

Dove Sta Amore

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Draft 1A

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FADE IN:

INT. 50'S-STYLE BATHROOM. EVENING.

THE WOMAN (late 20's, with a slight arch to her back) stands nude in her ivory-white bathroom, a leg propped on the side of the bathtub as she shaves it, then her underarms. Her face is completely obscured by an off-white plaster mask, giving only the illusion of features, but nothing definite. Through two narrow slits in the mask we can see her blue/green eyes, focused intently.

Once she has completely rinsed the cream from her body, she slides into a Coca-Cola red dress that perfectly shows off her figure. In front of the mirror, she drips and smears red paint over the mask's lips haphazardly, before applying two pink thumbprints to each cheek.

The doorbell sounds like a giant church organ, rattling all of the items on the bathroom sink. The doorbell rings and the paint drips.

INT. IMMACULATE LIVING ROOM. CONTINUOUS.

She fluffs her dark hair in the mirror, before hurrying through her immaculate home to the front door. The doorbell rings once more, and once more it rattles everything in sight. With a deep breath, she opens the door.

A series of PRIESTS and NUNS push past her, filing into the living room. Finally, behind all of the rest, strolls in THE COWBOY (early-mid 40's, gruff looking, but well-tempered). He tips his hat to The Woman and pulls the strand of straw from his lips.

She closes the door cautiously, unsure of what's going on. The Cowboy's eyes scan the room, left to right, then up and down. He nods in acceptance to himself before taking The Woman's hands and leading her to the well-worn sofa in the center of the room.

They sit, staring at each other in silence.

A Priest leans towards The Cowboy, whispering something into his ear, and The Cowboy nods, understanding. As the Priest finishes, The Cowboy's eyes get wide, and he hurriedly removes his hat, placing it behind him on the sofa. The Priest nods before handing The Cowboy a weathered wooden box, a ring of children's teeth act as handles on either side.

He locks eyes with The Woman.

Carefully positioning the box on his lap, he opens it slowly, as if savoring every creak the rusted hinges make. The box is filled to the rim with more baby teeth, in varying conditions and sizes. He dips his hand in, feeling around, his eyes still locked with hers.

At last, he produces a handful of bent and dirty Polaroid photographs. Each photograph features a different nude woman from behind, a Rorschach Test painted on each of their backs.

One at a time, he shows The Woman these photographs. After each she slowly shakes her head "no", and he slips them back into the box. The fourth photograph inspires the same response, until The Cowboy starts to slip it back into the box.

The Woman grabs his arm suddenly, pulling the image back into view. She gets very close to the photograph, inspecting every detail before tapping it several times as if saying "this is the one".

The Cowboy raises his eyebrows, and The Woman shakes her head in approval. He places the rest of the photographs in the box with care. A Priest removes the box from his lap, and hands him a small glass jar of ink.

Dipping his middle finger into the ink, The Cowboy smears two crooked lines of the ink under The Woman's eyes. He re-lids the jar, and places the photograph into his shirt's pocket. From his jacket's pocket he produces a large seed, vaguely resembling a walnut.

With a bit of twine, he ties the walnut into a necklace, placing it around The Woman's neck. They lock eyes once more, and rise to their feet together. He signals to the Priests and Nuns as he grabs his hat. They file out the door as they came in, returning moments later with a crude coffin, placing it on the floor near The Cowboy.

He gives a nod and a smile, putting the straw back into his mouth. Two Nuns open the lid of the coffin, which reads "The Lord Giveth, and The Lord Taketh Away". The Cowboy climbs in, crossing his arms over his chest, his hat still in his hands.

A Nun tosses a single rose and a Priest tosses a pack of American Spirit Cigarettes into the coffin. Lastly, a Nun hands The Woman an old six-shooter to lay inside as well. She does so gently, as if in mourning.

The Priests and Nuns together nail the coffin shut, and carry it out the door in a slow procession.

Once they are all out, The Woman rushes to the door, and bolt-locks it, sliding to the floor in exhaustion. She inspects the walnut hanging from her neck, pressing it to her chest as if saying "I'm in love".

Pulling herself up, and straightening her dress, she peers up the staircase nervously. For a few moments, she stands there, not wanting to go up.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY. CONTINUOUS.

Finally, she slides her hand up the banister carefully, and starts making slow steps, gripping the banister tightly, white-knuckled, and wide-eyed. At the top of the staircase is a long, dark, and narrow hallway, leading only to a tall, thin door. White smoke is wisping from the bottom, drifting into the air.

