

Waves

Echoes in The Sea

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Prologue

A wave is a disturbance or oscillation that transfers energy from one point to another. If we are talking about the building blocks of reality, these pieces of energy can behave like particles or waves depending on the observer.

But the waves or echoes you are about to read, dear reader, cannot be rationalized. There is no math to explain them. The only way to understand them is by experiencing them.

This is a meta-anthology or an attempt, if you will.

Introduction

elu hira?

Aeon

his words meant to land softly, without a splash.

nua ala

Maga

she replied

hira lye mir sel

Aeon

he spoke, eyes fixed on the frame where time once lived

hira, nua ala

Maga

There was a stammer in her breath, but the words stood firm once they left her lips.

I Still Do

It was late in the afternoon. The sunset lingered. My mother was lying in bed, agonizing. For a moment, I was at peace.

How things quickly fall apart

Maga

a voice echoed in her head

Mother started to gasp. It seemed the end was near. Mother made a signal. I figured she wanted me to get closer.

You are the reason why I was never happy with my life

Mother

each word clawed its way out, starved for air, half-formed but determined

That was it.

It wasn't a storm that hit me.

No.

Saying it was the worst doesn't pay tribute to what I actually felt.

No.

We are talking about a woman who was never happy with her life. All her decisions were made not by her.

She never said she loved me. She physically abused me all my life. To this day I don't understand why she had kids in the first place.

She never loved my father. She even kicked him out of our paper-thin walls of a house we lived in.

But none of that mattered in the moment. At that moment, I realized I needed to love her. All the pain, all the struggle, all the trauma, it didn't matter. It is said that it is so special when you find a person you can be yourself with.

All broken but I was myself

Maga

It is a truth the writer wears beneath the skin, steady and unshaken, don't you?

I loved her. I still do.

Who Deserves Better

Mom, why you and dad are getting a divorce?

Maga

her voice a trembling thread of innocence, woven with worry for the one she loved

What do you mean why? Are you stupid?

Mom

cried out knowing the fault was not hers.

It's all your fault. Your dad is leaving me because of you.

Mom

*went on, her words steeped in hatred for all things, knowing deep within that she was
the one truly cast aside*

His eyes were so obvious. I felt his pity. He was probably wondering how I have managed to live this far.

Is it over already?

Maga

thought while checking the clock

When did your Mom say that?

Therapist

asked with caution

I think I was 9 years old

Maga

Is there anything else?
Therapist
said knowing there was more

There's always a moment.
One moment.
One question.
You think you can dodge it, dance around it, talk your way past it.
I tried. For a long time, I tried.
But now I'm here.
No more running.
No more pretending.

Maga, is there anything else?
Therapist
pressed once more, certain we had arrived, certain I was ready

Yes
Maga
cried out

There.
I was in it.
The moment I'd been avoiding.
The words burned on my tongue, the same ones my mom once gave me.
Time stopped.
The pain did not.
It stretched on, endless, as if the universe itself had forgotten how to move forward.
I looked at him.
And for just a moment, I let myself fall backward into memories.

You know what I realized?
Mom
gathered her next words, each heavy with the weight of her sorrow

You are the accident for people who deserve better

Mom

spoke as if tearing herself apart with every word

You know what happens when two black holes collide?

The tearing isn't neat. It isn't clean. It's violent, so violent that the ripples tear across the fabric of the cosmos, breaking anything they touch.

But not those words.

Not even.

Those words didn't break.

They lodged themselves inside me, immovable, eternal.

Honey, how was therapy today?

Husband

asked, a fragile hope threading through his words

I kissed him hello. And somehow, through his eyes, I finally understood. The words I'd once read made sense now.

The less forgivable the act, the more must be forgiven. The less lovable the person is, the more you must find the means to love them

I forgave her.

I forgave myself.

I love you my Mom, always.

