

Placebo

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Link: <https://youtu.be/ebINAZZ-XhE>

Artist's Statement

The story can be interpreted in a few different ways. The main story without the details are as below:

The man is unhappy about his life. One day he got up and decided to change, and so he goes into the forest to find the forest spirit. He wishes to exchange lives with the forest spirit, but when he reaches out his hands for a handshake, they realise they are not able to, as their hands are not facing the right direction. The man closes his eyes and passes on. When he opens his eyes again, they can finally shake hands, and their lives have flipped. The man has become the forest spirit, and the spirit has become the man. As time goes by, the now man spirit experiences the same reality as the original man, and the story repeats itself once again.

The in between dark swirly image is a reference to phosphenes, a phenomenon of seeing a ring or a spot of light when there is none. People have this experience when they put pressure on the eyes or direct stimulation of the visual system other than by light. The green and purple swirls are my version of phosphenes, it is what I see when I rub my eyes for quite a long time. The interchanging display of the eyes and the phosphenes can be implied as both when the man sleeps or blinks. Therefore the time intervals between each change is interpreted by the viewers, as the man feeling pressure all the time, or every time when he rests. The time passed in the first act could be years, or just one day.

When the man is flipped upside down, I first show it by zooming in on his face. Since the eyes are originally slanted down, naturally it seems like a sad face. When the entire person is flipped, the shape of the shape changes as well. Before I show the full picture, it almost seems like the man is happy, as the eyes are now slanted upwards. The original grey eyes have a reflection of something that seems like a city, it gives a little context on where the man comes from. When the man is flipped, only the color changes to convey the change of environment, the reflection in the

man's eyes did not, as both the city and the forest have similar large vertical structure. The reflection can be seen as both buildings and trees.

Before the man flips himself upside down, there is a short moment of phosphenes, i.e. when he closes his eyes. I did not specify how he did that, therefore in that short moment, I would like the viewers to fill it in themselves. It could be that the man died, or is flipped by magic, etc., but ultimately he has given up his past to move on to a new one.

Handshakes are originally to show that the person is not holding any weapon, it is a gesture of peace, at the same time it is a brief gesture for greetings and parting. This shows that in that world, man and nature are not enemies, they have no quarrels with each other like we do. This might strike a question, why did the man leave the city, if he might not have hated city life? The man's and the spirit's encounter is quick, the single handshake is both a greeting and a parting. They seem to know each other's existence and are swift with the situation.

Both the man and spirit have at least one thing unusual about them. The man's hand is upside down and he has 2 right hands; the spirit is not upside down like the other spirit. This could mean they don't fit in their own respective lives. Maybe this is a clue to why this encounter happened.

In the wide shot of the forest, other spirits can be seen upside down in the frame. They could be seen as just watching, or possibly waiting, yet the main spirit is on the ground unlike the others. It could mean that the spirit is in the same situation as the man, just trying to get out. Possibly the spirit is grounded, and the man is in the situation because he wants an ascension. After watching my sequence for the first time, you would know that the man might once be a spirit and vice versa. The other spirits being present in the frame could mean this has happened many times. If you look up close, I gave the man green eyes and the spirit grey eyes in the wide shot. If you implied it that way, they might even be doing this on purpose, to trade mortality so that they can both live forever, as men are mortals and are trying to prevent death; spirits are immortal but they yearn for the human experience of growing old.

After the flip, I picked daffodils to represent the spirit and the watch for the man, which now their rows are reversed. Daffodils are a traditional symbol for rebirth. The now spirit man is reborn from his past self, from the broken watch he once wore, their identities are now combined as one. Yet not even the spirit can escape time, even when he is reborn cannot prevent the both of them from aging, being satisfied or simply being alive. The daffodil withers from time to time and slowly the phosphenes from the background become more and more noticeable.

Image used:

