreams come true. She could never understand why she had the feelings towards her sister that she did and she grew up with this festering sore inside her heart. This, among other things, would eat at her for the duration of her life.

John stands up and kicks the couch. His rage is barely controlled.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Don't even think of interrupting me! Get the fuck out of my head! Don't ask me how I figured this shit out; suffice it to say I just did. I am fucking smart. Isn't that what you always used to say to me? "Oh, John, you are so smart. You can be anything in your life you want to be." Only it wasn't that simple, was it? That statement was only accurate as long as you approved and as long as I wasn't showing off... So, back to my story. Lo and behold, that fucking bullshit fairytale that the woman had always believed actually turned out. Initially. She met a man who was perfect! An English gentleman who was educated, intelligent, well spoken, and had a good pedigree. Life was perfect, marvelous, a magical fantasy!

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JOHN (CONT'D)

Here was the man who was going to whisk her off on his magnificent steed to the land of Engineers Wives, private clubs, servants, and the mansion and the cottage. Jesus Christ! Saying that out loud makes me want to puke. Shaming me again, mother, with those judgmental eyes? The beauty of this little talk is that I can say anything I want. Now, where was I? Fuck, fuck, fuck! Fuck you!

John sits back down.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Oh yes, the fantasy bullshit land that you thought you were going to inhabit. At what point did you get that it was never going to happen? Was it when he was traveling all the time up North? Was it when his drinking and smoking were a constant source of irritation to you and he just wouldn't stop? Or was it when, at the end of the day, he just wouldn't fuck you? At what point, mother? Oh, I'm sorry, is that too harsh for you? I know, I know, family members are never supposed to talk about fucking. Oh, I'm sorry, sexual intercourse. We don't talk about sex, we don't talk about money, we don't talk about anything except what the fucking neighbors will think. We pretend that our lives are perfect and everything gets swept under the rug. My point, mommy dearest, is that you did, in your numb state, eventually realize that something just wasn't quite right, and you left him! A woman leaving her husband in the 1960's! It took amazing courage. Unfortunately, it stopped there... So, I understand all of that. Now, let's back up a few years to when I was born. Again, I want you to imagine a baby, a newborn, a brand new life form to this planet, entering this reality and feeling nothing but terror and rejection.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

Get out of my fucking head! How do I know this? Now we get to me; my rage, my pain and my insanity. You rejected me at birth. You probably rejected my father's come because by then, you were so bitter and disappointed with him.

John stands up and paces back and forth, hitting his head with his hands.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! Right now, in this moment of time, I feel like ripping off your head! Just fucking listen to me and for once in your pathetic life don't make this about you. I've spent my entire life fixing the damage you did to me. I will eventually explain how I know what I know, but right now, you and I are going to take a wonderful trip down memory lane.

John sits back down on the couch.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I was born into rejection and I froze. Babies are almost pure energy. They have no awareness, no ego and no history. I froze, my life force retreated from my arms and legs and curled up into a little ball in the center of my being. I, of course, had no awareness of anything other than terror and the feeling that I was simply going to die. That was your legacy to me. I was born into a world filled with rejection, judgment, shame, pain, and eventually numbness. Thank you, mother, for your gifts... There are various points in any confrontational discourse where people get defensive. You may be just bursting to tell me that I'm being silly and ridiculous and that I'm making this all up;

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JOHN (CONT'D)

that you were a good parent, that you did the best you could, raising three children all by yourself, holding down a full time job and keeping a house. I bet you just can't wait to tell me, "What is wrong with you? Can't you see I was just trying to cope? How can you be so ungrateful? Where are you getting these notions from?"

John stands up again.

JOHN (CONT'D)

See, here's the thing, mother. These responses are why, at this point, I can't fucking stand you!

John grabs his head with both hands, pacing.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What's that? Why am I being so hurtful? Why am I so terribly sensitive? John and his feelings. If I hear that one more time in my life you stupid cow, I think I'll cut off my own nuts. I can look at my own parents and acknowledge how truly stupid as human beings you were. Like most everybody else in the world, you were mindless sheep, victims, totally powerless in your own lives. And therefore, no matter what I say to you it will be one excuse after another after another. But guess what? Finally, after all these decades of healing myself, I don't give a shit. I don't need anything from you. I don't need your acknowledgment and I sure as fuck don't need your love. Your version of that word destroyed me. So you wanting to whine and bitch that you didn't know, means nothing to me.

John clenches his fists and jumps up and down.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Unconsciousness is never an excuse!
Do you fucking hear me?
Unconsciousness is never an excuse!
Unconsciousness is never an excuse!

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JOHN (CONT'D)

My freedom today is that I get to vent all my insanity and you can't say anything. Can you hear me, mommy dearest? You can't say a thing. Anyway, where the fuck was I? Oh, yes, my birth. I get so crazy I lose my focus.

John sits back down.

JOHN (CONT'D)

That's the reality into which I was born: rejection, judgment, shame and terror. So, life moved on as life always does. I started to grow; eat, shit my diapers, sleep and do everything babies do. The only problem is that I had an awareness at a very early age that something was terribly wrong with me. Maybe my brain had been opened or damaged by the shock of the rejection. Maybe it was the nanny who I knew loved me unconditionally. Or maybe I had just been born with enormous feeling and even though I went numb at birth, there was enough left over for me to realize that just being alive was dangerous. I have very old memories of absolute shame and terror. I remember feeling a turd sliding down my leg. I can't remember what I was wearing, but it may have been a red jumpsuit. The turd may have slipped out of the leg of my diaper, or I may have been out of diapers by then. All I really remember is how good it felt to shit myself, followed immediately by shame and terror. I was sure I was going to die and either you or father were going to kill me. Then there was the time when I was dancing in the living room of our first house, on the white carpet. I took my underwear off and put it on my head. It was white underwear. I was simply enjoying being alive, the wonderful feeling of being naked and moving my body.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

Again, there is no recollection of who else was in the room except you and what came out of your mouth. "Oh, John, stop showing off. You should be so ashamed of yourself." Something in me, again, just wanted to curl up and die. You were doing a magnificent job of teaching me to feel ashamed just for being alive. Christ, I don't know how you survived my first three or four years. I know I was such a difficult child. I was incorrigible! Your perfect little boy was causing you such angst. What to do, what to do. Oh, the hand wringing that must have gone on. My father was basically non-existent, the nanny was gone and you were essentially on your own. However did you cope with three children that you had to make perfect? Good gracious, the stress you must have been under; how difficult your life must have been... Then there was the event that must have sent you right around the bend. I swallowed almost an entire bottle of baby pills. I have this wonderful memory of those pretty pink pills that just tasted so good. Anyway, it wasn't that big a deal. Babies get into shit all the time, right? Except that for me, it was another period of sheer terror. It took three doctors to hold me down. Why would a small boy put up such a fight? Because, mommy dearest, at that young age I believed that once again I was fighting for my life. I can still remember the tube being put down my throat and feeling that I was going to die. And finally, I'm going to share one more wonderful little tidbit from the mind of a tortured little boy. Is that okay? Gooood. I had to get my tonsils out. No big deal, right mother? Just a routine operation. Once again, my memory is one of fear and shame. I can still see the Studebaker we had.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

I was sitting in the front seat holding onto the dashboard, and I vividly remember how much pain I was in because my throat was so sore. I could barely swallow. But more to the point, I was afraid to tell you because I felt I had done something wrong and you would hurt me if I said anything... I lied to you about the part where I said that was the last story. There is one more. And you know what? It felt really good lying to you. Anyway, let's move on, shall we? Stiff upper lip and all that, right, mother?

