

I lost my left arm today. It came off clean at the shoulder. Janice 2 picked it up and brought it back to the hotel. I would have thought it would affect my balance more than it has. It is like getting a haircut. The air moving differently around the remaining parts of me. Also by turns a sense of newness and lessness – free me, undead me, don't look at me.

Isn't it strange that I never knew a single living Janice and now I know three?

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I stay in bed all day. If I lie on my right side, I can keep the arm balanced as if it is still part of me. Or I can pretend it is your arm and that you are in bed with me. I think about how we used to take a blanket into the dunes and wrap up together. Wake with sand in our hair and in the corners of our eyes. Sound of the ocean big as the sky. I miss sleep. I miss you.

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Mitchem says I'm in denial. That I am depressed because I am indulging in a sense of loss instead of wonder. 'Embrace your new existence,' he says. I picture myself trying to do this with one arm.

When I was alive, I imagined something redemptive about the end of the world. I thought it would be a kind of purification. Or at least a simplification. Rectification through reduction. I could picture the empty cities, the reclaimed land.

That was the future. This is now.

The end of the world looks exactly the way you remember. Don't try to picture the apocalypse. Everything is the same.

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Mitchem says it is important to do small, ordinary tasks when you're depressed. That even if I don't do anything else all day, I should make the bed. This morning he came in and opened the curtains. He stood over me, that half-moon head of his backlit by the window. He picked up the arm from where it was lying on the floor and held it out like something I needed to account for. He said, 'You've experienced a significant loss.' He said, 'It isn't just your arm.' He said, 'You're grieving your life.' Since he broke off his penis he's Mr. Wisdom. When he left, I closed the curtains again. A glow creeps under my room door from the hallway where the lights are always on.

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Yesterday Mitchem preached in the lobby. Today he set up on the roof. He stands on a side table from one of the rooms. Afterward I saw Bob following him around wearing a rain poncho like the one Mitchem wears. Uh oh.

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Tried to make a harness for the arm. It is too heavy. Dead weight. Ha ha.

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Found a shirt today with cuffs that button. It is red. I stuffed in the arm and buttoned myself in with it. The fit isn't good. The arm slides down bare up to the elbow and flops forward in my way. Like the dislocated limb of a mannequin. It gets turned around in the sleeve and elbows me in the side. It is strange to see it like this. My hand. My wrist. The fingernails.

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Smoke has settled down in the sound. Sunrises and sets have been dull and angry. The full moon dark red. Even inside the hotel it is hazy. Exit signs are dim irony at the ends of the long hallways. Wildfire, back-burn, blitz. Any way you look at it, a blaze we set.

Mitchem preached on the roof again tonight. Only the undead can truly understand the meaning of life, he said. There is no meaning, he said. Bob was there. He seems to have been promoted. Now he carries the side table around and stands nearby when Mitchem is up there. Which comes first, a believer or a religion? Others are showing up now, too. I can't describe how strange it is. Someone puts her hands up in the air and then the others do it. Someone moans, and the others moan. You can see how this will go. There is talk of a revival.

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That's another thing – most of us can't remember who we are... were...are. We are character actors to ourselves – people we recognise but can't name.

It really bothers some of the hotel guests. They always have the troubled, distracted look of a person trying to remember something simple. They are attracted to one another. They sit together saying one name after another hoping if they hear their own name they will know it. They write names on the walls, in the elevator, on the air exchange unit on the roof, in the dust the dust the dust that covers everything. You can take a name for yourself. You can leave one for someone else. But why choose the name Janice when someone else is already using it? And who chooses the name Bob?

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