

Fly

The tightrope walker looked around. He was alone. The circus mats, an usual shade of blue, stretched out in all directions, occasionally bubbled badly, looking exactly like the ocean in every respect. It was enough to make the tightrope walker's stomach turn again, the last revolution it permitted. The tightrope walker's eyes bulged. His elbows were no longer controllable for him, but rather began spinning impossibly, like propellers on some ramshackle last hoorah seaplane, piloted by good old boys, fishing, forgetting their former lives in the auto plant. To his terrified surprise, but also giddy elation, the tightrope walker's feet left the ground, almost kissing it goodbye as the tightrope walker's ascending body slowly pulled them forever free of the earth. He soared into the middle air of the great orange and yellow striped tent, steering beautiful figure eights around the two support poles, which swelled like over-watered trees, growing upward from the ocean, but also a hundred yards apart from each other. The tightrope walker's face was flush. He raised and lowered his extended arms only slightly, accomplishing the most precise, but free, turns in the air, as if his arms, not his feet, had been the stars of his acrobat life to that point. He pretended he was holding his balancing pole. The image of it glistened in his mind, like a precious bar of platinum, so strongly his hands actually felt it despite its absence. It wasn't long before the tightrope walker's satisfaction with the confines of the circus tent ended and he wanted to fly out through the twin folds of canvas strung before the only door. He couldn't find that portion, saw stripe after stripe with no break, no deformity. Ocean. Stripes. Ocean. The tightrope walker's vision caved in and exploded, like a supernova born of a collapsing star (that turns out to be a great brain in space). Everything that was individual repeated into countless multiple images of itself, a kaleidoscope of overlapping monotony. Ocean Ocean Ocean. Stripes Stripes. Stripes. Ocean. Ocean Ocean. Stripes. The tightrope walker's arms warped the most in that field of altered vision. He saw not propellers, but the feeblest trace of paper-thin wings, like wax paper affixed before a powerful fan. These appendages emitted an incredible buzzing sound that permeated the tightrope walker's brain all the way down to the stem, which itself appeared to be buzzing. The tightrope walker landed a wall of canvas, clinging sideways to it without effort, rubbing his forward-most limbs together incessantly.