Take My Picture

*How much am I good for you if you won't believe?
How much can one heart do as the second leaves?*

Sin Cos Tan - Sooner Than Now

*music in the air, soft and deliberate, like the unseen hand guiding a masterful
photographer's lens*

Turn your head right

Photographer

uttered with a weight of silent verdicts

I let the music settle into me, whispering against my bones. I didn't know the band, not their faces, not their story, but the words fit, somehow. Like makeup pulled over my skin.

Modeling had never been mine.

I was always hungry.

Always reaching. But Mother... for once, that was enough.

*Today session was good. Please, smile more. You embarrass me in front
of John*

Mother

spoken in a note of disapproval, stitched into the hum of the starting car

Yes, mom

Maga

said with the hollow breath of someone who no longer believed in language

For as long as I can recall, modeling had been my life.
Not a choice.
Friends? I had them, sure. Faces that smiled wide for the cameras, voices that spoke in polished glass.
But truth be told?
Truth didn't survive long in a world where reflection mattered more than reality.

Yes, mom

Maga

words sent out into the world, untethered from any true knowing

Boyfriends? Sure.
They loved the skin, the smile, the body molded by a thousand camera flashes.
Not me.
Sometimes I caught my own reflection and stared (really stared) and wondered who that stranger was, trapped behind the glass.

Yes, mom

Maga

spoke with a breath barely stitched together, a thread of hopelessness unraveling into the air

Mother's phone rang, sharp and shrill against the silence.
Father.
Maybe the only person who ever truly loved me—but love alone wasn't enough. Not when faced with her.
They were fighting again. Of course they were.
It had been years now, the same tired war fought.
I was nearly nineteen. Old enough to see the cracks too deep to mend.
This time, I thought, it might finally be over.

You, WHAT? Daniel, what are you saying? DIVORCE? NO, DANIEL.

I won't talk about this. THIS IS BULLSHIT

Mother

words flung in fury, though deep down, she knew the war was lost

Father hung up.
Mother stared at the road ahead, then snapped, words spilling out, sharp and senseless, like broken glass.

He'd finally done it. Walked away.
Part of me felt pride. At least one of us had made it out of this shithole.
Mother... she was never a good driver.
A walking cliché, and the rage twisting through her now wasn't going to help.
Our world shifted.
I blinked.
The ringing in my ears was a living thing.
The car had stopped but not by choice.
Twisting, I caught sight of her.
Blood.
And for the first time in my life, I saw her crying.

*Did you know your grandma was never satisfied with my life decisions?
Everything I did was never enough for her?*

Mother

whispered through ragged breaths, torn between agony and release

I hated her all my life.

Mother

said with the fragile weight of final words

I remembered.
No one had ever been good enough for Grandma.
Not for her, not for anyone.
I glanced around, the wreckage, the twisted metal, the bleeding woman beside me.
We'd survive this. Somehow.
But as I looked at my mother, small and broken in a way I'd never seen before, a
thought popped in my battered mind.
The cycle has to end.
And it will end with me.

Would you forgive me?

Mother

cried out

You have done nothing wrong, mom.

Maga

*spoke in a voice so soft, so calm, it carried the weight of truth and the quiet mercy of
forgiveness*

Her Wedding

You are going to make it about yourself, Mom, right?

Maga

meant to keep the words caged in thought, but they slipped from her lips

Pardon me, love?

Fiancé

spoke, his voice trembling between confusion and worry

Oh, I'm sorry. I thought I was in my head

Maga

answered with a careful breath

Yeah but what was that?

Fiancé

spoke, still confused

You know, my mom is going to make my wedding about her

Maga

sighed, a soft surrender

Ah love... Sure she means well

Fiancé

answered with a knowing calm, as if her unspoken meaning had long lived within him

How you do it?

Maga

asked with the sense of knowing how fortunate she is

What do you mean?

Fiancé

a bit confused

Yeah, how you do it? How do you always see the good in people?

