

SOMEDAY I'LL LOVE OCEAN VUONG

By Ocean Vuong

April 27, 2015

Listen to this story



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.

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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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