

Imagine there is a death. But there is no end.

In 2007, my mother died: an unusual death, an untimely death, a freak accident. She choked on a piece of meat. The loss of my mother shifted me, pushed me off center, askew to a world faithfully oriented around the family; a purity of love embodied in the identity of a mother and mine was gone, forever. Death signifies an end. But the death of a loved one lives forever in a perpetual state of undead: we are desperate to keep them alive in memories, in hope, in sadness, in joy, in longing, in despair, in loneliness.

In 1997, there was another death: the death of an assumed identity, a prescribed identity, a dominant identity that began to subjugate me. I felt the determination of identity forcing its way down my throat and I refused to swallow. It lodged itself in my throat and began to suffocate me, constrict my voice, asphyxiate my life, so I killed it and informed my family without any sorrow. This death also shifted me, pushed me off center, askew to a world faithfully oriented around the family; a purity of love determined and embodied in the identity of a heteronormative family disrupted, forever.

The ghostly residue of the dead, it lingers. The death of a mother, the death of an identity, the death of a family; they all linger, waiting. Do they linger in wait for us to visit them again in moments of longing, to resurrect in the inebriation of memory, to suspend in a perpetual state of undead; a unifying space where the living and the dead become one, caught in an existence that is half alive and half dead; unable to fall, to fall apart in order to create a new certainty falling into place? No, it is the living who refuse to let the dead dissolve completely into death.

This space of the undead, where we keep the dead alive, where is it located? Is it beyond the horizon that my eyes fixate on to keep me grounded? Situated in bodies of water with unseeable depth? Atop balconies that beckon us to fall? Or is it located in the act of orientation, in the effect of inhabitation, fixated within the richest junctures where everything aligns momentary, in perfect unison, to mean the same thing?

I watch these reels from my childhood, of old family footage, looking for something: the route of death; searching for clues, glimpses of queerness, disturbances of identity, deviations from a prescribed love, points of pressure rupturing from a representation of love that now feels empty.

The refracting light of the sun that cuts through and disrupts a moving portrait of my mother and father standing side by side for the camera, as the ideal couple, becomes proof of a queer cosmos. These points of pressure fracture into a comfort found in breaking apart, in the death of horizons.

I return to these projections of family also seeking something else: life, a certain slant of light that I have known to be my mother. These remains of a life, now slighted, form tenuous connections of intimacy. They create additional points of pressure that rupture inside of me. If there is comfort found in disruption, deviation, breaking apart, and falling, then there is comfort here too: in the collapse of horizons, in the disorientation of free fall, in the bottomless abyss of the sea, and in the death of my mother.

A free fall continually suspended by a grounded memory. My memories become shelves, architecture for the dead to reside. Feelings remain abstract and in flux, transitional and unstable; but the details of my location in space and time, my points of orientation to the

physical world, are inescapable.

I remember dates, times, smells, a bat landing on my head, an aging enchantress wearing an infinity necklace reading my future on strange cards that I have never before seen— odd occurrences that now seem like premonitions of death. I recall my precise locations, the distinct direction I am facing the world, details of manmade designs, and the omnipresence of horizons and bodies of water—a lake eighteen years ago; a river eight years ago. Why is it that during these moments of death, I stand atop ledges that play with our fascination of falling? I am beckoned into free fall but, instead, I create steps with these housed memories within tiered shelves, a grounding in familiar objects, architecture I can grasp; all of it to prevent disorientation.

Infinite. Infinity. A loop that crosses over, twists and folds over itself in an attempt to touch the line that came before. Perhaps believing it is creating a new line but finds itself back where it started. Infinite affinity.

I have used my memories to conjure magic once, in an attempt to raise the dead. You were lodged deeply in a state of unconsciousness, where we imagine time, space, orientations, objects, and others no longer exist, suspended in an unreachable realm of unfathomable depth. I searched my memories for all the worldly things that brought you joy, all the things you had once loved that would now entice your senses back into this world of relations: your favorite roses, hand-picked by your expert hands, from one hundred and fifty different varieties; the song you danced to in the arms of your first and only lasting love, spinning you around in love-bound circles as it sang how wonderful you looked tonight. I brought these temporal artifacts to you as offerings and incantations, gathering them around you as we gather around tables to form bonds of family, of friendship, of community.

Your body figures a tabletop to arrange a still life of memories, compositions in sounds, whispers, touches, and caresses, embodied in wilting flowers, near empty hourglasses, and buttery masses of fat alongside sea creatures who have lost their way home. They congregate in ever-shifting formations to steady the horizon and prevent you from quivering into a maze of collapsing memories.

The complexity of my emotions begins to gather as well, infinite and disparate, creating disturbances and deviations in their inability to align with the horizon of constructed memories. The slippage of emotions allows the moments of disorientation to gather in their place, as if they were queer bodies around a different table, a table that propels us to face a different way, away from the rupturing horizon. Without a stable paradigm of orientation, grounding becomes an illusion; relative positions of above and below, before and after, oneself and others no longer exist: boundaries collapse into free fall. And it is here, in falling, in liminal space, where perspectives twist and fold into one another, that I understand death and life to be the same.

I will show you death deviant from a world stabilized by horizons, fracturing from the dark mass of your body positioned between rays of light and the grounded surface: the shadow you trail behind you at every morning rise and the hazy absence of transparency

rising to meet you at every evening set. I will show you death in the quietus of identity, the disfiguring of family, and the eternal rest of a mother, collapsed in infinite reciprocity. I will show you death in the multiplicity of dust.

Narrated text for Johanna Breiding's essay film, *Andrea*, by Jennifer Moon

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Screen by Hito Steyerl