

OMNIVISUM

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who we are

In the Light

Written by Miles R. De Rosa

"Do you believe in God?" the priest asks through the partition.

Apollo sits there in the box, sweating profusely. He rubs his clammy hands together and thinks to himself. There is a nervousness in the way he moves, scuttling around, shuffling in the confessional. Despite the heat, he had thrown on a pair of jeans and a t-shirt that morning. Old habits die hard. There is a line out of the door. Everyone knew.

"Why do you ask?" Apollo finally replies.

"I've never heard your voice before and you sound scared," he said. "There is going to be a lot of people like you today, and I will not know what to tell them." The priest talks slow, worn down by the heat and by his own thoughts of the end.

There is another lengthy pause. Apollo sits and thinks, biting his lower lip compulsively. "I don't think I do," he finally says after some thought.

"Yea..." says the priest, "I'm not sure I do either."

"But I don't know where else to go."

The two sit in silence again for a while. Apollo stares out at the long line of people, most in shorts and a light shirt. Some wear no shirt and show red on their shoulders and back.

Apollo left quickly and without a word.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Miles R. De Rosa is a young writer from Oakland, California, where he studied creative writing at Oakland School for the Arts. With his writing, Miles attempts to make people confront the uncomfortable terms of their realities.

Sunday, May 29, 10:30 AM

The sun beats down and the hippies out on hippy hill all take their clothes off and lay in the grass, absorbing the searing sun, smiling, smoking, living their lives in the final hours. The rest of San Francisco breathes deep and looks skyward, a hungry red sun bearing down on them, frothing at the mouth.

In an apartment, building a man with a thick beard practices his reflection in the mirror, practices the way he wants to die. He puts on "The Piper From The Gates Of Dawn" and dances around his living room; naked and sweating through his skin, releasing himself, pulling himself undone. When he gets tired, he lays down and stares out his window at the dancing sun as it approaches.

Then, music still blaring, he goes into his bathroom and runs the coldest bath he can. He crawls into it, smiling and smelling like a madman, and when "Interstellar Overdrive" comes on the submerges himself in the cold water and refuses to let himself out from under the surface until he drowns. A couple songs later the album stopped, the needle lifted, and the man was left to burn in silence, lifelessly floating in the water. He died shining like a crazy diamond

Sunday, May 29, 11:00

They sit together in Jason's room, doing nothing. Tom sinks progressively deeper into a bean bag chair and snorts. Jason throws a tennis ball against his wall, it always falling right back into his lap.

"What're we doing?" asks Tom. He wears a white Supreme sweater and khaki joggers. There is a Suorin in his pocket. "Like, I feel like we should be doing something."

"What do you mean, man?" Jason replied, throwing the tennis ball again with a thud. He wears a mesh Under Armor shirt with Nike shorts and socks. "Like in life?"

"Well today's the day the sun collides," Tom replies like it was just fully dawning on him now. "Right? It's the 29th." He pulls his phone out of his pocket and checks. "Yea dude, 29th." His voice trails off and he looks as if he's drifted from the room.

"That's not really gonna happen," Jason says, holding the tennis ball. He looks at Tom, taking a hit from his Suorin. "Hey bro, can I hit that?"

"Yea sure," Tom hands it to Jason and he inhales; breathes out a thick plume of vapor and coughs weakly.

"How do you want to die?" Jason asks somberly, holding the Suorin in one hand and the tennis ball in the other.

Thomas doesn't reply. He just gets up and leaves, walks up the stairs into the kitchen and walks out of the house and into the street with no word, no warning. He looks out at the small, sheltered cul-de-sac and starts to run. The sun bears down on him, so he takes off his white hoodie and leaves it on the side of the road.

He turns onto a street with no cars in any driveways. All the houses are white, and they all look the same. The curtains are all open, but the lights are all out and all he can see inside is darkness. He starts to feel woozy; his is blistered and burned and boiling under that red sun so he runs inside and is immediately lost. The door closes behind him and he cannot find a way out of the darkness, he does not know where to go.

He did not know where to go.

Sunday, May 29, 11:30A boxer stands alone in the ring. There are two banners hanging above him. On one he is pictured, his name blocked out in big letters. The other hangs over the opposition's corner, but there is no one standing there. The house lights are on, illuminating a vacant crowd. There is no one there to watch, and no one there to fight. His manager texted him this morning, telling of the news, informing him that he would be spending his last day with his family and that he should do the same.

The boxer slowly drifts into the center of the ring, looking up at the two banners where two men are immortalized in fighting stances, gloves on, firm looks on their faces. He shakes his gloves to the canvas mat, and turns slowly around in circles, inspecting the empty crowd. Stopping, he shifts towards the opposing corner and then throws

a punch at the air. And then another, and another. And then he dips, popping from left to right into an uppercut, from which he dances back. Retreating, receding to his corner, waiting to see the response from his shadowy opponent. In his mind he sees the other man stand, stabilize himself against the ropes, shake off the ref, and walk back towards the center. Sweat beads off his shining chest and the lights suddenly appear brighter. He can hear the cheering and the commentators shouting over one another as he approaches and jabs, and dances, and swings. And he hits, hand to faceless flesh. And his adversary falls and hits the canvas with a final thud. A definitive punctuation on the end of any true contest. Sweat and blood are thrown into the first row and the boxer raises his arm as the referee rushes in, waving his, signifying a knockout.

But the boxer stands alone. There is no cheering crowd, no man lying lifeless on the canvas. No title, no winner, and no loser. Just one lonely man left in the ring, sweat rolling off his body.

He died sitting in the ring, looking into the rafters, carving out the place his pennants would've hung.

Sunday, May 29, 12:00

A teenage couple hold each other on the Oxford grass at high noon. They are alone, most everyone else having retreated from the sun. They sit and look out over the Berkeley streets, normally clogged with cars and people but now it is quiet. Despite the heat and the blinding light the two sit together, wrapped up in each other, looking into the sun.

She sits between his legs and leans back on his chest, tilting her head back to look at him. He kisses her cheek, and she smiles and turns around and puts a soft hand on the side of his face and kisses him. The boy leans back a little further and she falls into him a little more.

"If time has to run out," he pauses, "I'm glad it did before it forced us apart," the girl smiles and shakes her head a little bit.

In an apartment building across the street, a husband and wife sit on the bed, frantically calling family, talking to everyone except each other. By the time the sun collided, they were not the last people they had said goodbye to.

The young couple looked at each other, now lying in the light, getting so close that they can feel the sun's scorch on their boiling, bubbling skin. And they look into each other, a final burning image. And they are full. The older couple stands on opposite ends of their house from each other, weeping into their telephones as heat takes them, and then the light. And then the heat all over again.

And they burned alone.

At high noon on May 29th, the sun collided into the earth and it burned. And so did you and so did everyone and everything.

