

1 EXT. A FORESTED ROAD - A LITTLE BEFORE SUNSET

A MAN lies on the ground in the fetal position in a forest. He holds something silver in his hand. He is not breathing.

2 EXT. RUNNING TRACK - EARLY MORNING, SUNRISE.

A BOY, around 17 years old, stretches on the track. He is wearing shorts and running shoes, a light blue sweatshirt, a watch and a dog tag necklace. He is stretching on the track, preparing for his morning run. He bends over and the dog tags fall out of the sweatshirt, catching the sunlight. He looks over his shoulder, and begins running, getting faster and faster.

3 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

The man is sitting on a bed in a well-lit hospital room with a chair across from him. He has an IV in, several medical devices near. Several pill bottles are on the bedside table. There is a photograph of the boy and his father, an army soldier, who is wearing dog tags, and another photograph of the man and his wife. A DOCTOR enters the room and sits in the chair opposite the man, flipping open a manila envelope or clipboard. The man stops fidgeting. The doctor begins saying something that we don't hear, the man stares blankly at them.

MAN V.O

It's a weird thing, being told you're going to die. In any situation, it's kind of a given it's like... coming in first in the race, then being told you won. Thanks. When did death become so impersonal? I am in a white room, a box, surrounded by equipment that will soon be sterilized, blankets that will be washed, my things donated, and people, serving peo-single serve people. Even the food is single-serve even this fuckin' doctor She won't look at me. Death is so impersonal. I'm not dying, but the numbers say I am, isn't it weird that we've institutionalized death?!

The doctor leaves the room and the man watches her go blankly. He leans back into bed.

MAN V.O (CONT'D)

maybe death is contagious. Maybe it's mental. A social disease and you only really die when you've become so useless that every interaction is just a numerical transaction to keep living.

How many calories do I need today? I was born from a dark room and I'll die in a white one. Heh. We exist of flashes.

CUT TO: The boy seen earlier running on the track, leaping, bounding.

MAN V.O (CONT'D)

We have baby photos, trying to preserve that sacredness of new life. But we don't have photos of death. Maybe there's not enough light when we die to capture it, underexposed, but birth... is overexposed. Y'know, life is a film. That physicalness? The impersonalness of it? keeping time?! that's the gelatin of it all. and we're only halide smudges in the end, forming full photos as we experience more and more light and exposure.

CUT TO: The man in the hospital room.

MAN V.O (CONT'D)

If I wore death as a portrait, I'd die staged I'd die with something long lost. Two things in oblivion, but not to each other.

He stops and looks at the photograph at his bedside. Slowly, he reaches under his collar and pulls out army dog tags, supposedly the same ones as in the photo.

MAN V.O (CONT'D)

I say life is a film but I don't believe that used to be me.

MAN (OUT LOUD)

Oblivion I have been consigned to, haven't I, Dad? The prodigal son. Ha.

After a moment of thought, he pulls out his IV, and it dangles over the edge of the bed. The man walks over to the window and looks

outside. He turns around and goes to the doorway, quietly opening it. He peeks outside, then opens the door fully. He stands in the hallway, looks left to right, then exits to the left.

4 INT. A HOSPITAL STAIRWELL

The man runs down the stairs (as well as a dying man can), his purpose now clear to him, and runs out.

5 EXT. A FORESTED ROAD - BEFORE SUNSET

A MAN walks. Wearing a robe, pajamas, with no shoes. It is the morning and is still dark. He is walking on a road with forests on either side of the road. He steps off the road and into the forest decidedly. He leans against a tree, his sleeve falling to expose a medical bracelet. He moves into the forest, meditatively, and takes a deep breath. He takes off the dog tags and begins laughing.

END