

My Three Days

By, Jacob Zuniga

What did you do when you woke up this morning? Did you go to the bathroom, or brush your teeth, or did you lay in bed with your mind on the loose and the sheets tangled like snakes around your limbs, holding you into the warmth of your bed with a vice-like grip? Did you lay there, staring at the ceiling while you hear your siblings getting up, smelling the sweet perfume of your mother making breakfast mixed with the smell of your father's coffee, and did all your surroundings fade out into your subconscious as you wonder what the day will hold in store for you? What if suddenly no sound came to you in the morning, or no smell, or touch, or God forbid, no sight? What would you do if you knew the gift of sight would leave your eyes in the lucky number of three? Three babies is a triplet, three strikes is a turkey, but three days is such a small time. How would you prepare your mind or body for such a drastic change in lifestyle? What would you do to save your sanity? What would you see in three days?

In my opinion, there are just too many wonders in the world, and it would be impossible to see them all in three days, although if this would happen to me, this is roughly what I would wish to do.

I have looked at our country on a map and only one city throughout the entire nation seems to be a giant magnet pulling my magnetic eyes toward it. On the first day, I would visit Washington, D.C., the throbbing heart of our country. Throughout the day I would roam the city, my mind like a camera as it snaps pictures for my memory. I would see Abraham Lincoln sitting like a god on a throne, and for a moment I would look into those stone eyes and try to see the wisdom that lay there. I would pass through the Smithsonian, glancing at everything. As night fell I would stroll past our nation's capital, wondering what our nation's leader is doing at that very moment.

As the day closes, I would find myself at the Washington Monument. Here I would watch the sun become Picasso, making the sky a dazzling painting of reds and oranges. As the darkness finally shoved out light and swallowed the city in blackness, I would stand in awe as the large finger pointed toward the brilliant heavens. I would turn my head upward and stare at the diamond embedded sky, with each star twinkling in the night. If you've ever craned back your neck to look at the sky, you probably know you will get dizzy, your knees will buckle, and you will slump down to earth. This would probably happen to me, and I would lay back on the cement and admire the heavens as a girl will admire a new doll. Long into the night I would lay there with my mind at ease, and my eyes roving the great depths of space.

Some one once said, "Humor is God's medicine. If you have humor you can overcome any illness." On the second day, I would, after a few hours of sleep and a long affair with my morning coffee, sit and watch humorous movies. Not only would I entertain myself with humor, but also with movies that hold suspense or drama. When you watch something that is entertaining, it releases a part of you that you never knew existed. The movie is your locksmith, and it forges a key to all the wonders that lay embedded in you.

After some laughs, thrills, and a few tears, I would travel through Washington and the surrounding areas. Mid-afternoon would find me at an impoverished area where people can barely scrape together a life. Seeing poverty will show you how much you have to be thankful for.

As the day wears on I would try to find my "inner child." Children have no fear in the world, and they don't grasp fully what the world is all about. I may be watching a game of some sort, or possibly just children running around playing tag and wrestling, with not a care in the world. As I sit there I would think about my childhood. The normal person will regret something in his or her childhood, yet suddenly mine looks as if it couldn't be better. As night falls I would say goodbye to the city, and then, as my heart despairs for what I know will happen, I will turn to the place where I had the best times of my life.

Some one else once said, "Home is where the heart is." And I'll travel home in the night. I would sleep during my trip and arrive home as the sun peeks through the trees. Another affair with my morning coffee would begin and shortly after I would go outside.

Casting my shoes and socks aside, I would walk through the grass barefoot, letting the dew tickle the soles of my feet. During my stroll in the woods, I would let my other senses take over, letting the breeze ruffle my hair, walking no place in particular. As the breeze blows the trees, the flowers dance before my eyes, a dance no ballerina can match.

It is possible I may see a deer, only aware of its presence as I look up. For a moment our eyes would lock, unmoving, and then the spell will be broken and away the animal will go. A deer moves with inhuman speed, and its graceful body will now race the wind, its figure becoming a blurred brown as it runs. I would follow it with my eyes until it disappears and then I would continue walking. By this time the dew would begin to dry, so I would again don my socks and shoes.

I would walk to my neighbor's fields now, where there is a giant hill. This hill towers over the area, looking down upon all the land the eye can see. The hill is covered in prairie grass that stands around four or five feet tall and when you stand on the very top with the ground sloping downward and wind rustles the grass, it is fun to imagine yourself as the king, and the grass and trees as your people; and they bow to you with a humble gesture.

After this I would perhaps sit in the forest, propped up next to an ancient oak, and sip a glass of water as I listen to the animals. The birds go on with their business, some singing like a New York City opera performer. The squirrels run around gathering nuts and being their cheerful selves. I'm sure this would bring a smile to my face, and here I would stay until the sun makes its descent in the sky.

