

O-BLOCK

Written by

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"My whole body, see through" - Frank Ocean

Address  
Phone Number

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Meander down an outstretched roadside as frayed forms of looming trees and suburban houses pass; their details thinned within granular, light-speckled, super 8 film.

The click-click-clicking of an unreliable lighter scores the scene and interrupts the placid, roaming image with loose sparks of light, superimposed.

Click. Click.

EXT. STOOP - NIGHT

A flame flickers.

TOMI, a slender, twenty-year-old with a hard, self-serious face and skin the color of coal, enters the frame from the top corner, curling towards the fire to light the cigarette hanging loosely from his plump lips.

As he does, we steadily turn from his profile to a central image so close that it depicts only his wide-set nose, lips, and burning cigarette butt.

FOCUS on the cigarette as he inhales and switch as he exhales capturing the winsome way that smoke wafts in open air.

Click. Click.

SAM (O.S)

This fucking thing isn't working.

PULL BACK and SLIDE left, towards SAM, a scruffy dirty-blonde with piercing baby blues, as Tomi turns his head coolly, handing Sam his lit cigarette.

SETTLE beside the pair, upon the stoop's dusty stairs, as Sam lights and exhales.

He runs a hand through his hair, enjoying the sudden rush of nicotine.

SAM (CONT'D)

You know, and maybe you believe it  
and maybe you don't, but there were  
moments there...

MOVE around Sam's shoulder, landing behind the pair framing them on opposite sides of the gate in the distance.

SAM (CONT'D)

There were moments there where we were really happy.

The warm, ambient score floods in signaling the beginning of a fast cut, panning MONTAGE:

- **Morning**, the pair laughs upon the stoop in boxers.
- **Night**, Sam cries as Tomi wraps his arms around him.
- **Morning**, Tomi yells as Sam listens.
- **Night**, Tomi punches Sam in the arm.
- **Morning**, The pair shotgun beers.
- **Night**, The pair howl at the moon.
- **Morning**, The pair struggle to light their cigarettes.
- **Night**, The pair get up to go into the house.

Through wire and shrubbery, A POV: Tomi and Sam walk onto the stoop for their morning cigarette.

FROM ABOVE, descend on the pair as TOMI glances and moves the cigarette packet from his lap to a stoop stair. Sam chatters through this, his vocals muffled underneath the music.

SAM (CONT'D)

It's like a butterfly right? You hold out your palm and it sits.

The screen cuts to black--- TITLE CARD: O-BLOCK

SAM (V.O.)

And sometimes, sometimes you get so excited that you curl up your fingers and crush it.

Silence.

TOMI (V.O.)

D'you ever wonder if some people are meant to be alone?

EXT. STOOP - NIGHT

CLOSE on an open cigarette packet resting open a stairs' edge. Tomi's hand falls into frame, grasping for a fix.

He grabs a dart and we RISE, following his arm as it folds towards his mouth. Profile.

Cut out to an ABOVE from a diagonal angle, receding slightly, shirking Tomi within the image as he lights.

CLOSE as he exhales.

TOMI  
(exhaling)  
There can't be someone for  
everybody, right? Doesn't make  
sense. I mean monks exist, nuns?

Click. Click.

Tomi sits, hunched over his cigarette, with the background blurred. SWITCH FOCUS as Sam leans forward.

SAM  
(exhaling)  
You're gonna be a monk?

MOVE to center the pair and continue on until we see Tomi from Sam's perspective.

TOMI  
It wouldn't be so bad. Reading,  
writing, living away from...*people*.

SAM  
(nodding, inhaling)  
Uh huh.

TOMI  
You could humor me, you know. Kinda  
mid-crisis.

INT. WHITE WALL - DAY

BANJO, a curly-haired red head with dazzling, multi-colored eyes, sips on a drink whilst looking directly at the camera. Her face fills the frame.

SAM (V.O.)  
Think she'll show tonight?

TOMI (V.O.)  
(quivering)  
Please no.

Underneath her image, in small, red, subtitle script appears:  
Fuck that bitch.

SAM (V.O.)  
 You guys were friends though,  
 Before everything.

INT. WHITE WALL - NIGHT

CLOSE on Banjo through a VHS, tracking every shift and sway of her movement.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)  
 How'd you two meet?

