

## Floor Time

I am myself from the past.

I am lying on the floor in my unfinished living room of my apartment, and my body hurts. My lungs ache and my chest muscles are sore. I inhale. This room is a mess of partially-finished construction projects and tools. Strewn-about clothing and dust covers everything, including my small bookshelf and coffee table.

My reality is folding on itself as I lie here, not in a dramatic way, but rather, in a very banal sort of way. I am not perceiving time as I feel like I should be. I should be going about my day like any other person, like someone who worked through their day. Someone who had time to go to the store to pick up groceries, plan out dinner with their family, leisure time, bed time.

But here, where I am lying, my arms flat against the cold, flaky linoleum floor, my face laying sideways in a thin layer of concrete dust, time isn't working quite right and I am alone. I want the minutes to pass in a measurable way; a predictable, logical method, like I'm used to. Where one minute takes the same amount of time as the minute before, the same for the previous. But I can't make it work. That logical, measuring part of my brain isn't functioning for me and I feel crazy.

I lift my arm from the floor and reach for my phone a few feet away. I check my phone's clock: 3:37 PM. Okay, it's like three-thirty or whatever, mid-afternoon, almost evening? I put my head back to the center of the floor and look up at the white ceiling, old paint is peeling away from the wood in the corners. I check again a couple minutes later, 4:56. That's frustrating. I didn't even notice the sun move.

Panic hits me because I was brought up in a way that valued productivity in time. Not that my family was so specifically eager to uphold these parts of our cultural capitalism, but I am a product of my culture at large, and my culture tells me that I am valued by how hard I work, and how much I can get done in a certain amount of *time*. I have not yet fully deconstructed that philosophy. My body is a vessel for work and my hands get beaten down physically, but mostly they recover in time for the next project.

My days are leaving me behind. I am 27 now. I turned 27 a few weeks ago, several months ago. yesterday. What have I achieved in that amount of time? I can't remember. Last year I was 24. I got a lot done in that time, but I have become a different person many times.

Where I am living now, my new home, is a lot more complete and livable now. It wasn't like that 4 months ago. Yet I am still face down in construction particles, my sore fingers and wrists to the side, my chest weighed down by the hours and the years. The minutes tick in my heart. Everything is fine. I'm alright because I'm almost finished with the table I'm working on and just added a new finish to it. I got *something* done. The afternoon sun hits the surface in a way that brings out a beautiful golden color that reflects a new warmth onto the walls. I ordered the new table legs for it and they will be here Wednesday, six days from now. It's 5:01 now. I wonder if time slowed down for me because I was thinking about my projects.

What will I do until Wednesday arrives? I'm not sure, I suppose I will find the distractions that allow me to not look so deeply at the minutes as they bounce around. But I do know that after that, I'll have a nice table that I'm going to load up with just a bunch of things that I own, and it will sit like that for months. Progress. The dust will build once again. I was a child once.

Tomorrow, I'll be in Mexico, three years in the future, sitting in a beach-side hut. The salted ocean wind blows on my side. and I contain a sense of airy presence, wondering slightly about how I got here. It's not of huge concern because the waves keep rolling in, keeping track of me.

But right now it is 5:55 and the evening sun still envelops my room, illuminating my life in pieces, casting shadows in the dust. And time, I'm pretty sure, still moves forward, despite my uncertainty and my fears. I'll be lying on the floor until the sun goes down, looking through listings for used wristwatches on my phone.