

PALE GOLD

By

Anonymous

With enchanting murmurs Daisy admired this aspect or that of the feudal silhouette against the sky, admired the gardens, the sparkling odor of jonquils and the frothy odor of hawthorn and plum blossoms and the pale gold odor of kiss-me-at-the-gate.

—F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

I

As far back as I can remember, I've always been a dreamer. But dreams are tricky things, and not so long ago, there came a time when my dreams, well... they were no longer dreams. They became nightmares.

I have this one recurring nightmare, nearly every night, that always tells the same story. The dream begins with this big ball of light glowing down upon me, and quickly I realize: it's the moon. A full moon shining brightly in the night sky, only there's a certain glistening glimmery wash over it, which is when I recognize the water. See, I'm in the ocean—below the surface—and I'm looking up to the faraway moon as the waves above me dance beneath it. But by then, I notice the moon seemingly growing smaller. It becomes smaller and smaller and smaller—and I of course wonder: why? Until I finally come to understand: I'm slowly sinking deeper and deeper underwater. And all around me, the light grows dark and the sea grows cold, and I claw toward the distant surface, scraping to get up, back to breathe the air of life. But it's never any use. I'm free-falling into a mist of darkness, and the moon? It becomes all but a flicker of dim light above me—and finally I see the whole picture: *I'm drowning.*

For as long as I can remember I've been trying to make sense of this puzzle. Some people believe that dreams are completely random, full of all the miscellaneous nonsense found in every arbitrary corner of a person's mind, from all the things you've seen and all the sounds you've heard; your ups, downs, sideways, and circles. Some people believe that dreams are a way for a person's brain to practice coping with threats, simulating danger so that the mind can enhance its survival skills and prepare itself for all the troubles it will come to face. But most people believe, as I think we've all come to occasionally wishfully consider, that dreams hold meaning in some abstract shape of profound symbolism that points to a great transcendental truth of the self beyond our conscious perception of the universe—or whatever that's supposed to mean.

For a time, I believed all of these ideas to be true. And for an even longer time after, I didn't believe in any of them. Until one day, when I actually fell for a dream.

There are some things in life that seem almost unexplainable to me, as though words aren't enough, and it's only through a feeling, which becomes the guiding compass in who I am, that I'm able to truly go on living. That's how I felt when I saw him for the first time. I was at a loss for words, not for anything other than the fact that I knew—the moment I looked into his ocean eyes—I knew: *I was in love with him*. I knew my life would never be the same after that. I knew that he was the one, the one who would change me forever.

And it was in our time we spent together, that brief fleeting moment of blue just about seven years ago now, that the nightmares went away. It seems falling in love was the only thing capable of—easing my pain, healing me into some paradise of feeling, a certain ephemeral ecstasy that only exists in a distant memory of innocence. I was happy then, caught in his swell—washed over by his waves of wisdom. He was full of it, overflowing with parables and

poems and paradoxes, including this old quote he carried like a torch in the night that he passed off to me—that still echoes somewhere in the light corners of my mind. He once told me:

“In dreams, we plant the seeds of our future.”

For the longest time, I never understood those words. Not because I couldn't, but because I didn't want to. I didn't want to believe in them, I didn't want to make that choice. And in my own experience, there has always been and will only ever be one choice: the choice between *fear* and *hope*.