Approaching the door with extreme caution, she reaches for the handle. Just before her fingertips can touch it, the handle melts like wax from a candle, dripping to the floor. She steps back, and it creaks open towards her, painstakingly slow, smoke billowing out.

As the smoke clears, a LARGE EYEBALL is revealed, the pupil dancing around the room, seemingly starved for fresh sights. The Eyeball fills the width of the doorway and bricks seal it in from above and below.

With a gushing sound, a heavy, leathery eyelid droops down over the Eye and back up, leaving gooey tears to drip to the floor and evaporate immediately into smoke.

Her eyes closed tight, The Woman inhales deeply and reaches a blind hand forward, fingertips extended. She penetrates The Eyeball after applying some pressure to push through the membrane. The walls begin to shake and blood gushes down the bricks as The Eyeball vibrates with pain.

She begins scooping chunks of The Eye out, tossing them to the floor, causing an explosion of smoke to erupt into the air, gradually getting darker and darker the more she scoops. Soon, she extends her other arm as well to help expedite the process, her eyes still closed tight.

Finally, she breaks through. Scooping out the edges now, we can see that there sits a long metal tube the exact circumference of the eyeball. Her eyes open, still terrified, with tears streaming down her cheeks.

She scoops out the last of the gelatinous remains, leaving only a slimy residue behind, and the giant, quivering eyelid overhead.

With some effort, she climbs into the tube, only able to crawl on all fours given the height.

INT. TUBE. CONTINUOUS.

Only a few tight inches rest between The Woman's back and the ceiling of this dark metal tube. It seems to stretch for miles. In the far distance there is a faint blue light, flickering like a television set.

She presses forward, feeling the floor beneath her before every move, testing the durability.

After crawling and crawling, she finally reaches the light source. Fixed to the outside of the tube are half a dozen television screens, three down the left side, and three down the right. They are all showing static. The final screen on each side has a faint picture showing through the static, though mostly obscured. She continues on.

The next batch of television screens are showing vintage footage of a bullfight, intercut with footage of a group of circus freaks/performers shot on a jumpy Super-8 Camera. Again, she continues on.

INT. OLD MAN'S KITCHEN. EVENING.

The third and final batch of television screens displays an OLD MAN (80's, some grey five-o'clock-shadow) drinking a cup of coffee in his bathrobe while sitting at a table in a small kitchen. A newspaper sits on the table in disarray, having already been looked through thoroughly. The Old Man lights an American Spirit Cigarette, and as soon as he exhales the screen goes black.

INT. EASTER BUNNY'S LIVING ROOM. EVENING.

A few moments later it flicks back on, showing a YOUNG GIRL (8-10, stained t-shirt and pajama bottoms) sitting on the lap of THE EASTER BUNNY (the suit is stained heavily as well) in a dark, dirty living room. There is trash strewn all about and the wallpaper is tearing off. Newspapers sit, some crumpled, in every corner. They're watching a television set, themselves, and The Easter Bunny sips a beer featuring an Indian with a hatchet.

Their television set shows SANTA CLAUS (emaciated, hair disheveled, wearing only the beard, pants, and hat that we know) weeping as he ties a noose around his neck, secures it to the rafters, and kicks a chair out from beneath himself. With a snap, his weeping is replaced with The Easter Bunny's outrageous laughter as he points at the screen. His beer spills droplets to the floor.

EASTER BUNNY
(Laughing wildly)
HAHAHA! Did you see THAT?! Did you
see it?! HAHAHA!

INT. TUBE. CONTINUOUS.

Once again the screen goes black. The Woman looks around uncomfortably.

INT. 50'S-STYLE BATHROOM. EVENING.

The television flicks back on to show video of The Woman from earlier, as she shaves her legs, shot from a different angle, with a lower resolution camera.

In the next room a DARK FIGURE lays out her red dress, adjusting its position minutely, trying to get it just right. Once he is satisfied with its position, he slips a folded note into the front of the dress. Kissing his hand, he rubs the dress, then sits at her small desk, staring out the window with impeccable posture.

Slowly he raises both arms into the air, towards the ceiling. A large mound of dark soil falls over him, burying him completely. A single stick falls from the ceiling, impaling the top of the pile deep.

The screen flickers, and The Dark Figure, the mound, and the stick are all gone, leaving only her desk as she left it. The screen goes black, then to static for good.