BANJO  
 Tomi and I?

She smiles and leans against the wall behind her.

BANJO (CONT'D)  
 We met, um,---

She laughs.

BANJO (CONT'D)  
 It's funny cause it's such a  
 classic freshman thing---we met at  
 a dining hall.

INT. DINING HALL - DAY

A time lapse of people walking through the dining hall,  
 jumping from angle to angle.

BANJO (V.O.)  
 He sits next to me, wearing this  
 all black get up---

Tomi's eyes appear at the top of the screen. He raises his  
 head in greeting. Banjo's appear below and crease as she  
 smiles. The time lapse continues between them.

BANJO (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 and we start talking about laundry?  
 He said, He said---

PROFILE on Tomi, framing him from the mouth down as his lips  
 move.

BANJO (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 (in Tomi's voice)  
 I think people think I'm cool cause  
 I wear all black, but it's mostly  
 to avoid laundry.  
 (MORE)

BANJO (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(beat)

I guess I'm scared of ruining things.

PAN slowly to the opposite end of the table, framing Banjo in a manner similar to Tomi. She puts her hand over her mouth as she laughs.

INT. WHITE WALL - NIGHT

Banjo looks away from the camera, lost in the memory.

BANJO

He was very charming.

She smiles.

BANJO (CONT'D)

Confident, for sure. And sweet. He's always been very sweet.

A ponderous silence. She turns to the camera.

BANJO (CONT'D)

Did I answer the question?

EXT. STOOP - NIGHT

HOLD---Silhouettes against night, Sam and Tomi rest upon the stoop. Sam, continuing his tenure, sits at the head of the stairs whilst Tomi, who has migrated below, stretches his legs out into a horizontal lounge.

Sam lights a cigarette. It's fiery color adopts singular glow, staining our darkened backdrop with a spot of orange.

SAM

Down for another?

TOMI

Sure.

Sam throws the packet down. Tomi catches it and adds an orange spot of his own to the composition.

A MEDIUM on Tomi as he rests his head against a wooden fence. He inhales as he ponders.

TOMI (CONT'D)

We were friends.

SAM (O.S.)

Yeah, well---I mean, then it's  
chill right? Maybe you just go back  
to being friends?

Tomi chuckles.

TOMI

Why? So she can tell me about all  
the guys she's seeing? All the non-  
complete-fucking-disaster dates she  
goes on?

(beat)

No.

Tomi inhales. Push in.

TOMI (CONT'D)

No, that would kill me.

He shakes his head and begins to chuckle.

TOMI (CONT'D)

I really fucked this one up, didn't  
I? Fucked it up *real* good.

SAM'S POV, FROM ABOVE: Tomi sits at the bottom corner of the  
stairs.

TOMI (CONT'D)

It'd be impressive if it wasn't so  
sad.

Sam stand into frame, shoulders first. He moves towards Tomi.

From an angle just beside Tomi's feet, Sam walks down the  
stairs, backlight and ethereal.

SAM

I can't see you like this, dude. No  
fucking way.

Sam sits beside Tomi and throws an arm around his friend's  
shoulder.

SAM (CONT'D)

Let's just have fun at this party,  
We'll get a little hammered, maybe  
talk to some chicas. A little fool--

-

Sam points to himself then throws some light punches at  
Tomi's chest.



EDDIE  
 (in Spanish)  
 Don't go running around these  
 streets embarrassing us.

CLOSE on his face, moving swiftly from a central image to a profile as he smokes from a folded position; His head hangs between his splayed legs, his arms, moving gingerly, appear flaccid and lifeless.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 "Love is blind but the neighbors  
 are not, miho." Don't bring shame  
 to this house.

EDDIE'S POV: Tomi and Sam walk into their home.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 I wonder what they think of me.

EXT. EDDIE'S HOME - DAY

From a distance, watch as Eddie wheels a 'barrow across his front yard. An ambient, electronic score swells in here and pulses throughout.

Cut in CLOSE, stuttering along as we overlook a wheelbarrow approaching the muted gleam of a mid-afternoon sun. Eddie's panting cuts through the music.

EXT. EDDIE'S GARDEN - DAY

Brown hands twist and turn within a green, unkept garden.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
 Me, with my calloused hands.

