

Ilflores

ISOLATIONIST

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For her: Confidant. Commiserator. Mother.

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Of loss.

Loss is an unnervingly acute and unforgiving, sharp edge that doesn't dull. It slashed me wide and I LEAK, leaving behind long vermilion trails of who I was BEFORE as I trudge with avolition straight by what used to 'matter', through the ticking time, only occupying space.

Because– AND MAKE NO MISTAKE –that's what and very simply ALL I, as a freshly eviscerated structure, am equipped to do now. OCCUPY SPACE. The hopes, wishes, and wants– what was true and had 'matter' – that I had held BEFORE have become fraudulent. They are now the ideas of what happiness, fulfillment, and love mean according to others ENTIRELY, according to WHOMever said WHATEver the most eloquently, the most realistically, that I regurgitate with bulemic ease when I'm asked just what precisely ARE the things that I desire. There

IS no desire, so I recite dreams stolen from the uncut people. I try to blend in, but my appetites for what once sustained me, what had fueled LIVING, have mutated into inorganic cravings that are only fractionally, if even AT ALL, sated by A) what swims within the deep, heavy, pining dark and B) materials conceived and born after Minds chained to lucidity by a combination of tolerance and boredom marry Visions of neoteric synthesis.

...And they're all cloaked in a pristine white...

Even my RESPIRATION is artificial, unreal in both its soft, steady sound AND its vitalizing purpose.

I barely even exist anymore. The WHOLE of actuality— everything that had been REAL and FULL to me —was categorically emptied the very second loss struck and the only things of 'matter' NOW are poisoning what's left of me...

Inside, I am anhedonic in presence, mimicking humanity. I am a flightless mocking bird echoing emotion. I am a counterfeit, illegal personality. I am the aftermath of loss.

1952

1.

"Another dead soldier..." Jean said absently to herself after swallowing the last drink of her salty beer.

It was in her latter years– the sicker ones –that she had become more partial to glass after glass of Natural Ice with salt than to her original fermented love; wine.

Red, red wine... Something had invaded her and those tastes and tolerances she had held before had been forcefully and forever changed. She had a heavy secret and winced as she stood from her chair by the kitchen table.

"Damn leg... *Ow* ." she whispered.

She didn't know her pain was showing.. She moved, impossibly graceful and nonchalant, even *in* her suffering, to the refrigerator and studied the left crisper. She counted three more cans and sighed.

Thinking to herself, ' *Damn it, Jean!! I TOLD you to*