

Anthology Complex

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Volume 1 - Composition 3

(1:3 / 3 / III)

Part 8

Chapter 71

1,001 DREAMS

1:3:8:71

THE landscape of history, the portrait of desolation, a thousand and one dreams of liberty. Fireworks illustrate the night sky, creating constellations that contained dyslexic imagery; imagine dyslexia that could be solved if the viewer viewed viewings viewfully.

In Keystone, South Dakota, 82 people watch the summer night as the works soar overhead Mount Rushmore. The works had been designed to imitate the actual memorial, but went further by including the complete design that was missing from the memorial itself. An extra effort to produce a fourth of July that would not soon be forgotten.

In St. Louis, Missouri, 104 people watch the works as they compliment the Gateway Arch. As a gateway to the mind's imagination, ordinary fireworks are suffice to do the job, but even so, the final explosion is that of an arc that opens the door to the mind's expansion.

Imitation is sometimes experimented with and met upon with accuracy, or sometimes it is simply underachieved or overachieved. Replicants may be identified immediately or never at all, stealing identities of the before-cloned.

In Washington, D.C., somewhere between Maryland and Virginia, 95 people watch the works as they spell out the names of important historical figures. Soldiers, presidents, activists. They spell out the names that laid down a foundation and the names that continued it, only leaving out the names that would carry it through its future.

In Black Canyon, Colorado River, somewhere between Arizona and Nevada, 63 people watch the works as they draw images of the American flag, as well as other images that pertain to the nation. They decorate the sky and educate of the land's symbols.

Lost pieces to a jigsaw puzzle may be annoying, but they become horror when a person realizes that the lost piece is gone forever, destroyed, or was never acquired or created in the first place. Text and images go hand in hand, and even though they are still quite useful alone, one added to the other spins a new dimension.

In San Francisco Bay, California, 17 homeless people watch as the works thunder the night sky nearby the Golden Gate Bridge. One of the works resembles the constellation of Iceman, a myth about a man who came to the United States by foot and went from town to town, drifting, and causing mischief against the people, and sometimes even influencing it into their beings.

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 249 wealthy people watch as the works light the night sky nearby Independence Hall. While there are no discernible constellations here, what is

obvious is the theme of independence and its importance to the living soul.

What do you seek? Liberty as an individual, or liberty as a people? Does it make a difference? Can a person enter an establishment, and one by one, influence the actions of individuals and groups, for the better or for the worse? And if they do, can mischief be enlightenment; and wisdom, corruption?

In Chicago, Illinois, 91 people watch as the works reflect onto Cloud Gate, seeing mainly pictures that seemed to foretell the future on the structure of yet another arc appearance. The only telling, however, is how unlike an arc is to the circle, never beginning again where it ended.

In Buxton, North Carolina, 78 people watch as the works tower over the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse. Here, the fireworks reflect not on steel but on the water that the lighthouse shines on. Not so much an arc but more something of a parallel that is never under or overachieved.

It may be that the many types of lines and the many ways to contort them shape our universe. Maybe they even shape the things we can't see, the circumstances like destiny and the emotions like anger.

In Boston, Massachusetts, 86 people watch as the works ignite the Freedom Trail. How long does a person have to walk until they find what they are looking for? What are some of the things they will have to endure in their journey? What are the sacrifices?

In Savannah, Georgia, 84 people watch from the Bonaventure Cemetery as the works remind them of the ones who have died; fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters. On this so called road to free will, will it not end in perish as well? Will the last stop not be met with death and disease?

Death has no favorite sons. Born rich, poor or somewhere inbetween, gain knowledge or stay stupid, a certain skin shade or a certain racial pattern, death finds everyone and takes everyone away just the same. The only difference may be the way each person spent their life.

In Manhattan, New York, 51 people watch as the works embellish a view from the Statue of Liberty. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." There is a fire in every soul, and even in those without a soul there is lurk; someone or something hidden deep inside the mind that awaits an awakening. An entity with no specified name that before now, a person may have only seen in their dreams.