John stands again. He can't stay seated. He paces.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I was kicked out of junior kindergarten or whatever the fuck it was called back then. The teacher simply couldn't handle me. I was a bad boy. Obviously, I don't remember the conversation you had with her, but I do remember being utterly terrified that I was going to die. I also remember running down the hallway, which, I believe, had a burgundy rug, and jumping down maybe three steps and falling to my knees. And here's the incongruity: as shamed as I felt from the looks you had given me, I felt good running and jumping because I knew it would have angered that idiot teacher... So, there you have it, mother. Part one of the life of a rejected, terrified little boy. Are you taking any of this in, you unconscious woman, or am I blowing smoke out of my ass? God, it feels so good to use my disgusting language in front of you. Now, let's move on. Oh, this is so exciting! I'm having a wonderful time, aren't you mother? I really feel this is going to evolve our relationship. I now understand that somewhere along the line I developed a schizoid split.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

In order for my psyche to survive, I had to hide the fact that I had this great and horrendous secret. There was something so wrong with me that I could never tell anyone. And do you know what that secret was, mother? I was alive and I wasn't supposed to be! And do you know how I knew that mother? Because anytime I had a feeling I wanted to express, really anytime I was going to open my mouth and say something, anything at all, I knew it would be rejected. So if I felt that, then I should not be alive, because there must have been something horribly wrong with me. I was wrong just for being born. You rejected me just for being born. Can you hear me, you stupid bitch? The nerve of me; how dare I have the gall to enter this world and cause you pain. So I froze and left my center, my essence. And guess what I learned to do, mother? I became an expert liar. I knew that if I ever expressed my true feelings to you, shame, judgment and rejection were soon to follow and I just couldn't bear the feeling that I was going to die... Here's another little story that comes to mind. On one of the few occasions that my father was around he took me and my brother on a trip into the prairies. I can't remember where, except at one point we stopped and picked kernels of wheat from a field. I remember how wonderful they tasted. I also remember him putting me on his knee and letting me steer the car on the highway. Those two memories may be the only two half decent ones I have of him. The others were filled with fear because I also felt his rejection and that may have had something to do with you kicking him out of your bed, replacing him with me. What do you think, mother? Do you agree, that he, being as totally oblivious as you, blamed me?

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John sits down.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Guess what? I do, and that's all that matters. My own fucking father hates me because his bitter, repressed wife throws him out of bed in preference to her tiny, little son. Fuck! Anyway, I digress. We ended up in some motel and we were pretty much left on our own. By that time I had made a wonderful discovery. It was called fire. I loved it and felt its pull. I found a pack of matches and started a wonderful, glorious grass fire. I loved how the flames moved in the wind. The only problem was that the fire department had to be called to put out the flames. Again, out of sheer terror, I lied and told them that another boy had started it and then ran off. I still remember a fireman bending down and picking up the pack of matches, making a comment... So that was my ECE or early childhood education: growing up every day feeling that I was going to die. That terror was never far from the surface; a shark lurking just under the water. That became my Demon that has haunted me my entire life... Life never moves in a straight line because it is driven by the energy of emotion, and no one is only one emotion, so I grew. Even though I had frozen, I still had enormous life force and things just came naturally to me: sports, music, singing. I was your little superstar, your angel. I was your favorite, God help me, and was the recipient of all your sickness. I guess I was around six when you left father. I felt that some great and terrible event had happened and once again I had done something wrong. Death was imminent.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

I somehow took from you that moving into the house we did, in that neighborhood, was just about the worst thing that ever could have happened.

John stands up again, pacing in front of the couch.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Until the old man died when I was eight. Holy shit! Not only does he not provide you with the lifestyle you felt you deserved, doesn't fuck you, is an alcoholic, and causes you to lose the big house, the fucker dies on you. How could he be so selfish? What was he, only forty-four years old? And you know what I remember mother? Not feeling sad, because I didn't really care that much. I had been at a sleepover down the street and I remember that the boy's mother seemed very, very sad when she gave me my cereal. I was very aware of her. Then I came home and you and my sister were sitting at the kitchen table. I have no memory of where my brother was at that point. My sister turned and whispered, "Dad died." And you got so angry with her. I clearly remember feeling your shame at that moment and taking it out on my sister. When were you going to tell me, mommy dearest? When the moment felt right? But that could never happen, could it? Nothing ever really felt right to you. You were almost totally driven by your own shame. So, when were you going to tell me? Sometime later that day when nobody was around? Were you gathering yourself, trying to find the courage and she wrecked it? Or was I going to find out at the funeral? All I know is at that point I was consciously aware of hating you and thinking how really pathetic you were. How does a child ever recover from that barrage of negativity? I don't know...

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JOHN (CONT'D)

One of my last memories of him and I think this is when you two fuckers successfully split me, is when we were downtown somewhere. I remember it was dark and there were these big, beautiful snowflakes falling. You and he were arguing and you started to walk away down the sidewalk. I was left in the middle. You called out to me and told me to come to you. And then he did the unthinkable. He told me, no, to come with him. I feel, looking back on this singular moment, that it was the most painful thing I had ever felt... I can't do this.

John walks quickly to the door and opens it. He starts to walk out, turns back again and stops, fighting himself. He knows leaving is a bad decision. He desperately wants to leave but is scared he will never come back. Finally, he closes the door and moves to the back of the couch.

JOHN (CONT'D)

The two most important people in my life were pulling me in two directions. I honestly felt like I was being split in half. Something inside me broke. I felt this ripping feeling... To this day I can't remember to whom I went. I think I must have left the building for awhile as my reality took off on a rollercoaster. I know I came back, I just have no idea when.

John sits down again on the couch, squirming, too uncomfortable to stay still.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Are you beginning to get the picture, mother, of the trauma through which you put me? What was I, five or six? In my ceaseless search to understand my pain, I read, years ago, that we choose our parents before we ever enter this reality.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

My first thought was, "Jesus Christ, what kind of a motherfucker was I in some distant past to pick two assholes like you as my parents?" I must have been a serious prick. I eventually let that line of thinking go because it wasn't helping me. But holy shit, the two of you did some incredible work on me. It's a good thing he died when he did or I would probably be in some mental institution, banging my head on a wall, screaming that I was just misunderstood. Either that, or dead.

John stands up and moves to the back of the couch, leaning on it.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hang in there, mother, we're moving on. Are you ready? Comfy? Good. Here we go. Now, where was I? Oh yes. You shaming my sister because she opened her stupid trap about the old man dying... The years moved on. I never remembered the funeral. My reality was defined by my ever sharpening senses telling me who would reject me and who wouldn't. My brother and sister were basically strangers. You compared us so successfully that I ended up not really liking either one of them. School got harder and harder. As I got more and more frozen I couldn't take in information anymore. School, as well, became a source of constant terror. I was always afraid that I would be shamed by the teacher or beaten up by the bad boys, of which there were so many. You were afraid of literally everything and your reason was always the same. We were somehow better than everybody else. I learned to be arrogant! Heavens, I did learn something after all.

