My Soul is painted like the Wings of Butterflies

by Lilys_Eyes

Summary

If you can take only one single memory into the afterlife with you, which one do you choose?

Notes

Inspired by the wonderful 1998 Hirokazu Kore-edo movie After Life (Wandafuru Raifu), in which the souls of the departed spend one week in a kind of halfway house where they have to choose one memory that they wish to take into the afterlife with them. Once they have made their decision, the memory is recreated (usually with extremely simple means e.g. painted backdrops and cotton wool clouds) and filmed, thus preserving it forever. Only after viewing their memories on screen, do the souls move on to the afterlife.

Freddie smiles, almost a little expectantly, when the young man behind the desk announces that he still hast to inform him formally. How very quaint.

“Mr. Mercury, you died two days ago”, the man says politely. “My sympathies on your loss.”

Freddie inclines his head slightly. “Thank you”, he says.

It’s surprising that, although his fellow travelers are just as dead as he is, nobody in the sprawling old
building ever seems to talk about death or dying. Only life. Life, life, life. Freddie talks very little, he’s content not to, he’s said so much, sometimes too much, lived so much, loved and laughed and suffered so much. Now there is just peace. He spends most of the days simply strolling around in the gardens, just enjoying being able to walk, to breathe once more. Even in his dreams he keeps walking in the light of a gentle spring sun. By the end of the week they all get to spend in this waystation for the newly departed, Freddie is absolutely certain what his one memory will be, the one that he will take with him into eternity.

“So you have reached a decision, Mr. Mercury?” the young man asks brightly. Apparently not everyone has been able or willing to do so.

Freddie just smiles from ear to ear.

A curtain opens, he steps onto a white stage, rows upon rows upon rows of quickly sketched faces his audience. There is a blond man behind a drum kit, a man with a bass, wearing a pink shirt and miraculously, even a man sporting Brian’s impossible, bouncy curls, a guitar not unlike the Red Special in his hands. Freddie looks at them, these men that are his brothers this very moment, feeling an immense wave of love for them wash over him, even though they are just memories personified. He turns to the audience and smiles slightly to himself. He feels strong and energized, connected not only with the band or the audience, but the entire universe itself. And above all, there is love. Love, love, love. This is his one moment, his eternal memory.

A skinny young woman sits down in the seat next to him in the little old movie theater, where they will all be together one last time and view their memory movies. She giggles a little as she recognizes him and he gives her a friendly wink, just as the lights go down. The silver screen flickers to life and they watch in rapt silence. And then the time has come for each of them to finally forgive and forget life, to love and let go. The time to break free.

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