

THREE TIMES LUCKY

1

At first, I came to realize she was someone I could even meet some years ago: her long black hair and that naïve smile of hers make me think she was an acquaintance. Sort of. Indeed, she had to be an acquaintance of mine; not being so, how in the world could I recognize her face? It was July, but it was an uncommon one: there was no windy or stormy days, merely some clouds passing by quite quickly, as if they were afraid of impeding the sun from being exposed totally. This way, it was really feasible to enjoy my days – or, let's say, anyone's days – going out pretty early in the morning so as to have, you know, such a great time outdoors. That's why those dull, coldly and windy days were for the locals, and I was more or less an outsider. Being so, I took my chances and decided to negate that *self*, freeing any perception concerning it, and let it *die*. Or maybe not exactly die, but just letting it be concealed, or even trapped somewhere inside that other *self*, the one I was in need of, to be capable of melting down like ice, amidst all those who were called English. So, whilst I saw her being seated out there, waving at whoever was pretty close to be seen, I thought: *how can it be? This is the first time I am 'ere, yet I know I can recognize her*. Weird. Instead of approaching her, talking to her, trying to find out if I was right or, on the contrary, I was terribly mistaken, what did I do? Just fled. Surely, there had to be some kind of motive making me act like this, but at the time I was not aware at all. Just an old – yet improbably – acquaintance of mine so, who cared? It was foolish to give it a thought.

But still.

Then it came: a huge, unstoppable and crude dose of reality adopting the odd shape of some memoirs. It had been when I was thirty, whilst spending a fortnight in some pretty and peaceful seaside town, in the countryside. At the time, I was having breakfast by the promenade. It was such a dull but at the same time cool day; there was almost no one to be seen and from time to time I could hear the eager voices of some kids, wandering around accompanied by their parents and a doggy. Although it seemed quite boring, I was enjoying that experience. My breakfast was merely a sandwich made of ham and still water. I bought both – that sandwich and that bottle of water -, in some sort of a café, while going towards the promenade. Due to my poor English, I had to ask the waitress to repeat something she asked me. That was the reason of me being there. That was the reason of me trying to enjoy something someone had described me as *The English Experience*: basically to have a pint – or even half a pint – of *Guinness* in a *pub*, watching any football match and fooling around. Pretty cool, isn't it? Thus, I had a seat by the promenade and started to eat my ham sandwich, because I tended to be myself despite that English Experience theory. It was then I could see her; she was seated not so far away, on a bench and she was waving at me. I knew as soon as I saw her that I didn't know her. Then, I came to realize I had nothing to do with her, therefore I was not going to nod, or even to make kinda sort of movement to acknowledge her. I finished my sandwich, I drank all my still water, and finally I got rid of the empty plastic bottle. I seated up. She was gone, as if she had vanished in the thin air. I walked for a while all the promenade long, facing an odd cold wind, and not even giving that unknown woman, whoever she was, the slightest thought.

Until now.

The same face: there was no doubt: it had to be her. But that was really odd; she was not aged. How on Earth ...? It was impossible. Oh, sure, it could be someone pretty like her, or maybe even her daughter. Why not? But there was something really bizarre in that way of waving at me. She looked like being in need of doing so, as if *that* was all she had to do in order to be happier. Come to think of it, the first time I saw her by that promenade, and the second one, quite close to my home, were more or less the same thing: she was eager to claim my attention, indeed. Why was

that? I wish I could at least fathom, but there was nothing I could think of bringing me some kind of clues. Therefore, I had to put that stuff away, at least for a bit. I mean, until the third time I spotted her, this one waving at me whilst some tears were rolling down her cheeks.