INT. TUBE. CONTINUOUS.

The Woman reaches into her dress, shocked to find a note folded neatly inside. Unfolding it, the typewritten words:

"Dove Sta Amore
Don't Stop A Moving Image"

are revealed. She ponders the for a minute, checking the back to find no more writing, before folding it neatly as it was and placing it back into her dress.

She continues on down the tube.

At the end of the tube, far past her last stop, sits a dirty and frail MANNEQUIN with the words "Listen to my heart beat" painted sloppily on his face, and "Faster! Faster!" repeated a dozen times over his chest in varying sizes and intensities.

The Mannequin only has one eye, and a perfect socket where the other should be, red paint dripping from the hole like blood.

Nervous, the Woman leans close towards the Mannequin's chest with her ear, listening intently. A very faint "duh-dud" followed by the sound of rusty machinery, gears, resetting themselves before another "duh-dud".

Above her a croaky, dusty, Tom Waits-esque voice creaks.

MANNEQUIN

Please...whatever you do...please
kill me...

The sounds of a jukebox switching tracks echoes through the tube. With a click, he sounds again in the same Waits-esque voice.

MANNEQUIN (cont'd)

Please...whatever you do...please...
don't *kill* me...

The jukebox sounds echo again, and the first track is played once more as The Woman watches in horror.

After a few rotations, she reaches her hand up, eyes closed tightly, and presses her thumb into the Mannequin's "good eye". Blood gushes down his face and down her arm, dripping to the floor.

The vocal track continues on, starting to warp and malfunction as she pulls her thumb loose.

With a loud ripping of metal, the floor falls out beneath her.

INT. HALL OF DEAD MACHINES. CONTINUOUS.

The Woman lands on a mound of old, rusted typewriters and radios with a loud crunch. Some of the radios are on, but all that are are broadcasting different channels, and some only presenting static, creating a confused soundscape.

Above her the Mannequin is slumped over the hole in the tube, not quite falling through, still malfunctioning with warped speech. Blood from its "good eye" drips down, falling onto the Woman's forehead and rolling off, down either side, staining her mask further.

She lays, staring at the Mannequin, until a distinct "click-clack" sound grows, overpowering that of the radios--a typewriter.

She raises her head, scanning the room for a source. The sound comes in rapid bursts, followed by a "ding" and a rip.

In the corner of the room sits The Dark Figure, hunched like a madman, typing away furiously in those short bursts, and ripping pages from the machine, before carefully re-spooling a new one, and typing once again. Around him are thousands upon thousands of these typewritten pages. Beneath his chair is a small stack of blank pages, growing smaller by the minute as he types, rips, and spools.

A stick is protruding, caked in blood, from the top of his skull, pages dangling from it like large leaves on a skinny tree. He is typing with such fury that the stick quivers and shakes violently. The mounds of notes around him are also shaking, one of them falling in an avalanche of pages.

A COCKROACH climbs from the fallen mound, and The Dark Figure stops immediately.

The Woman pulls herself to her feet, clearly in pain, and tiptoes towards The Dark Figure, who is now slumped, arms dangling to his sides, and his head towards the ceiling. A steady, deep moan rattles from his throat. She reaches out to touch his shoulder, but he jumps back into typing at full speed before she can. She jumps back, startled, her foot crushing The Cockroach with a wet, crackling sound.

When she lifts her foot, revealing the goo of The Cockroach's innards stuck to her shoe, The Dark Figure stops once more. He peers over his shoulder menacingly. All that is visible is one dark eye, and blood oozing down his face, presumably from the stick in his skull.

He rips the unfinished page from the typewriter and tosses it aside into the mound with all the rest. They all read:

"Dove Sta Amore

Don't Stop A Moving Image"

He reaches under his seat carefully, grabbing the final sheet of unused paper, and spools it, with utmost attention to detail. Very slowly, using just his index fingers, he types one last message. With a "ding" he cautiously pulls the page from the machine and nonchalantly holds it in the air, as if saying to The Woman "here, take it, it's yours".

She reaches for the note, pulling it gently from his hand. It reads:

"Dove Sta Amore

Here. Lies. Love."

She ponders this, looking back and forth from the page to The Dark Figure, until in a sudden fit of rage he throws his chair to the side and pulls a can of gasoline from under his desk. He douses himself and the mounds of pages around him. The Woman jumps back, away from the cyclone he's become. He collapses to the floor, panting from the exertion, and puts a single American Spirit Cigarette between his lips.