Maga

a bit rhetoric

I dunno... I guess things are complex, you know?

Fiancé

doubtful of his own thoughts

It's hard for me to believe in evil doing

Fiancé

spoke, simple smile

There you are! Your mother is looking for you like crazy

Wedding Planner

barely keeping it together

Here. We. Go.

Maga

knowing the hell is about to unleash upon her shoulders

Why are the Johnsons not in table 9?

Mother

said very judgemental

'Cuz...
Wedding Planner
barely spoke

Doesn't matter. Make it happen
Mother
demanded

*While you are it. I need to move two tables. The Wayans and The
Jefferson are very important and influential families.*
Mother
continue demanding

Why are you so calm?
Mother
spoke

Sigh... Never mind.
Mother
sighed

*I can't believe how much work I had to do to make this wedding even
happen.*
Mother
monologuing

Shut up
Maga
thought

*Honestly, if it weren't for me, there would be no wedding worth
attending.*
Mother
...

Shut up
Maga
thought

I handpicked the venue, I selected the menu, because let's face it, my daughter has no real taste, and don't even get me started on the guest list.

Mother

...

Shut up
Maga
thought

My friends deserved to be there. Half of these people showed up because of me, not her.

Mother

...

Shut up
Maga
thought

Everyone kept coming up to me, telling me how stunning everything looked, how beautiful the arrangements were, how they could feel the love, as if I didn't orchestrate every detail.

Mother

...

Shut up
Maga
thought

I basically saved her from embarrassment.

Mother

...

Shut up

Maga
thought

*Her dress? My choice. Her makeup? Thank God I intervened, she
would've looked like a washed-out little girl without me.*

Mother

...

Shut up

Maga
thought

*Honestly, when she walked down that aisle, all I could think was: Look
at what I created. Look at the masterpiece I made. This day, let's be
honest, is as much about me as it is about her. Maybe even more. It's
my legacy walking down that aisle. Everyone saw it. Everyone knew it.
They were applauding me too, whether they admitted it or not.*

Mother

was there any air left in the atmosphere?

Shut up

Maga
thought

Oh dear lord in Heaven! Damian that tie, no!

Mother

shouted

No, shut up. SHUT UP. SHUT THE FUCK UP, MOM!

Maga

yelled, a storm breaking from a sky that could no longer hold its rage

*This is my goddamned wedding. And this is my fucking husband. Get it
to your head!*

Maga

said

Sigh, whatever. I have other important things to attend

Mother

said very dismissive

...

Maga

*swallowed her words, tasting the bitterness of their futility, knowing some battles are
lost before they are ever spoken*

Come here, love

Fiancé

said calmly

I love you, Damian.

I really do.

Maga

cried out, hoping to crack the silence of the universe wide open

No, Sweety, That's Wrong

Maga sat on a bench beneath a tree whose branches clawed upward like fingers begging the sky for answers. Leaves whispered with the secrets of strangers. Children screamed with abandon. Lovers clung like ivy.

And yet, she sat alone.

Not lonely. Just... unaccompanied by noise that wasn't her own.

She watched them all with the same question in her chest: *How do they know what they want?*

It had been the quiet refrain of her life.

While others chased careers, craved families, clung to partners like buoys in turbulent seas, Maga drifted, untouched by the same storms.

She didn't fear love. She just... hadn't found a shape in the world that fit her shadow. A way to want what others seemed born wanting.

Then, a voice cracked the silence beside her.

Hi, Sweety. Do you mind if I sit here with ya?

Old Lady

said with the sweetest voice ever

Maga blinked, turning toward the voice.

Something about her presence severed time.

Memories, long buried, surged.

She nodded, wordless, as the old lady eased herself down.

You know, this is probably obvious to you, anyway, but they say you can trace back all your personality to your childhood.