RISE to Eddie's face as he wipes his brow.

EXT. EDDIE'S BACKYARD - DAY

Eddie walks into frame as we PUSH IN towards an open toolshed within a backyard lined with crushed beer-cans.

PAUSE, allowing Eddie walk deeper into the frame. Before entering the shed, he squats down to tie his shoe-laces.

He stands again and retrieves a hammer. CLOSE as he test swings.

One.

Two.

The hammer hits a nail.

Again. Again.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
And blistered fingers.

Turn to Eddie as he raises the hammer for a final strike. HOLD on him, shifting back to accommodate his forward motion, as the hammer falls.

The score cuts out. His face twists in pain.

EDDIE  
FUCK.

INT. EDDIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

HOLD on a bruised finger held out, hovering above a wooden table. LUNA, Eddie's large, latino wife, leans into frame and dabs the wound with disinfectant. Eddie winces.

LUNA  
(in spanish)  
This is the second time this week,  
Eduardo.

EDDIE'S POV: CLOSE on Luna as she cleans the wound. The light above her blanches her hair. She looks to her husband, glowing.

LUNA (CONT'D)  
(in english)  
You've got to be more careful.

WIDE, PANNING--- Luna stands over Eddie, tending to his finger behind a table, empty except for a pack of kiddie plasters.

EDDIE  
(in spanish)  
I've been a little...distracted.

LUNA  
Distracted? Is that what you call  
it?

Eddie winces with more fervor.

LUNA (CONT'D)  
We're *almost* done, ya big baby.

A low angle, framing the two from the legs up, as Luna grabs a plaster off the table.

She presses the plaster against Eddie's finger.

LUNA (CONT'D)  
 There. All better.  
 (beat)  
 Want me to kiss it?

EDDIE (V.O.)  
 A man is nothing without his work.

Eddie nods. Luna obliges.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Luna and Eddie sway along to an old tune, body to body, within their dimly lit living room, flowing back and forth, in a manner similar to a tide, between the border of a door frame and a white wall.

APPROACH as they speak sweet nothings in hushed tones, as they leave quick, melting kisses upon each other's lips.

As the kisses grow in strength and passion, Eddie leans forward causing an equal but opposite reaction in Luna. Her leg pops.

EXT. EDDIE'S HOME - DAY

EDDIE'S POV: Teo's smiling face as he spins his son around, holding onto his arms.

Eddie walks ahead as his son straddles his shoulders, reaching upward, grasping for the sun. Something outside the image diverts Eddie's attention. He turns his head and beams.

Teo runs towards us as another boy, hot on his heels, chases after him. Teo makes a sharp left as we PULL BACK revealing a circle of seated children.

EDDIE (V.O.)  
 And those to share the fruits of  
 his labour.

WIDE, SLIDING---the entire front yard opens up to us, Teo and other children play duck-duck-goose in corner whilst, on the porch, Eddie sits on a comfy chair with a beer in hand and his wife on his lap.

CLOSE on Eddie as he takes a large swig of his beer.

EXT. EDDIE'S PORCH - NIGHT

EDDIE'S POV: He smashes a beer bottle against a supporting beam and stumbles up the stairs toward the porch.

The screen splits into four.

**Screen one:** Eddie teeters forward, in slowed motion, fighting an age old battle between drunks and the floor, against a blue-tinted background.

**Screen two:** Eddie teeters backwards in the same manner against a background morphed purple.

**Screen three:** Eddie teeters forwards against pink.

**Screen four:** Backwards, red.

WIDE---Eddie falls against a supporting beam and slides down. He rests at the bottom corner of the natural frame.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Black.

A silver sliver appears at the opposite side of the room; light filtering in as the door opens.

Eddie slips in, quiet as he can, and heads for the stairs.

A voice erupts from our side of the room---

LUNA (O.S.)  
(in spanish)  
It's three in the morning.

Eddie runs his hands through his hair.

EDDIE  
Three? Christ, Luna. I'm, I'm  
sorry. We---I, fuck, lost track of  
time---

LUNA (O.S.)  
Don't give me that shit.

A light flickers on. Luna stands, covering half the image. Eddie is seen, just over her shoulder, recoiling from glare.

