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The Race

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The Race

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"The road stretches before me into the seemingly endless night. The moon high above my head, casts light to illuminate my way. I am running..."

Cover Page Footnote

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The Race

The road stretches before me into the seemingly endless night. The moon high above my head, casts light to illuminate my way. I am running. . .

Behind me the footsteps of others fall on the rock-strewn pavement. I will not--I cannot force myself to look back. I must run and run and run. My pace does not lessen but quickens as the road races upward. It becomes rougher, rockier in the cold light.

But I must rest now, I cannot continue as I am. My breath comes short and in quick gasps, my lungs heave and my heart cries for peace. . . I fall exhausted on the dew-wet grass that lines the road. Those behind me catch up, quicken their pace, and pass by me in the night.

A man collapses beside me, his sweating face barely silhouetted in the falling light. He lies still with only the sound of his rasping breath breaking the utter quiet of the now soundless night. He rolls over and looks at me with sad, questioning eyes and asks why I, too, am here.

"I am tired. . . I am resting. . . I will start again soon. . ."

"I will go no further. . . I am through. . . I am too tired to continue. But you go on. You run until you fall again. Not I. . . not I. . ."

On again now, my steps are stronger and quick. The muffled sound of living tears fades behind me as

I race to regain my lead. Far ahead the figures profile themselves against the setting moon. My being is nothing but power and speed. Nothing can stop me in my furious chase. A step, a foot, a yard and I am closer. Nearer I come; they seem to be tiring! Run harder, faster than they. There, ha! one falls! I pass him as he rolls by me. The next is not far ahead. You! Trip! fall! stumble! stop! Roll helplessly back. I smell the dank scent of sweat as I pass him. But who is that in the distance? He seems faster than the others. Run harder. . .

In the chill of dawn I feel hot breath on my shoulder. He tries to pass by me but he cannot. . . I am more experienced than he. See? I am gaining the lead. . . only a bit more and I will be ahead. Do not beat so, my heart; do not ache so, my lungs; the sun will rise soon.

You there, ahead of me, wait, I must tell you of what is to come. I must tell you of this endless road, of its ruts and pitfalls, of how to run it. Slow down, there is so far to go. Let me lead you into the dawn,

we must arrive before it is light. No? You will not?
Run then, run until I catch and pass you.

Blinding pain sears me like a white hot iron.
My leg, bent and broken, crumbles under me. My body
begins to roll down the hill, gains speed with each
tortured revolution. . . I become dizzy with the
speed. Above me the moon reels in the dying night.
Down I roll, I cannot stop. . . I hear the laughter of
those I have passed as I plunge helplessly back.
There is neither darkness nor light. . .

A. M. FISHER