The room goes black.

Only a slight sheen from the Woman's eyes is visible.

Then the spark of a Zippo Lighter, lighting the cigarette.

The "click" of its lid snapping shut, and a single red dot in the room from the tip of the cigarette before--

Woosh.

The room erupts into flame. The Dark Figure runs, stumbling through the room like a great ball of fire. He makes it to the back of the room, by a large metal door, where he collapses. The Woman is in complete disbelief.

Two Priests push open the metal door, and put out the flames encasing the man with some blankets, before dragging him back through the door, not closing it behind them.

The Woman chases after them.

INT. HALL OF LIVING MACHINES. CONTINUOUS.

The Woman runs through the doorway, but stops in her tracks once she sees her surroundings.

The Priests are laying the Dark Figure down at the end of this long corridor. Either side is lined with a dozen glass tubes, each with a NUDE WOMAN inside, suspended in a thick goo. Wires are connected to each of these Women, and thick metallic cables run from each of these tubes to a larger cable on the wall. The corridor is humming with electrical currents.

The Priests pull the now smoldering and smoking Dark Figure to his knees, as if he were praying. In front of him sits an empty glass tube, the wires dangling from the top of it. The Priests face The Woman, and watch her, expressionless, as she steps down the corridor, towards them.

Suddenly The Dark Figure collapses, convulsing in a violent seizure on the floor once she gets within a few paces. The stick protruding from his skull is shaking wildly now, sending ash from the notes around the room and into the air.

He is wearing a charred Phantom of the Opera style mask, revealing only one eye. Blood gushes from his wound, as well as from his eyes, and foam bubbles at his lips. There is something loose, almost plastic about his skin. The Priests remain unmoved, their eyes fixed on The Woman.

A door to the left side of the empty glass tube inches open. An OLD DOCTOR, dressed in black, wearing a medical mask enters, followed by a series of Priests and Nuns, carrying The Cowboy's coffin, now dripping with mud, leaving a dirty trail behind them on the white floor. They set the coffin down between The Woman and the still-seizing Dark Figure. The Old Doctor kneels in front of it as two Priests with crowbars open it.

Once the nails have been removed, The Old Doctor nods to the Priests, who step back. He opens the coffin himself, reaching inside while standing. Turning to The Dark Figure, his hand still hidden in the coffin, he locks eyes with The Woman for a moment. The Old Doctor pulls the old six-shooter from the coffin, tests its weight in his hand, and cocks it. With a single, deafening "Bang!" he fires a shot into The Dark Figure's head. The Dark Figure immediately falls still.

Blood pools beneath his head.

The Old Doctor tosses the six-shooter back into the coffin as he wipes his brow, concentrating hard. Reaching back in, he pulls out the single rose, left by the Nun. Pulling on the stem, there is a "click" and the flower comes off, revealing a scalpel blade, hidden within the stem. The Old Doctor smells the flower before tossing it back into the coffin.

The Woman watches with horrified curiosity.

The Old Doctor kneels before the corpse, cutting a circular hole around the stick protruding from the skull. Blood drips from the incision. He continues to cut from his first incision, straight down, between The Dark Figure's eyes, all the way down to the crotch. He adds the branches of a "Y" incision to the chest with two quick slices.

He then grabs hold of the stick, placing his foot on the Dark Figure's head for leverage, and pulls with all his strength, until finally it comes loose, brain matter still dangling from the end. He hands this to A Nun, who treats it like a holy artifact, carrying it with utmost care out the door they entered through.

Pulling away the "Phantom" mask, the Old Doctor finds a featureless face, almost like that of a doll. He tosses the mask aside and forces his fingers into the forehead incision, pulling with all his might. Goo and blood leak everywhere, getting all over The Old Doctor and the floor.

Once he pulls the face down to around the neck, The Dark Figure's true face is revealed to be that of The Cowboy's, covered in chunky goo. He pulls off the rest of the skin, leaving only the gelatin-encrusted nude Cowboy, handing the skin to a Priest, who carries it out the door.

The Old Doctor stands, removing his gloves. A Nun removes the pack of American Spirit Cigarettes from the coffin, placing one between his first two fingers. He tosses the gloves aside and hurries through the door he entered.

The Priests and Nuns signal for The Woman to follow. She does so, reluctantly.

