

1: La Bear & Bright Eyes

The world is parallel and it is perpendicular and it is never weaving. It is inchoate and extends its rays tangentially towards the farthest reaches of its thoughts in the most direct routes possible. Nonlight is the body of the void and hugs her daughter and son in at once a warm and at another time a cold embrace. Before this, it was Nonlight alone who bore the sorrows of infinite existence on her back and in her belly. It was out of sorrow that she created companionship and love and in so doing tipped the balance in favor of a new momentum.

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LA BEAR'S STARS

Four stars hang rhomboidally in peace within the warm black expanse of Nonlight --a chubby brick with a tongue out wagging for honey bees and buzzing moths. When Nonlight cut this beast out of her folds she gave her the name La Bear because of the way her tongue was always hanging out humming, Laaa Laaa La. Her stars were a melody composed on a blank and longing staff. She was the perfect song for Nonlight's silent drapery. Before La Bear the only sound was the staticy swish-scutting noise of felt rubbing against felt whenever the breeze blew between Nonlight's curtains. La Bear made Nonlight smile and happiness was soon known by both.

La Bear quickly grew thirsty for adventure and wanted to explore, so she set out each day to travel the expanse of Nonlight's many arms. With each journey, however, La Bear's interest waned and a gray malaise of familiarity soon creased wrinkles into her eyes. Nonlight saw this and quickly folded her skin into a smaller section than she had folded for La Bear. Though smaller, La Bear's little brother was formed from using the same series of folds Nonlight had used for La Bear, and so they looked very much the same.

Bright Eyes' stars

While Nonlight used less fabric for creating Bright Eyes than La Bear, she was far more generous with the light she infused into his skin. His eyes shone bright and to this day burn straight through this dark bandit band. But, unlike raccoons, he did not always have his bandit band. Nonlight had wanted to make a constant companion for La Bear, one whom La Bear would never lose in the dark expanse of her fullness, so she gave Bright Eyes two full glowing orbs for eyes. However, darkness fully ceased when Bright Eyes came to be because his light was so

overpowering. La Bear shut her eyes and Nonlight weakened, both stood almost powerless in awe of this blinding light. Their happiness had been harmed by their eagerness to attain more than what they already had.

Before being completely drained of her energy by the blinding light, Nonlight sheared a sheath of her fabric into a dark band and quickly wrapped Bright Eyes' luminescent orbs with it to dull their splendor. Where she tore this part of her fabric we now see the Milky Way shining through. æther

La Bear suffered in another way. As she ran from the light to the other side of the sky, where she now resides, her tail was singed to a tiny nub and it remains so to this day. In case Bright Eyes should ever lose his mask and risk blinding the world again, to this Nonlight added many more bands to his tail, which he could remove at will and use to quickly pull darkness over his eyes. Still his eyes shone through, though their light to others was now more tolerable.

The inside of Bright Eyes shined like thousands of candles and his capacity to love was equal to this brightness in its generosity. But the covering over his eyes made him be wise in who he chose to give his light to as he could only share two candles at a time. Even at night when Moon shines her fullest a lucky beast can feel the warmth of a raccoon's green candle eyes, a relict of Bright Eyes' story.

Bright Eyes' face shared the arrangement of four stars as La Bear, but he lacked a tongue and instead was endowed with two bright eyes always fixated on the planar delineations of space in Nonlight's bodice. He enjoyed the jovial singing of his older sister and to this he added the percussion of his striped tail thumping against the air rhythmically. Nonlight greatly enjoyed the music they sent forth into the æther on this, their first adventure together.

Bright Eyes and La Bear's second adventure

Fully across the expanse of Nonlight, Bright Eyes looks longingly to La Bear for a sign of motion, of life. Their first adventure – when they created music – happened as Nonlight came to motion, chilly shivers sending warmth rocking along the edges of walls and filling the hollows between. It is again now that Bright Eyes can feel the shaking, the vibration of heat, and his spirit jumps to happy conclusions and wistful ruminations of possibility. His frostbitten wintered tips sting with life as the warmth spreads.

The world still jaggedly latitudinal and jarringly longitudinal, Bright Eyes beams with excitement at the possibility harbored in each alcove and hidden specter of space beyond ridges and ledges. Over his shoulder, still trailing, follows La Bear; he slaps his tail beckoningly at her. He sees the lines composing pictures of soot-stained roofs and floors, but for the first time his light penetrates their sullied surfaces and he intuits color and texture. He yearns for a taste, but can only ask La Bear to fulfill his fantasy as she pulls up over the ridge flowing gentle and soft in his footsteps. Understanding the imploring expression trembling over his eyes, she wags her tongue over the surface of the air, she then draws her tongue back and forth over her lips in satisfaction. She had never thought to taste the æther before. As she takes another gulp she focuses on each tingling sensation of taste and follows it from her tongue up through her face and into her thoughts. As it hits the back of her mind, it reflects forward to her tongue, drawing over a blanket of ecstatic warmth and affection.

Bright Eyes looks up now and out over the polygonal landscape, his thousand candles eagerly scanning for new substances for La Bear to lick. Traipsing through the vertices and ledges of Nonlight's skin they leave a stream of ripples and curves in their wake. The landscape was changing; it was losing its linear perfection in exchange for a new curvaceous one.