Maga

spoke, her voice drifted like autumn leaves, soft, sorrowful, fading

*As far as I can tell, my childhood was fine but I wonder if I'm deluding
myself*
Maga
spoke, doubtful

After all, that's point right? To repress whatever allows you to survive
Maga
...

Old lady searched her bag for candy while listening.

Amazing, you know?
Maga
...

Old lady nodded slowly, as if the truth had landed gently and she welcomed its weight.

*I'm here with you already finding thousand reasons why it was not my
parents' fault*
Maga
...

Old lady raised her eyebrow, not in judgment, but in knowing she'd heard that note before.

I mean, I loved them, I really do but it's like I'm trying to protect them
Maga
sighed

*Which it's funny in itself 'cuz I'm the daughter, shouldn't be the other
way around?*
Maga
said like grasping for some truth

I'm having these feelings but I can't name them. What's that?

Maga

said, desperation laced her voice

The Old lady knew this tale. Not from books. Not from rumor. From something deeper. Perhaps a dream once dreamt so vividly it had stained the soul. Perhaps a life already lived.

But she said nothing.

Some truths are best kept wrapped in silence. Not out of fear but because revealing them too soon can shift the balance of a story still unfolding, at least the writer, he, for one, believes.

I've never found men interesting in enough to pursue a relationship.

*But was it because I'm not worthy or
because I'm not interested in love?*

You know?

Maga

...

*You know what? The same is with my career... I still don't know what I
want. Did you know what you wanted?*

Maga

said, rhetorically knowing probably she knew

Old lady laughed softly, for she knew the strange comfort in being uncertain.

*Life would be so simple I can just blame it on my the depression
but we both know ain't isn't so*

Maga

...

Old lady chuckled.

*Sometimes I wish to end it all...
But to my luck, there is a cosmic joke at the end of the tunnel...
asking me to make a choice*

Maga

...

*But I'm grateful. I have such a wonderful life despite all I have said. I
love my mom and she loves me very much*

Maga

gratitude bloomed in her tone

Old lady finally spoke her mind.

*Oh Sweetie, surely you love your mom. But you are who you are until
you are not, right?*

Old Lady

...

Suddenly, Maga drifted.

Not with her body, but with that quiet slip of mind that came when memory struck.
The park, the birds, the old woman beside her, faded into the edges of her awareness
like watercolor in rain.

She was small again. Eight, maybe nine.

A party.

Laughter.

Friends.

Boys.

The first real moment, she thought, of belonging, of choosing, of being.

After all, anger is the oldest of emotion. The right emotion to survive...

And yet, her mother's answer was a solid no.

Not a violent one, but unmoving all the same.

No, Sweetie, that's wrong.

Mother

said, voice soft but firm

The words weren't cruel.

They were just... final.

Maga hadn't known what to do with that. Not then. A heat had risen in her chest, unfamiliar, tightening her throat. The world had shifted slightly. As if something inside her had cracked, not broken.

Something sharp.

Anger.

Not the childish tantrum kind. No. This was quieter. Older.

The moment passed, as such moments do. But it stayed with Maga, like a stone dropped in deep water.

And the rest, as they say, was history.

But Maga, sitting now, older, wiser, and still uncertain, wondered if it was her history... or just the beginning of her mother's echo living on in her.

A Cigarette After Sex

Maga stood before the long mirror. Her studio smelled faintly of lavender oil and varnish. She dabbed a smudge of charcoal from her cheek, though it left a faint shadow behind. Like most things worth having, perfection was an illusion.

Tonight was the exhibition.

Tonight the world would see what she had made of herself.

She moved to her wardrobe. No armor of extravagance tonight. Only herself and the truth she'd painted.

As she fastened a thin silver chain around her neck, her gaze wandered. A Cigarette After Sex, still wrapped in linen. The name lingered in her mind, sour and sweet all at once. Like the taste of regret you chose to savor.

Will anyone get it?

Maga

thought to herself knowing no one will pay attention

She paused, studying her reflection.

The successful artist, the composed woman.