2

Then, as soon as I reached her, she stared at me. Those were bright blue eyes, soaked by eternal tears of sorrow. She meant something, something I was not sure to know. *Who are you?* She was still staring at me. There was no answer, only an intensive silence covering my ears entirely, as if it was no silence at all but music made of it. *Tell me, I wanna know.* But she was still quiet, not even making a move now that I was pretty close to her. There was no need of waving at me again, obviously. Then, she decided to utter some words, which were spoken slowly: *I'm not only one.* Her voice was quite melodic but it was an odd one, also, like being made of three different ones owned by three different people. *What does that suppose to mean?*, I inquired. But she decided to get up and turn her back on me. I was astonished. Being seated, I could look at her, standing in front of me, walking along the street, getting further and further. It was like a picture decreasing its own size, as she walked the street long until she was merely a remembrance of the past. I spent some time sitting on that bench, trying to understand what was just happened, though not coming to make things work out, unfortunately. By that time, she was totally gone. There was not even a trace of her having been where I was. *Who was she?* It came out *was* instead of *is*, because it was pretty clear to me that woman had to be one belonging to the past, and neither to my present nor my future. That would explain perfectly well why that trace was missing, why I felt nothing inside me but sadness, as if I had lost something somewhere sometime. That woman was just a trace joining two – or even three according to her voice -, different paths. Or maybe roads, and somewhere, sometime, somehow, there had to exist kinda sort of a manor one. I knew almost instantly she had to be the part owning the skill concerning the speech for she had spoken to me, although in that odd way of hers. *What are you?* I didn't expect any answer, so it was not a surprise when this one, simply, came not.

3

There. I lift my pint up whilst people are laughing; there is plenty of smoke around me and it is quite difficult to recognize their faces: over there, could he be that old chap I used to greet during my first staying 'ere? Or surely he is not; and what about that young girl resting her back on that dirty wall, drinking alone and no doubt feeling lonely, is she who tended to be my first scholarship days girlfriend? Or surely she is not; and what about me? Am I who I thought I was? No, I'm not. I'm still having a beer despite the fact I'm getting pretty drowsy, even in spite of this spot narrowing: but somehow, it seems it suits me well: being there is like floating in some sort of a dream, surrounded by people who, sometime ago, were described as friends, and now, because of the time, are blurry faces getting drunk. It is a dream: I want to believe that. There; someone is approaching me, maybe because I'm the only one staying away from that crowd, that hubbub making things foggy; at first I can hardly see that profile: it is too dark in 'ere and I'm about to pass out; then I see that body has a gender; it is a she and not a he; so I must speak to her and not to him; and her is what is going to discuss 'ere: I am drunk, yet I can appreciate her long black hair and her naïve smile: it's her, again, or at least that is what it seems: she is in 'ere, somehow she knows my whereabouts, somehow she can materialize in front of me whenever she wants to, and that makes me feel uncomfortable. Who the hell is she, anyway? Now she is unfolding her arms, pointing directly at me, as if she was trying to grab me by my shoulders: I am expecting some sort of violent jerk but it is not going to come, after all: her touch is not a touch, really. It is like fog, something which is not in 'ere, something you cannot touch no matter your intensive effort to do so; she does

not exist, she is merely a dark figure amidst that crowd, and now, for sure, I know she is not solid at all because I cannot feel her hands on me; but I see them and I am quite certain she is a projection of what I want her to be, though I am not even sure how that can be. And thus, she is smiling at me, she is whispering something to my ears and I can understand her words. Now the spot has darkened, it is pitch black and I cannot see the other faces or figures over there anymore, this spot is narrowing quickly and I start feeling hot and I can barely take a breath; the music now is merely a remote hum, and she is coming closer and I see her body trespassing mine; and then I'm cold and I'm not hot anymore, and I close down my eyes; I expect some perfume but unluckily there isn't any, so my theory is quite right: she is not 'ere, she is not even for real, just an hologram or an spectre. Closer, closer ... And my senses are falling down irremediably, and I don't know what I did about my pint, surely it has to be somewhere, maybe it is crashed, spilling all its remains on the ground, creating out of the blue such an alcoholic puddle where, in case you step on it, you can end up trapped. Who cares. She is in me, now, her silhouette is part of my own body now, her hypothetical flesh now is part of my actual flesh, her face look at me from within, and now I know she is attached to me, although I am still not sure at all why.

