

The main character of this story seems to have everything: a loving girlfriend, a creative job, and an interesting past. But something happens on his thirty-seventh birthday, «midway upon the journey of our life»...



Roan Johnson  
**Should I Find myself  
within a dark forest**  
[Dovessi ritrovarmi in una  
selva oscura]  
Novel

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**Roan Johnson**, is a writer and filmmaker. He was born in London and grew up in Pisa with his Italian mother and British father. He went to film school in Rome, graduating from the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia. He published the novel *Prove di felicità a Roma Est* (2010, ed. Einaudi Stile Libero), which received a Berto Award, and has also directed three movies.

While making love to his girlfriend, «at the peak of pleasure, a fraction of a second from climaxing», he is struck by the first of his «terribles»: a searing pain in his nape like a burning rod piercing through his head. Over the next few days, the pain comes back any time he tries to have sex or masturbate, striking right before he reaches an orgasm. He starts visiting hospitals and specialist with his girlfriend, his mother, and the fear of living the biggest irony in history: the capacity of being aroused but the inability to enjoy it ever again. He decides to undergo an MRI, but he has his first panic attack during the procedure. Boarding a flight a few days later, he is gripped by an irrational fear just before takeoff and is escorted off the airplane.

Anxiety had been his life-long friend, but there was always a non-aggression pact between them. Now, however, it is taking over his days in the form of rash decisions and new paranoidias. What is happening to him? Maybe he should look for the answer in the psychedelic experiences and desperate love that marked his adolescence...