

Permanance

By

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Based on "Elegy" by Joel Sams

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FADE IN.

Black.

MAN V.O.

The unreasoned fullness of the sky
atones almost for that which I
desire...

EXT. TREE - DAY

Sunlight filters through a tree. Abstract. Glimmering.
Almost blinding. Taking shape in blurry, curious forms.

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)

Fruitlessly in ripened cherries and
the sweet corn silver silken, honey
heaviest of all.

BOY's eyes take it all in. Young, unfettered by care. Wide
and open. He is in the freshness of youth with roguish,
curly hair and a tanned face.

Around him, nature blossoms. Fresh foliage. Blooming
flowers. Corn in its fullness. The wind ruffles the stalks
with a sound that tingles ears.

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)

Almost, but still unspeakable the
longing lengthens barrenly and
curls in tendrils through the
seasons.

Against the light, GRANDFATHER takes shape. He is
gray-haired, along in years, but stands strong and tall
still, carrying a gnarled cane. A pocketwatch hangs from his
trousers. Shadows blur his face.

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)

I wish one long and blinding day
and fallow fields forever turning
furrowed into fruitfulness, but
seeds must have their wheeling
season; days must stretch and
change.

Grandfather's HAND reaches down to Boy. Boy smiles upon
seeing his beloved Grandfather and willingly takes his hand.
As he stands up, he stumbles a bit. Grandfather steadies him
and helps him to his feet.

Both walk side by side towards the cornfield up ahead. Slowly Grandfather takes the lead. His worn shoes step into the field.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)

I will grow and die here with the love of changing shadows in the world, the grasses, green or golden, stones that sink through centuries, waters washing ever young.

Grandfather's stride is long and Boy must hasten to keep up. His ruddy face reddens; his hair flops on his flushed face. Grandfather walks slowly, hunching over more and more on his cane, yet Boy cannot reach him.

OLDER BOY emerges, continuing the pursuit. He is Boy, but a few years older - perhaps fourteen. Leaner. Wiser. Angular with the strain of adolescence. He picks up his pace, jogging.

Grandfather's back and shoulders are all that are visible through the corn. Then he disappears entirely.

Older Boy begins to run. A full out sprint. He sweats and pants, panicking. At last he exits the corn field as MAN - Boy and Older Boy in one, on the cusp of adulthood. He slows, stops. Looks up at the

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Man is alone. It is just him and the cabin. He stares, a gray dread stealing upon him.

EXT. CABIN PORCH - DAY

Man steps cautiously onto the porch. The steps creak, keying up his nerves. He puts one trembling hand on the knob.

INT. PORCH - DAY

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)

Yellow ruled suspenders, Old Spice, gasoline, a Gaither tune behind a stained-glass window, soil broken bitterly beneath a broken sky.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAN V.O. (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Little things will conjure up the
image of a soul.

Darkness. Barely any light allows him sight to take in the bleakness within. Dust moticomms float in the air, almost beautiful in their stagnancy.

Man's shoes sound hollowly on the empty cabin, devoid of anything but furniture. Every surface is swathed in black dust cloths. By the fireplace hangs Grandfather's cane. Dusty. Unused.

A weight in his pocket draws his eyes down. He pulls out the pocketwatch. It feels heavy in his hand. He sets it on the mantlepiece. Walks away. Out of the cabin to the

EXT. PATH - DAY

Without feels just as gray as within. Every step is heavy, an effort.

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)
Lives like waters wash between the
chinks of my remembering. Stone by
stone the shallows fill and
chatter, weathered with the torrent
of too many days.

His face is weathered with the torrent of too many days. The sun seems blinding. It hurts to see. He pauses and closes his eyes. Lets the sun wash over him. Motionless.

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)
How many livings live within a
life? The one is inescapable. Two,
for better or for worse; four for
wisdom, if you're lucky, eight for
antique picture frames.

WIFE steps beside him. Her slender frame and full hair are ripe with life. Full of womanhood. Her white dress radiates the sweet summer light. She slips her hand into his. His eyes open. She is beauty itself. She leads him. It is green and good. They touch, his hand around her waist. Her lashes are long. Her hair catches the light. They round the corner to the

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

Here is coziness. Brightness. Beauty. A luscious picnic is laid upon the grass. On the blanket sits DAUGHTER - sweet, young, dimpled, in her play clothes. About six years old. Upon seeing her parents, she jumps up and runs to Man, who picks her up and tosses her in the air, giggling, hair flying.

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)

Nineteen lifetimes I have lived in plantings. Nineteen centuries of winter, and the roots of me are groaning, swollen with the heaviness of life and death.

Man, Wife and Daughter play kickball in the yard. Leaves shake on the branches, flecked with color. Fall approaches.

Daughter kicks the ball into the nearby woods. Man kisses Daughter on the cheek, tells her to wait. He heads towards the woods to get the ball. Wife follows closely behind him. They enter the

INT. WOODS - DAY

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)

Grown thin like garments, weather-bare, the shapes of older things show through the warp and woof of days.

Man and Wife walk hand in hand. The woods are close. The leaves inked with colors of fall. It is cozy. He holds her hand tightly. The trees grow less friendly - closing in. Darker. Danker. Her hold on him loosens. Looser. Drops completely.

Startled, Man looks beside him. She's gone. He looks ahead at the

EXT. CEMETERY - DUSK

His ringed fingers are empty. The sunlight has dipped behind the treeline. Painfully beautiful, washing over him heavily. Trees are colored with ripe autumn leaves. There is her gravestone, adorned with faded flowers.

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)

Dull dark, digging thorns and thistles, husks of corn and rinds
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAN V.O. (CONT'D) (cont'd)
of withered pumpkin, cold stone,
moss, the must of death...

Man caresses the stone. Leans on it - the only support holding him up. Hunches over it. Crumples to his knees. Screams. Cries. He is alone.

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)
...its smell and importunity - all these uphold the roots of ripened cherries, stalks of sweet corn, silver silken, heaviness of honeycomb.

Dusk deepens. Nearly night. Still he weeps alone.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

He sits by the tombstone. It is dark. Empty. He is alone.

EXT. SKY - DAWN

The sun begins to rise, dawning on Man's face. New wrinkles, new gray streaks adorn him like noble battle scars, telling of a struggle nearly lost.

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)
The breakings of our bodies and our souls, before we dream of germination, or the crush of springtime soil giving way...

Slowly, with aching joints, he rises to his feet. His clothes have worn to match his soul and body. He squints in the light, still weak with newly birthed day.

He rounds a bend, entering the

EXT. BACK YARD - MORNING

OLDER DAUGHTER waits there for him. She is leaner, about ten. She wears a more mature version of the outfit she did earlier, with the long hair of her mother.

MAN V.O. (CONT'D)
...are sweet, are sweet, for earth is dark with holiness, inscrutable with rooted loves and deepest dreadful joy.

(CONTINUED)

Man smiles upon seeing his lovely daughter. He takes her hand and leads her around the house. She looks up to his tall frame. She is trusting. Hopeful. He straightens his aching back, strides confidently.

They approach the

EXT. TREE - MORNING

where Boy lay at the beginning of his journey. Here Man lets go of Daughter's hand. She understands. Walks on alone.

Man sits. Lays down. Stares up at the sun as it filters through the tree. Abstract. Glimmering. Almost blinding. Taking shape in blurry, curious forms. Man's eyes, wrinkled with wisdom, take it all in.

FADE OUT.