And then, whilst being one or almost one, I can hear her saying to me: Give it up.

4

But I never did. Sometimes I can recall such a picture, but as long as it shows up out of the blue inside my head, I resolve I cannot determine where it comes from, or even when. This picture seems to be depicting a great day in the park. One would be happy being able to remember such a moment; surely one would have to, if it were not for the annoying realization that I never was in that park so well-depicted, not to mention the fact I never was in any park at all. All the same; on this picture there is a huge crowd standing up, looking directly at the camera, as if they were waiting for something, or someone, to command them to go. And I am there, too, but just behind them, being merely a darkened figure trying to be of no concern at all, desiring probably not to be precisely in that picture, surrounded by all those I think they are strangers. Then, this picture is gone, and I am alone and bewildered, and I try to summon more details coming from that picture, but I cannot, so I forget about it for, let's say, one or two days, coming back to my own dreadful monotony.

What has that picture to do with that spectral woman I am talking about? Ah, surely nothing, nothing at all: it is just something I can still remember from time to time, as if it was totally impossible to get rid of it. It is something attached to me, some weird and hidden part of my own self, something quite similar to that woman acting like a foggy creature possessing me in the pub, something far from what we do know, far from all which can be considered as normal. There: two times I saw her, only the third one I decided, resolute, to reach her and talk to her; then it came that mystic pub experience. Why? After that bizarre night, I came back home pretty tired. I thought there was someone inside me, maybe that was why I could barely go upstairs, till I got inside my flat. I got undressed and let my body felt down over my bed, closing my eyes almost immediately, trying to get some rest. Despite the fact I was exhausted, Morpheus didn't call me, so I spent the best part of that night laying awake, asking myself awful and probably foolish questions I could hardly respond. Then, it started again: it was about three in the morning when I felt such a presence inside my bedroom, and I opened my eyes up just on time to see funny shadows dancing on the walls. Those shadows were large and were dancing quite chaotically, as if there was not some sort of arrangement made between them just before the dance was evoked; different figures, on the walls, different shapes, some of them so terrific, another ones being beautiful, a bunch of them even quite hilarious. *What is going on?* I could be scared of that shadows, surely I could, but I do know I wasn't. I was home, after all. So, the shadows stopped their magical and undoubtedly hypnotic ball all of a sudden, and started to mix each other, until right in front of me there was only a huge one lasting. It has the unmistakable shape of a woman. *Her*. She did not make a move, it seemed she was

just hanging on the wall, staring somehow at me, despite the fact she was *it*, because *it* was a shadow and not a woman. I expected some voice calling me by my name, or some sort of spiritual revelation, but nothing came to happen in the end. The shadow, after being there, more or less suspended, staring at me, vanished. This way I rested completely alone, again, gazing at the walls as if I was watching the TV, pondering about what will be on in the seconds which have yet to come.