John paces back and forth, using the couch as a shield.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

And year by year, the killing rage grew in me, but I was so terrified of being rejected that I could never talk about the Demon or give it voice. The thing that made me the most crazy is that I was aware the whole time of getting more and more frozen. You, by your constant judgment and fear had done a wonderful job of isolating me. I created amazing strategies to avoid conflict so I wouldn't be hurt. To all outward appearances I had it all, except each year I achieved less and less and the rage grew stronger. I did all the things that good boys, according to you, should do. I played classical piano; nothing else would have been appropriate. I still played sports and did okay in school. Only I knew I was getting more and more frozen. Of course, I constantly lied to you and told you only what you wanted to hear. I could never show you out of my eyes what I was really feeling. There were many times when I simply could not look you in the eyes. It was just too painful. That Demon was always there, waiting. I created a separate life. A life of setting fires, breaking things, egging houses, and just basically doing shitty things. I was also amazing at not getting caught. God forbid your perfect son would ever be caught doing things that only bad boys did. This alternate life became a pattern for the next eight or nine years. Again, I had incredible awareness of my own behavior and even though I understood from where it evolved, I was utterly powerless to stop it. You had certainly created me from your own image, mother. Looking back as often as I have, I have slowly come to understand that the only difference between you and me is that I was incredibly aware and you were completely fucking oblivious.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

You were as dumb as a stone and had made me as powerless as you were.

John stops pacing and looks at his mother.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm sorry. Am I hurting your feelings again, mother? Well, don't be so sensitive, use your common sense, for heaven's sake. Don't you get that every action has an equal and opposite reaction? I am the reaction to your action, mother. What is wrong with you? You don't have the sense God gave geese. If only you were more like your brother... Oh, sorry, I lost it for a second. How many times did you say that to me through the years with your shaming, judgmental tone? You see, no matter how perfect I worked at being, it was never good enough. Sooner or later I would do something that in your eyes was wrong, and the Demon would come up.

John sits on the couch again.

JOHN (CONT'D)

As I approached my teens, I was more and more aware of the rage that would follow that statement. Of course, the Demon would always win, but I would be left hating you every time you said that. "You don't have the sense God gave geese." For years, whenever I would think of that statement I would get triggered. Anyways, let's move on. Now, I'm going to elaborate again. Yippee! Want to hear more about my joy filled youth? No? Well, tough shit. Listen. Summer camp comes along. How old am I, nine or ten? My only real memory is being so terrified of the outdoor shitters that I don't go for three days. I still eat all the meals but I hung on to my shit for dear life. I remember being in so much pain I actually thought I was going to explode. But somehow, I managed to hang on and hang on.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

Finally, my need to shit outweighed all other feelings. I stuffed my weenie between my legs, sat on my hands and out came this deluge of fecal matter. On one hand I had never felt so relieved and on the other I was utterly terrified that some unnamed monster would crawl up out of the pile of shit and kill me. Or come through the flimsy door. Or be lying in wait for me when I left. I wiped my ass, pulled up my pants and ran. I looked over my shoulder several times, sure I was about to be killed. The funny thing is, I actually felt unbelievably ashamed as I ran, knowing I was being ridiculous but utterly powerless to stop... Then came grades seven and eight. Most of those two years are a blur in my mind except my awareness kept growing. I came to see how most of the adults I came into contact with were full of shit. I could feel their disconnect and incongruities almost immediately. I came to realize I was smarter than most of them, but at the same time, things kept getting harder and harder. This is also when I developed the behavior of not completing things. To this day that haunts me still. And you know what? I knew exactly what was going on as it happened. Completing things was just too painful because of the danger they might be rejected.

John stands and walks slowly around the room. He finally comes to the piano and stares at it. He can't get too close.

JOHN (CONT'D)

So. I still did everything that young boys did, except I was more and more isolated. I could never show anyone my true feelings, so I never had real friends growing up. This is also when I discovered books. As it got more and more difficult for me to take in factual information, I devoured fiction.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

That became the only way I could learn. This carried me through to the end of high school. Then, in grade nine, an interesting thing happened. You must have sensed something or you suddenly realized I was becoming too Godless. You sent me to a Christian school for grades nine to eleven and it was there that I learned the true nature of human bullshit and stupidity. Those people were some of the most dishonest, judgmental people I have ever known. There was more smoking, pot smoking, drinking and sex in that small school than I ever could have imagined. Again, I recognized how truly stupid you were. You saw nothing. You followed rules and systems. I never in all my life saw you engage in introspection. You were mindless and asleep. You thought I was going to be saved. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord God Almighty. Your son was going to be guided down the path of the righteous. Religion was going to fix me. What an idiot!

John moves around the room, too uncomfortable to stay still. He looks at various objects.

JOHN (CONT'D)

That school was full of hypocrites. The funny thing is that it was there that I became acutely aware of my love and empathy. I saw that many of those kids had been so controlled that out of sheer desperation they acted the way they did. Once again, I was too scared to actually act on my feelings, but I did recognize the pattern of behavior. As I have said, I had awareness. I studied human behavior, probably out of a need to see who would reject me and who wouldn't. Before I would talk to someone I would study them. By the time I was thirteen, I had learned many things.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

I had studied you, I had studied my father and I had studied my grandmother, who had come to live with us when you just couldn't cope. I don't remember how old I was, maybe six or seven. Here's the point I'm making: my brother was my father's favorite, my sister was my grandmother's favorite, and I, God help me, was your favorite. I saw all of this and learned. Mostly what I learned was how bad the three of you felt and passed all of that on to us. Somewhere along the line I also learned empathy. I now understand that that was perfectly in line with my schizoid split. On one hand I just fucking hated you and on the other I really loved you. Talk about being two people. Jesus! The funny thing was that I really wanted to be an amazingly loving person, but I could never stay in those feelings, just like things got harder and harder for me to do in my body... So, at thirteen, I hit puberty and it was like my awareness was kicked into high gear. I was full of rage and terror that froze me, and I was full of love that I could only sometimes access. I saw you with your judgment and shame. I would rarely bring friends over because I was ashamed because there was always something wrong with them, just like there was always something wrong with your friends. I saw you with men you would date and they were never good enough. I had to listen to you yelling down the street for my brother and me to come in much earlier than anyone else. I knew your fear was doing this because you could never give us any reason that would make sense. How I hated you, because once again, we were constantly made fun of by the other kids. I saw the unspoken tension between you and my grandmother and as the years passed I watched her get worse and worse.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

Back then they called it senility, but once again I felt nothing but shame when anybody I would bring home would see her. Her dentures fit so badly and her gums recessed so much that she began drooling, until towards the end of her life she had turned into a drooling vegetable.