Amidst the celebration, there hangs a painting in one of the halls of the White House building. A painting of John F. Kennedy, eyes downcast, arms folded and a feeling of complete sorrow. "We must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

Somewhere in a bar, a man drinks and watches as another man appears on a television screen, sporting a blue tie and speaking of things like change, equality and better living standards. “He can't win,” he thinks to himself. He turns to the patron beside him, “You know what they're calling this guy already?” “No, what?,” the patron answers then asks, pretending to be interested. The alcoholic says as he calls for the bartender to order one final drink, “The general who became a politician.”

Chapter 72

THALIA MELPOMENE

1:3:8:72

I still remember when the first screw in my head went loose. Twenty-something and in a room much like this one; textbooks everywhere, college papers waiting to be written and countless nights spent studying.

Today, I realize I haven't come too far from that place as I sit in this storage unit sifting through the old card collections that first told me I might suffer from obsessive-compulsive disorder. Counting them every chance I got to make sure none of them were missing. Making sure they were in their proper order, ranked possibly from most rarest to most common or by best condition to worst condition.

These two rooms, much like identical twins, are very difficult to tell apart. The only thing I feel that actually does set them apart is the fact that I have chosen this asylum completely of my own free will, and the other, I felt I had been forced to inherit, even if I truly wasn't.

I finish with the cards and place them back in their box and then begin counting the money for my second payment of this place. After, I go to the door of the unit and catch a slight glimpse of Satan, who is in Hell and is counting his residents. When I lift up the door, the Sun's powerful rays hit me, and then take me to a time before the war.

Years and years ago, I had a dream where I was still green and just started military training. I'm sitting in my designated area of the room and in comes an idiot who is carrying more bags than he can handle. He looks around, then begins to walk towards me and tells me that he too was designated this area, and then he goes on to ask me if he could have the top bunk bed. I didn't mind, not really, so I said yes.

Naturally, this is how I first met Tao, and for the next year we went through military training that would prepare us for a war that had not yet started.

In the field of psychology, or as a psychoanalysis, sometimes a few personality traits are mixed and combined to form a personality marker. One popular marker is titled "the dark triad;" narcissism, Machiavellianism and psychopathy all neatly packaged into one human being. The best way to describe, in depth, a person like this? Well he came up to us shortly after Tao's arrival, and with a smug look on his face says "Name's Harvey, people call me Harper, but I prefer Harven."

We both heard about him before we got to the camp and were reluctant to introducing ourselves, but with a person like this, you really have no choice. After the introduction he went back to his designated area, and when he took off his shirt we knew that we had talked to the Harper we had heard so many stories about. A peace symbol burned and scarred over the entire surface of his back, there was no doubt.

The next day we were all lined up as the lieutenant on-sight, Conway, addressed us. “The time for war has not yet come, but it will come, and that soon, and when it does come, my advice is to draw the sword and throw away the scabbard,” he tells us.

He sees the look of confusion on our eyes, and instead of explaining himself, he chooses a soldier at random to do the explaining for him. Four people attempt to explain the message, but none of them satisfy Conway, not until he hears what Harper has to say.

“It's simple, sir. Even those who survive the war will come back dead. There is no reason to hold on to your scabbard because it will be the last time you draw your blade.”

I make my way through the parking lot and notice that Tao's car is present. I almost forgot that he was currently unemployed.

Passing pots of flowers I open the door to my apartment and head towards the room that houses my composition notebooks. There I sit to write down the dream I had the night prior. I may have finished if it wasn't for the fact that I had been writing on the notebook's final page. Another addition to the family.

Instead of finishing, I place my thumb on the side of the notebook and allow it to flip through the many pages, and eventually I land on a random dream.

Reading about two definitive masks, I am led to question whether or not it is possible for a single action to be completely free of reason and motive. Take, for example, an individual who suffers from Tourette's syndrome. Some of their actions, even some of the things they say, they almost appear to be random, seemingly taking the appearance of superficiality, but even we know that beneath it all there are reasons to their behavior.

