



They Told Me
Their dREAMS

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he Told Me his dREAMS

I

he was walking by the
white hen pantry
on sixth and green

and they turned around the
corner in the car
opened fire on him

he was hit over and over
again; his teeth were
shattered by bullets

he said he died then
and he saw from up above
his bloody body

he even saw his obituary

but then he went back, did it
over again: this time
he was in the doctor's

office. It's always like this,
he thinks, always
running away from death

he Told Me his dREAMS

II

he was in bed, but
it wasn't with her, like
he would expect: it was

with her best friend, and
they were making love, in
his bed. he didn't realize

it wasn't her until he
was making love. strange;
where was she in the dream

he Told Me his dReams

III

he was making love to a
woman, he didn't know
who, he thought she was

blonde. They were in a forest
together, he thinks. And when
they were done, he was

with her later, but she wasn't
the same woman anymore; in
fact, she was his cousin. Why

does he keep having dreams
like this, he asks me, am I
obsessed with sex? No, I

said, just look closely. Why
do you think things are
never as they seem

he Told Me his dREAMS

IV

as he wakes up less
rested than the night before.
I had a dream my teeth

fell out again, he said.
This time they fell out one by
one, first slowly, then faster.

Sometimes they all fall out
at once, sometimes they fall
one row at a time. I try to

stuff them back into my mouth.
What is this supposed to
mean? I don't understand.

I just don't understand these
dreams. What does it mean
when you dream your teeth

fall out, when you dream it
regularly? I think it means
I'm afraid of commitment.

No, I said, it means
you're pregnant. That didn't
go over well with him. And he

walked to the washroom,
brushed his teeth, made sure to
floss, like he would four

more times that day

he Told Me his dReams

V

they were trying to kill
me again, why am I
always running away

from them? they had guns,
they had pistols, machine
guns, as they always

do, and I only had my
feet to keep me away
and save me. I

could feel the bullets
riddling my body. who
are they, why do I

always have to run away;
even in my own dreams,
who am I running from

he Told Me his dREAMS

VI

in the recurring dream
during my childhood
I was on a sort of game show:

and every time I would
be faced with three doors
to choose from. They

always had the same things
behind them. The first
time I had the dream

I asked for door number
three. Behind the door was a
desolate hill with a tree

on the top. I would then
climb the hill, climb the tree
if I could, just to see if

there was something else.
Nothing. Just a hill, just a
tree. Other nights when I

would dream of it I would
go back to the hill, find a
wooden ladder at the tree,

climb it and find a fort to
play in. But that was all, still
so lonely. On other occasions I

would choose door number two.
Behind it was a dark tunnel,
a scary tunnel; there was a

light at the end of it, but I
would never get that far. I
would try to go through the

tunnel, but I only got a
strange feeling. Was there
anything there at the end?

Sometimes in the dream I
would choose door number
one. Behind it was a great

Walt Disney World amusement
park, even better than
that. And there were roller

coasters, and lots of food.
It was my favorite door.
But sometimes I had no choice

which door I got. Sometimes
I'd notice more details, but
it was always those three

doors, the desolation, the
fear, and the rewards. the
doors were always the same

he Told Me his dREAMS

VII

when I was little
I would have dreams
where I found riches:

a large rare, expensive
gold coin, a pile of
money hidden in a cave.

And the one thing I
remember most is that
I always wanted to take

it back with me; I knew
I was dreaming, and I
would think, “God,

please, I just want to
have this gold coin when
I wake up.” And I

would try to hold the
treasure firmly in my
hand, wake myself

only to find tightly
clenched fists. Once I even
remember putting

the wealth under my
pillow in my dream, and
then I would wake.