John reluctantly comes back to the couch and sits down.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I will never forget this one incident: my brother had bad allergies and he would often ask her to put ointment on his chest. So this one time, out of the blue, he says to me, "John, could you come and wipe the drool off my chest? It's getting mixed in with the ointment." He might as well have been asking me to pass him the salt, he said it so casually. I nearly died. It took all my control not to burst out laughing at the sheer ludicrousness of the situation, made even more so by the fact that she heard every word and he just didn't give a shit... And finally, mother, I saw you at my father's grave. It was only a marker because you couldn't afford a headstone. It was a chilly day. I remember the sun and how the wind blew your tears off your cheeks like leaves from a dying tree. You cried and cried. How I hated you. Not because you were crying or because I knew you loved him. Not because he left you with three small children and an insurance policy that had lapsed because of non payment. Not because you sold the house for a fraction of what it was worth and became destitute. Not because you were a woman alone in the seventies.

John leaps violently to his feet.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

I fucking hated you because in that moment I didn't fucking exist! You were so completely selfish and oblivious that the only thing in existence was you and your pain, you fucker. Can you hear me, mother? You brought me to the grave of my father and once again, by your selfishness, rejected me!

John savagely turns away and rushes to the door. He is so angry he doesn't know what to do. He leaves the room and smashes the door shut in a rage.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

John goes to the chairs in the middle of the room and flops down on one. He can't stay seated so he stands up again and starts pacing in a circle. He starts moving to another door on a wall, hoping an answer may be in one of the rooms. He stops, changing his mind, feeling his craziness. He sits down on the floor this time, trying desperately to regain some sense of control. He lies down in the fetal position, covering his head with his arms, protecting himself.

Finally, his breathing slows down. He gets up slowly and walks to the door that opens to the stairs, moving faster and faster. He reaches the door, yanks it open, and can't leave. He turns and looks back at the room where his mother is. He knows if he doesn't do this now he may never have the courage again.

He walks back to the door. Opening it is one of the hardest things he has ever done in his life. He walks slowly into the room.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

John goes to the couch and sits down, more in control.

JOHN

Sorry, mother I lost my shit. So, the summer of my thirteenth year arrived and once again, life took a turn for the worse. Again, I remember how beautiful it was outside. The sun was shining and it was late afternoon. For some reason I was outside when you were walking home from the bus stop.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

I saw your limp and I just knew something was badly wrong. You had a large lump on your ankle. You went to the doctor and his diagnosis was that it would simply go away. As the days turned into weeks it got more and more painful, and finally, out of desperation you got a second opinion. You waited so long mother, because you were afraid our family doctor would get angry at you and rejection would almost certainly follow. Oh yes, mother. I saw the same terror in you that in me you had so successfully instilled. It didn't matter that he was an incompetent douchebag and an alcoholic to boot. All that drove you was your fear. When you finally got the second opinion, that doctor had you hospitalized as soon as he could for a biopsy. And surprise, surprise! It was cancer and had already started moving up your leg. This is when I became very aware of my duality where you were concerned. I loved and hated you and hated myself for ever having those feelings. And I was truly powerless, trapped in my awareness. I knew how hard you had worked through the years to provide us with all the same opportunities as the other kids. I knew how hard it was, even with your mother's support, to raise three children. I even understood that you had done your best and I felt enormous love and respect for you as a result. The problem, was that I could never get past my Demon, mother. He was a constant reminder of what you had done to me as a newborn. Of course, I didn't know any of this at that point. I just felt that something was very wrong with me and that feeling was always with me, no matter what was going on. I also knew that I was never safe with you because every single thing in your life was wrapped up with judgment and shame.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

"You should be so ashamed of yourself," was your dagger and you used it oh so expertly, mother. I never knew when the next cut was coming, but I lived with complete confidence that sooner or later I would feel its pain.

John moves to the back of the couch, pacing.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I believe that is why, when I saw you limping, I felt that something was wrong. It was not that big a surprise when the lump turned out to be cancerous. I had grown up with your negativity and bad feelings... So the Christian school rallied around us. Each one of us three kids went to a different home, even though I wanted to stay at our house. It was just another example of how totally clueless you were. It didn't even occur to you that the three of us might actually have preferred to stay together. Once again, we were separated and isolated. I went to stay with a boy who was in my grade nine class. He had a sister, and a brother who was severely retarded. What they had achieved with this kid was miraculous. With love, the boy had developed way past what the doctors had said was possible. He was prone to these wacky outbursts when he reached his tolerance limit, whatever activity in which he was involved. The first time it happened we were eating dinner, and out of the blue this kid starts mm mm mmmmming louder and louder until he was screaming. I nearly dropped my fork. I think I nearly left my body out of shock. They had not bothered to communicate to me what might happen; rather, I was expected to take it in stride when they explained his retardation. So, with love, they managed to get the child semi-functional.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

But again, I saw the bullshit start to creep past the 'be a good Christian' idea. They were very judgmental, had no tolerance for anybody different and were fucked up beyond belief around food. This was the seventies and they were acting like we were in wartime Europe. I once asked for seconds and it was as if all the air had left the room.

John sits on the edge of the couch.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I felt like I had committed this great and serious sin. Again, I was shocked. I once saw the mother scraping rice out of a pot. I swear to Christ that her life depended on getting every single fucking kernel out of that pot. I thought she was going to scrape a hole through the pot, and I realized that was why she left the rice so wet. The father, being the patriarch, was responsible for praying. It didn't take me long, after listening to several of the men praying, to figure out that those idiots often just liked the sound of their own voices and would drone on and on ad nauseam. Unfortunately for me, this particular patriarch had severe halitosis and by the time he was finished droning, the entire room had been infused with his stench. I felt like I was a prisoner. I was fucking hungry all the time, staying in a house that stank, with a boy prone to screaming fits, powerless to change anything. What else was new? So mom, while you were in the hospital getting your leg chopped off, I was in another prison. It was also around this time that my grandmother died. I have almost no recollection of this event. I don't even remember if there was a funeral and if there was, did I go? The last time I ever saw her was when she was taken from our house to an old age home.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

My feeling was amazement. For someone who had basically turned into a human vegetable, to be able to rouse herself out of that stupor just blew me away. She knew she was being carted off to die! She had to be physically taken out of the house. That's what stayed with me: not sadness or love, just shame and amazement.

John sits on the couch again.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Good gosh amighty, mother, that goldurned shame again. It just seemed to follow me wherever I went. Whatever do you think was wrong with me? I know, I know, I was just being too sensitive. What a glorious start to my teenage years. You were released from the hospital sometime before Christmas and the three of us returned home to the negativity that was uniquely ours. But at least it was to what I was accustomed. I was actually feeling okay with my experience with that form of Christianity, because they had opened up their home, even though I had never felt it was from their hearts. Until I learned the truth. I knew it was making them look wonderful in their respective churches. What I didn't know until several months later was that you had paid them. Once again, I saw how truly full of shit and dishonest they were, hiding behind their religion. Christian charity and love. Ha! What a steaming pile of shit. I was a border and they made money renting out a room. They fucking took money from a one legged single woman who had cancer. How fucked up is that?... Towards the end of grade nine, I committed the second most deadly of all sins. I went drinking with a friend of my brother's who had his driver's licence. Between the two of us we drank an entire twenty-six ounce bottle of whisky.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

To this day it is still hard for me to drink whisky. I got so sick I must have puked up some internal organs. But you know what, mother? It was worth it. Do you know why? Because I wanted to hurt you. And I, this time, was successful. You had literally been waiting up for me the entire night. I was incoherently drunk and I still felt your shaming. How could I hurt you like this? Didn't I understand? How could I put you through this after all you had gone through with my father? And on and on and on and on. I thought you were going to die, you were so distraught. The next day the phone calls were flying. I had to be fixed before I turned into an alcoholic.