Luna moves towards him.

LUNA (CONT'D)

Tell me, Ed. What does a married man get up to till three am, hmm?

EXT. BACKYARD PARTY - NIGHT

Center on a champagne glass filled to the rim with bubbly. Behind the glass, out of focus, are blurs of bodies shifting about. Two blurs standing, at a distance, on either side of the glass are in the midst of a muffled conversation, muffled further by low-fi, indie music.

REFOCUS on the figures, revealing Tomi and Banjo.

BANJO

How's the short?

TOMI

It's going okay so far, I think.

BANJO

That's good.

TOMI

Yeah...how's acting?

BANJO

Writing.

TOMI

Oh.

BANJO

Switched to narrative studies, I still act though.

(beat)

Sometimes.

Cut. The glass between the two is now empty and their awkward small talk has become a flailing, visceral.

BANJO (CONT'D)

So that's how you treat people? At arms length, so that they don't---

TOMI

You're the one that wanted to be friends! This is friendship!

Silence as anger dissipates into hurt.

BANJO  
 (voice cracking)  
 You know, I was really excited to  
 come tonight. I thought---

Banjo sighs, shaking her head.

BANJO (CONT'D)  
 I'm so stupid.

TOMI  
 (softening)  
 No, look, I'm---

BANJO  
 I thought we could pretend.  
 (beat)  
 I thought 'Tomi's such a great guy.  
 He didn't mean it. He as pushy,  
 sure but what he said, what he did,  
 he didn't mean it.'

TOMI  
 I didn't---I'm, I'm sorry. I just---  
 (beat)  
 I'm trying, Banj. I'm trying real  
 hard To fix whatever's broken  
 between us. I'm drinking less, I'm  
 trying to be kinder, more mindful---

BANJO  
 I know you are, Tomi. I know. And I  
 hope you find peace. I really do.  
 But I can't wait around till that  
 happens.  
 (beat)  
 You aren't who I thought you  
 were...There's no apologizing for  
 that.

Silence. Tomi looks the ground. Banjo turns her hand over and  
 checks her watch.

BANJO (CONT'D)  
 I'm gonna go, okay?

TOMI  
 (to the ground)  
 Yeah.

Banjo nods and walks deep into the frame, melding into a  
 blurred palette of people, as Tomi looks at the camera.

TOMI (CONT'D)  
THE FUCK ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

He looks away from us, embarrassed.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Screen Splits

**Screen one:** An eye peers out from behind a door cracked open. PULL OUT---revealing half of Teo's face, shuddering in reaction to---

**Screen two:** Eddie and Luna stand across the room, in the same position that we left them.

Cut closer, as we rotate around the bickering couple. The sound levels of their individual monologues rise as we near them and lessen conversely.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| LUNA   | EDDIE   |
| We've been married 15 years, Eddie. 15 good years and in that time I have given everything, everything! For this family. | I work all day. 6 to 6. I come home, I fix leaks, I clear weeds, I spend time with our children. I feed you, I shelter you, I put clothes on your back. 15 years. in 15 years, what the hell have you ever done for me! |
| (beat)   |   |
| I had dreams, Eddie. I had dreams too.   |   |

PULL BACK---Eddie and Luna stand in opposition with the stairs between them.

LUNA

I've been here! Locked away in a home that we built together, Raising our family.

(beat)

Alone. Because we're not enough for you. We've never been enough.

EDDIE

It's not---

Angle on Luna.

LUNA

Yes it is. This isn't the life you wanted. I know cause I'm disappointed too. But I'm here, Eddie. And you've never been.

(MORE)

LUNA (CONT'D)

(beat)  
So leave.

EDDIE

Don't tempt me, woman.

LUNA

I said leave!

Luna pushes Eddie. He pushes back.

Return to the angle that began the scene, we see Luna fall from a distance.

**Screen one:** Teo backs away from the door, enraged, and slams it shut.

**Screen two:** The sound echoes, Eddie and his fallen wife turn to the door.

INT. BOYS LIVING ROOM - DAY

CLOSE on PEARL, A girl with cheekbones sharp as razor wire, as her baby-blues flicker open.

SAM (V.O.)

No, no. we're happy. Really happy.

