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# Strange and Beautiful Flower

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Strange and Beautiful Flower || **SAM COLRIDGE**

i keep having these fucked up dreams.

dreams of spinning. falling. crashing.

dreams of drowning.

gold tinted dreams of leaves changing color, and writing  
my name in piss on snow, and really good pizza- but when i  
finally went back east, home for winter break, i dreamed of  
oceans and neon lights and medical grade cannabis.

even when i dream of flying it's a series of uncontrollable  
bounds that get progressively higher, usually starting out at the  
basketball hoop of my elementary school playground, bounding  
over the hills of my suburb, and once, when i was lucky, all the  
way to the ocean, and at that point i'm two miles in the air and

falling and i spot a pier with a ferris wheel and wonder if it's Coney island or Santa Monica and when i hit the water it's cold but not wet and i wake up and think that it's my subconscious telling me to get the heater in my apartment fixed.

they say that people used to dream in black and white.

my dreams look like the dust illuminated by slants of sun shining through a bedroom window on a Sunday morning.

one dream that's happened twice is of a two lane stretch of highway 58 between Bakersfield and Barstow, and an oncoming semi that forgets to turn off his high beams, which floods my windshield with such intensity that i see nothing but white and follow the road on gut instinct for a second waiting for the truck to pass but end up swerving into it going seventy and that's when i wake up.

or this series of dreams set back in high school, but somehow it's populated mostly by people i've met since — as if the kids from high school that i haven't seen in years no longer register even in my subconscious. i'll be sitting in the cafeteria, joking around with people i've met in Stockton and Los Angeles and Las Vegas, and three tables down, i'll notice a face looking at me, a familiar face that i can't place a name to, and when i wake up i'll look through

my Facebook friends but still can't figure out who i was dreaming of.

i'll dream of ditching class and playing hacky sack with the kids i used to hack with who i know are now in jail or rehab, community college or working the same minimum wage job they did back then. in these dreams we are always in our teenage bodies, as if the past few years never happened, as if we were being given a chance to do them over, and were simply wasting it to get high and play hacky sack again.

an observation i once made is that every single kid i knew my freshman year of college who was any good at hacky sack has been kicked out of school already.

one night i realized i was dreaming while i was dreaming, but before i could fly or look at the dream stars or conjure up some hot girl to have dream sex with everything started spinning uncontrollably and i tried to hold on but i woke up and cursed.

and when i wake up it's like that feeling you get when you go to a movie theatre in the afternoon and watch whatever action blockbuster chick flick horror movie and you eat three quarters of the tub of popcorn and you pull that eighth grade yawn move to get your arms around the girl's shoulder and then the credits roll and you walk outside and it's completely dark- you know that feeling?

usually i wake up and i don't even know the

plot of what i've just seen—i just feel like i watched a tearjerker with someone i couldn't let myself cry in front of.

dreams of getting arrested - an amalgamation of the different times i've been in handcuffs in the back of a cop car, the cold plastic of the seat, the twinge in my wrists and elbows, the sneering white faces of the cops in the front running my info, neighborhood children waving at me from their front step, the resignation of my fate. but these dreams don't end with me being released on my recognizance, the petty possession charges dropped within a month - they end with me sitting in the cell, waiting, staring at the walls, and then the walls will start shifting, and flashing neon colors, and i close my eyes and then i wake up.

dreams of turbulence on an airplane. dreams of hurricanes.

i wake up and it's like how it feels going to a baseball game and keeping score and then when you go get hot dogs in between innings the line is too long and you miss a couple of at bats and give up and leave the rest of the card blank like it never happened.

after i first did mushrooms - sophomore year, fifteen years old, played a guitar for what felt like ten hours and then tried to eat it because it tasted like music—i started having these dreams where i was

someone else somewhere else completely, and when i woke up i couldn't remember anything at all but it would feel like i had been in that life for years and years and then been forcefully wrenched back into my miserable suburban existence. these dreams would recur every night and i would never remember the details or even the generalities but there was still some kind of consistency to them, as though i was continuing to live that other life, merely taking breaks to go to high school or work, and i started to believe halfheartedly that my dream world was real and my real world a dream—not quite an overt nightmare, but nothing pleasant either.

you ever notice how oldies stations when we were kids would play shit from the forties and fifties and now they play stuff from the sixties and seventies?

i wanna know have you ever seen the rain  
i think i'm dying  
everyone's dying  
i think there's something wrong with me  
there's something wrong with everybody  
i want to stop having these dreams  
just smoke more weed  
okay