My instinct told me to
turn over my pillow as
soon as I could. There

was never anything there

he Told Me his dREAMS

VIII

he remembers escaping from prison
he knew he had to escape
he was captured by evil people

he managed to run away
but the more he ran, the slower his steps
slower and slower, he's not going anywhere

the evil men with the machine guns
caught up
why can't he run away

they plugged him with bullets
forty, maybe more
he could feel them hitting him, feel them

he kept trying to run away
and they would catch up to him
take him back to prison, still alive

he lived through it
he was still full of holes
why can't he run away

he Told Me his dREAMS

IX

She said: Do you know that feeling
you get when you're starting
to fall asleep and then suddenly

you feel like you're falling
very quickly and you instantly
wake yourself up? Everyone

gets that feeling sometimes
when they sleep. Did you know
your body does that on purpose?

You see, it happens when you're
very tired and your body starts
to fall into a sleep state at too

fast a speed. Your heart rate,
your breathing shouldn't slow
down that fast. So your body

makes you feel like you fall
so you'll wake up, feel a little
tense, and fall asleep more

slowly. He said: No, no, that's
not what I'm talking about.
I know that feeling, but

what I'm talking about is
being in a dream and going
to the edge of a cliff and jumping.

She said: Well, what happens?
Do you land? He said: Sometimes
I wake up before I land,

sometimes I land gently and
live. You've never had a dream
like that before? She said:

No. He said: Why do I have
dreams like this? Why this cliff?
Why do I fall? How do I land?

She Told Me Her Dreams

I

we were at some sort of showing
some sort of exhibit
where they were displaying the glass

sculpture, it was eighty-three
billion years old, and it was
more smooth than anything

and it went on and on, one smooth
curve after another
it was so old

they displayed it on the water
was it a lake, or the ocean
it rested on the water, religiously

and I was in the water with someone
a man, I don't know who
and we were swimming around it,

touching it
he was on the other side, told
me to swim under it

I didn't think I could make it across
but I went under, across I went

I kept feeling the sides, the smoothness

somehow, transcribed along the
sides of the sculpture, was a
timeline, a record of history

there's wasn't much at eighty-three
billion years ago, but there was
more and more the closer we got

to present
I remember reading Lyndon
Johnson's name, and then I saw

information about the future
it was all on the glass, I was
looking at it, but I can't remember

what it says

She Told Me her dREAMS

II

The Bulls basketball game
was being aired on television
but I was playing a game

with my co-workers, we were
playing a game ourselves,
and it was being recorded

and being aired over the
basketball game
I remember I was in an

argument with one of my
coworkers at the time, but
they never caught any of

that on television
I remember knowing that
the camera was on me

and I remember thinking
“everyone who is watching
the Bulls game will be

watching me”

She Told Me Her Dreams

III

this is my recurring dream:
I am in a garage
with my two brothers, there

is a window near the top of
one of the sides
and one of my brothers is

looking through it. There was
also a draining grate
on the floor of the garage

and my other brother was
looking down into it
and I sat there in the labyrinth

for the garage was filled
with a tall maze
and we all had to get through

it in order to leave the
garage
but there was a dragon

in the garage with us, and
every dream was my
brothers, looking out the

window, looking into the
darkness, and then all of
us running for our lives

She Told Me Her Dreams

IV

I was in a shopping mall
with Efi, I don't know why
I was with him, they call

him smelly
and we were walking on
the first floor, and we

were near the stairs to
go down to the basement
and someone came along

and pushed Efi down the
stairs, he must have died
and everyone wanted to

know who murdered him
and I saw who it was

down in the basement of
the mall was a marker board
and I wrote a message

I wrote, "I saw who did
it." And later I went back
to the board and someone

else wrote me a message.
It said, "It wasn't Peppers.
He's a good guy." And I

saw who did it, and I
know it wasn't Peppers.
A third person got to the

board before me and
tried to scratch out the
name Peppers, but I could

still read it. No, it wasn't
him, I knew who it was, even
if it was only in the dream

She Told Me Her Dreams

V

I was back at my college town
with some women from a sorority
we took pillows outside to the top of

a cliff, to enjoy homecoming
my friends, a woman and her
boyfriend, were at the bottom

of the cliff, at the lake, swimming
one of the women from the sorority
rested on a big pillow on a rock

then the man from the lake came
up the cliff to me, told me the
woman in the lake wanted me to

come down the cliff and swim with
them, and then he tried to drag me
down the side of the cliff