INT. OLD MAN'S KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS.

The Old Doctor is undressing down to his boxers, and putting on a bathrobe. Finally, he removes the medical mask to reveal that he is The Old Man from the television screen in the metal tube, and that this is the same kitchen from the video, only now, Two Priests are in the corner, washing the skin suit.

He lights his American Spirit Cigarette with a match as a Nun pours two cups of coffee, gesturing for The Woman to take a seat. The Nun then offers The Woman a cigarette, she nods "yes". The Nun produces a knife and cuts off The Woman's face mask, just below the nose before lighting her cigarette for her with a match.

The Old Doctor shifts in his seat and ashes in the ash tray.

OLD DOCTOR
Better?

WOMAN
(nodding)
Much.

OLD DOCTOR
(gesturing to her
cigarette, smiling)
You know, you shouldn't be smoking
these things, given the circumstances
of your...*condition*.

WOMAN
(inspecting her
cigarette)
One shouldn't hurt, you think?

She plays with the smoke drifting from the cigarette into the air.

WOMAN (cont'd)
But...you are right, doctor..

A Nun slides the ashtray from The Old Doctor's side of the table to hers. She puts it out with a thankful nod to the Nun, who smiles in return.

OLD DOCTOR
Do you believe that there is a
natural order to things? That the
universe has a plan, and that it is
the conductor, orchestrating all of
the meetings and the events of our
lives? That nothing is left to
chance? That we're not mistaken in
these things?

The Old Doctor inhales deep on his cigarette, holding it in for a second before exhaling smoothly. The Woman thinks hard and long.

WOMAN
I think so... I don't think that the
universe could stand all of the chaos
if that weren't the case. I think
that the universe needs itself to be
orderly, that the only place it has
made for chaos is in our brains.
(MORE)

WOMAN (cont'd)

Chaos belongs only in our brains,
that is their natural order, not the
universe's.

The Old Doctor pulls the ashtray back to himself, takes one last puff, before putting it out. He nods to The Priests washing the skin suit. They stop, and exit the room. As does The Nun.

OLD DOCTOR

With that, I think that we're almost
done here. Now, stand and undress.

The Woman does so, slowly, clearly nervous. The Old Doctor also undresses. Both nude now, except for the walnut dangling around The Woman's neck, they exit the room together.

INT. HALL OF LIVING MACHINES. CONTINUOUS.

The corridor is now dimly lit, with hundreds of candles. A large mound of dirt rests in front of each of the glass tubes. The Old Doctor leads the Woman to the empty glass tube, making eye contact with everyone in the room, as if asking "are we all ready to go?". Finally he turns his gaze to the Woman, then down to the walnut.

She removes it from her neck and hands it to the Old Doctor. He steps back and two Nuns step forward, one directs the Woman to put her arms straight out to the sides. The other begins scraping the goo from the Cowboy's corpse and painting the Woman with it. She is careful, slow, as to not miss an inch of her.

Behind them, the Old Doctor puts his arms out like Christ on the Cross. The "Skin-Suit" Priests begin to slide the Old Doctor into the tight suit. Once he is fully "dressed" they start to sew up the incisions with a needle and thread.

Once the Woman is completely covered in the goo, they help her into the glass tube, where they begin attaching the dangling wires to her body and slip a breathing apparatus into her mouth. Closing the tube's door behind them, they hit a few buttons on the base of it. The tube begins to fill with the same liquid as the others and the Woman falls unconscious, suspended in the tube.

The Old Doctor is stretching, testing the limits of his suit. He crosses over to the tube, and views the Woman, as if viewing a work of art. A Nun places a new cigarette between his lips and lights it with a match for him. Exhaling, he inspects the walnut.

He removes the twine and places it on the chest of the Cowboy in front of her glass tube. Stepping back, towards the wall, he pulls a giant lever. From the ceiling, dirt falls, covering the Cowboy and the walnut completely in a four-foot tall mound. A Nun hands him the Dark Figure's "head stick" that he slides carefully into the apex of the mound.

One by one all of the Priests and Nuns take turns kneeling before the mound, each whispering a prayer, before exiting back into the Old Man's Kitchen.

Lastly, the Old Doctor kneels, weeping before the mound. A Nun pulls him to his feet and wipes his tears. She leads him to out the room before closing the door and re-entering the corridor. CREDITS ROLL as she slowly blows out each of the candles.

FADE OUT

THE END