

I heard they are choosing to be born.  
 A place  
 A life  
 And a new beginning  
 We were asked for it!  
 To be blind, crippled and crazy!  
 My mind, my poor mind was trying to justify everything; but, but it wasn't true.  
 Like an orphan boy who makes stories about his father.  
 And who knows? I asked myself. It must? It must not be a truth! Maybe, not the truth, but a part of it! just a convenient story! And it was...I quest it was fair!"

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## Life's A Circle

-Sarah Thust

Surrounded by shadows he woke up. Nothing was clear. His head felt as though it would explode. Just 12 years old Michael Marone woke up at the intensive care unit, it became the day of his rebirth. Running through a dark tunnel accompanied by swollen voices he felt his heart beating. His environment became clearer and a person was staring in his eyes. He wanted to crawl away, but his body was paralyzed. This statuesque woman framed by dark brown, curly hair started talking. With crossed arms she announced: "Michael, I have to go to a meeting now. Carin will take care of you. Have a nice day." "Who are you?", he asked. She turned to the doctor and said: "Obviously you have to treat him longer. See you tomorrow, Michael." One hand raised she left the room, leaving a spare of high-class perfume. This was the first time he met his mother.

During the following hour the doctor explained to him, obsessed with telling all details, that he lost his long-term memory due to an accident. The right temporal lobe of his cerebrum was severely injured and not even the experts could estimate the full consequences. "The accident obviously erased the autobiographical data from your memory. You may even never be able again to memorize the happenings in your life. Your knowledge, in contrast, seems to be intact", the doctor said. Subsequently he promised him the best treatment and assured the respect he has for Michael's parents. While his ears listened to the lecture of this tall, charismatic man in the blank coat, the lawn in the yard absorbed Michael's attention. A girl in a red dress was standing there, in the luscious green. She stood immobile and looked at her feet, where a butterfly sat. The wind combed her long chocolate brown hair and her eyes were dark of thoughts. As the butterfly flew away she lifted her head and her gaze stopped at Michael's

ice blue eyes. She flinched and her small body carried her away with the wind. The girl disappeared so fast that Michael believed her to be part of a dream, but the feeling that she came for him remained.

Michael's family owned one of the biggest business empires in France. As part of the Parisian high society he always had to behave. He was not a child, but he was a representative like his sister and his brother. Those years consisted of nannies, education and competitions. No descendant of the family dared disobedience as they once had to carry a big heritage. Michael always was very quiet and pensive. The Marones regarded him as the most disciplined and talented child, but this all changed when he turned 12 years old. The boy asked for a pyjama party for his birthday. Instead, his parents celebrated a charity for endangered animals. Michael had to accompany them to a five-star hotel in the centre of Paris to chat with the guests. He hated to be there, but he knew about the importance of this event for his parents. Steadily Michael wool-gathered, being in the living room of his house playing piano. Through the glass partition he could watch the rain dripping at the marble terrace, while his nanny would serve him a hot chocolate. Exercising Schubert, Bach and Vivaldi he spent the afternoon in his dream world.

When a raindrop hit his nose he came back to reality. He realized that he was walking out of the hotel. In front of him stood a girl of the same age with red flowers in her brown hair. "Hi! My name is Michael", he said. "Hi! I'm Jeanne, but my friends call me Sunny", she answered. "Can I be your friend?", Michael asked. Her dark brown eyes twinkled and she burst out laughing. In this moment her parents called her, standing at the other side of the street. She anxiously turned around and stepped away. Waving she said: "It was nice to meet you." As she left, her scent mixed with the fresh smell of summer rain. "Can we keep in touch?", Michael called after her. She beckoned him to come. Both of them didn't notice the car coming from the left side. The shrill squeak of the brakes startled Michael out of his reverie. The picture of the girl blurred fast, all that remained was black and the sound of her voice echoing in his head.

One year later he knew that there was nothing to expect from his family. He coped six months of rehabilitation and checks without the support of his family. After four weeks already, they presented him at a charity event. Those days he felt as if somebody would inflate a balloon in his head until it exploded. The only pleasure he had was to see his younger brother and his older sister. They cared for him and supported him, even though he always felt dispensable. He had no feelings at all for those people they called his parents. No memories were related to them; Michael only felt total disinterest.

Since his accident, each night, he dreamt of a girl in a red dress. His psychologist told him that the dream was a symbol for his infantile anxieties. He didn't care about other people's opinions, but he knew that her presence calmed him. If he woke up, he started playing piano first. Each day his habits became stronger and more constant. Michael developed a strict schedule consisting of learning, therapy and creative work. He was enthusiastic about creating his own personality like a pottery statue. He didn't know loved ones. He was hunting his own tracks and he enjoyed it. From these days on no nanny took care for him longer than three months. He fired them once a week, followed by a big argument with his parents.

In the end, there was a discussion going on each day about his "behaviour". Michael refused to join the "narcissistic events of his genitors", as he called it. More and more he understood the business structures in the family, including the role of strategic marriage and dependence. These insights disgusted him. As soon as he understood the game, he stopped playing it.