I was afraid I was going to fall
I was screaming, I was resisting
why is he pushing me, why is she

watching

SHE TOLD ME HER DREAMS

VI

I went to visit some old friends
we were going to a party together

I went outside to save a
space for my car

I came back, but they
left for the party without me

I was abandoned

TRANSCRIBING DREAMS

I

I was at a beach, I don't know why the dream was there, but it was, the dream I mean. And you were there, and your family too, and at one point your little sister, the one that isn't so little anymore, pulled me to the side and told me she was pregnant. She loved her boyfriend, she couldn't have an abortion, she didn't want to tell her parents. And she told me, and I didn't know what to do. Later in the dream, still at the beach, she told you, and your parents, and you were screaming that you were going to kill her boyfriend, and your mother was babbling what would the neighbors think and your father was speechless. And I know that all of you were hurting her more, that what she needed most was supportive words, someone to hold her. Didn't you think she was scared enough, I wanted to ask. But I didn't, I watched all of you do this to her, the poor little girl. How scared she must have been

TRANSCRIBING DREAMS

II

me any my sister and my
mother were driving at night
and we were approaching
and s-curve in the street.
We had to turn right, drive
a half block, then turn left.
When we took the corner
there was a fire in the
building right in front of us,
and there were all these
fire trucks and ladders and
water spraying through the
air. And we couldn't turn
around and go back, we had
to drive past this, and the
car got faster and faster,
I felt like I was being thrown
toward the inferno. And I
saw firemen that were on
ladders on the second and
third floors being thrown
away from the building by
the flames, falling, screaming,
falling to their deaths. And we
sped around the corner, my
sister was falling out of the
car as we took the turn so
fast. She was holding on to
the frame of the car and we
watched firemen fall from
the sky, and I sat in the center
of the backseat, not knowing
what to think, watching it all

TRANSCRIBING DREAMS

III

I was walking into your living room and there was a ten-gallon fish tank there. You just bought it. You were looking at the fish, that's when I walked over. And I saw a shark fish in the tank, one about eight inches long, and he was at the bottom, killing and eating a four-inch fish. There were other one-inch fish swimming at the top, neon tetras, small things. And I walked over and the shark was just eating the four-inch fish, and soon he was completely gone. And you were just looking, you could do nothing to save the fish. And then another four-inch fish came out of hiding from behind a plant on the left side of the tank, and he darted around. It looked like he was in a state of panic, maybe he breathed the blood of the other four-inch fish, his ally, his family. And he started darting around the tank, and the shark was just sitting at the bottom of the tank, and the other four-inch fish darted more. And then the shark opened his mouth, and in a darting panic, the four-inch fish swim straight into the shark's mouth. All he had to do was close his mouth and swallow the fish whole. There was no fight, like with the first one. There was no struggle. And I looked over at you, and you

were amazed that this shark just ate your two fish, which were probably over ten dollars each, and that they didn't just get along in the tank together. And I looked at the tank, and I saw the one-inch neon tetras darting around along the top of the water. They knew they would be victims later, trapped in this little cage, and that the shark would just wait until he was bored until he administered his punishment. I wanted to ask you why you bought all of these different-sized fish and expected them to live together peacefully. Maybe you didn't even realize that the shark would need more food than he was prepared to buy him. Besides, a shark that size shouldn't even be alone in a tank as small as ten gallons. He needs room to grow. But before I could say anything, I saw the shark swim to the top of the water, push his head and nose out of the water, open the lid to the top of the aquarium. You weren't looking, so I told you to look to the top, and not to get too close. And the shark just sat there, looking at you, and it looked as if he wanted to show you what a good eater he was. It was almost as if he was looking to you for approval.

THEY TOLD ME THEIR DREAMS

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