I become a beam of light.

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I become a beam of light.

Photographs by Leor Miller
I become a beam of light.

Leor Miller

May 2019
“As a dreamer, you can be simultaneously the protagonist of the dream and the viewer watching the action on the screen of the dream. It’s the sensation of being both inside and outside thought, of thought being both inside and outside one, this double vision.”

-Susan Hiller, “Reflections”
My mind races with thoughts and the world is filled with happening. Somehow, I am everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Pieces of self fly across digital screens, other fragments manifest themselves in the mental space of people I know and have known. I exist in physicality, and simultaneously in immaterial forms.

Everything is complicated. The world turns. Our bodies and minds grow and distort, engage in unseen processes.

Time passes and I don’t see you. You and I occupy different spaces, but you are in my mind, appearing to me in dreams as well as in my waking life. Who are you now? Who am I?

I am everyone I’ve ever met. I am my parents, my sixth-grade English teacher, that man on the street, his dog I pet. I am a collection of relationships housed in a body. I am everyone, and so are you.

The world moves. I experience great change. Years pass and we are miles apart, maybe we don’t even know it. My skin sits and folds differently, in new places over the same bones. We have changed, but still hold on to pieces of our past selves. We carry all our iterations.

The wet ground creates suction cups around my feet. Step after step, the grass takes the shape of my soles. I pick up its information in small crevices of rubber, spreading seeds and desecrating unmarked graveyards. A collection of eroding rocks, bones, and muscle; life fed by its own expiration. I wash myself when I get home.

I’ve added an experience to my repertoire of understanding. It all accumulates strangely. Sometimes they bleed together, creating new understandings of already-happened happenings; the past is contextualized by the ever-expanding present.

I once was, now here I am. What is once was? A prototype, draft, iteration? A piece of a larger whole, or complete in itself? Does that self sit somewhere, as I sit somewhere, and engage in a continuation of its own reality? Some day, on some alternate timeline, I run into my parents’ grown son. I will not have seen him in years. Once we moved in step, somewhere our singularity was split.

We walk and we talk. I leave my material mark. Water cycles, evaporates, and comes down in snow. My footprints will melt, take on new form, my debris carried by their current and deposited somewhere, only to be moved again.
Who am I and what do I do about it? I come to a clearing in my mind. It is a landscape, constantly in flux: people running in and out, feelings swelliing and crashing down, understanding moving in and out of focus. I am confused. I watch people and the ways they move, engage with each other, engage with the world, and wonder: how do I engage with myself, my surroundings, and the people who exist within them? We begin from a similar point: I am me, and that is the world. There is an imposed space between subject and object, a space which we constantly navigate the boundaries of in our interactions with the world, as well as in our interactions with photography. But there is no real space. I exist within the world. It is not separate from me, I am a part of it. I am a particle in a very large sea. I am not unimportant, I exist as a small fraction of a whole, as well as a whole in itself. It is bigger than me. Infinity divided by one. What do I do about it?

There is a warm light. I want to touch it. Like a moth, I throw myself at it with no concern for my own physicality, I am just directed by it. The light is pleasure, fulfillment, and meaning. It is contentment, happiness, bliss. It is more than that. It is ecstasy. I move toward it. It appears closer and closer in my field of vision, until my eyes are filled with glowing white. I catch a glimpse, then look away. If I were to take in too much at once, what could happen? Maybe I would never feel it again. Maybe I would only feel it forever. Both would be too much. I need balance, though I am still trying to find it.

Moments of wholeness are paired with ones of intense uncertainty, the strange world makes its presence known. I am thankful for the strangeness. It keeps my stomach churning, my heart surging, my eyes darting. There is bliss somewhere in the peculiar. I become one with the uncertainty. I become a beam of light.