But then you take something like a sports cap, an inanimate object, and you observe the way it reacts to its environment. The electrons that revolve about, do they have a reason or a motive for their actions. We move up to a different plane of existence and substitute the electron for the human being, then wonder if we ourselves can possess more reason and motive than a mere electron.

Imagine all the inanimate matter in the universe and all the processes that occur every second, even every millisecond. One might like to think that even if it's not detectable by our own senses, there is in fact a human-like reasoning and maybe even a deep motive that might imply some kind of consciousness in the things that appear to be “dead.”

The other way to look at it, of course, is to say that we are more like the electron than the electron is like us, and all we really do is display the illusion of reason and motive.

“You don't have enough hate in your heart,” I say to my partner, after he begins to show signs of weakness. I lift my happy theater mask up to the top of my head and try to convince him that what he's doing is the only way to make a difference.

“Don't get philosophical with me, man,” he replies. This is when we hear police sirens above us that spoke of a town-wide search.

My partner begins to speak, “You know what they do with people like us? It doesn't matter if our intentions are good, once they catch us they'll crucify us.”

As the sirens died, I knew that we were beginning to drift apart and any future I saw would have to be put on hold. There was now becoming a division between us, and while I did not know it then, I would become the impenitent thief, and he, the penitent thief.

Something passes by in a foreign language. When I glance out and down from the window I see Boris conversing with two other men in what may be his native tongue. It's hard to tell whether it's broken down or not.

Hearing and trying to interpret a language you don't understand is a difficult task, but we've all heard of body language and its generality. Between the civilians, the citizens and the outsiders, body language is the one thing we all have in common.

So instead of listening I watched. I watched Boris's eyes as it was the only way to read him, and I watched the other two men as they made gestures that spoke of industrial matters. Maybe some sort of machinery, a piston or multiple gears.

It took a while, but eventually I realized that either Boris or the other two men were in fact not speaking in their native tongue. I figured it was Boris's tongue, seeing as he had far fewer gestures than the others, and he of course seemed to struggle less.

Things started to make more sense for everyone, myself included, and perhaps even you, when Boris went into his car and tried to start it. The sound that came next was a sound that we are all familiar with, the sound of a car that won't start.

Once Boris finishes his demonstration they lift up the hood of the car and peer inside of it, and this is around the time I move on to other things.

Language is such a dynamic organism and there are so many forms of it that some of them slip our mind. It's almost like the bending of philosophy. If you asked me I'd say there was no such thing as a simple or complex philosophy, mostly because philosophy is not so much objective as it is subjective.

The simplicity or the complexity of the philosophy depends on the person who is doing the philosophizing, and where one person sees a simple truth, another sees complex truths, but that's not to say that the complexity outweighs the simplicity. Regardless, with any philosophy, there will be those who bend it to a certain degree, and then others who bend it much, much further, sometimes to the point where it breaks, and of course no one knows what truths lie beyond the breaking point.

At this same time, what was a simple two-dimensional circle becomes a complex three-dimensional sphere and the single path that orbited the flat circle becomes open to an infinite amount of paths from various trajectories.

That actually reminds me. I was going to save this for another time, but what's the difference? It's all the same. Anyway, there was this story of a rebel who was working on

an epic fictional story, what the genre was is unknown. For decades the rebel worked tirelessly on the epic, but a series of unfortunate events led to the rebel's death before the epic could be finished.

The epic stayed stored away for an uncountable amount of years until someone found it. They read it, found it interesting and then began to duplicate it and had others read it. What was most fascinating, however, was how the fictional tale slowly began to grow as historical fact. Eventually, it was accepted as full truth.

That's just one version of the story, another tells that it was a mass extinction that killed the rebel before the epic could be completed, along with all the other humans. On this same timeline, the uncompleted manuscript of the epic survived, and an uncountable amount of years later, a strange species began to form and evolve until they were able to recognize the piece of writing as a story. It shouldn't come as a surprise that when they were indeed finally able to understand what the story was telling, they accepted it as full truth.

Countless men and women have died trying to open the minds of others, being cursed for their radical and sometimes blasphemous persuasions. Imagine the poor soul that might see past this story, having the ability to question its authenticity. The poor soul that might have both the courage and stupidity to bend what has been put into place.

