

10/20/20

My Friends Talk in My Ears

I woke up to the sound of him cackling and then coughing. Familiar waxy feeling, thick feeling in the ears. Ear canal. Right earbud shoved in harder than the left, I slept on my right, I guess. They must have been talking to me all night, I guess. I can't decipher what they're saying, but I'm too heavy to pull them out, but it's too bright to go back to sleep, but I need to get up, so I pull out each earpod with a wet pop and my ears feel a familiar empty ache.

Women talk about the empty ache, the hole, they feel inside of them when a man pulls out and they are left spread open. My ears. My ears feel similarly to that, when they are empty. And I hear a ringing.

A ringing. It's not bad, it's pleasant and it keeps the silence from becoming threatening. One time a boy I knew heard a truck siren blaring in the road outside the room and he turned to me and said, confidently, *D minor*. The truck was blaring a D minor note. What note is this ringing? I wish he were here to tell me but then again I'm not sure if he would hear the ringing too.

Where am I? I'm still in my bed. I'm still so heavy and sweaty and safe. I know there's something. I need to get up. It's so cold, I need socks. It's so cold.

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I'm in the other room. The kitchen room. I need to drink something, because I feel terrible. The water is too cold so I stick it in the microwave and then I take it out and I drink it and the warm tap water tastes like metal and I lean into the ringing and all's well.

It's still dark and I sit down on the floor and drink more tap water. This time, I turn the tap on hot so I don't have to microwave it. I'm learning, I think. Look, I'm drinking water in the morning. I'm growing, I'm getting older.

At a certain point I start having a conversation with myself, it is nice. I make up a joke and I imagine telling it to him and I imagine him telling me it is bad and then I imagine him telling me a better joke. They're good jokes, the ones I make up, I pull out my phone to write them down, I open it, I realize that I listened to 14 podcasts in a row last night.

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I like ones where there are two very good friends who talk to one another. It's clear when they are real friends and when they are not, I like it when they're real. I also like ones where they tell you how to breathe. I breathed wrong for such a long time, and now I breathe so well. In through the nose, out through the mouth. In through the ears. Too.

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It's noon already which I didn't realize because I completely blacked out. This is happening more often now which is probably bad but also I don't care. I'm listening to the sound of voices, I must have put on a podcast this morning before I blacked out. I realize now that I felt terrible this morning because I did a lot of drugs last night and also didn't eat dinner. I had a late lunch, but I really should have probably eaten dinner considering I got incredibly high. I need to be more responsible about these things, probably.

The sound of the voices. I'm not wearing headphones so I must have put it on the speaker, I should turn the volume down, but I'm so tired. If I can't make it quiet I may as well listen. It's two men and they are talking about something being adjacent to something else. They then discuss how it is also post-something. It is a commentary on something, but ultimately also something in and of itself. They must have said what they were talking about before I started paying attention, and I wish I knew what it was. But they move on and start talking about their mutual friend before I can figure it out.

Trying to figure out what they were talking about makes me tired, so I go back to bed.

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I wake up to the sound of moaning. I walk out into the kitchen room. He's on the floor, naked, splayed out. He's wearing a full face of makeup, though. When he sees me he gets on his knees and looks up at me and lets his arms fall to the side with his palms out, like an offering. I should take the moment in but I realize I've already spoken, I already told him, *I'm sorry but I just really can't handle this right now.*

The cold floor of the kitchen room is on my knees and I'm naked. I still hear moaning. I take the earphones out of my ears, thick salt water foams out with it. It soaks the ends of my hair, which is frustrating because now I am going to have to take another shower. The water subsides and I go back into my room and crawl back into my bed. It's only 11:30 and I really shouldn't have to deal with this.

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It's another morning, maybe it followed the previous night but I won't claim to know. I take my water out of the microwave and try to drink it but it's salty. Seawater. I give up.

I hear the talking. Now it's two women, which is a nice change. I like hearing women talk because it reminds me that I am actually not the only woman, which is a difficult thing to remember, sometimes. They are talking about something being derivative of something else, and something being a copy of something else, and something fitting squarely within the contextual paradigms of something else. I don't have to deal with this, I go to my speaker, I press the off button but water begins pouring out of the little sound holes in the speaker and the talking continues.

Suddenly the two women are talking to him, and that's not fair because I was just about to turn it off and now he's shown up and I can't turn it off. He's talking about music, and about how talking is it's own kind of music. I want him to die so badly that I fall down.

The talking is even louder from the floor, it's coming up through the cracks in the linoleum. I could get up on the counter but that would take too much work. I just lie there and let him talk.

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He's talking about how talking is it's own kind of music, and he tells the two women he is going to show an example. And then he starts to spit and choke, and I hear bubbling. The two women are silent, maybe they weren't even there. I can't move, I'm so heavy, the ground is so cold and it sticks to me like a wet shirt, and he's drowning, which is good.

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When he finally shows up at the kitchen door, I am not surprised. He tells me that he has something very important he needs to tell me. So I get up and I walk to the door and I even open the door as well.

And a wall of salt water crashes through the door. It floods.

End.