Underneath the image in red, subtitle script that reads:  
Nope.

SAM (V.O.)

I just---I needed a change of perspective.

PULL-BACK.

SAM (V.O.)

Know anything about Zhongshu?

TOMI (V.O.)

Mm. Mm.

Reveal: Pearl standing before a white-wall modeling a white fur-coat and big, black boots. NOTICE a small butterfly tattoo on her wrist.

SAM (O.S.)

He's this philosopher I've been reading about. A Chinese guy.

Reveal: Photographers surrounding her, taking pictures at different angles.

SAM (V.O.)

He's got this whole thing on detachment. He basically calls on people to separate from their desires. All of them. Happiness, sadness---

TOMI

Grand apathy then?

SAM

Mhmm. As a defense mechanism against hurt.

Reveal: a couch beside where he stands, a table piled with magazines and tables. This is not a professional shoot within a studio space.

TOMI (V.O.)

That bad, huh?

Underneath the image in red, subtitle script that reads: Told you.

Click. Click.

INT. TEO'S ROOM - DAY

CENTER on a crouched Luna's half-face as she sets a stick of incense, upon a bedside table, ablaze.

WIDE as she stands holding a laundry basket in a scattered, clothes-strewn room.

With her back turned to us, she picks clothes off the bed and places them in her basket.

Looming over the clothes, NOTICE the way Luna's hands pierce and exit the frame in a rhythmic, dance-like manner.

As she unearths the bed, a piece of paper flutters into her view. She grabs it---

LUNA'S POV: CLOSE on Teo's rendition of a family portrait with Eddie missing.

WIDE, again, as Luna sits on the bed. Back away from her, as she lays the paper beside herself, despondent.

INT. SAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on Pearl as her eyes flicker open. Mascara drips down her cheeks, her lips, once perfectly rouge, are now a mottled patch-work of reds and pale pinks.

She yells desperately, but not a sound is heard.

CLOSE on Sam as he averts his gaze. His lips unmoving.

The two stand in opposition at the room's center. Pearl yells with her entire body, her violent gestures a ballet of rage.

Sam stands, unmoved, with his eyes on the ground.

A CLOSE, HANDHELD angle on Pearl as he grabs hold of Sam's shirt.

PEARL

He kissed *me*, I swear, he kissed  
*me*. I--I--didn't do anything.

Sam brushes her arm off him and tries to turn away. She pulls him back.

PEARL (CONT'D)

I came back, see? I did the right  
thing, I called you. I'm here.

She holds his hand.

PEARL (CONT'D)

I'm here, Sam.  
(beat)  
Please, say something. Anything.

Sam takes a deep breath.

INT. SAM'S MIND - DAY/NIGHT

MONTAGE:

- **Night**, the pair play underneath bedsheets, using their phones as flashlights.
- **Day, through a super 8**, Sam and Pearl eat across from each other. Pearl makes a weird face with her food.
- **Night**, from behind held-up sheets, Sam leans in for a kiss.
- **Day, through a super 8**, Sam and Pearl pass a hand-rolled cigarette between them. She laughs.

- **Night**, CLOSE on Pearl as she rests her head, eyes closed, upon Sam's lap. A butterfly. She smiles as he runs his hand through her hair.

- **Day, through a super 8**, From above, Sam and Pearl lie curled together in bed.

INT. SAM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Pearl's profile fills the frame.

SAM (V.O.)  
(pained)  
You should leave.

As Pearl cries, begin to FADE into the next scene. Sam sits against the stoop's fence, smoking a cigarette, superimposed within her image.

SAM  
Sometimes, right before I fall  
asleep, I'll still feel her next to  
me.

He chuckles.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Her hair brushing against my  
shoulder. Her warmth.

INT. STOOP - NIGHT

Tomi sits with his back to us, smoking as well.

SAM  
On those nights, I lay there,  
staring at the ceiling, waiting for  
the hurt to pass.

TOMI  
Does it?

SAM  
No. But morning comes.

He inhales.

SAM (CONT'D)  
(exhaling)  
The morning always comes. And with  
each one, it gets a little easier.

Silence.

TOMI  
Want another?

SAM  
Sure.

RISE as Tomi hands Sam a cigarette.

The image flickers.

FADE OUT.