The mask fit well.

Too well.

They'll think it's about romance

Maga

said, laughing softly under her breath

Or addiction. Maybe even rebellion.

Maga

sighed

Maga stepped toward the door, slipping her heels on with practiced ease.

*You can't understand the cigarette, until you've already lit it, knowing
full well it'll destroy you... and choosing to inhale anyway.*

Maga
whispered

She checked out the clock. Time to go.

The gallery was full of life. Faces here and there of the city's collectors, critics, and admirers.

Maga moved among them smiling, nodding, answering questions about brushwork and inspiration. She laughed when expected, tilted her head thoughtfully when praised, and thanked the ones who tried, poorly, to impress her with their interpretations.

People spoke of color. Of form. Of the vitality in her landscapes, the playfulness in her portraits. People loved what was easy to love.

And all the while, her mind wandered.

When?

Maga

...

Back. Way back.

Back to the rear wall of the gallery, to the solitary canvas hung there alone, lit by a single, narrow beam of light, as if the painting itself exiled its surroundings.

A Cigarette After Sex.

No one mentioned it.

No one even glanced that way.

Not one of them wanted to understand the wound she'd chosen to bare.

She gasped.

A man. Alone.

Back. Way back.

She approached him quietly, unwilling to break the stillness he had created.

Would you mind telling me the process behind this one?

Man in the back

said, voice low, without pretense, eyes didn't leave the canvas

No arrogance.
No expectation.
Only... curiosity.
A rare, sacred thing, she thought.

*You know there's a kind of beauty in something that chooses to end
itself.*

Maga

...

She nodded toward the cigarette painted between delicate fingers, the only splash of color in an otherwise desaturated world.

*We think of destruction as something sudden. Violent. Final. But real
destruction... Real destruction is slow. It's patient. It isn't a strike, it's
a whisper. A single choice, small enough to seem harmless. Made
again. And again. Until it becomes a rhythm you don't even notice.*

Maga

...

*We don't set out to ruin ourselves. No one wakes up one morning and
says today I will carve away my worth, one piece at a time.*

Maga

...

She smiled then, not bitterly, not sadly. Softly. As if forgiving a mistake she still could not stop making.

*No. We do it because, for a moment... it feels like control. Like
defiance. Like proof that this body, this soul, still belongs to us, even if
all we can do with it is burn it slowly away.*

Maga

...

*The cigarette knows. It knows it's killing you. You know it too. And still
you press it to your lips and inhale, savoring the destruction because, in
that instant, the world finally makes a terrible, perfect kind of sense.*

Maga

...

Maga turned then, meeting his eyes.

*We call it weakness, self-hatred. Some days, maybe that's true. Other
days, I wonder if it's just... the last stubborn act of someone who
refuses to vanish quietly*

Maga

...

Maga dropped her voice to a murmur, a confession meant only for those willing to hear.

*To hurt yourself is, in some small way, to admit you're still worth the
effort*

Maga

...

Seeking Shelter

It was a simple afternoon.

No omens.

No song.

Certainly, no angels.

Only the cry of Maga echoing against indifferent walls, nay, indifferent mother. A mother that was more worried about letting others know she just became a mom, like a child showing off its new toy.

The title gave her meaning, perhaps more meaning than the life she was now responsible for. She was fond of the idea of motherhood, but not of Maga, nope. Not really. Love came, but wrapped in conditions, weighed down by expectations. Every gesture had a price, every hug a hidden cost.

Maga was a child of curiosity, experimentation. The things she yearned for were often declared off-limits. Affection. Freedom. Even silence. Her world was a room of *don't* and *can't* of closed doors and sharper looks. Her mind became like a hall of mirrors, every decision multiplied, warped, distorted by anxiety.

Too many voices.

Too many what-ifs.

Too many exits.

All of them wrong.

And then came the hands.

The ones that didn't ask.

The ones that took.

The ones that laughed while taking.