“Question everything,” said any teacher whoever said anything worth saying. It's obvious that when you spend more time with yourself, you learn more. More about you, more about the world. It seems though, that more and more each day we are surrounding ourselves with electronics that make us unaware of our own existence.

FILE 3 OF 3, "BLOODTHUMB"

1:3:8:73

THIS is the way nightmares begin. Or, perhaps, end. Very simple, direct, unadorned. Incredible, and yet so terribly real, that even while they're happening we live with them, and digest them, and assimilate them. And if it's twelve o'clock noon, that's what you preoccupy yourself with. You don't think about twelve o'clock noon on the next day or the day after that. But that's what we should have been thinking about, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. We were preoccupied with hands on a clock when we should have been checking off a calendar.

An employee of Omar Robinson sets up several lines of cocaine and begins to snort them one by one. "I gotta get a tie like that," an other nearby employee remarks. The snorter looks up at the television screen and notices the speaker's tie.

"That maroon is what's up," the non-snorter continues. "Maroon?," the snorter asks. "Yeah, the color of his tie," he replies. The snorter pauses briefly, "You mean red?"

The door to the room is opened and in walks Deion Jennings and right behind him Omar Robinson. The snorter and the non-snorter stand up in panic.

"What the fuck?," Deion asks. This area was suppose to be a drug-free zone but apparently these two had other ideas. On any other day, Deion would have reprimanded them, but today was the day that Deion and Omar found out that Derek's body had been found.

"They found the body and Spy is probably going to spill, so we're cleaning house," Deion continues.

"Cleaning house?," the snorter asks, "Why would he spill? He doesn't know we did Derek." Omar walks up to the snorter, looking at the remaining lines of cocaine, and with a stern face tells the snorter that if the body had been buried properly, then Spider probably would have never had any reason to do anything displeasing.

"We could just tell Spider that it was the other crew, like they was trying to get back at us," the non-snorter suggests. Again, Omar tells them that Derek's body was improperly buried, which was in itself a story of its own that would tell Spider that someone was trying to hide something.

The question was whether or not Spider would be smart enough to realize this. Omar, however, gave him the benefit of the doubt and decided to take no risks.

With the stern look still on his face, Omar blows away the remaining lines of cocaine and begins to walk towards the door back to Deion. "Clean this mess up else we'll all end up in jail," Omar says, "those test tubes and the scale, just get it all out of here." The two exit the room.

“Is there gas in the car?,” Omar asks Deion. “Yeah, there's gas in the car,” says Jennings, “but I think the people down the hall know who you are.”

About four years ago, I had a dream. “Don't worry,” I say to my patient as she dives into her deep subconscious. This was real black therapy, all alone in a rehashed memory while a hypnotist attempts to guide you. It was my job and it was my idea, to guide her through her own mind and the pieces that lay dormant there.

It was past nine o'clock and we were all in a dimly lit room; myself, the patient, one of her family members and three others who were there mainly for regulatory purposes.

“Do you see the car?,” I ask her. “No, I just see a street, with some buildings and two street signs,” she replies. “What are the street names?” “Willoughby and Myrtlebank, but I see a gentleman replacing the Myrtlebank sign for a sign that says Maple.”

“Is there anyone around?,” I ask. “No, and it's dark.” “Where are you exactly?” “I'm standing in front of a small store that sells and fixes different types of jewelry.” “Can you see the name of the store?”

It takes her about twenty seconds to finally answer me, and when she does she says that “she was no longer in front of the store, and was now on the other side of the street and had no memory of ever crossing the road.” I saw this a lot. Black outs. Memory spots.

