

# SOMEDAY I'LL LOVE OCEAN VUONG

By Ocean Vuong

April 27, 2015

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00:18 / 03:27

*Audio: Read by the author.*

*After Frank O'Hara / After Roger Reeves*

Ocean, don't be afraid.  
The end of the road is so far ahead  
it is already behind us.  
Don't worry. Your father is only your father  
until one of you forgets. Like how the spine  
won't remember its wings  
no matter how many times our knees  
kiss the pavement. Ocean,  
are you listening? The most beautiful part  
of your body is wherever  
your mother's shadow falls.  
Here's the house with childhood  
whittled down to a single red tripwire.  
Don't worry. Just call it *horizon*  
& you'll never reach it.  
Here's today. Jump. I promise it's not  
a lifeboat. Here's the man  
whose arms are wide enough to gather  
your leaving. & here the moment,  
just after the lights go out when you can still see

just after the lights go out, when you can still see  
the faint torch between his legs.

How you use it again & again  
to find your own hands.  
You asked for a second chance  
& are given a mouth to empty into.  
Don't be afraid, the gunfire  
is only the sound of people  
trying to live a little longer. Ocean. Ocean,  
get up. The most beautiful part of your body  
is where it's headed. & remember,  
loneliness is still time spent  
with the world. Here's  
the room with everyone in it.  
Your dead friends passing  
through you like wind  
through a wind chime. Here's a desk  
with the gimp leg & a brick  
to make it last. Yes, here's a room  
so warm & blood-close,  
I swear, you will wake—  
& mistake these walls  
for skin.

*Published in the print edition of the May 4, 2015, issue.*

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*Ocean Vuong has published the novel "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous" and the poetry collection "Night Sky with Exit Wounds," which won the 2017 T. S. Eliot Prize.*

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