



1999

Best Man

J. D. Head

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Above me, thin and stretched on bony poles—
But in my head I see it,
Glowing coldly on the tops of hills
And lining distant mountain ridges.

Beside me lie three bodies, still;
And only I awake to hear
The howl of the wind, a toothless wolf
Whose wailing breath sometimes devours mountains
And to feel his giant slinky body brush against the tent.
He frames us now between his monstrous paws.
A single swat could set us bouncing
Off the canyon walls.
But he will not —
Tonight, he is just playing.

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Standing there, sweating, nervous, so so proud
watching him watching as the formal chords sound
When suddenly, in a white dress, life appears at the
top of the stairs and pauses, shining face and
eyes almost painfully bright, painfully happy – beautiful
And it seems for one second that the whole congregation
and the whole sanctuary and the whole world bend right around
and bow to this neutron star of happiness
True angel shining Life turns and slowly, weighing every step,
drifts down to Father God and softly slips her arm into his
looking one last time into his eyes as his
then turning, and trying to go slowly, but (even from here)
RUSH is evident in her pores, demanding him
down an impossible aisle of rose petals
down the long ancient aisle of birth
I stand and watch him watching, wishing I could see his face
wishing I could know what he is feeling... and my whole face
my whole body feels like it will just crack from the joy and awe at
this moment of being when a man takes life
takes life by the hand and says, "I do."