"It's like you just woke up, doctor. You don't know where you are, and you don't know why you are there. The only thing that can answer your questions are the notes you wrote yourself while you were still doing that one action to remember what you were doing. Sometimes you write a note to remember where something is. 'Your bike is in lot 5A.' All you have are your own notes, and nothing else. Not your memory, not anyone else's word, nothing but your notes. You wake up in a car, you're angry and you don't know why. You wake up at a friend's house, you're frustrated and you don't know why. You wake up while walking, you're in this part of town but you don't know why. You're not really waking up, but that's what it feels like. You can still learn how to do new things, though. With that kind of memory still there, it's important you learn to recognize your own handwriting. You have to know what you wrote and what you didn't write. Other than that, having this condition is like you just woke up. As soon as I stop talking to you and my attention changes focus, I will forget all of this and I will wake up again, and maybe I'll be saying goodbye to a complete stranger."

Dozens of patients like this, and what I learned from them all is that memory and experience is a fine gap-filler for the lack of intelligence and foresight. Maybe you couldn't figure out how a particular thing worked, maybe something like multiplication, and when someone asked you what five times three was, you couldn't answer. The next day, you see someone solve the math problem and it stays with you, fifteen, and even

though you couldn't figure it out for yourself, at the end of the day you still found the correct answer and your memory allowed you to hold on to it.

My patient suddenly begins to quiver and soon after she falls onto the ground, yelling "I see it, I see it" and almost convulsing. "You see the car?," I ask her. Laying flat on her stomach, she looks up and begins to peer. "100RFD. That's the license plate number," she continues to yell.

Her relative checks to make sure she is all right, and the regulators, as well as myself, hope that this information she has provided will actually be useful.

We contact the local police department and they search through their records and eventually find a match for 100RFD. While we weren't sure she was driving at the time, we now knew that the first lady was the owner of the vehicle, and this very fact alone was enough to wake me up.

I needed to take a shit so I went into the bathroom and took a shit. After wiping my ass and after washing my hands, I stared at one of the bathroom walls for a while. Not because I'm crazy or because the wall was interesting, but because I had an autostereogram on it. One of those three-dimensional images on a two-dimensional surface, and if you focused well enough you might see something that others can't.

Besides trying to find the hidden image, things like these always helped me think. Thinking about shattered dreams. Playing out how something will happen in your head before you go. The anthology complex. It feels like you're sitting in a room that is darker than normal and the only light is the stream of light that pierces through the window.

After enough time you'll realize that what you chose to fix your eyes on was where the light ended, on the floor just a few feet away from you. "Yes, captain, all those pieces really do matter." Is that a little shadow man in that patch of darkness there in the corner of the autostereogram?

It's been two and a half minutes now and I still have not been focused enough to find the image. I've seen it before, but it's lost on me. Like a lost dream. Have you ever had one of those before?

Most people don't write down their dreams, and even those who do sometimes lose the dreams they've written down. Fortunately for me, it's singular and not plural as there is only one dream I cannot find. It's somewhere in that library and I've been searching for it for years but can never seem to find it.

I remember giving the dream a title, like any other, but I don't remember exactly what I titled it, so now I just call it "Moby Dick." A nemesis that gets the better of me every single time.

The dream was mostly about pain, and I don't mean the emotional kind. I mean the less complex and more superficial kind. The physical kind. I was bitten by something in

the dream, and when I awoke the pain followed me into the real world and lasted for the entire day. I guess, more or less, you could say that it was indeed something psychological, but even though the pain stayed with me, I felt that when I woke up I had left more pain behind than I took forward.

I still lack the focus and finally give up when I hear someone knocking on my door. A soft knock but it's not Lynne or Sara. Instead it's a man holding a pamphlet who begins to speak to me about supporting a child for less than \$3.14 a day. I take the pamphlet and ask him why he chose exactly \$3.14. He didn't really have an answer, so that made it even stranger. It was just a number, and what I should have really been thinking about was what more I could do to help.

Three point one four, one day away from the Ides of March, not to mention the mathematical implications.

After he leaves, I am left standing there with a pamphlet I planned to throw away and staring at Lynne's potted flowers. Next thing I know I'm downstairs checking my mail and going through pieces of paper that tell me I may have already won a prize. That, and some credit card information for one George Johnson. What a joke.

When I get back upstairs I can hear my phone ringing. That damn ringing sound. I walk towards it slowly and then stop completely when I get in front of it. I stand for a while and let it ring, wondering when the caller will finally give up, but they never do.

