

Best is Man's Breath Quality
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LEO:

Every time you take a breath, it is an absolute certainty that you are inhaling some carbon dioxide that your mother exhaled during your birth.

Carbon dioxide hangs around. Other things fall onto the earth. The earth continues to get heavier.

I am 103 years old, so I don't sleep well, but when I do I see the dead. I am a jellyfish, and for a jellyfish 103 is pretty young. My mother was born 600 million years ago. I contain an array of toxins that are representative of those found in organisms throughout nature, from pathogenic bacteria to cobras. I'm not separate or simple. I'm part of you. I'm the invisible part. The deadly part. You call me Chironex Fleckeri, but my friends call me Leo. Sometimes people refer to me as Sea Wasp, or Box Jellyfish. My 60 ribbon-like tentacles grow longer than nine feet. And each is equipped with what scientists call, the most explosive evenomation process presently known to humans. I'm two things you already know combined into something unknowable, or I'm three things you already know combined into something unknowable.

I stung a professor at the University of Hawaii once. When she was able to speak again, she said "I've been hit by a car, broken multiple bones, and had three children, all by natural childbirth, but this was far worse than anything I've experienced before. My lungs were filling with fluid and it felt like burning hot needles were stuck in my neck. The weirdest part of it was this overwhelming sense of impending doom.

I don't have a brain like you do. Does that make me stupid? My intelligence is in my body. My nervous system is capable of learning, memory, and complex behaviors such as avoiding obstacles and swimming in unusual patterns to catch prey. I weigh about four pounds but I have enough venom to kill 90-120 humans. I kill way more people than sharks do.

I'm happy in water. I'm fluent in the liquidity of language. What is the difference between fluency and articulation? When one is fluent, he can endlessly arrange the terms like blocks on a table. But when one is articulate, he can describe shapes that

are unseen using the shapes on the table as a way to communicate to others who are familiar with those shapes. I prefer to live in a world where the invisible is made visible, where people care to look inward before looking outward. But I'm talking about humans specifically. I'm translucent. With me, there's nothing to hide. I am unburdened by secrets. I'm hidden in plain sight. When I look at my friends and family, I see the world through their bodies. I float along just like a water lily.

You are a product of the 19th century. You believe that sadness implies goodness, and suffering implies purity, and you think that when you find someone who is sick in the head they must be good because they've suffered.

Imagine a painting of a great battle. Even if the artist has chosen his perspective with care and captures much of the action, he still necessarily sees what he sees from only one point of view, whereas God sees the battle through the eyes of every man, every horse, every mouse, and every grain of earth and air. Your primate eyes, both facing in the same direction, sometimes seem to me a great hinderance to sympathy. It's easy for me to imagine a fearful creature like a thrush, whose eyes are on opposite sides of its' head, having a much softer heart.

I wore an Oculus Rift recently, and it made me think about how silly all our technological innovation towards perceptual advancement are. Perception doesn't happen in the eyes. Where does perception happen?

Physical discomfort is a way to experience humanity. Why do some people permanently frown? Why do people develop certain wrinkles, a furrowed brow? Why do people hold tension in their shoulders and backs, and do these habitual tensions also manifest on the inside? Are your livers furrowed like your brows? Does your heart have a groove in it from where it was badly broken? Why in certain situations do you hold your breath and forget you have legs?

Jellyfish can't sing. Water moves through us, not air. Best is man's breath quality. My detractors may call me spineless, as if lacking a spine is weak, but I wouldn't trade one tentacle for all your back problems. One day we may wash upon the shore. If we die in the water, our friends will deliver teary eulogies that are immediately mingled with the sea.

Liver.

I don't have a liver but I live, luckily. Luckily is a breath of perfume that comes out when you press the pump.