

## **you are here**

Everyday. Every day you get up and you decide what to wear. You look at yourself in the mirror while you are brushing your teeth, even if only vaguely and briefly, even if instantly forgotten, and you look like what you're going to look like for the day. In most cases. You open a drawer or pull a shirt from a chair and decide exactly what color. Exactly how formal or casual or matching.

But no matter what, there is an exactitude to how you walk out the door. Even if it's exactly the same as all the other days. Even if you're only barely conscious that you're doing it. Especially then.

And every day. We go to work or we go to school or we go to somewhere that isn't where we live and we do something and then we go back. Every day. And the days and the years go by and yet the ebb and flow is the same. Radically different and yet entirely the same.

And in that routine. The repetition of the getting up and the encountering the world, today and all of the days that are lined up behind this day, seemingly endless and infinite and anonymous except for that's not actually how it IS, at all.

It's actually a whole series of if/then equations based on the unknown and what ultimately is seemingly true chaos, and that can only be approached one decision at a time, in each instant. and those instants are nearly always filtered through the conditioning you've had to date. I.e., you are a 20 or 30 or 40-something year old human being alive today who's collected a unique range of experiences, some of which are of primary concern to your person, in an ongoing and maybe egregious way, including and most always dominated by the loving of some and the losing of some. And but so the prism of your outlook is both biologically and practically influenced by all other experiences you've had thus far in life.

But it's confusing because this quantum math is not directly or immediately perceivable, per se, even though it is, you know, finite and known on some sort of macro map type way. Even though your responses to things can be predicted. You know that you know in advance what will happen in certain cases, for example. And you can sometimes even feel it become known as if it's a magnet from some other frequency, distant but distinct.

And the days and sometimes the years when the conflict of the mind creates havoc and distraction that puts everything on automatic econo mode are the days that a re-doubled *ear-to-the-wall* onto the macro map type-thing is in order. Listen. Absorb. Repeat.

The empty immensity of what we find ourselves floating in demands few things directly. Despite this longing for purpose, this shouting into the void, there is no clear answer in the day in, day out world. The only one here is the one you assign to yourself or maybe assume from tradition or then again default into through pain. And deep down we all know this is true. It's the root of the root of the truth. And even though the magic of your unique reality may not be deliberate, existence itself is phenomenal, and holy and sacred just on it's own. and it's enough.

And so everyday. In the getting up and the facing the day and the looking in the mirror and the rushing to something-ness. Stop for a moment. Breathe for a moment. Look in your own eyes for a moment. Perceive the map.

You Are Here.

-mml

### **From Mario Vargas Llosa's Death in the Andes**

Like pisco, music helps us understand bitter truths.

Dionisio has spent his life teaching them to people, but it hasn't done much good, most cover their ears so they won't hear. I learned everything I know about music from him. Singing a huaynito with feeling, giving yourself over to it, letting yourself go, losing yourself in the song until you feel that you're the song, that the music is singing you instead of you singing the music, this is the path to wisdom. Stamping your feet, stamping and spinning, adorning the figure, making and unmaking it without losing the rhythm, forgetting yourself, leaving yourself, until you feel that the dance is dancing you, that it's deep inside you, that it commands and you obey, this is the path to wisdom. You are no longer yourself, I am no longer myself but all the others. That's how we leave the prison of the body and enter the world of the spirits. By singing. Dancing. Drinking, too, naturally.

You travel when you're drunk, Dionisio says, you pay a visit to your animal, you shake off worry, you discover your secret, you become who you really are. The rest of the time you're in prison, like the corpses in the ancient tombs or the cemeteries we have today. You're somebody's slave or servant, always. When we're dancing and drinking, there are no Indians, no mestizos, no white señores, no rich or poor, no men or women. The differences are wiped away and we become like spirits: Indians, mestizos, señores, rich and poor, women and men. Not everybody travels when they dance or sing or drink, only the best ones. You have to have a will for it and lose your pride and shame and come down from the pedestal where people have put themselves. The man who doesn't put his thoughts to sleep, who doesn't forget himself, or throw off his vanity and pride, or become the music when he sings and the dance when he dances and drunkenness when he drinks—that man does not leave his prison, does not travel, does not pay a visit to his animal or rise up to become spirit. That man does not live: he is decay, he is the living dead. And he cannot nourish the spirits of the mountains, either. They want first-rate creatures who have freed themselves from their slavery. Many people, no matter how drunk they get, do not become drunkenness. Or the song or the dance, even though they yell and shout and stamp the ground until it gives off sparks. But that little mute who works for the cops, he does. Even though he's mute, even though he's a half-wit, he feels the music. He knows. And I've seen him dance, all alone, going up or coming down the hill, running his errands. He closes his eyes, he concentrates, he begins to walk in rhythm, to take little steps on tiptoe, to move his hands, to jump. He's hearing a huayno that only he can hear, that they sing only to him, that he sings without making a

sound from deep inside his heart. He loses himself, he goes away, he travels, he leaves, he approaches the spirits. The terrucos didn't kill him that time in Pampa Galeras, because the spirits of the mountains were protecting him. Or maybe they had marked him for something greater. They'd receive him with open arms, like those lords in the old days who were offered up by the women, the ones who sleep now in the tombs. But you, in spite of your trousers and the balls you're so proud of, you're shitting with fear. You prefer to have no work, to be dried and sliced by the pishtacos, to let the terrucos take you into their militia, let them stone you to death, anything before you'd shoulder a responsibility. It's no wonder there are no women left in Naccos. They withstood the attack of the evil spirits, they maintained the life and prosperity of the village. It began to go down when they left, and you men don't have the courage to stop it. You let life slip away, you let death fill the empty places. Unless...

Also, of course: City that Does Not Sleep, by Federico Garcia Lorca