She lost her virginity not as a choice, but as a theft. She bled and didn't cry. She tried to tell someone once. They told her not to make such a fuss.

After that, the boyfriends came like summer storms. Loud, violent, and always promising sunshine afterward. But love was never the reward. Only bruises. Only the feeling of being used up like a candle buried in ice, needing fire just to remember it once burned.

Maga gave away her body. She hoped someone might find her soul buried in there. No. No one did.

Promiscuity isn't always pleasure. Sometimes it's a search. Sometimes it's a scream. Even in the echoing nights when her body trembled for no reason at all, she believed something might still come.

Something kind.

Something whole.

Something *true*.

She studied the mind, the human spirit. Not out of altruism, but as an expedition into the ruins of herself. She thought if she understood others, she might understand the thing inside her that always felt broken. But her focus drifted. She read the books, memorized the methods, asked the questions *but rarely listened to the answers*.

A retreat arrived. A mountain cloaked in fog. Trees like ancient sentinels. Time slowed there. Or maybe it didn't matter.

That's where she met him.

Him.

The Guru.

His presence was not loud, not commanding. It was something quieter. The silence you notice after the storm. When he spoke, her mind went still.

You wear calmness like a finely painted veil, yet I wonder. Is it but a portrait, a reflection crafted for the world, and not the soul beneath?

The Guru

said fully aware his words were echoes in the sea

She chuckled. A soft, painful laugh because he was right.

There is a forest. There is a storm, fierce, unrelenting.

The Guru

continues

*The rain births a waterfall from the sky itself. Creatures flee, seeking
shelter, trembling beneath the roaring heavens.*

The Guru

*said while he moved his arms with practiced grace, guiding us through the rites of
space*

All but one: a bird.

The Guru

..

*The bird bathes in the downpour, untroubled. It could fly away. It could
seek refuge. But it knows*

The Guru

...

The choice is an illusion.

The Guru

...

*It chooses yes but not from fear nor from hope. It simply chooses to be.
And in doing so, it embraces the oldest wisdom*

The Guru

...

*There is always a third path,
the path of no choosing,
the path of **simply living***

Epilogue

Sometimes I wonder what is worse: death, or eternity.

It's the kind of question that feels clever the first time you think it. But the more you hold it, the heavier it gets. The blade dulls not from use, but from truth.

I used to believe eternity was the prize. The reward. Heroes seek it. Gods wear it like a mantle. Poets ache for it. But they don't understand. They chase permanence like children chasing butterflies, not realizing that some things, once caught, stop fluttering.

I have lived long. Long enough to forget how many years I have wandered. And here's the thing no story tells you:

Infinity is not a gift. It is a mirror.

And the longer you stare, the more it reflects not who you are, but who you were trying not to become.

Because given enough time, the thrill fades. The mystery unwinds. You see every star, drink every wine, love and lose and love again, nothing breaks like a heart. You watch civilizations rise, not with pride, but with detached curiosity, like watching sandcastles built by strangers you've already grieved.

Death, by contrast, has an edge. A finality. It gives shape to the hours. A man running out of time is a man who chooses. Who feels. But eternity? Eternity doesn't sharpen you. It wears you smooth.

I came to a conclusion:

Death is better than eternity.

Not because I wanted to die. Not even because I feared unending time. But because I had learned the secret that all immortals come to know:

In the end, all we ever wanted was to be surprised.

Not to know.

Not to endure.

To be startled by the beauty of a sunrise we didn't expect.

To be caught off guard by love, by laughter, by a moment that doesn't feel scripted.

To feel, just once more, that something new was waiting around the corner.

But there are no corners in eternity.

Just circles.

Endless, elegant, and cruel.

Nothing.

Nothing down here is real.

It doesn't matter the hate, the abuse, the love and the songs.

All shall pass.

But one thing you should remember:

*To love
To forgive
Are powers that teach
How truly to live*