5

It is not that I was getting nuts; it is just I was alone during the best part of the day back then, so these odd events were making me think hard about my own whole life. Resting at home, trying to make things work out, I found myself recalling my days just before meeting *her* for the first time. I was having a great time with some friends of mine in some Café I could not remember what was called. There were four of us; there used to be six or even seven friends, but that day – or, to be more accurate-, those days, some of them were truly hectic because of their bad-paid jobs. I used to have plenty of beer, so I got drunk almost immediately, a long time before they were. Anyway, there was fun and we were all enjoying our drinking time together. In there, there was no too much light, so we could do a lot of foolish things not even worrying to appear as a stupid crowd of drinkers. Dim light, alcohol and loud music, the perfect place to be when one desires to forget about something. Or the perfect place to be when there are important matters to be discussed, like, for example, our lives. I can recall I was severely preoccupied about getting older being alone; my friends did not share my fears but surely they understood perfectly well what I was about, for they tried all the time to cheer me up. *Don't worry, you shall not be alone.* They meant it, they really did, but I was not sure at all and I tried to meet someone, someone who could understand my feelings and, probably, share them. One of those nights, at the Café, I told them about her. Not the same woman I am talking about right now, not that weird creature belonging, somehow, to my own flesh and blood, but the one I met when I was coming back home by bus. They mocked me, they were pulling my leg all the time I tried to express my thoughts openly, so I decided to shut my mouth in the end. It was pointless, to be there amidst all of those I thought my friends, being teased every now and again. Then, I started making a move home but I was too drunk, so as soon as I sat up I felt down quite spectacularly. They came to my rescue, despite the fact they were drunk, too. It was pathetic, I presume. *What's wrong with you, mate?* I didn't have any answer. I was sick; too much alcohol for a single night, and all I wanted was to reach home as soon as I could. Finally, and I'm not sure how, I managed. After one hour, I was staying right in front of my building, standing up, resting my left arm on a tall tree. There was no one to be seen, and I was tranquil because of that silence all around me. I could even hear some voices coming from the distance just to be fading away almost in a flash; and what was that thing impeding me from getting home? The loneliness. My flat was empty; that furniture had nothing to do with me, I realized. When I bought that flat of mine, I furnished it entirely, thinking about my future, smiling at no one in particular while doing so; what a fool! There I was; scared of my shallow life and flat, trying to get home but not desiring to be home, trying to conceal those awful thoughts from myself but not being able to do so; and somewhere she had to be reading, or watching the TV, or maybe having a shower, no one was going to give a shit. But I was. I was because of the fact I needed to, I craved for meeting her, I knew right there, awaiting in the street, staring at my flat through its windows, that I was terribly alone and lonely, and that I could have one, maybe two or even three, perhaps, opportunities to share my life with *her*. When I say her, now, I fathom it was that girl, the human one, the one I thought I felt in love with. It was too late at night when I could finally face my daemons and went upstairs, opened my door up, and slammed it behind me. It was dark in there, but I did nothing to fix that. I was pretty used to wandering around my flat surrounded by darkness. I didn't care. I got undressed, as usual, went to my bathroom and gazed at my sick drunk face in the mirror. What I saw there was not good at all; the mirror was showing me a man wearing kinda sort of a mask: the mask of a sad aged face, the face someone

who had been through something really hard would have had. The important thing was: it was me. I was young, I think, but my body was revealing the other way around. I closed my eyes; I tried to freshen myself up; I turned the lights off; I went to bed; I forgot explicitly to turn the bed-lamp on; I laid on the bed for a while, staring at the ceiling. Then, silently, I cried.