John stands up and moves around the room.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Oh my God! Oh my God! Hurry, before it's too late. What to do, what to do? Your precious son was being claimed by the devil. And you know what? The entire time this fiasco was going on, I was laughing inside. It was the first time in my life that I allowed myself to accept your stupidity. This monumental event full of angst and terror for you, was, for me, simply a night out. I really let myself feel that you didn't have a fucking clue who I was. I knew that no matter how I took my first drink you were going to freak out, so I said, fuck it and fuck you. So, grade nine ended with a bang. Well, actually, not really. I'll explain more about that later. Hee, hee, hee, hee, hee.

John turns and looks at his mother.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Are you still with me mother? Don't worry, I'm coming to the best part of our conversation. Grades ten and eleven came and went.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

By this time I had quit soccer and hockey. Learning had become so difficult that I got by simply on my innate intelligence. I had no clue how to learn and sure as hell could not consciously retain information. I felt my dreams dying and my rage growing. Here's how truly fucked up I was: I actually wanted to be a loving human being, but with the Demon inside me, I could never truly express my love. I finished high school at another school because I basically told you I would quit unless you let me leave that cesspool of hypocrites. For once you actually listened to me. By that time it really didn't matter what I did. I started chess and ping pong, but sooner or later I would always come up against the Demon and freeze, so I quit those as well. The only class I did well in was English. All those hundreds of books I read taught me something. My English teacher wanted me to win the award that year, but of course, I didn't. His comment on one of my essays was that it was one of the best essays he had read in years. I graduated, barely, and felt like a loser. Of course I would never show that to anyone. By this time your gallbladder and kidney had been removed and you had had a hysterectomy. Three separate operations. Each time to remove cancer, and each time I died a little. I went to a Christian college for three months and was piss drunk for most of the time. I was really aware of how fucked up I was. I signed up for a full course load and basically just carried books around the campus for three months. On one hand was my need to meet this stupid ass expectation of yours that I was smarter, better looking and magically more gifted than anybody else. On the other hand was my truth.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

You had crippled and castrated me so effectively that I had no possibility of ever achieving anything, let alone meeting your standards, which no human being on the planet could ever meet. Your standards were based on how you lived your entire life. A human being doesn't actually practise, train, study; in other words take massive, powerful action on a daily basis to achieve a dream. No, how you lived your life was, "Have faith, God will prevail. We don't actually have to do anything, John, you are a Marion. You're special. Just you wait and see. Someday you'll be a great man. You're better than everybody else. Just you wait and see. You'll show them." As completely full of shit as that was, you made it infinitely worse by your shame and rejection. Anytime I had the nerve to actually achieve anything, which happened a lot because I still had huge feeling inside myself, you would crush me.

John moves to the front of the couch.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You know how you did that, you stupid, stupid woman? You know what dumb ass shit would come out of your mouth? "Oh, John, stop showing off. What will people think? You should be so ashamed of yourself." All that shit was running through my mind when I came home from college. Plus, I had a big pimple on my forehead and I just knew you would say something. Even I, who had developed radar for fifty miles around shame and rejection, was caught off guard. You met me at the bus station and the first words out of your mouth were, "Oh, John, what have you done to your face?" As if I had a choice, you moron. I felt my shame and rage well up, but by that time I was helpless and actually couldn't say a word.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

Like an idiot I thought that after three months of being absent you might have greeted me with a little love... Do you remember my early childhood education, mother? Well, that was my post secondary education. A three month drunken binge at a college full of 'Christians', who spoke out of both sides of their mouths, two thousand miles away from you. It was not a great success. Needless to say, I did not get my Ph.D. and God did not save my soul. Feeling more and more lost, I then decided to work on the oil rigs up North. It was there that I truly saw what pigs men became when they left society. More on that later. Suffice it to say, I could not get far enough away from you.

John sits on the couch and leans back.

JOHN (CONT'D)

My shame, rage and fear followed me wherever I went. Even though I knew I was not going to last long up there, I had to prove myself because I had already quit so many things. I was not your typical redneck fucking hillbilly trash talking douchebeg rig pig. I was a refined and eloquent trash talking douchebag. But never a pig. But that was not good enough, so I worked harder than everyone. Imagine mother, your precious, better, smarter, more handsome, infinitely more talented son loved manual labor! I would put two, one hundred pound bags of drilling mud on my shoulders and run up and down the rig stairs. This earned a modicum of respect, but no matter what I did, I could not escape you. After six months I had had enough, so after the last night shift before our week off, I got piss drunk with the rest of the crew.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

We went to the airport and when the Tool Push, who was in charge of the rig, saw us, we were all fired on the spot. That suited me just fine because I couldn't stand to be around those pigs anymore. Having nowhere else to go, I came home. I realized that I was so crippled that I could not learn from books, so university was out of the question. Not that I wanted to go, anyway, but my shame was so huge that I knew I just should go. I finally ended up at the phone company and my teens started drawing to a close.

John leans forward.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Do you see, mother, how those years were an era of unparalleled joy and inner prosperity? Here's a question for you, mommy. Do you think, out of all the soul destroying damage you did to me there may be one event that trumps all the rest? Don't bother answering. Let me explain. Sex. Oops, I said it. Oh, I'm sorry, you didn't hear me? Ready?

John stands up.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Here we gooo. Intercourse, fucking, doing it, fucking, penetrating, fucking, pounding, fucking, whoring, fucking, diddling, fucking, banging, fucking, screwing, and finally, fucking and fucking and fucking! Sorry, I left for a moment. I'm back now. I tend to go a little nuts sometimes.

John sits down, extremely uncomfortable.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'll start from the tender age of six. I was in grade one and the girls loved me. I decided we would play a game.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

It was called chase John, catch him, and cover him with kisses. The entire class of girls happily obliged. We did this over and over until a teacher came and told us to go home. That was the highlight of my young life. I realized girls were magical and I was really good with them! Too bad that didn't last. Anyway, I was seven or eight and I and this little girl I knew had built a fort in the living room. I was feeling tingles because I wanted to go inside with her. We did and I kissed her and it was like an electric shock went through my entire body. It was this magical, wonderful feeling of just being alive. I will never forget that as long as I live. Of course, I knew I could never tell you. Something told me that would have been very, very dangerous. Unfortunately, after that, it got more and more scary for me with girls. As the Demon took a stronger and stronger hold on me and I got more frozen, I avoided a great deal of contact. All my life girls practically threw themselves at me and I was too scared to do anything. I would freeze. Then I hit puberty, God help me, and I was so horny I was climbing walls. All I wanted was sex and all I did was feel bad for wanting it. It was the summer of my fourteenth birthday that I committed the first and deadliest of sins. I got laid! It was in the middle of a golf course and it was terrible. I could not get you out of my head. I didn't even come. As wonderful as it felt, I felt bad and terrified the whole time. It wasn't guilt, it was shame. How could I want something that was that bad? Again, something was seriously wrong with me. I felt so bad and shamed that even two years later at another camp I couldn't do it.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

I met this beautiful girl from Brazil who literally followed me around like a dog in heat. She almost came right out and told me to fuck her, and I was so full of shame and terror that I froze.

