

The Lonesome

There's a story here
A story I can't tell
Or, rather don't want to tell
Of a hair's length
Measure of time
And hairs width gap in memory
That grows and grows until
You can't remember how you looked
Since you last battled the blades

On average, hair grows around half an inch per month and around 6 inches per year. There are of course many other factors that affect this growth rate such as hereditary, ambient temperature, nutrition and so on. In other words, all of the things and more
That have changed since that cold day in March
When the sky looked bleak and our hearts felt weaker.

Since then
We politely peered into the bright flatness
Looking for form and friendship
without the depth or reality
As Frankenstein did
We looked beyond faces
At lives unlike ours

Searching for mirrors
to see past the obstinacy
to learn languages of our own vulnerability
And To ignore the devastation inside ourselves
and plod along
Hoping that things will get better
Hoping that something will cure the two dimensional numbness of four
flat walls
This feels inhumane

The hair grows down my head, just over the rim of my ears and as the
months pass
into town it comes,
Covering them but filtering nothing that goes into my ears. The slow
creep of this silver glacier
Whispers across the face as it moves

You daren't cut me
It taunts

Half an inch
Month by month
Urging belligerence to not cut
No matter how much it irritates
Or infuriating
Don't cut it
Let it flourish like the vines of a banyan tree
The banyan or strangling tree is a parasite
Germinating inside a healthy tree and enveloping its form
The identity thief of the natural world
It grows around, through and out of other things, living and dead
It's fibrous tentacles
Reaching, ever further, for the next victim to devour

Contrary to popular belief, hair and indeed nails do not continue to grow after death
Instead it is the receding skin around hair that give the illusion of fibrous persistence

Just imagine if
Since we were born
Our hair was never cut
Our hair, like the banyan, taking over our being
Slowly creeping through us
Or others
Instead we just learned to live with this

From the time I was born to the age of about three and a half, my hair was never cut. So according to the calculations, my locks measured 21 inches. Obviously, my hair didn't look that long because it was chaotically curly.

I was taken to India for a ritual head shaving. Not much is remembered or remains of this point in time.
Not a single snap for posterity
Let alone a before and after shot
All am told was that it was done to take away the unclean hairs and promote new growth. The cut hair caught in my paternal aunts lap
But like lacking memory of my curly locks being cut my aunt is also

gone from sight and memory. All I remember of her was her thick black oil hair, seated with fragrant oils.

Her hair was jet black well into her fifties.

She always claimed she didn't colour her hair but we all had an inkling that she must have.

Whether she did or not, I never forgot her long black hair.

I was up the side of a mountain in Taiwan when I got the news of her demise. We had just reached the foggy climbs of the mountain retreat and our first instinct was to join the WiFi connection. As I did so a torrent of messages populated my phone. I saw this one message stand out. it was what we an electronic scream from those I was apart from. instantly I remembered the stories of her and her connection to me through my hair.

There I stood, quietly lamenting the loss of the aunt that had held be firmly as the barber slowly vacated three years worth of assumed unclean hair. helping me cleanse me when I didn't even feel unclean. Pushing me through a rite of passage I would neither understood nor remember.

even so, we were connected by that moment.

In the same way we are all detachedly connected in these moments.

So this time round I'm not growing my hair for ritual or for cleansing.

Instead

this time round

I want my hair to measure the intangible stillness

I want to hold my hands out into the still lonesome ready for you to cleanse yourself of yours.

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