6

That was before seeing her being seated on that bench. As far as I can recall, my life during those previous days was so depressed, I was seldom in the mood to do the easiest things, and I could not even concentrate at work. After seeing her waving at me, my days started to get better, I'm not sure at all how or why, but this is the way it was. I told you I didn't try to acknowledge her, so I continued with my life right after that episode. As far as I'm concerned, my life became bored but, at the same time, affordable, or maybe it would be better to describe it as bearable. All the same; for such a long time I did not care about me being alone, so I could go on focussing all my attention on my job, my books – I was, well, I still am -, such a compulsive reader, my pieces of writing – oh, I did not tell you I am kinda sort of non professional writer -. It was like that for some years, years where I tried to forget completely about sharing my life with someone, about that girl I met one foggy day coming back home on that bus; how were they? I could not tell: shallow, cold, even sad, but not in the same way as before seeing her trying to claim my attention; back then I was an empty man avoiding being mixed with other people but my best friends, in case I kept ones. And, then, out of the blue, I was having breakfast by that promenade, and then all came back to me: I was wasting my time. There she was, exactly the same person looking at me from the distance, calling me, waiting for me to approach her, craving for me doing so. This time was quite different: I went back to the house I was staying, an old Victorian English household, I went upstairs till the upper floor, and then there I rested laying down on the bed for a short while, pondering about my life, again. From time to time, I could see a black and white cat wandering around, entering my room, meowing sweetly, then getting out of my bedroom without leaving the least trace; on the ceiling there was a small window, allowing the sun rays to illuminate my room entirely, as if it was the same God who was pointing one of His fingers at me. There were more people in the house; but at that instant, I was almost alone if it were not for the cat. *What am I going to do?* It seemed such a difficult question. That part of the world was peaceful, and I could just stay there pondering about such matters, for as long as I would like to, because, I have to confess, there was no one waiting for me in my homeland. It was true; it is still true even now, whilst I am writing this down. I closed my eyes, and that picture came back to me, stronger as always, and this time I could see I was a little bit closer, to the photographer's point of view, no doubt. *What did that mean?* Maybe it was my necessity of being loved, of not being alone, which made me see that uncommon phenomena: *who were those people, by the way? Were they related, somehow, to that odd woman waving at me?* In such an instant, the picture was gone and I opened my eyes up, focussing my sight on that ceiling window. I could see the sky, getting dull, enormous clouds passing by, darkening the day. It looked like rain. That view of such a cloudy sky made me recall one particular day, when I was a child; my parents took me to the mountain, and we were enjoying our time together, the perfect family, under a blue sunny sky. All around us was beauty: it was hot but there was no humidity at all, so if you wanted to, you could protect yourself from the sun under a big tall tree. There was no one to be seen but us, so we enjoyed almost the whole day because it seemed to us we were, in fact, the only human beings on Earth. My father smiled all the time watching us, while my mother and I played kinda sort of a football match. But then, the sky started to get dull, and the sun was not there anymore, and a cold wind gave us the chills, and the first raindrops felt down, and then such a terrible downpour started to get us piss wet, so we had to hurry up, all across the mountain, to the train station. That day, I got such a cold, and I spent a whole week at home, having fever and feeling shit. Nonetheless, what we all experienced that day, despite the fact it was cold and rainy in the end, was simply and

purely joy. That was I could recall that day, laying on my English bed of that old Victorian English household; the joy of belonging to some group, even if that group was, to say the least, my own family. That spectre I saw, the waving, the calling, the meeting not being perpetrated, all, nothing, the void. I was falling down, irremediably, I knew it, and I know it.

I kept gazing at the ceiling window, wondering if it came to rain or it came to shine.

7

At the household there were two more students. Both were from Edinburgh, so me not being used to their accent I got such problems understanding them. In spite of that, I managed to communicate using my poor English. I have to admit it was really interesting stuff I got there, even when I was down in the mouth, I could differentiate the good things I was experiencing from those I hated the most, that is, the bad ones. At that time I was not paying too much attention to them. I was sure about such a thing: I was an outsider, merely some guy coming from another country in order to increase his English language knowledge, nothing more than that. I mean, I was nothing special, I was there because of one concrete and precise goal, and again I gotta admit I failed irremediably. Nonetheless, one of those two students was quite receptive to me. It is not she was attracted to me in some way, it is just she was trying to know me deeply, or at least that was I thought back then. I talked to her during such long and windy nights, having such an informal dinner in that very house, in the living room reserved for all of those who were not part of the family. In that room, there was a fireplace, and plenty, myriads, of books stored in a lot of wooden shelves surrounding us completely. I get used to that place because of those books, precisely. So, one cold night, while finishing our meal, she asked me: *Do yo need something? Before you leave, I mean.* That caught me off guard. It seemed feasible to respond a simple yes or not, but I decided to be a little more profound, so I resolved to answer: *I'm always in need of something.* Which, to say the least, was pretty obviously the pure and simple truth. She looked at me, smiling. She didn't know much about me, my ponders, my sadness or even my loneliness, so she was trying to be, probably, polite when asking so. Anyway, my answer was too inexact, so she cooked her head and said to me: *What exactly are you always in need of?* I looked at my watch: twenty five past two. Quite late. However, her presence in that room calmed me, drowned me to some kind of being-awake dream. I was not sleepy at all. *What do you want from me?* I asked her, in a low voice, almost being a whisper. She said nothing for such a long time. At that instant I came to realize there were no sounds at all, even the cat had to be sleeping somewhere inside that house. That other student was sleeping for ages, so we were the only ones totally awake. She decided to answer my question, finally: *I'm not sure at all.* There; there is where our foolishness, our stupidity, lies: sometimes I found myself recalling that moment in the living room, and I know I was the stupidest man over the world, for instead of trying to talk to her armed only with the simple sincerity, I avoided her explicitly, I put such an enormous barrier between us so as to get rid of her. And why was that? Because I was sad, I was totally certain I was not worth a try, and thus the only way I got at the time was to keep on going, alone, letting my shallow life consume me, until some day after, when all my friends were married or gone, I could just let myself die.