John stands up and moves to the piano. He reaches out slowly and caresses the wood, remembering. He looks at the bench but can't bring himself to sit down.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It was around this time that another wonderful series of events was unfolding. I know I have been talking a lot, mother, but bear with me awhile longer. I haven't spoken much about the piano because quite frankly it has taken me this long to get there. Of all the things I did, I loved the piano most of all. I stuck to it longer than anything else. And do you know what happened? My brother and I had a homosexual pedophile for a teacher.

John gingerly moves to the piano bench and sits on it as if it might break. He puts his head in his hands.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ! It's like I was blasted over and over with a shotgun. Every single aspect of my personality was blown apart. I have wondered often in my adult life how I escaped turning into a babbling, raving loony. Anyway, I loved the piano most of all. Sitting down and seeing all those keys and the magical possibilities they offered would fill me with joy. As frozen as I was I could still access some feeling when I played. Being in the presence of those great geniuses by just being able to play their music hundreds of years after they created it, filled me with awe. I understood on a very deep level that I was connecting with pure creativity; the power of the Universe.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

Not the hateful, negative, shame filled idea of God that I had been taught through religion. This was pure. It was full of joy, love and openness. And once again, I was destroyed in that beautiful reality.

John stands up and leans against the piano.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It wasn't that he was an asshole. He was just a sick human being. The most he ever did was touch my cock once. He was actually a gentle man. So that wasn't the issue. Because I could feel him as a human being, I empathized. What made it so unbelievably fucking painful is that every single week my shame would nearly kill me. I felt like I wanted to die. It would build and build until the lesson time would arrive. I would sit outside his office dreading the moment he would open the door, dreading the moment he would sit beside me on the piano bench and dreading the thought of having to fend off his touches. And you know what made me absolutely fucking insane? I couldn't do anything or say a word. I was so filled with shame and terror that I would freeze. The rage in me was like a living thing and I couldn't take a single action. I wanted to kick the living shit out of him and rip off his motherfucking head. I couldn't even say, "Stop." My shame and terror of being rejected froze me completely. I was so broken I couldn't tell you either. I knew that somehow you would blame me and it would be my fault and I would die of shame all over again. Finally, I had to make a choice. I couldn't stand it anymore. The choice was face you or quit the piano. After six months or a year of this; it may have been two years, I honestly can't remember, my brother and I finally came to you and talked.

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John rushes over to the couch.

JOHN (CONT'D)

And do you know that all you could muster up was, "My boys tell me you are making overtures towards them." Are you fucking kidding me? You stupid, broken excuse for a human being. Here's the sickest part of that little adventure. You didn't even get us another teacher!

John goes back to the piano.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I have no idea when my brother quit, but it was not long after your nice talk. Something in me still needed to play. It was either the year of your great confrontation or the one after, that I took my grade nine exam. Jesus, this is painful. I had the highest mark in the province and was supposed to win the gold medal. Of course I didn't, because I hadn't completed history and harmony. Shortly after, I too, quit. And that was that.

John turns away. He can't face his mother. He steels himself with everything he has and turns back. He knows that no matter what, he must face her. He walks slowly to the couch and sits down, hanging his head. Finally, he looks up.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Ahhh. Sex, sex and sex. Here we go. Oh, God, this is hard. I'm fifteen or sixteen and you call out to me to help you with something. I go to the bathroom, open the door, and there you are sitting on the toilet with your legs spread wide open, holding a douche tube in your hand. I couldn't help myself; out of sheer fascination I was staring at your vagina and then you asked me to help you put in the tube...
Fuck.

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John stops talking, lost. He is glued to the seat. He is paralyzed, lost in the one moment, aside from being born, out of all the shit he grew up with, that broke him. He is completely overwhelmed.

Finally, after many, many moments, he pulls himself back. He has to finish.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm going to move on now. Fast forward to college again. I have sex once. Not because there weren't a gazillion opportunities. The Demon was just too strong. Fast forward to the rigs again. The nurse who was stationed there was gorgeous. I manufactured a reason to see her because I really wanted that woman. This one actually came out and asked me to screw her. I was so terrified I simply left her room. Then one night close to the time when we were all fired, the crew decided to go drinking in the nearest town. I stayed at the rig because it didn't feel right to go with them. The next morning my roommate told me that he was leaving the rig. When I asked him why he told me he was so disgusted with himself that he had to take a break. He said that the five of them had picked up this woman from a bar and had all done her at the same time. Use your imagination, mother, I'm certainly not going to explain to you the mechanics. The reason that story stayed with me all these years is that for the first time I saw the complete and total lack of respect that some men had for women. From the tiny place in me that was still intact, I made a decision that never in my life would I stoop that low. As fucked up as I was, to me, women were magical and I would never reduce them to receptacles. To this day I have no idea from where those feelings came. Do you think, mommy dearest, with your unconditional love, from you they came?

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JOHN (CONT'D)

So I came home and eventually started with the phone company. By this time I was so horny I was going crazy. Soon after, I met this woman and Bam! At long last. We fucked each other eight ways from Sunday. The sex was mind blowing. Virtually all we did was have sex. It was a fuckfest, a fuck for all, anywhere, anytime. And I felt your resentment and jealousy. I knew in your bitter, repressed, sick mind that you wanted your precious son all to yourself.

With enormous effort, John pushes himself up to a standing position.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I had known for a long time that mommy dearest wanted to fuck her own son. I remember one time I had been out at my girlfriend's most of the night. I staggered home, fell asleep, and before I knew it, you came clomping down the basement stairs into my room. Your comment was, "John, get up. My legs are just as tired as yours." I remember that specific sentence because I was almost in a coma and my defenses were down. I could not believe the resentment and judgment I was hearing... In the middle of my nineteenth year, from some warped place in your mind, you decided to get married. You had taken the same bus as this man for years, never really dated him, but for some unfathomable reason, married him. I just could not for the life of me, figure this one out. That is, until one merry night at home. I was the only one there, having just drifted off to sleep. Suddenly, I was awakened by this weird sound. It scared the shit out of me for a moment. Then I realized it was you, moaning and groaning and grunting and panting like an elephant in mating season. And it hit me like a ton of bricks.

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JOHN (CONT'D)

You had to marry this guy just to fuck him. To make matters worse, you knew I was there and you knew that I knew that you knew. The level of your sickness was truly remarkable... And so, mother, that is the story of my youth, with the exception of one final act that sealed my fate. In the middle of all that madness, you died!

