

October 22nd, 1917: Yoshito Okamoto

From a certain position, at a certain time, anyone who sits on the bench across from Loeff's carousel can spot the moon balancing right at the ride's steeple. Yoshito Okamoto, in this certain position, at this certain time, observed the carousel; its base choked with decoration, rumbling, casting off colored light. At its top, it culminated to a single, quiet point, where the moon—caught in such a precarious position—alarmed the cautious boy.

At seven years old, Okamoto was burdened with the crucial responsibility of care for all inanimate objects. He graciously assisted any stuffed toy left face down in the store, and when he walked alongside railroad tracks, he aligned each step with the gap between the sleepers. And now here was the moon, pinned to its place in the sky by only the little boy's gaze, and the Santa Monica Pier became a pivotal point in the order of all things. Okamoto knew this, and took it seriously, and avoided slouching to prevent the tip of the carousel from piercing the moon's surface.

Somehow, the enormity of the situation seemed to be lost on the park visitors who blurred past him, buzzing like static in his peripheral vision. The boy and the moon were locked in an agreement, tugging on either end of a tight orbit. That night, Okamoto made a vow to God to keep the moon where it was. He would not resurface for hours, not for the promise in lurching rides, dinging like winning rounds of a slot machine, not for glimmering offers from balloon salesmen, not for frantic Japanese pleas shouted above the din of a crowd.