

IKAN-PRE-PROLOG

When I was little, I saw flying fish. A cluster of silver-scaled halfbeaks with golden-tipped fins. I looked at the glimmering shoal as they flew across the yonder, their lopsided jaws continually flapping in synchrony. But instead of bubbles, they sent forth dots of little yellow flickers that floated away, flying even further than those exhaling them.

Later in life, I found out that those were stars.

This is my very first memory: flying fish and stars. And for many years hence, I believed that, when someone ate a fish, they also ate a many stars. And that, inside of their guts, were hundreds, thousands, *millions* of constellations no one's ever seen before. Constellations of their own. In private skies inside their pots, floating between intestines and stomach and all them nasty entrails.

This is why people's tummy gets inflated when they eat too much. Because, slowly, they're turning into planets; starting from the constellations-keeping middles.

I. IKAN-CH. 34 (ESCHATOICHTHOLOGY)

Losing someone we love would give the similar effect to being pierced by thousands of needles right in the eyeballs. It's so painful, that we couldn't move, we could barely breathe.

I love HIM. More than anything in this world, and other worlds there are, there was, and will be. To be broken in pieces for the sake of such love isn't too bad. The destruction of one's self is worth this feeling.

But the one to suffer wasn't me. I'm the one who's lost, and HE's the one who has to suffer the loss. HIS hand was clutching the very tiny last piece of me, making those small fingers seemed so big. So big, and so sad, with unceasing trembles and silent cries that goes on and on.

For years, HE kept on suffering the pain of missing me. And little by little, the pain permeated into me: It's not easy to love someone so much, and had to see that someone being tormented by pain that you caused. And that's what happened: I caused HIM pain, and there's nothing I could do about it.

My biggest fear had come true.

Perhaps one day, people would learn of the end of the world and fish. How all the fish there ever was suffered immense sadness that their whole

bodies began to melt, and what's left of them caused great flood, drowning every depravity brought by The Damned. All dirt, all evils, all filth, were then swirling inside tidal waves that once were hundreds, thousands, millions... infinite numbers of flying halfbeaks in the sky. No creature's left to live. Just water. Covering the Earth, filling up the sky, that the whole universe and the universes beyond began to turn into an interminable sea with neither beginning nor end.

But they—the melting halfbeaks—were just a tiny part of the whole deluge. They were nearly wholly made of HIS own tears. Because this was a pure sadness. HIS sadness that, not only killed miracles, but also the whole worlds.

I recalled The Chinars. The Chinars—where are they now?—who once told me that the whole world was water.

I wonder whether the water in the past was made of HIS tears as well. Was HE crying too, back then? Was it out of loneliness? Was that why HE created the first light, and the fish, and the plants, and animals, and humans—as Confusing once said? Was HIS loneliness reduced as they came into existence, and thus HIS tears began to dry?

I recalled Chinar. Chinar—where is It now?—who once told me that there's neither beginning nor end but HIM. I used to wonder if that means anything. If it does, I still haven't found out what.

Ah, my kind and grieving dearest. What's there to do to dry this tears? The whole worlds were swallowed in HIS tears. Not only the Earth, but also the sky, the stars, every hole in the universes—the bright ones and the dark ones... Everything HE's ever created—all of HIS handicrafts—were drowned in salty waters.

This is how it's like to be broken. So perishing, that the whole worlds perish with you.

IKAN CH. 35 (DARKNESS COVERS THE FACE OF THE DEEP)

And even then, after everything's broken and perished, HE remained so still. HE lied there, clutching me on HIS palms, for so long. The Earth began to crumble. Moon preceded long before. Planets aged and died, and the pieces of them roamed the universes before they, too, exhausted themselves and fell to the bottom of the space. And the stars and the sun burned out; their last flame, which they unleashed before exploding simultaneously, boiled all waters HE'd cried.

Time began to cripple, until it no longer were. Every drop of water that was once a fish began to exhude darkness; a form of their infinite sadness as creatures who, too, loved HIM too deeply to be able to bear watching HIM crying for so long.

Now the world is dark. So dark. There's no more light.

IKAN-CH. 36 (LET THERE BE LIGHT)

Hello. YOU have been grieving for so long.

The sun had died now. And the stars were all gone. No more blue morning skies that I used to love, who used to greet and wish me luck as I made my sleepy way to the very first stop of the day. No more night sky and its glittering trinkets—that dark yonder that used to remind me that it's time to go home, the same sky that used to whisper lullabies to kind children who's had their heads on their pillows.

Where's the good shoes the good Sir Cobbler made for YOU? Where's YOUR overcoat? With the deaths of everything that burnt, aren't you cold? Perhaps not. But I still hope that you're always surrounded by kind warmth. If it's not from me, that overcoat should be better than naught.

I wish to hold YOU, like I did before. It's not fair that YOU're the one holding me when YOU're the one who's supposed to be held. Ah, my kind little dearest. My poor little dearest. When YOU're crying, no one's there to stop it.

The Earth is gone now. The moon is now lying on the floor of heavens. Are YOU really this sad of my leaving? Why me; a fat, unliving thing who didn't even understand YOUR miracles before YOU came to me and show it all? Why don't YOU drop your precious tears for people who understand the grandeur of YOUR presence? Or those animals who used to sing praises for YOU throughout their waking hours? Or the nice plants who never hurt anyone, knowing simply of love and compassion throughout their lives?

I'm but a little creature. It used to be shrouded behind the fatness of my body. But now, there's nowhere to hide. Exactly like that steel toothpick YOU're clutching in YOUR hand, I'm but a meaningless tiny creature.

Then HE closes HIS eyes.

And HE opens HIS mouth.

And there is light.

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