John literally leaps forward and rushes over to the picture of his mother that has been sitting on a table. It is a large, framed picture. In a frenzy, he picks it up and smashes it with all the rage in him on the table, over and over again. Then he hammers on it with both fists, and then he jumps on the table, where he proceeds to stomp it into pieces. The table breaks under his assault. He picks up a baseball bat that is on the floor by the table and continues smashing the picture and the table until he can no longer raise the bat.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Can you hear me, you crazy bitch? You died! You fucking died! Before I ever had a chance to confront you about anything, you died, goddamn you! All the rage and hatred in me could never be directed at the one true target: you! You destroyed me and you know what you did? You died! You died! How could you do that? You castrated and killed me and I never got the chance to say anything! How I wanted to smash you, pound you, batter you, crush you and annihilate you! But you fucking died! Goddammit, goddammit! Ahhhhhhhhhh! Fuuuuuuck!

John throws the bat away and sits on the floor, utterly spent, head hanging. Gradually his breathing slows and he raises his head, looking at the remains of the picture.

JOHN (CONT'D)

When the cancer hit your brain and the doctors gave you three months, I really felt you were going to last a lot longer. You had hung on for so long after the initial tumor that I didn't expect you to give up that easily...

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JOHN (CONT'D)

I think I was the last one to see you alive and conscious. You whispered for me to come close to you. Your last words on this earth were, "John, I hope you learn to love God the way I have." Not, "I love you, son." How could those be your last words to me? How could you do that? My whole fucked up life all I ever wanted was for my mommy to just love me for me, and even dying, you couldn't give me that. I remember actually physically recoiling from you when I heard those words... I'm about done for now. I'm glad we had this little talk. Don't go anywhere, mother, I'm not done with you yet.

John staggers to his feet and slowly walks to the door. He opens it, walks through and gently closes it behind himself.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

John walks slowly back to the stairway door. He is in a trance, moving without awareness. He opens it and walks through, leaving it open.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

John walks up the stairs, opens the door and walks through, leaving it open. Every movement feels like it is in slow motion, taking forever to accomplish.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

John walks up the next flight of stairs, opens the door and walks through, leaving it open.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

John walks up the final flight of stairs, so exhausted he can barely make it. It is like walking through mud. He opens the door and leans against the door jamb, too tired to move. Finally, he goes into the living room, leaving the door open.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

John sees SUZANNE, 50, sitting on the couch, watching him. She has dark brown hair, minimal makeup on and is beautiful in a natural, unaffected way. She oozes femininity. She stands up and walks towards him, smiling.

SUZANNE

I thought you might want some company after that.

John goes through an array of emotions. He is unable to speak, lost in the memory of what he has just experienced. He stops and waits for Suzanne, still in a trance and far too vulnerable to move towards her.

Suzanne approaches him slowly, seeing the rawness on his face. She reaches out to touch him and he flinches.

John comes back to the present and really sees Suzanne. He slowly wraps his arms around her in a deep embrace, hanging on as if his life depends on it. He inhales her scent and finally relaxes completely into her.

JOHN

I love you.

SUZANNE

I know.

John kisses Suzanne, slowly and then with greater and greater urgency.

Suzanne backs up to the couch, pulling John with her, staying in the deep kiss.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

I want you to fuck me.

John kisses her neck and shoulders, taking his time, enjoying the incredible flow they have together.

John slowly undresses her and himself, kissing her all over as he does. They are both lost in the moment, savoring the sensations and the anticipation of the pleasure to come.

John pushes Suzanne on the couch and buries his face between her legs. Suzanne grinds her hips against his mouth.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Lick me, John. Oh, God, lick me John.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John licks and masturbates her simultaneously. Suzanne has her first orgasm, screaming.

John slams into her, ramming her as hard as he can.

Suzanne sits on John, grinding furiously. John masturbates her and she comes again, screaming even louder.

John enters her sideways, totally lost in the present, oblivious to all else, the sunlight reflecting off the sweat on their bodies, surrounding them in a golden radiance.

John fucks Suzanne doggy style in a frenzy, until he too, comes. He screams from the depths of his being. His orgasm goes on and on.

John stays inside Suzanne as long as he can, until he finally slips out. He lies beside her on the couch for some time. They are completely comfortable with each other.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

I want to come again. Are you ready?

JOHN

Yes. You just climb on and ride my hand.

Suzanne climbs on John and grinds away until she has her third orgasm. This is the most intense one of all. She collapses against him.

INT. BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

John washes Suzanne's body in the shower. There is a sense of total relaxation and ease between them.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

John and Suzanne are relaxing on the couch. They are indistinct, almost formless. The room is bathed in golden hazy sunlight, so thick it is almost foggy. There is an opened bottle of red wine on the coffee table and two glasses half filled.

SUZANNE

Are you finished? Is it ever done?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Good question. You've known me for years now and watched me work out my bullshit. I don't care if it is finished, as long as I can go after my dreams. I know that confronting her has been incredibly powerful. I have released a lot of shit from a very deep place. I only have a few more things I need to say.

SUZANNE

Then what are you going to do?

JOHN

Live more and more in the moment. Love you more and more. Keep feeling more and more, and better and better. I'm finally okay with my emotional pain in my baby place because I can finally move it from my body when I feel it. I may never get rid of all of it, but it doesn't matter. For the first time in my life I feel in control.

SUZANNE

Would you like me to stay? You look very vulnerable. I will never really understand your battle, but I have watched you fight it for years and I will always support you and love you. You have given me amazing support in my life. I have never felt so loved.

JOHN

I would love you to stay. Why don't we go out for dinner after?

SUZANNE

That sounds like a wonderful idea. I'll make a reservation. Now, off you go. Finish it.

Suzanne gives John a deep, deep kiss. He breathes her in, stands up and walks to the basement door.

JOHN

Okay, I'm off for round two of ranting at my dead fucking mother. See you soon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John walks through the doorway to the stairs, leaving the door open.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - AFTERNOON

The door opens and John enters the room. For a moment he almost appears translucent. He picks up what is left of his mother's picture, leaning it against the remains of the table. He sits on the couch.

JOHN

Hi mom. I'm back. How are you?
Sorry for the sarcasm. I don't know if I will ever truly let you go and forgive you, but I'm close and I believe I will... Let's move on. At your funeral, it was one of the few times in my life I cried. I remember being extremely aware of my confusion. I had no idea why I was crying. After that I just basically numbed out and spent the next thirty odd years learning how to feel again. To get back what you had destroyed in me pre birth. I started modeling because so many people told me how handsome I was. Not because I felt it, of course. Over the next four years I spent thousands of dollars on having my pictures taken, hoping that I could learn to feel that way. It didn't work. I did numerous forms of door to door selling, hoping that by facing my fear, that would work. It didn't. I was so fucking terrified that sometimes I would walk in a tight circle to get away from those feelings. I went to many, many seminars on achievement and sales and getting what you wanted out of life. I was always the first volunteer, hoping that action would fix me. It didn't. I moved to another city. That didn't work. I saw therapists up the ass. They were well meaning idiots, as lost as I was. That didn't work. I discovered ballroom and latin dancing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

I learned to dance, teach and sell and even though it had taken me deeper than I had ever been, that didn't work either. I put the points of arrows against the soft spot of my throat, the feathered ends against a wall, and broke them.

