EXCERPT

The Odyssey of My Electrons

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ME

ME AGAIN

According to CERN, I am going to live sixty-six thousand yottayears, that is five quintillion times the current age of the universe. I would add: give or take five or six multiplied by, uh, multiplied by, let's see, the gravity formula, for the accuracy of imperfection. Had CERN said my lifespan was only sixty-six thousand yottaseconds of a millisecond, I would have believed it just as readily, but not only could I not have told you my story, I wouldn't be as proud as a pea-cock. Well, better to be a toad, because, just so you know, with his tiny amplexus a toad can stay on top of his beloved for days before having the time of his life. Wouldn't you like to be a toad, but with Wide-Awake Beauty, eh? And you, sweetie, imagine you are the Wide-Awake Beauty for three consecutive days and nights!

I'm going to tell you a story no one has ever written. No one was old enough to tell it.

I am.

My name is Eïon. I'm an electron. Nothing spectacular at first glance. I'm usually imagined as tiny, insignificant, lost in matter. That's a blatant optical illusion.

I appeared when the Universe was still a dense field of energy with no scenery, no form. "Appeared" is an approximation. Let's say I stopped being a possibility and became a permanent presence.

There were no clocks, no calendars, no philosophers trying to define chaos. There was only an unimaginable intensity where everything existed without yet being distinct.

I have no age. I do not move through time. Time, for me, does not exist. I move through matter, whatever form it takes. Time is your way of organizing your life and measuring my movements.

I have passed through molten rock, through the first hesitant molecules, through modest algae and arrogant reptiles. I have circulated through the minds of mystics and murderers. I have been present in kisses, orgasms, battles, equations, and lies too shameful to confess.

I choose nothing. I take part in everything.

You could say I am the primordial memory of the world.

A memory without nostalgia. Nothing is erased, everything transforms. I carry traces without judging them. I am both the archive and the archivist.

I can be inside a body and watch it act at the same time. I can be the charge and the witness. And sometimes, I speak in place of the one who carries me.

His name is Boris. He thinks he's writing. I'm the one passing through him. I'm the one dictating. You'll see. I can be quite boastful, and I tend to drift into digressions that should probably be cut.

Don't look for order in what I'm about to tell you.

There isn't any. Or rather… there is one, but it's mine. A kind of involuntary yet creative disorder that defines me. In that sense, I fully agree with Nietzsche.

I'm messy.

What you're about to read is not a story that moves forward. It's an exploration. I move from one body to another, from one era to another, from one idea to another, without warning, always circling the same question: what light does to beings… and what beings do with light?

I transmit. You receive. Your turn now to use it, and to pass on that eternal light.

And since the Universe never bothered to write its memoirs,

I will do it in its place.

NEWTON

THE APPLE AND THE LIGHT

I had fallen into a thin ray of sunlight between two showers.

Perfectly normal.

I was in perfidious Albion.

The sky suddenly turned into proper pig weather. It was raining buckets. It was pouring like a cow pissing.

But since I was in England—where some expressions are harder to crack than the Rosetta Stone before Champollion—it was raining cats and dogs.

Imagine those drops weighing ten to forty pounds falling on the heads of the rosbifs – the locals.

Let's imagine the worst: a 220-pound English mastiff.

I immediately started singing:

"*Imagine… Imagine it falls on your mother-in-law!*"

I don't have a mother-in-law, although I do sometimes get married in certain covalent bonds. One less problem with my spouse—male or female, I'm not quite sure.

Anyway.

I took shelter in the beam of light entering Isaac Newton's laboratory through the window. A simple ray, calm and steady, crossing the room and striking a glass prism.

On the other side, the light split, scattered, bent, unfolded.

On the table, a man in a powdered wig—ridiculous fashion of the time—was carefully noting the color of each fragment of the magnificent rainbow I had just created.

LGTBIQACisney+MAX had just been born—prematurely—an embryonic, multicolored, multi-gender thing in the pantry of evolving mentalities.

Newton would have been stunned to know he was closer to A—as in asexual.

He was neither L for ladies, nor G for guys, nor B for both, nor T for transitions, nor Q for curious, nor I for in-between—not even Herculine Barbin—look it up, it's worth it. Poor woman. With a name that sounds like a joke already—half virile, half feminized—with an ass and a beard hidden in the French wording. What a prophecy.

A for Isaac Newton. Yes, poor him too. The paparazzi of the time confirm it. Sir Isaac Newton discovered gravity and the decomposition of light—but had no idea what to do with his little thing, which felt attraction only for his own hand… and even that, not always.

Sorry for the digression—I couldn't resist, given the gravity of the subject. Having your thing pulled toward the ground your entire life by the very law you discovered… that can't be fun every day.

Anyway.

As I said before, I sheltered in the beam of light with all my unionized comrades—electrons and photons forming it.

A beam of me—that's something.

With those tiny dust particles floating in the swirls of smoke from the pipe Newton had just lit, using matches made in Sussex by pregnant, underpaid workers brutalized by drunken husbands who thought of nothing but screwing them on some miserable sofa in a noisy street where prostitutes were also working the pavement.

Ah, you know me—once I get into poetic prose, there's no stopping me.

I am the Word.

I was both outraged by this assault and surprised by my own inner beauty revealed like this. To slice me up without even asking my permission…I muttered to myself, foaming with rage:

Red: blood, anger—mine—war, the ember that will burn you, idiot.

