

DREAMORY



Sister—sweaty—grinds on top faceless body in flannel shirt and blue jeans, red hat to match American flag in blue-black bedroom. Sister pauses to wipe off sweat, then goes on riding like a cowgirl on mechanical bull. You rub quick and hard getting off as Sister goes at it unflinchingly, perky breasts bouncing, aching. Then you wake, sweating profusely.

Far removed from the waking life (or so it seems), this dream is disturbing. Even more than the ones where Sister and her husband separate after 30 years of marriage, Sister who is supposed to be happily married. You recall the reality of your brother-in-law calling a family meeting with you and your siblings when you flew home to San Diego because Sister was dying, and how no one said anything when he coolly remarked that you all must have got the good genes while Sister had something missing, tapping his forehead on “loose screw.” How you were surprised and not surprised when he said she was on anti-depressants. And how your two older sisters criticized him for going to work rather than spend those precious final days with his dying wife. Maybe your Sister-sex-dream is not so far off from reality. Maybe she secretly desired to be free of her marriage at too young an age, maybe the dream reflected her true desires not yours, maybe they had problems you could not see in real-life but could only

detect under cover of night-dreams.

Sister steals your camper van and your Honda is missing too. There you go dreaming about cars again as you often do. Sister feels fine with her husband marrying her best friend; humanlike creatures are embedded in the street right outside your childhood home, wrapped in cellophane, but then they unwrap before your eyes. You try to close the garage door, but Sister pushes back and reassures you the creatures are harmless. You open the door, afraid the walking dead are hiding, holding your missing cat hostage.

Combination of Dream and Memory: Sister's husband really did marry her best friend sometime after her death; you saw Sister's former best friend at your nephew's wedding and the new wife pretended not to see you—would not look you in the eye (or was it you who avoided eye contact); you squirmed in your seat when you saw them sitting next to each other, wondering if they connected before your Sister's death or when it became clear she wasn't going to survive.

Papa tells you about an actor that woke up one day and decided he was simply tired of living. He then committed suicide. You wonder why he is telling you this, then he jumps off a cliff with you literally holding on to his coattails (as literally as can be in a dream).

You wake up in midflight with tears in your eyes and immediately get out of bed, pick up your smart phone, and Google “actor who said, ‘I’m tired of living,’” not knowing why you are compelled to do so. The name “George Henry Sanders” pops up and says that he was a British actor. You scroll down the Wikipedia page to the part about his final years and death, and the suicide note is brief:

“Dear World,

I am leaving because I am bored. I feel I have lived long enough.” Sanders suffered from dementia and depression in his final years from losing his wife, mother, and brother within the space of a year.

Real life Papa, who died of Cancer two years ago, once told you about this actor, though you forget the context, somehow your remembrance of this minor detail remains in your long-term memory, you see it as a true memory with perfect clarity. You knew what it meant when he'd pull the chair out from the dining room table that you had just vacated, that he was gesturing for you to sit back down and listen to his stories before beginning your day. Papa's prostate cancer spread to his vital organs because he refused to see the doctor and when he finally did it was too late; he said he couldn't complain, for he lived a good life and was ready to go. You would tell him (perhaps disingenuously), Don't say that Papa, shrugging away his nonchalance over death, knowing he like everyone else is supposed to die, you just don't want to believe his could be very soon. Was his seeming acceptance code for a real fear or sadness over his oncoming demise?

You know those recurring dreams related to waking reality? Like the one where you're searching for a toilet to pee, and when you finally find one and try urinating, nothing comes out and it hurts until you wake up and stream a bowl-

full of urine in the middle of the night?

Or how about those dreams about flying or just hovering near the ceiling above your bed? These kind of dreams are not them. Not Dreamory, but rather signals of urgent present need.

For these other familiar dreams, no matter how hard you try, you can't decide whether or not what feels like a memory was actually a dream or vice-versa. Dream and Memory intertwined like two love-making bodies, Dreamory.

Aren't all dreams familiar to the waking, analyzing brain to some degree? Are dreams meaningful to your actual lived life? Can they teach you something about yourself you would not learn otherwise? Do recurring dreams change each time they are analyzed thereby changing who you are and who you might be?

There exists an abundance of theories on dreams and what materials they consist of as well as how those materials work together. One theory—the self-organization theory of dream—claims that your sleeping brain can transform brain signals into a relatively continuous narrative during sleep. *Frontiers in Psychology* says on the subject that dreams reflect a “dreamer's physiological and psychological activities such as memory consolidation, emotion regulation, and reception of external stimuli.” This makes a lot of sense. When you reflect on them the next morning, dreams—though initially illogical—transform into a continuous narrative as you recall them and especially as you unfold their details to someone audibly. Further, dreams often reflect memories—those times when you can't tell between a true memory and a dream, thereby obscuring your understanding of reality. The self-organization theory of dreaming posits that dream content can contain important information about the dreamer. What is it you learn about yourself from dream?

Day Dreamory: While showering this morning, you felt an urgent need to pee, and you almost did right there under the flow of water from the showerhead, and you remember how when you and Sister—who was four years older than you--were little, that sometimes you showered together. You could not tell the difference between warm streaming water and warm streaming pee down your legs. You giggled and looked at each other's unflowered bodies; all was natural, and you were saving water by taking a shower at the same time. You seem to remember this was Papa's idea. You thought of Sister too, the other afternoon suddenly, the sound of her shaky voice over the phone when she found out she had lung cancer, the shaking of her leg at the ICU, head balding, haven't you recalled moments like these before, haven't you also dreamed about them in distorted form? You don't have as many dreams about dead Sister anymore. She died six years ago, and even then, you had grown so far apart (Were you ever really close?) mostly because you had left the religion that she was still so devout to (Jehovah's Witnesses); you didn't mourn for her as you had for Mama and then Papa. These dreams that you remember vividly, does this mean that somehow after all you do grieve?

Dreamory: Mama commanding us five children to line up in front of the fireplace as she holds a rolled up newspaper in her hand to feed the flames that she threatens will burn us all down with the house that she and Papa bought when you were a baby. Mama is angry about something, probably about Papa not going through with his baptism as a Jehovah's Witness, or over one of their arguments about religion. You are first in line, and Mama's face distorts into anguish, anger, sadness, and/or fear.

Another: Mama steps hard on the ankles of your two oldest sisters whom she ordered to lay down on their stomachs in the garage transformed into a sala. You have been tempted to ask your remaining siblings if they remember this happening, you could attempt to confirm whether or not these Dreamories occurred in the lived world, but you hesitate. Let them be, let them be Dreamory.