When he turned 16, he decided to go to a boarding school in London. His roommate was a nerdy chess specialist and confirmed all prejudices: grey hat, fleece shirt and black framed glasses mixed with a queer

personality and unrealistic beliefs. "But what is queerer than my story?" That was Michael's point of view of life. Due to his strong personality he soon learned to manipulate the people surrounding him. Teachers, parents, policemen – he didn't respect anybody, but his siblings and his friends.

The fact of living in another country, far from his parents, spurred him. He refused to take their money and cut all his dependencies. He didn't want to know more than he knew about himself. Soon one short girl story followed another. He drove off the ladies, which his parents recommended him. In revenge he dated "bad influences". Since his accident love was a loanword for Michael. That was also, what the final diagnosis said. "The patient will probably never be able to store biographical data in his memory. The storage of emotional data is limited. The responsible brain areas are obviously damaged. In addition, the production of some hormones is affected, which might lower his life expectancy." Based on this scientific opinion he lived his life to the full.

Repeatedly he interrupted his studies for traveling to Brazil, Asia, Africa and Russia. His family and friends hardly got any news from him. Sometimes his parents would come to bring him back to Paris, but Michael always fought against it. The place where he finally got stuck was Cambodia. It was the first country where he worked and cultivated friendships. Being one of the drifters who shape the capital Phnom Penh, he spent most of his time drinking, smoking and going out. His life was easy, full of independence and the certainty, that each of his action had consequences that don't matter for him. "How would you describe yourself?", a traveller once asked him when he was working at a bar. "I'm a pessimistic and pensive recluse, but I rule my life like nobody else does", Michael answered smiling whimsically. On his way home Michael saw a beautiful girl in a red shirt floating across the street. Seeing her, made him feel home. Suddenly. He ran after her. "Sorry! Lady! I found this umbrella, is it yours?", he called after her. She froze and turned around. "I knew it will happen one day", she said lowering her eyes, "My name is Laura. Let's have a coffee". She had the most beautiful eyes he ever saw. They were full of dark thoughtfulness and love of life – very contradictory. She sighed and pointed at the coffee shop at the next corner. He started asking her questions, but she didn't answer. Instead, she said: "Hurry, you need to know..."

She told Michael everything about the accident. Her mother once worked for Michael's parents as housemaid and talked often about him. She was the only one who stayed longer than five years in his house. He lost his memory, because of her. Talking about this guiltiness laced up Laura's throat. Since this day Laura followed Michael on his way. She continued: "I don't know why, but I love you." "I don't remember what you're telling, but I saw you in my dreams and I remember you standing at the lawn. And I know there's nobody else I desire right now", he answered caressing her chocolate brown hair. Since the beginning, there seemed to be a tear proof connection between them.

Three months their hearts lived together, sailing to the horizon. Every second contained the lethal dose of an ending story. She had all his shortfalls – a family, sanity and love. Each word that left her lips made him smile. She loved to listen to his quiet voice exposing his secrets. But then there was always the same phrase: "I can't love anybody, you really should understand this." Every time he said this, she looked at him with her mocking eyes and answered: "You know that you'll never let me go. I'll have to go first." Her heart beat like a boom box. Responding to his passionate kiss she closed her eyes.

Some weeks later she got the message. Her flight to London was booked for the next morning. The night before, they had a big argument. He refused, as he always told her, to take the responsibility for this relationship. After she accompanied him during his whole life, she noticed that she was too grown-up. He was still the 11 year old child. Due to his accident he didn't remember the first 12 years of his life, so he didn't live them. She in contrast lived them more than she wanted to. Every day bad dreams followed her. His accident broke her heart; it was not Michael's fault. No else life she would have wished, but it just

wouldn't work. During those thoughts her eyes became even darker than usually. The certainty about losing him was highly visible and overwhelming.

The next day he woke up in his bed with a big headache. He had drunk too much last night after she left. That whole day he couldn't eat, even a bite of food. So severe was his hangover that during the next days he felt sick and very tired almost continuously. It felt like being in love, but it was filled with an endless sadness. He knew this feeling very well; however he didn't have it for long. He was right, after weeks it disappeared.

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## Sands Of Time

-David Nelson

these grains of sand passing by I find  
are like the memories of lives gone past  
and as these sands of time flow through my mind  
I wonder when I will find the key at last

living in caves searching the heavens  
fishing in streams and hunting my meals  
and each morning as the sun star leavens  
my mind turns like stone age wheels

a million years have come and gone  
I suppose a million more will pass on by  
the age of man has hardly dawn  
I look up and wonder why

why am I here just what is my purpose  
sometimes I feel this is such a cruel game  
in this ring of a crazy circus  
am I a fool should I feel some shame

some say just keeping faith is all you need  
I think that's a hopeful guess  
you cannot know from where came the seed  
it is impossible to say truly yes