

This is About Losing My Book

While unrequited love was something to which he was well adjusted, love lost rendered him as vulnerable and sore as a chafed wound. Real love, he insisted, was characterized by the degree of damage potentially done. The Giants lose a playoff game because their offensive line is soft as wet sand and just as easy to walk over and the city erupts, the sanctity of the moon-landings is shaken by America's diminishing eminence and Buzz Aldrin cries, Beyonce wears a gown as flattering as a Grand Wizard's commencement speech at Morehouse and her fans flood databases with millions of her flawless photos. He knew what pumped through his body, what panged in his mind and fluttered in his chest and gurgled anxiously in his stomach was real love because his sentimentality, desperate and hopeful as a newly wed widow, matched or exceeded all others crying on busses and on trains and in taxis and standing in weaving TSA lines, waving forlornly to loved ones.

Initially his denial was enough to battle the reality that his love was indeed lost, but soon, when there arose the slightest doubt of its return he became as defensively incensed as children refusing to transmute arguments of "I don't know" into anything else. His love wasn't lost, he protested. Perhaps the totality of his experience had not yet been fully recovered, and as though he were reading classic literature, the depth of his own understanding of the love he reserved for his lost could emerge only after all had been thoroughly digested. Only a tell-tale sign would prove that his love, lofty and heralded as God's, was something he'd one day replace with agnostic indifference.

Days passed surely and sadly as he tucked his heart from torment like desert animals burying themselves from the destructive heat that also enlivens them. He lamented upon the loss of his love like an inmate laments his arrested freedom, the baseness of their sorrow and self-pity matched only by the magnificence of the half-fiction memories recreated again and again to catalyze their desolation. Each day's focus refitted around his love, lost and more perfect with every passing and tangent thought, and his heartbreak loomed in a grainy immensity setting a contrast almost too stark to peer into.

The only cure, he settled, was action, to set himself to tasks that had in them the capacity to disentangle his mind from his heart. It was a process. Eight weeks under world-class instructors with more time on their hands than migrating herds and B-list singers with scrawny legs and sloppy midsections can Tango like Argentinians. It had to be a commitment he blindly devoted himself toward like blood sacrifices. If he went to the gym he was Magnus Ver Magnusson, to the casino Johnny Chan, to the strip club Uncle Luke, to the library Matilda Wormwood.