I departed the next morning, pretty early. I did so to avoid seeing her one more time, because I was scared of what could happen in case I spent more time in that house, close to her. She woke up half an hour after my departure, so she sent me a text message I read right in the bus stop, on my way to the airport. *Have a nice trip back home. Not so long.* I felt sick; all of a sudden I saw the 501 bus line, so I signalled the driver and the bus stopped in front of me. There was no one inside, I was the only passenger going to the airport that morning. That reinforced my awful feelings of being absolutely alone in this world, and when I got there and I got off, I thanked the driver for the ride and entered the airport through those crystal doors, and I had a black coffee and killed some time before catching my plane.

This way, in no time I was back home, and there, clearly, was nothing, was no one, waiting for me but the void. It was summer, and all I could think about was a novel's title: *After many, a summer*.

8

Half a pint of Guinness. It is dark in 'ere. One more beer; I am bloody thirsty. Let me drink till I pass out, I don't care. Do you care? No, I know for sure you don't. So let's be frank: I'm gonna drink till I cannot do it anymore, then you shall take me home, and there I shall rest all morning long and I'm not going to work because I don't care at all, don't I tell you? Ah; this is the perfect place to be when you are so tragic, so dramatic, even to realize you could be out there, playing that awful role anyone is supposed to be playing; happiness, fuck you! There's no such a thing; it is like the wind, but nothing more than that. And now, I can hear 'em playing some guitars: oh, it is beautiful, the music is driving me mad, but it does not matter as long as I can keep my pint of beer, my Guinness of salvation, my way to my own and foolish redemption. Look at me, don't dare to spare my life, it is not worth a try, let me be, leave me alone, but don't go too far, 'cause I guess I'm gonna need you, 'cause I cannot come back home by myself, I'm too drunk to do so. The girl, the woman, the creature, is inside me, she is screaming inside me, and I don't know how I can get rid of her, but all the same, 'cause I am not sure at all if I would like to, y'know, so let's say I'm getting' fuckin' nuts and I am trying to explain what's going on inside my fucked up head, but it is like sorting out the maelstrom, and I'm getting' lost and all I want is to be loved, and all I crave for is to be understood, and be able to be able to be, just to be, 'cause I feel I'm nothing, and the nothingness is bad, and sad, and terrible, and I am scared of it, and the void give me the creeps, and I miss that student, and now I know I could've talked to her, but I did not, and what's left? The creature is scratching deeply, it is almost in my heart, and I foresee I'm gonna die.