"Hello?" "Hey, I'm at work, do you think you could pick up Sara and David for me? They're at Olya's." "Olya?" "She lives in the next building over." "Oh yeah." "Yeah I'm running late but I'll be home soon." "What happened to Alondra?" "She's away with her mom for the week." "Alright yeah, I'll go get them."

I change my shirt and head outside, then I happen to run into Amy Steinbrenner. I nodded, she nodded, so on and so forth. Walking away I noticed that she was losing a little weight, but it all seemed to be in vain as she was smoking. Maybe one has to do with the other.

Cigarette smoking is something I like to call an absurdity. It's tolerated because we have been therapized to accept it as a norm, but when you really sit down to think about it, it's crazy. Putting a leash on a dog, keeping track of dreams, actually having a positive outlook on your future and on life in general, all these things are absurd.

The moment I go to enter the building, I see Olya coming my way with four kids. "Thanks for coming," she says as she hands David and Sara off to me. "No problem."

She heads to her car with her children while the three of us go back home. Sara puts her hand in mine while David sprints across to our building. "Do you know the movie 'Green Monster Pam?'," she asks me. No, I say, then ask her if she watched it at Olya's house. "Yea, it was funny," she laughs.

When we catch up with David, we can both hear him reciting “Green Monster Sam, watch out for his wam and bam.” Sara replies, “Green Monster Pam, watch out for her wam and glam.” David looks at her then at me, and he asks me if I know about the new movie called “Green Monster Sam.” Again, I say no, and he tells me about how they watched it at Olya's house.

When we get into my apartment I tell them to sit down on the couch and to not touch anything until I come back. When I do return I find that they hadn't moved an inch, so I offered them a television to watch. They declined, and even when I told them that the cartoon with the three stupid kids running around trying to make money was on, they still declined. It was kind of depressing because I really like that show.

“Do you guys want to use the computer instead?” Now I was speaking their language. I brought them into my bedroom and the first thing they did was play a game that was created by the same people who made their new favorite movie. When I looked at the title of the game, which was also the name of that same movie, I saw its correct name. “It's 'Green Monster Jam,' you idiots. Sam and Pam are just the main characters.”

Of course they didn't hear a word I said, and for the next thirty minutes they played their lives away. I started to wonder where Lynne was and if she was just simply running more late than she already was.

About a minute after the thirty I went back inside to check on them and found Sara still playing but David sleeping on my bed. “David went to sleep and didn't pray,” she says. “That's fine,” I say, “he can pray when he wakes up.”

I walk up to her and see how far she is in the game. “I'm trying to beat the boss ham,” she tells me. It was amusing to watch her play for a little while, and after enough time passed I asked her what she usually prayed about.

She tells me about how she prays for God to help all of the poor people, and to help her father, and to help David be able to sleep better. Tall order, I guess, but miracles do happen.

Not too far from then Lynne finally arrives with food. “Thank you so much.” She takes her children and brings them home to feed them then comes back to my apartment to tell me that tomorrow was her first day off in six days.

“I was thinking I should buy a sprinkler for the garden,” she says. “You mean the one at the home?,” I ask. “Yeah.” “That's a good idea.” “Do you want to go tomorrow?”

I told her that I would just stay home and would rather just help her set it up the next time they went to the home. That's not what she wanted but oh well. “I guess you wouldn't want to come with me to my check-up then?” “What check-up?,” I ask.

Every period of time she would go in for a check-up on her cancer condition slash situation. Make sure every thing was still working and that every thing was fine. I

assumed she was asking because she was afraid to go in alone, but I also wondered what made this one so different from the rest.

I said no to that as well. I don't detest hospitals like some people, but I never liked them either, with their smoking and non-smoking areas, stupid kids playing around like it's suppose to be some happy place. She was alone on this one.

She wasn't upset, but I could see that she was disappointed. I think a younger Lynne would have been even a bit confused, but that's the one thing she wasn't now. She understood.