John stands up and paces in front of the couch, much more relaxed, but needing to move.

JOHN (CONT'D)

That didn't work. I walked on fire. Twice, because the first time I didn't believe I did it and thought I had been manipulated. I hadn't been and those coals were fucking hot. That didn't work. I had tons of sex, aware that I was trying to fuck you out of my system. That didn't work. You see mother? I knew I was fucked up beyond belief, that something was seriously wrong with me. My one overriding goal was to fix myself, but no matter what I did, sooner or later, the feeling of utter terror that I was going to die would surface, and I would freeze. This became the cycle of my life and sometime in my twenties, I recognized it. That didn't work either. Awareness meant fuck all. Then, in my early thirties, after years and years of searching, I discovered something called Bio Energetics. This was a form of healing that was based on unlocking emotion that had been frozen in the body, usually from childhood. Eureka! I had found my Holy Grail! My entire life suddenly made sense. My brain had stored every single experience I had ever had. The problem was in accessing those experiences in real time. My therapist had explained to me the concept of regression, that to the brain, time does not exist. After having done everything I had done, I was very, very skeptical. Then I had an experience, that, for me, made the rest of my life possible.

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CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

It was a pivotal event. I had reached a place with my therapist where I was beginning to trust her. She simply said, "Reach out your hand and ask me for help." In that instant I felt like a lost little boy who wanted his mommy. And you know what happened? My entire right arm froze instantly and I felt my spine twisting to get away. I simply couldn't move, I was too terrified, even though every part of me was screaming, "Run!"

John sits on the edge of the couch, too exhausted to do anything other than talk, but needing desperately to move on, knowing the end is near.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Awareness after awareness washed over me and I realized that after you died, just to survive, I had convinced myself that you had loved and accepted me, and that whatever was wrong with me I had done. That it was my fault. I was in touch enough with my body to trust that what was happening was absolutely real. I was not making my own arm numb out and my spine twist. My own fucking mother was so dangerous that as a tiny infant, I knew, just to survive, I had to escape. Of course, I couldn't, and all those negative emotions got stuck in my body, connected to my breath, and froze me. I understood my Demon for the first time! My chest freezing and not being able to breathe was finally explained. It wasn't fucking allergies. At that point in my life I was so desperate to fix myself that I physically pulled my right hand forward. I believed I could use my willpower and make my body do what I told it to do. How little I understood. Any lingering doubts I had about the validity of regression vanished the next day. I had torn muscles in my arm and could barely move it.

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CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

Over a period of months I gradually regressed to the point where I rebirthed for the first time. Holy Shit! My unconscious kept taking me back there over and over again, fifteen or twenty times. I don't know, I never accurately counted. Talk about being fucked up at birth. All I know is that I finally got it right. I have this amazing memory of pushing and pushing and feeling the top of my head driving forward until my entire body shot forward and for the first time in my life I was free.

John starts moving around the room. He can no longer stay still.

JOHN (CONT'D)

As an adult I had learned how to be born without fear, rejection and trauma. How truly, magnificently, wonderfully magical! All in all I spent several years with that therapist, healing wound after wound that you had inflicted.

John ends up at the piano and sits on the bench.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Eventually, I moved on and continued healing on my own. It was never easy, but facing my fear had become a way of life. For me, knowledge of self was the only true education, because from that place all my learning stemmed. So I moved forward, got stuck, moved forward, got stuck, and kept moving forward, pushing through fear. I just couldn't let you win. Then something happened that I simply was not expecting. I got tired. Fighting the Demon all those decades had taken a huge chunk of my life force. About three years ago, I was almost ready to quit, give up, accept that I was never going to achieve my dreams.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

I was afraid that my greatest fear was going to unfold before my very eyes: the Demon would win and I would simply disappear into the endless sea of victims, the average, the helpless, the mediocre. The Universe answered my plea in the form of a cd course that arrived in the mail. I listened over and over, hour after hour, for the next four months. Until finally I took in a great universal truth: that life itself is good, and the only reason for existence is to move through this reality and feel better and better, and if numbness and pain are in the way, work out your shit.

John moves towards the broken picture of his mother.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Even if there is an endless fucking chasm of shit and pain, work it out. And that's exactly what I have done, mother. At a very early age I must have chosen, unconsciously, to move into the light. Guess what, mother? I did find God. Only this God is, for me, about living an incredible life on this earth, following my dreams and living in the moment. I was able to reject how you, my father and my grandmother lived. I must have chosen love. Your lives were filled with fear, doubt and anxiety and your core beliefs were simply negative. After spending most of my life deconstructing my personality, I have finally come to love my Demon. I have understood, at long last, that it was only trying to protect me. Recently, we said goodbye, the Demon and I. Einstein once said that there are only two ways of living life: one as if everything is a miracle and one as if nothing is a miracle. I choose to find miracles. And here's the best one of all: at fifty-two years old, you died.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

At fifty-two years old, I have been
 reborn, again. My life is truly
 beautiful.

John moves away from the picture, staring at it with enormous intensity. He knows this is the last time he will ever look at his mother. He starts to turn away and then turns back, making a final decision.

JOHN (CONT'D)

As a dreaming man I often wonder,
 As a hopeful man I often assume,
 I look to the future as my world
 splits asunder,
 Hoping that someday soon I will
 bloom,
 I am anger and always it blocks my
 way,
 Each day approaches with the taint
 of sadness,
 Doom, gloom and depression all have
 their say,
 And often I smell the stench of my
 madness.

A rageful man am I, am I.

Sometimes I have the dialogue of a
 melancholy man,
 And I wallow in a neverending sea
 of pain in a neverending night,
 Listening to the wind or staring up
 at the fan,
 Oh, how I want deliverance, as an
 ostrich needs to hide and a lion
 needs to fight.

A saddened man am I, am I.

The mirror, the mirror, how I wish
 it would crack and shatter,
 Leaving in its ruins an empty,
 beckoning frame,
 Then again, I might see too many
 fragments, but I guess it doesn't
 matter,
 For I would rather be many of me
 than play the denial game,
 Because I see a wasteland of
 frightened lives,
 Strewn with poisoned, emotional
 rubble,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)

Littered with countless empty,
glassy eyes,
Staring through their invisible
bubbles,
And there is a cloud, hazy and
white as a midmorning dream,
Looking to me like a thought
running from its delusion,
Tumbling, rolling in the wind,
riding through the slipstream,
Hoping to catch the fantasy of
another illusion.

A thoughtful man am I, am I.

I look to the earth, I look to the
sea,
And nothing is there, so I stare
into the fire,
Then I look to the sky and see only
one of me,
Singing a song of wonder that will
never tire,
Again I look to the earth, again to
the sea,
Into the fire, up at the sky, is my
path a lie?
For this time, everywhere, I see
the many of me,
Singing, go gently, softly, into
the deep and learn how to fly.

A man full of life, am I, am I.

Goodbye, mother.

John takes off all of his clothes and walks out of the room,
leaving the door open. He slowly fades into the light.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

John jolts out of a deep sleep. He sits up, not knowing where
he is. He lies back down again, dozing. Sunlight filters in,
almost obscuring the room.

THE END