

Text by Rhiannon Scray after William Wegman's "La Jolla Vista View"

Overlooking the *La Jolla Vista View*
after William Wegman

the church is so pretty. i wish i could go in. but they only let members enter.
do you believe in god?
he lifts the corner of his lips, shakes his head.
no. i don't believe in heaven or hell either.
me neither.
i kind of like that there's nothing after death.
this time, he frowns.
you're not upset by that? that there's nothing after this?
what's the point then? in a hundred years, no one will even remember us. it just
makes me wonder
why?
i think it's comforting.

he doesn't really understand what i mean. i can tell by the way he turns back toward the cliff. i
don't know what to say. so i do too. the city looks different now. or i guess i wouldn't know, i am
too young. but i have chosen to put my trust in the hands of the artist who, right underneath,
says *there is too much here* and *where are the trees going?* and *how can we possibly add more to this
world?*

a couple days later, we lay silent, side by side
i am a little distracted
by the brush of his fingers over mine
and the color of his eyes,

the same color as the art i took him to see,
with just a touch of green as if
the trees have come to life in his eyes
i have something weird to tell you
he says. his accent is thicker now
i listen carefully

he told me every time he imagined something, it would disappear. he noticed it when he was 7,
when his cousins wanted to continue playing Pirate Ship with Legos from the day before and it
suddenly didn't exist anymore. not that he couldn't remember it, he said, memories were
different. it was as if it wasn't real, which... it wasn't. but when you're a kid, your imagination
feels real, and for the moment it is. it's more real than taxes and jobs and school. your
imagination is in your head and that's where you are and so it's real to you. but he told me this
wasn't true for him. that it was real in the moment and gone the next day.

so now i wonder
does this mean that tomorrow he won't remember us?
i know it's different, actual events from imagined events but
what about feelings?
feelings aren't a real, tangible thing either
feelings are in that in between space
not quite physical but not quite imagined.

(is this all a dream for him?)

in 2 months, these moments will pass a threshold
one that moves me farther from him with each passing second until eventually
it will be longer without me than with me
and it will always
always
be less than everything else

(where do i go?)

he told me that he didn't like forgetting what he imagined
so he did this thing
created an alternate world, he called it,
where everything he did that wasn't real-
stories, movies, books, imagined pirate ships-
had a place
everything he did, he had to think
about how it related to that first story he created

as a kid he read harry potter
(in french of course)
and he liked it so much that the alternate world became hogwarts
(with pirates i guess)

(does he like me enough?)

i cannot imagine what it's like
for what you imagine to not be real
i know
i know

it didn't happen *to* you
but it happened *in* you
and who's to say that's not something?

(you apparently, for you it's not enough.)

and all these things are in one place for me

feelings and dreams and imagination and memories and art and moments

moments like standing on a cliff
overlooking the *La Jolla Vista View*
and walking into the eucalyptus trees
while the heady scent of lemongrass
keeps you tethered

moments that are shared-
watching the clouds snuggle up to the sun,
the church standing tall, demanding attention,
a million possibilities, hiding in trees and fences and walkways
entire worlds depicted with just a few, simple black lines

everything in the city is there-
almost everything.
one tiny dot is missing,
one barely visible in the skyline

 this is our shared moment
 looking out at art
 underneath more art

we are imagining the same moment in that tiny dot
where we first met,
and for the first time i understood
what it meant for the stars to align

(will this moment fade too?)

 you said it's real, it happened, if you can put it in this alternate place

 moments aren't imagination
 moments aren't imagination
 moments aren't imagination

if you re-imagine something, which side of the line does it fall?
if you re-imagined a moment, does it disappear too?

(if you re-imagined us
would we disappear?)

moments aren't imagination

but moments are made of feelings
and moments exist in dreams
and moments live in memories
and moments *are* art

and moments can be imagined

so now i wonder if the next time
lemongrass floats through the air
he will think of me
and remember how i smiled at
all his mispronunciations,
how he teased me for feeling nervous,
and the way his eyes held mine.

i wonder if he will re-imagine
our first kiss, just beyond that cliff,
on an old, stone bench
in the midst of the eucalyptus grove

i wonder which i will be
a permanent resident of that alternate world,
or just a faraway dream of something that didn't happen

 imagine
he says
 imagine being 70 or 80 years old
 and suddenly waking up
 and not remembering your life
 good or bad, you just don't remember.
 that's what i think death is going to be like.

 i don't understand
he shrugs
 it's the same as imagining
 the next day it isn't real
 life is like that
 one day you wake up, or don't i guess, and
 it isn't real anymore
 it doesn't matter
do you really think that? that life
doesn't matter when we die?
 of course. we're not there to make it matter anymore

i don't know what to say.
so i lay there and imagine
what it would be like to wake up
and not remember standing on a cliff
looking down at line intersecting line
until an image forms-
one that includes our love story
in between soft strokes of a brush,
hiding behind spring greenery,
tucked safely into a building
you almost can't see.

is he right?
does that moment die
when we die?

i want to believe that is the point of *La Jolla Vista View*.
maybe it's selfish
to think this piece is here to capture these moments,
to capture us,
before he is gone-
but maybe it's not just us.
maybe the artist shared a moment with someone too
someone who couldn't seem to grasp onto things the way others could
and maybe he couldn't find the line between real and imagination either
so he moved moment from feeling to dream to memory to art
so that it would never not be real

(not just a comment
on urban sprawl but
a delicate piece of metal
meant to rest
at your fingertips,
holding a string of moments,
waiting for the touch
of the next imaginist.)

when you first told me this, i was fascinated, enthralled
how strange, for a mind to not hold onto imagination,
tell me more

(and now all i can imagine
is not being imagined)

please, tell me

if our moments are imagined

are they not then real for you?

will you reimagine me?

will i have a place in you?

will you visit me there?

when we are worlds apart,

if we cannot be real

can we at least be imagined?