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### **Author's note on *Take Back Your Name!***

Since we are citizens of “national” entities, are eyes and ears considered “National Property”? Can they be liberated from “national security” functions? Also, does the personal name signify the “nation state”?

「とりもどせ！」について

「国籍」があるわれわれは、目と耳は「国用財産」だろうか。「国家安全保障」の利用から解放されるだろうか。氏名も国家の記号だろうか。

**About the author:** Adam Lebowitz teaches at the University of Tsukuba.



## Sea of Walls

**Laura Acosta**

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It's always fine and dandy to be alone until someone comes in and messes it all up. I know this because it happened to me. How unfortunate I was that day to wake up in my little empty corner of the world and find a presence beside mine. That stupid smile. That stupid, beautiful sleepy smile gazing at me like nothing in the world could matter more than the bags under my eyes. I knew then that the notion of comfort I had built around my solitude was about to crumble like an overthrown tyranny and be quickly replaced by a junta of sappy feelings generated by that sight. You may wonder how this came to happen. Or maybe not—because you already know the script to these encounters—, and I don't blame you. After all, love stories are pretty much funnel-shaped: initial circumstances may vary enormously, but in

the end they all result in the same doe-eyed hypnosis. And let's not talk about heartbreak—that's just mass-produced.

In spite of this ever-repeating pattern, we people in love have an annoying tendency to desperately want to tell the world what sets our story apart from the rest. As I have said before, love's procedures all tend to be similar—hands clasped together like two halves of an oyster, kisses like cherries—, but those who fall victim to the addiction to another person think not only that this is their first experience of it—no matter how many times they've already had it before—, but also the first case ever seen in the history of humanity. This is how I felt when I bumped into those enormous eyes that morning.

If I had to explain this occurrence—or if I succeeded at persuading you to listen to my selfish account—, I would talk about a brick in a sea of walls. A sea of walls extending far beyond the horizon. Some would call it a

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maze. Even Icarus came to know it by that name. I, however, call it the city. The city and its fixed fortresses, criss-crossed by moving gray blocks, walking, breathing pieces of concrete. Knock on one of them and you might get a howl, something helplessly trapped in it like Poe's cat. If somebody dared disrupt your square existence with a fistful of sound you would probably react with a shrill as well. It sounds grim, but it's actually easy for you to live amid such a scene because it's the only thing you know. The best of all possible worlds, as Dr. Pangloss would say. But think for one second: what if one day something disrupted the monochrome continuity of these lanes? An uncanny shape, an object so foreign it's familiar. You don't know why, but a sudden urge to follow it arises. This could be regarded—at least by you—as a reaction of sheer curiosity towards an alteration in the cubic landscape. Thus comes a grinding sound, cement upon cement, as you begin to trail painfully behind this fascinating intruder. As you drag yourself around, your path forever changed, you long for easier days when there was no distraction, just you and the city, and you try to come to peace with your formerly lonesome self by bringing a rational approach to the disturbance.

At some point, though, you must realize that the mere examination of the foreigner's intrinsic properties is quite a pointless reason

to tag along. No matter how well you are able to describe this most wanted stranger and hypothesize which of its features attracted you to it, you simply cannot explain how is it that it has come to irradiate a sense of transformation all around you. The gritting sounds are gone, and you are no longer crawling, but blissfully walking. You discover that by its side you are no longer a brick, and the city is no longer a cinder-colored labyrinth. Now tell me, does any of this sound familiar to you? Have you ever felt something like this? Surely you have, although perhaps you'd describe it in other terms. In my case... I probably have, too, more than once before this time. It doesn't matter, though. Love is the oldest theme in every form of human expression, and yet it will never cease to surprise us when we encounter it. Love has a way of revealing the universe as if it had been just created again from scratch. For us, in a certain way it has.

In the end, I don't have to explain much about an unexpected smile welcoming me back to the world one morning. This is all to say that I, too, have fallen in love.

*(for J.)*

**About the author:** Laura Acosta was miraculously teletransported from Colombia to Japan a couple of years ago. After regaining consciousness she became a student at the University of Tsukuba.