9

I promised myself not to be drunk again. As always before, I failed. Thus, the next morning I had the worst hangover ever. I got work too late, and my boss got quite angry at me – he really hit the roof -, so I spent more time at my office so as to compensate him. Then, about ten, I made a move home. It was a workday, so there were no too many people wandering around, just the usual ones coming back home, as quickly as they could. I went directly to the bus stop, I didn't want more beer for, say, a millennia. There, in that kind of shelter, I saw a woman resting her back on the information panels, reading a book, or at least trying to, because it was too dark if it were not for the very dim lights of some street lamps, lightening the bus stop. As soon as I reached her, I came to a halt, shocked. *It cannot be*. But it was: that woman was *her*. I mean she was that student I met some years ago, during my staying in the UK. And now, she was right in front of me, reading a book and not even realizing I was beside her, looking at her as if I wanted to find some imperfection, some clue clearing my mind completely about that very matter: as if I would like to know for sure she was, in fact, someone else. Then she looked up, putting her book away for a while, and smiled at me, frankly surprised. *Oh, Jeez! I can believe it! Is that you, is that you really?* I did not know what to say, or what I was supposed to say, not at that very instant. For I knew that situation was far from normal, and I could smell her perfume and those pictures belonging to the past came back to me stronger than ever. *It is me, indeed. What are you doing 'ere?* She embraced me tightly, then kissed me on the cheeks. *It's good to see you again!* I said I was really happy to meet her again, after all those years, and she was quite amused because I was talking to her using English and not even being aware of doing so. *I see you get better!* We stayed there, for a while, waiting for our respective buses to arrive. *What have you been through?* I asked her. She gazed at the stars for a long amount of time, not even making the slightest sound or move. I waited up. For some unknown reason, it

seemed to me I had plenty of time to do whatever I wanted, including waiting for a bus forever and ever, as long as I could await that bus beside her. Curiously, I thought her thinking the same. *The usual things, y'know. But I thought you were going to call me, or at least to email me. But you, simply, vanished in the thin air.* That was what she responded. I saw her eyes, glowing intensely in that semi darkness inside our improbable bus-shelter-for-a-while. *What do you want from me?* Again, the same obvious dangerous question. *I think I'm attracted to you,* she said, staring at me. So, that was what was about: that creature, that spectre, inside my soul, devouring me from within, the third encounter, the third time and the last one, there, here, wherever, possessing me, making me feel things I thought they were lost, irremediably: right in front of me, at my hand, all I needed to do was to unfold my arm and touch it, or even better than that: just touch her. Feel her white skin, her long black hair, her red coloured lips, let my own body be mixed with hers, embrace her, and then, *then*, I would be complete. So would she. *Is that so?* I asked, hope getting bigger. *I thought maybe I could find you 'ere. It seems I did.* She came closer. Her eyes were wide shut, her arms totally unfolded, searching for me. I let them touch my shoulders, I let them shove me slightly, until I was noting her breasts on my chest; then I could see her pretty well: she was aged, and somehow, for a bit, her face was the same face I could summon when I was drunk, that very face belonging to that spectre, to that night creature, to that woman who waved at me for three times. I screamed of pure terror, but then, while thinking that was the end, she kissed me on the lips, and her face was her own face and not *her* face anymore, so I calmed down and I felt the joy, that joy I had in the mountains, quite an entire life before, with my lovely parents, now dead and long time ago rotten; and then, all was perfectly clear to me, for I had been through the sadness and the loneliness for such a long time, and now, thanks to that woman on the bench, mine was the joy, mine was the will to live. Almost instantly, that picture showed up; but that time there were no unknown people looking at the camera, there was only a huge park, a huge silently and solitary park indeed, and my parents were there, smiling sincerely, while behind them, not so far away, a beautiful black-haired woman rested on a bench, smiling too, her perfect white teeth glowing because of the sun rays.

Then, out of the blue, the woman is gone and the picture vanishes. It is late at night, and I can see, no matter the darkness, wherever I want to, because you don't know but I am capable of such great things just because of her, just because this time is gonna be different, for I've found her, finally; and he has found me as well, and this way, having found each other after all those years, we do know we are going to be sharing such marvellous things, despite the fact we are going to get older, despite the fact we are going to die someday, somehow, somewhere.

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West Kirby (UK), Cornellà, Ribes de Fresser
July, the 17th, 2010*