

30 Seconds

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I cannot stabilize Tito; he moves and he speaks. How can I make him the object of my inquiry; I try to hold him still, he escapes me. For me to use his body to speak my thoughts, I must kill him again, to make him live through the violence of my representation. He is there, speaking of his own death, and I suffer as I watch; they, his audience, are watching too. Why is the guy in the front row laughing? He does not know as I know now, that Tito is dead. Did he kill him or did I? Every time I see his image, pain fills me. Can I stop his death? Only by killing him again, by re-presenting him so that he may live again in the silence of his death through his speech. I resist it; I need to resist my own calm. Watching the video, I think of Roland Barthes who wrote, "I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake."

When I was a child I remember having the fear of my mom dying. When she was not working the night shift at the hospital and after all the lights were off, I would go to her bed, get under the covers and look for her feet. Her warm feet comforted me. Sometimes her feet were cold, and I would panic... If she was alive why were her feet cold, and if she was dead, I was not waiting until the next morning to find out. Quietly, I would put my hand in front of her nose to feel for her breath. What if she wakes up? How was I going to explain? ...Knowing that she was alive I returned to my room, But what about if she died now?

We carry death on our back, but we don't know how much it weighs until one day, somehow, we bend because it presses upon us. ...I remember reading a book called Chronicle of a Death Foretold, when I was eleven years old... part of my education. My mom believes in the power of words. She thinks we call things upon us by saying them. One day looking in the mirror, she thought in how different she would look if she had cancer. She said she called the illness. Now she says over and over again "the cancer is not going to kill me." I guess Tito did not say this enough and finally death reached him. I never saw her body changing, I never saw her hair falling. I was here and she was there. I never saw the corpse of Tito, I just read about his death.

On Christmas, I visited her at the hospital; she wanted to give me a present. ...Long ago, I woke up and next to my bed there was a little turtle and a train. I loved them. I have been looking for them since my mom got ill. I have not found them. With despair I thought they never existed, that they were a forged memory of mine, a dream maybe. I told her that she didn't need to give me a present that everything was just fine with my turtle and my train. She started crying. I didn't think she would know what I was talking about. She said those metal toys were the only things she could afford when my dad left us. She wanted to give me a present that counterbalance the absence of my dad. I am thirty-two years old, and she wanted to give me a present again to counterbalance her possible absence, her possible death. What have I given her to counterbalance my absence? And Tito, what am I promising you? Absence does not have any equivalence...