

Till We Have Faces

by [James LePore](#) (November 2018)



Till We Have Faces, James LePore

When the time comes to you at which you will be forced at last to utter the speech which has lain at the center of your soul for years, which you have, all that time, idiot-like, been saying over and over, you'll not talk about the joy of words. I saw well why the gods do not speak to us openly, nor let us answer. Till that word can be dug out of

*us, why should they hear the babble that we think we mean?
How can they meet us face to face till we have faces? –C.S.
Lewis, Till We Have Faces.*

Who are you?

I don't know.

Why don't you know who you are? You must have a name.

I have a name, but it's not who I am.

Can I take your picture?

Yes.

Don't look at me. (I had already taken a dozen pictures of her, from afar. Now I took a few more, up close).

Do you want me to send you a print?

No.

Where do you live?

Here.

In the park?

At the moment.

Where do you sleep?

Wherever I am when I'm tired.

Did you see the naked guy yesterday?

Yes.

What do they do with a person like that?

I don't know.

It's beautiful here, but the city's got its problems.

Why are you talking to me?

You're here every day. I think you're sad. Are you?

Yes, but I'm coming to the end of it.

How do you know?

You came over to talk to me.

(Stop the action, pause to think about this).

Continue: Do you want some lunch? (I had half of a ham and cheese sandwich in my jacket pocket).

I'm fasting.

Fasting? Why?

So I can find out who I am.

What will happen when you find out?

I will see God.

Will God see you?

Yes. We will come face to face.

Will you talk?

Yes.

About what?

The naked man in the park.

The guy from yesterday?

Yes.

Why him?

I think he was sent by God.

Why do you think that?

He told me that when the man taking my picture talked to me, it was time for me to leave.

(Stop the action. Pause to think about this).

Continue: What are you reading?

She showed me the cover of the book. *Till We Have Faces*.

Will you be here tomorrow?

No.

Can I take you dancing?

She smiled. *No, but thank you for asking.* I think she was crying too.

Note: *The Jains have a religious ritual, called Santhara, of leaving the body by fasting. Due to the prolonged nature of santhara, the individual is given ample time to reflect on his or her [life](#). The vow of Santhara is taken when one feels that one's life has served its purpose, or a person has no wishes/ambition/desires left, and no responsibilities remaining in life. It is also allowed in cases of terminal disease or great disability. The purpose is to purge old karmas and prevent the creation of new ones.*

James LePore practiced law for twenty-plus years, then turned to writing fiction and taking pictures full time in 1999. In 2009, his first novel, *A World I Never Made*, was published by The Story Plant. Four others, in what LePore calls The Invictus Cycle followed. He has written a book of short stories called *Anyone Can Die*, a volume of flash fiction (*Blood, Light and Time*) that evolved from a series of blog posts, and three historical novels with the screenwriter Carlos Davis, featuring J.R.R. Tolkien and Ian Fleming in WW2 espionage adventures. His most recent books are the novellas *Breathe in Grace* and *Eyes of a Wolf*. His website is [here](#).

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