As the day ends, I would again find myself on the hill watching the sun melt into the land, and I would begin to say goodbye. Never again would I see these colors, or the sun, or even the sky; I'll just feel the sun's heat and my mind will know there's a sky. But how my heart breaks to know and think this. Then I would lay back, and again I would gaze at the stars in the sky. I've always thought the moon's face is one of laughter, yet now its glowing head looks like it weeps for me. I'm sure my emotions would then flow and what a roller coaster ride that would be. For a long time I would lay there in the grass as it towers above me like a wall, and I hope it will hide me, thinking somehow that I can hide from Fate. But I'm only trying to fool myself because I know Fate always comes knocking.

After a long time I would head to my house where I would eat and wash up and then go to a collection of friends and family. Those people whom I know best I would take long times with, trying to memorize everything about them and then lock it into my mind. My mind will scream and my heart will ache, yet I will try with all my power to keep my emotions to myself. Slowly I would say my goodbyes, and with those said, I would end my final day of sight with a one-way ticket to everlasting darkness.

Part of the reason I would have slept as little as possible in the last three days is to see as much as I can, and part of it is to wear down my body. I would rather die in my sleep, and in no way will I sit and wait for darkness to come. I would prepare for bed, taking a long look at myself in the mirror, and then I would climb into bed. For a while I would lay there, afraid to close my eyes, but sleep is needed and I would slowly close my weighted eyelids. Darkness would surround me, and suddenly I know what it's like to be strapped into an electric chair and they place the hood over your eyes. You get one last glimpse of light, and then it's gone, and the only light you'll see is the light in your eyes as they pull the lever and the electricity fries your eyeball. When darkness surrounds you, Fear's icy hand grips your heart, which is suddenly in your mouth, and you feel like you'll die of a heart attack from so much fear.

I think that fear would grip me as I lay in bed with my eyes closed, a fear to open them now. I would want to see light, yet what if it's already happened, what if I only see darkness? I'd try to

fight off that fear and to look at the advantages of blindness. At the moment, only one comes to mind as my conscious drifts through space like an asteroid. All over the world people will scream for peace, but in a store they will see someone of a different race, and they will throw a look at them cold enough to freeze ice. Without sight I wouldn't be able to see the pain and suffering that goes on in the world.

As my mind falls into the pit of dreams, I would prepare for twelve or sixteen hours of sleep coming for me, and the dreams to come with it. My mind gone, my heart fears my awakening, and my soul looks to the future. I'll read a lot and try to learn as much as possible, but what a turn of events. How greatly we take our senses for granted and how highly we pay when we lose one. As Dickens wrote, "It is a far, far better rest I go to now, than I have ever known." Yes, indeed it is a far better rest I now go to, one that's endless, eternal, black, yet there's a shred of light that I believe is hope. If God is as good as he portrays, I'll sleep like Rip Van Winkle, but how my mind screams. And, before I would drift off into eternal darkness, I would roll over, bury my face into the pillow and weep.

As I have written this, I have come to a chilling conclusion: How much the blind suffer for something they do not control. How they must cry when the doctor says there is no hope, or when their friends and family cast them aside like a broken toy. I know if this would happen to me, I would want death to come on swift and silent wings. How can these tormented people keep a will to live, to see another day, when I feel I would go insane? It must be like those on the Titanic hearing the ship is going down and you with it, the color draining from your face as your life flashes like a movie in your mind's eye. If only we could be like Bugs Bunny and say, "I should've taken a left at Albuquerque," or to wake up in our own bed and see it's only a dream. But it's just not that easy.

If you lose your sight at childhood, you don't know what you missed, but how can you lose a sense as important as sight in any other part of your life and still keep your mind, body, and soul flowing in natural harmony? It's hard knowing that not only illness can take away sight, but so can age. I hate to think somewhere along the road of life that I'll hit a ditch, and, wow, there goes my hearing. Another rut ahead and sight is sent packing. I hate to think of those days, but my life needs to be lived first, and maybe time will be generous. Thinking of this makes a fear grow inside me, not a fear that causes nightmares from a midnight novel, but a fear I know does exist, and that makes it all the more powerful.

In the end, we are all in the same boat. The only difference is loneliness. People who can see have many companions on the journey of life. A blind person is one person. They see themselves as the last of a race, of an era, the last Viking roving a frozen and desolate land. What lays in store for them they do not know. How strong they must be to keep going.

Still, I wonder if it will happen to me, or to one I know. I believe the only way to be prepared for something like losing a sense is to do this: look at everything as if it's part of your last three days. No matter what sense it is, use it as if it will be the last time you'll ever see, hear, taste, touch or smell. This will not fully prepare you, but if you do it, never again will the gift of the senses be taken for granted.