Bright Eyes led the way on their adventure. Rooting through the vastness, he came across rectilinear trees and could see their veins pulsing with life. Thudding his tail against the skyscape taking form, he again beckoned La Bear to follow. As she slowly approached the first tree her guide had spotted, her tongue longingly stretched the empty distance and slowly slid along the smooth, flattened surface of its bark. As she lapped up the sap she found that her tongue left ruffles along the now uneven bark. She quickly learned to leave the young trees for they would in time yield more sap if left alone, leaving the saplings smooth and even in her absence. So she set to work on each tree Bright Eyes would spot. As her tongue attached to the bark it drew the sweet liquid away and left crevices in its stead over the whole of the tree. Her impatient tongue bent the branches, causing them to warm and tumble around each other as they tried to stay attached. Each tree she licked took its own shape while trying to hold on to itself until the whole forest looked as though it was writhing slowly in distress.

Bright Eyes then turned his attention to mountains. La Bear found these even more satisfying. They tasted of knowledge and rust and yearning. She licked endlessly, drooling streams now rivers over their topography. Her drool carved lines deeper than her tongue and soon gave rise to great channels that spilled into great pools. Along these channels La Bear began to notice more trees that, in anticipation of her tongue, grew mangled right out of the ground. The trees were trying to fool her into thinking that she had already stolen their sap. She would wait until the following year and return for both their sap and their leaves; she was not to be fooled by these plants.

And so it was that La Bear followed Bright Eyes over the folds of Nonlight in search of everything with taste and texture until the pair was so exhausted and sated that they retired to the hem of Nonlight's robe. As they lay drowsy sleepers in the felt folds of their mother's embrace, the world below took its shape. They slept on, and the trees spread and the pools widened, and the crumbs from the mountains La Bear had licked became the animals and these followed the rivers over the land.

They filled the valleys and some filled the skies while others took to the water itself.

Soon the world was flooded over with life. And the trees grew so high that they reached up into the silent snoring folds of Nonlight, which upset the deep sleep of the siblings. Such a hunger filled the belly of La Bear when she arose that she immediately fell to work in lapping up everything within her reach. The leaves of the trees fell and she ate them, the rabbits fled for cover and she slurped them up too. The clouds filled her belly as well and soon the rains stopped falling. The overfilling was her hunger and she was only sated when the world was again nearly empty.

When the world was again almost barren she grew lazy with cold and fullness and decided that when she awoke next year she would not work so hard to end her hunger. She asked Nonlight to fold the fringes of her cloth into worms and mushrooms and beetles who would eat the fallen leaves for her; she then asked Nonlight to fashion wolves from her pockets, which would eat the deer and the moose and the mice.

She asked for all of these things so that the world would not fill and fill as it had done before. Things could not live always as they had been doing while the siblings slept, so she asked for animals to be strong but to eventually die and become new life in the bellies of others. Nonlight's coat grew thin with all the new designs she began placing over the earth. For each new creature that took its place below, a hole pocked the surface of her coat and a light shone through the opening. Soon her robe was pelted with constellations of holes; some took on the form of the animals below; some stood solemn and solitary; and all stood as a reminder of a harmonious complement below dancing to the tune of La Bear and Bright Eyes' music.

The animals, however, refused to obey Nonlight and they did not die as she had asked. The hunters refused to hunt because the prey refused to be preyed upon. The wolves and foxes soon felt tiresome sleep ache their bones to bed and, as La Bear so wished for rest from her task, they too wished to do no more. They lay sedentary in fields of

azure and their eyes dipped in fountains of foam; they slept and slept and still the rabbits ran rampant over their toes and under their tails.

Bridge Glider

Knowing the love of creation and companionship, Nonlight knew also greed and a desire to fix what was already in place. By creating animals to serve La Bear's wishes she in turn created new problems she had not foreseen. Her punishment would serve to show her a way of seeing bad for what it really was and so her punishment would actually become a lesson.

All the life La Bear had desired to come to be soon filled the skies so no light reached the ground, algae swamped ponds and choked out the fish, great clouds of dust rose across the plains under buffalo stomping. La Bear again saw her hubris's impact on the world and so she besought Nonlight, who was growing thinner and thinner threatening to split with each new animal she made, to fashion a last creature that could fly over the earth and in time release each creature from life to become new again. She would make the prey preyed upon and make the predators predatory once more.

Nonlight folded this preternatural spirit from the middle of her threadbare tunic; it was nearly the last of her form still intact and she strained fragile as she imparted the threads to this new beast. As soon as its form took its first breath, it leapt from the stars and arched parabolic into the shelter of the Northern forests far away from its mother. Nonlight for the first time knew loss and she wept over this, but it was the beast's way and she was to learn that without the badness of loss there could not be the goodness of life. Loss was life and was therefore beautiful – badness was simply a misunderstanding of the terms of living.

Here in solitude away from the stars, the peripatetic figure licked at its still smoldering skin, healing wounds in sticky salve mending and

molding. Bridge Glider, as Nonlight named her, molted its chrysalis and appeared in her new furry form; the sprite soon grew wise to the sad look of a world over worn. She took pity on the sad face of Beaver, who she now watched patrolling his pond in apathetic gestures of rote boredom. Here was life's last breath distilled from sublime solutes dissolving and piston pumps pumping, all the worse for wear.

The stars in the sky

As each animal lay peaceably on the well trod stones of sleep, their dreams floated in smoky spires up to their totem stars. The story coursed through the veins of Rabbit, Coyote, Raven, and Tiger. They carried with them the æther; they carried the burning candles; they carried the deer and the wolves that had given their lives to them before they began breathing; they carried with them the burning lights; they carried also the sinuous fibers of Nonlight's torn fabric. It was all the same to them; they carried each other.