

The mind-transfer worked.

I opened my eyes and my knees buckled. My vision was so intense, so alien, that I convulsed, vehemently, and my eyes contracted shut. My knees gave away, and I crouched, then kneeled, then spat uncontrollably into the tiled floor.

I clamped my palms on my eyes and pressed hard to deny all light, but the damage was done.

My optical nerves and all subsequent neurons were firing but they were firing in a foreign network, a foreign system. The impulses travelled across synapses and were passed to neurons my brain didn't recognize, eliciting releases of hormones and neurotransmitters in quantities my mind could not comprehend. It was like writing Shakespeare using Bengali alphabet and French phonetics.

I lost control. My palms went lax. I urinated. My gut tightened and my triceps shivered. My muscles were sending signals and stimuli to a brain that was not mine. The signals spoke of balancing, of temperature, and of sensations but they were all garbled, gibberish, alien, and strange; impossible to translate.

“Reverse it,” I wanted to say but couldn't.

I knew there were people running around, white aprons flying, tripping over wires and steel tables. But I could not feel them. My perception, my cognition was gone.

Partially, incomprehensibly, I heard Hisham shouting in a voice that wasn't his. Alexandria was crying and the mass of neurons my mind now inhabited interpreted her crying as hypocritical. Deep and hypocritical.

I did not feel the electrodes jab me, but I felt my head being yanked back. The basest animal perceptions, at least, were common throughout.

My newly-transported mind was reorienting itself. It rearranged the furniture, counted the utensils and scanned the wood for mold. It attempted to adapt itself to the new host, to seat itself among the dendrite barbs of Brian's brain and pretend it wasn't an un-consenting, hostile world tailored for and by another mind.

It was agony without pain.

My mind felt a tug. I tried to recall what that meant but couldn't. I had none of my memories here. Only the fundamentals that me and Brian shared.

Then I was back in the wires, and it was worse. The feeling, the sensation, the experience of not being un-fleshed was shattering. I was electrons in copper, current propelled solely by potential difference.

Then the machines, the processors, the semi-conductors. The buffering. I was torn; as obliterated as one can be. Torn from my body, reduced to the fundamentals of physics, and disentangled from even that. I was no longer a mind but a splatter of fragmented thoughts, a mass of swiggly lines in the peripherals of your eyes.

No mind can tolerant such recollection- except that I did not have recollection, just experience.

But then I did, and I was done.

I was flushed back into my own skull, my own brain, my own neurons, arranged and networked the way I could tolerate. I settled into my own synapses and glial cells. My dendrites sparked, lighted up. Neuron recognized neuron, mind integrated into brain, short-term memory bridged into long-term memory, and then I did have recollection.

I remembered, and I was done.

The untethered-ness -first from body then from reality- stored, recollected, and comprehended. The experiences validated.

I remembered and comprehended, and I was done.

My mind exploded.

And I was done.



