

Dreamscape Theory

I remember quite vividly something that happened to me a couple years ago when I was scarcely even thirteen years old, prodded rather suddenly into the uncharted New World of teenager-hood, as it was. It was a day saturated with a remorseless drizzle, not enough to be considered rain yet somehow just enough to annoy me ever so slightly. I sat cross-legged in the loft of a barn, one that had rested at the edge of the property before I'd even moved to Calvert County. I was alone, as I preferred to be when I was writing, a much-abused composition notebook open across my lap, the pages filled with my own handwriting and punctured in some places from where the pen had pressed too hard. Nothing was flowing, no creative juices, no streams of light that poured from the heavens bringing boundless inspiration, and any writer knows that such a state could only bring with it self-doubt and melodramatic inner spiels about how "nothing I ever write will be good enough" and et cetera. (Behold: the grandeur of writer's block.) In any case, my characters *depended* upon me to share their fictional struggles with the world! So I stood, letting my notebook tumble to the floor to join the wisps of straw and dust, deciding that inspiration would have to come in the form of fresh air until I discovered another reservoir. There was a sort of lookout window set into the forward-facing wall of the loft, a floor-to-ceiling affair that could be opened by a simple latch and hook set into the doors. Throwing them open, I leaned into the feeble slat of wood that went across it at about elbow height, staring into the nearly rainy day as I pondered what trials my characters, ill-fated yet stubbornly tenacious as they were, would have to face next. The slat bent with the pressure, making faint cracking sounds like knuckles popping. Then it just...gave way.

...Except, of course, for the fact that it *didn't*. And it *hasn't* since I've lived here, which has been for over a decade now. You seem surprised. Why is that? Did you actually believe I fell out of a barn window like some redneck Humpty Dumpty? Rest assured, there are some elements of truth here. The barn exists, along with the lookout window, the flimsy slat, and my unfortunate chronic writer's block. But the occurrence itself never happened. Now riddle me this: Did you believe in the validity of this story because I was *leading* you to believe in its validity, or could it simply be because the imagination, itself, possibly has more potency than we realize?

That's my Dreamscape Theory. It's bizarre and overly theatrical, certainly, but it's something that's always been a pressing matter on my mind. Think about those moments when you're half-asleep in a chair, that "falling sensation" when it happens to tip back. For a moment, you actually believed you were truly falling into some hellish chasm that opened up right beneath your feet. But then your eyes fly open, you regain your balance, and you feel amazed. *Strange how the mind works*, you think to yourself, and soon shrug off the experience as a silly accident.

But it *was no accident*, and you know this somewhere deep inside your brain. Dreams can be real in their own way, if only for a moment. The imagination has an influence and a vitality that we sometimes fail to notice. Maybe it's the fact that 'dream' is synonymous with 'aspiration' that lends it this potency, makes dreams almost tangible until they are, almost realized until they become a realization.

Tragically, I appear to be reaching the word count limitation, so I must halt my longwinded musing. On a pleasant parting note: If you've happened to fall asleep during my recitation, I know a funny way to wake you up.