With that same disappointment still lingering on her face, she tells me about how she started writing poetry. She talks about how when she was at my parents' home, it was the most serene she had ever felt in her life and she wanted to capture the feeling. To write it down in some way, so she tried to hold on to it and when she got back home tried to express it.

I asked her if I could read some of it but told me I would have to wait because she wasn't any good yet. What she says next is something I've never heard from anyone else. Nothing I would ever expect to ever hear from anyone else.

“Do you know that I look up to you?” I didn't know what to say. “I know it almost sounds childish, but it's true. I've never met anyone like you and I've never felt this way about anyone else. You just inspire me in so many ways that sometimes I can't even think straight. I wish you could stand in my shoes so you could see yourself the way I do,” she finishes.

“Don't look too hard,” that's what I would have said if I didn't care about ruining the mood for her. Don't look too hard at anything, especially life. You look too hard and you might miss more than you see.

Anyone in my current position I'm sure would have been flattered. To have someone tell you that you inspire them. Her words made me think of something someone told me a while back, something that may or may not be completely accurate.

It was about Marcus Aurelius, a Roman emperor who hired a servant to walk behind him as he received praise from the people he ruled over. This servant's only job was to say one line every time Aurelius received a compliment. In Aurelius's ear he would calmly whisper, “You are only man.”

Chapter 74

HERUTOPIA

1:3:8:74

HOW will the world end. What exactly is the definition of the end. Is it the destruction of civilization or the destruction of Earth herself.

Once I had a lucid dream where I was held inside a holding cell with a couple of other people. At this point I'm not lucid, but there is however a crazy woman sitting directly across from me who has a serious staring problem. The other cellmate has a staring problem as well, but I'm not his main subject, his main subject is more-so the floor.

After about an hour of staring, the crazy woman comes closer and sits next to me and starts to open her mouth to speak. The first thing I noticed about her mouth was that every other tooth was missing, and she had twice as many teeth on the bottom than the top. On the bottom row, the teeth on either ends were filled with some kind of metal, and one of her top front teeth was chipped about ten percent. How's that for description.

"The Sun is expanding," those are the first words she ever said to me. "I walked the surface of the Sun and felt its intense heat; I felt the sensation of powerful burning and it left me wanting more. As it got hotter and warmer, it grew and brought me more pleasure than any man before and there since after," she finishes.

When she began to talk about the surface of the Sun, I became lucid and I immediately knew which dreamline I was in. At first I thought I was back in Cape Town, but I soon saw that I was in a place that used to be known as the city they called Johannesburg.

I asked her what her name was and how she knew the Sun was expanding, and right then and there she went into a speech.

"Ramix, I like that name." You'd think those were my words, but they were hers and it seemed like she just made up a random name and decided that's what she wanted to be called.

Now she's talking about how the Earth's water will eventually escape into space and all known terrestrial life will become extinct, that we were all doomed and anything we tried was futile. "If only you saw the storm that was coming," she says. I actively began to understand why she was where she was.

"The Sun will continue to grow and grow and our Earth will become too hot, and eventually she will be sucked into the massive starbody and decease," she almost cries for her dystopia. Before she can a guard opens the gate and looks at me, saying, "Get up number forty-one." It was somewhat difficult, but I was able to stand and left Ramix behind, and when I got to the outer limits of the jailhouse, I saw slaves working in a field. Completely lucid, I wondered if I should have tried to help them, but I figured any

destiny I had was already set in the stones they were breaking.

We passed them and entered under through a sign that said “Civilian Hall.” From what I could see, and from the state of things, she was deceased already and had been so for a very long time. Once inside the building, I woke up.

When I traveled three or more so years ago, I went to all types of places and saw all types of people. The poor, the tourists; the main attractions, the slums. I was indiscriminate but even more in some kind of a trance state that clouded my mind. That may have been why I started to see all the people as one.

Wherever I went, I tried to blend in so I wasn't seen as an outsider, because that's exactly what I was then and what I am now. There were times when I caught myself wondering if I could ever live in a specific place, permanently and comfortably, but each time I came back to my senses knowing that I wouldn't be there for too long.