Orange: like a vicious Chinese mandarin ready to cut your head off.

Yellow: like my sarcastic smirk—and like the sulfur of the hell waiting for you.

Green: normally I like slipping into the green of an almond, or your brown eyes turning green after a swim in the sea, or a Colombian emerald. But now—furious—I think of mucus, vomit, hemlock, a live oyster about to be swallowed. Ugh.

Blue: the blue of flags in the sky, peace—but not mine. A bruise. The one you'll get when you trip and smash into something.

Indigo: my favorite—the deep Pacific blue in the Philippines. I relived that aborigine on his outrigger canoe, in whom I once incarnated before Fernão de Magalhães reached those shores in the name of Fernando II of Portugal. Magellan—that's not even his real name. Why do you people keep distorting them? He called them the Islands of Saint Lazarus. You can look up why they changed names. That color calmed my rage a little.

Violet: the color of death. But me—I'm immortal. Na-na-na.

Isaac, meanwhile, murmured the names like magical incantations:

"Red like the apple in my hand… orange like Barbarossa's beard… yellow like a submarine… green like spinach for Popeye… blue like the dendrobates azureus… indigo like the sails of a Pharaoh's felucca… violet like an amethyst… red, orange, yellow… again and again…"

He was sorting me like socks after laundry.

"One always goes missing," Boris would say.

“Except mine light up the world, Isaac.”

He looked up.

Isaac Newton—not yet Sir.

His powdered wig gave volume to his face. He must have been quite handsome when younger, with that cleft chin—virile—like a small butt at the bottom of his face.

I swirled through the room—splashed with color, and splashing myself with my own revealed colors.

He had discovered what I had always known:

Light is not white.

White is a lie.

Yellow and blue make green.

Red mixed with blue makes violet—the announcement of death.

He frowned, then tore off his wig in irritation.

Underneath—surprise.

A John Lennon haircut.

I nearly burst out laughing and began whistling *Across the Universe*, my favorite song—for obvious reasons.

I whispered to him, now calm:

“You see, Isaac, light doesn’t decompose. It reveals its beauty. And thanks to whom? Me.”

He had glorified me without even realizing it.

That man—he was a light. A bit thanks to me, of course. He didn’t answer. I must have offended him.

He stepped outside to relieve himself under an apple tree. He raised his right hand casually toward the sky. He was left-handed—his left hand controlled the stream so he wouldn’t piss on his boots.

So, I landed gently in his right hand—a tiny particle of light.

And—plop. A slightly overripe apple fell into it.

Apple. Palm. Apple. Palm. The echo amused me His hand trembled with surprise. He had just felt gravity—not as a law, but as a caress. There is no such thing as chance. He was born to discover gravity while taking a piss in my company. The apple didn't fall like cats and dogs. It wanted to reach his hand. It was matter's desire to be loved. I felt that shiver—the moment gravity managed to bend me ever so slightly from my path, even before Isaac discovered it.

And suddenly—he understood. In his body. The apple weighed in his palm. That weight was proof: Everything wants to fall into something. Everything attracts something else. Bodies toward the Earth. Light into your eyes. The Moon toward the sea. You—toward me, right now.

Gravity was no longer a formula.

It was an emotion. An invisible tenderness pulling beings toward each other like magnets.

Except him.

No attraction to women. No attraction to men. No wife. No husband. No lover. No hobby. No dirty websites. When you have no one to hold hands with—and nowhere to put them—you end up holding the hand of the Universe.

It's bigger.

But colder at night.

Isaac thought he had discovered a fundamental law of physics. But he had just realized that even atoms need a hug. He believed gravity was a force. A mysterious attraction between bodies. I let him believe it—for a while.

Then Einstein came along—great admirer of Newton—with his distracted violinist look and his mustache drifting in spacetime.

He corrected him:

“Gravity is not a force. It’s a curvature of spacetime. Mass tells spacetime how to curve. Objects don’t fall—they follow the curve.”

Newton might have raised an eyebrow.

I just kept spinning.

Isaac closed one hand—and his fly with the other—as if trying to hold on to the revelation. In his eyes, I saw the joy of a child discovering Santa Claus in a shop window on Christmas Eve.

His mouth opened—but no words came out.

Only a breath.

Between joy and tears.

The first love sigh of physics.

I felt he was in love with me.

Gravity doesn’t govern apples alone. It rules the entire cosmos.

It has passed through me since the beginning. It connects me to everything—stars, humans, animals, dreams.

I suppose you don’t care that the gravitational constant is 6.672×10^{-11} $N \cdot m^2/kg^2$.

Neither do I.

It looks so complicated I suspect it might even be wrong.

Probably.

So, very modestly—and in doubt, confirmed by Einstein—I’ll take my share of the credit.

It was me—the stubborn electron—who whispered the law of gravity to Newton while he was taking a piss.

In the end, he put his wig back on—as if to solemnize his discovery.

And I slipped into an indigo ray.

Serene.

My Isaac had just given birth to a universal, enduring law.

Well…

I left behind a sigh of light—a rage turned into comic-cosmic ecstasy—and drifted away, multicolored and free, convinced that light never truly breaks apart. It just enjoys dressing up.

I sped off toward my next incarnation.

I've always refused to incarnate in a toenail.

Ingrown nail—you get it.

No idea why.

The gravity of a situation—that's something else:

Hiroshima, concentration camps, and so many other places where light only exists by its absence.

The rest of the story is in the book.

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