

I have to return the costumes today. I have to erase the lines from my mouth. Give the props back to their rightful home. What I'm left with is the same character of a country as yesterday. There are so many differences time works at. Passages and footprints gift fossils unlike our own, yet similar enough to see reflections. There is not much of a road now. The path is playfully trodden. It has never been traveled since unless by wolves like us. This part has been written up so often that I hesitate adding anything more. I've spoken of the scenery. Of the landscape that has forgiven me. The body that remains. It all doesn't amount to much, of course. We love and seek recognition for the trauma it instills. This is the closest I'll ever get to screaming into the great canyons. Into the symbiotic coils of remembering and forgetting. I know what it is like to play the journey. To put on the makeup. To pretend. In the night, there is no river. There is no boat. No team of expedition. There is only my own hands blistered and healing. Only the forgiveness of my own language. Nothing can be irrigated except the bottoms, the very depths of my heart's bed. It has been cut up. Ditches in almost every direction. Forest fires and demolition. The destruction that had left me wandering in an isolated bottle. In a dream state of fiction and reality. I am no good actor, I am the first to confess the secrets and stage tricks. Yet, I will perform for all who will watch. I will showcase my veins onstage and off. I will offer them up willingly. It would be so easy after this to shut myself off. To build the canyon walls higher. To lock the doors of my house. To paint the windows and break the mirrors. To mutilate like the man I played and who played me. Though, I know. I know. We travel in choices. In boats along a river of sorts. One of transcendence. As I reach the supposed end of this journey, this particular chapter of a story yet unwritten, of the words of a downtrodden man that lived long ago, there remains a comforting level of uncertainty. What the landscape is below I know not. It is reasonable to suppose it to be the same character, the same woman player that we have passed through. It's reasonable to suppose there is no end to a healing not linear. To a love unfinished. And so I reflect again on my own reflection without the silly hat. Without the men's shirt I once wore to bed. To the certainty of impermanence. To the instantaneous switch of a moment. To together and not. To the hair shed in the sink. The bath water drained. The simultaneous life and death of a heart splendid. I would allow myself to burn down the house I built for us. To shut myself up in it forever. To cremate that woman that loved without ends. I would allow myself to kill her in her sleep quiet. To forget she ever reigned this body. To move to the Grand Canyon and set up shop as some botched physician. I would allow myself all this, and yet, I choose to keep her. I choose to heal the heart that has failed me. To grow resilient in vacant dirt. In loneliness. In aches and tribunal burns. I choose to love despite.

So far we have accomplished what we set out for, I was told by the frontiersmen that we could not get to the mouth, and yet here we are.