As you already know there were people I ran into, people I remember but I'll never see again. One of the people I've been turning in my mind ever since was someone who was very much like Ramix. The only difference was the fact that she was missing more teeth than Ramix.

I felt that when she talked, even if I understood and spoke her language, which I didn't, that I would have had a hard time understanding her pronunciations. So yes, even a translator would have been useless.

The only thing I did understand about her was the poverty she probably went through for most of her entire adult life. Seeing someone like her makes you wonder if there are plants that only grow at night.

A lot of us live in societies where it's okay to not care for the needy. It's not that we actually don't care, a lot of us do, but it's okay if you don't. Yet we care for ourselves and sometimes those close to us, physically and mentally, and I think this stems from the carnality of our own existence.

Are we one or aren't we? If someone gets HIV, even a complete stranger, does a part of me get HIV as well? No, right? This is how we see life, how we are designed to see life, but I've heard of a man who more than likely saw past the design and said that he feels sorrow when one human dies.

“Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”

In all her poverty she still believed in a personal God and that there was a place for her in Heaven when she passed. I didn't intrude on her beliefs because it was really the only possession she had. God was her's and she was God's.

Sometime later I was at an airport, ready to go home and sitting with the other to-be passengers in a waiting room. By then I realized that I was not a traveler, and that I was

more a person who stayed in one place. It was time I accepted who I was, for all the better and for all the worse.

Sitting in the waiting room for as long as I did, I thought about my future and the family that left me behind. Right before the plane arrived, I began reading a book. Or maybe it was a magazine. It gave suggestions on where to place faith and suggestions on what to believe. Prior to then, though, I read somewhere that you have to be ware, and that you can't just believe anything you read.

I knocked on Tao's door but it was Tian who let me in. "You're still here?," I asked him. "Yes, few more days."

I walked a bit further in and noticed that Tao had replaced his fish tank and also purchased a few new fish and aquatic items to place in the tank itself.

"You missed the first round," Tao states. As long as no one got knocked out I didn't really care. I just wanted to see a good fight.

"Who's this guy again?," I ask about the boxer with black trunks. "Some dude from Canada," Tao replies. The boxer from Canada was up against a class champion from England who sported white trunks and a deadly left hook.

When the end of the forth round came around, the pizza that they had ordered was finally delivered and Tao came back to spread the wealth. Once the fifth round began, the boxers had developed a feel for the other and the match became a back-alley brawl. The moment the Canadian landed a left hook of his own, the fight took on a different shape.

"!!!," Tian says something in what I believe may be Hanyu. "English," Tao says, "speak fucking English." Tian then asks him how you would say a certain word in English, and Tao tells him to just say "haymaker."

The fifth round ends and the fight that I thought would go the distance now seems like it may end with any one blow.

For most of the seventh, eight and ninth rounds, Tao and Tian slowly differed and chose separate sides. I guess Tian found some kind of attraction to the Canadian boxer, and for whatever reason began to root for him.

The difference and separation gets me thinking, if Tao and Tian developed a program, or a universe, what would it be like. If they decided to give their subjects, which would be the lifeforms for a universe and text and images for a program, a certain level of consciousness, do they become important? Are the things that are done to them then considered real?

You spill milk and it's not that big of a deal, but dream a dream of someone spilling your guts. You'll probably go into shock, and of that shock you would be very conscious, which in of itself will bring even more shock. There may come a time when the things that we thought were of no consciousness begin to ask for their own rights.

“To dry up; to deprive or exhaust of moisture; to preserve by drying; as, to desiccate fish or fruit.” Webster's dictionary, 1913. This is what a desiccant does, a hygroscopic substance that induces or sustains a state of dryness.

Vampires are known to suck the life out of those who are mortal. In the same way a desiccant may drain the moisture of its surrounding area, absorbing water for whatever reason. The difference between these two that most of us will see is that a vampire is conscious while a desiccant is not, and even though both seem to perform the same action, only one of them is accountable for their actions.

With a state of consciousness, we start to think of things like fate and morality, right and wrong and whether or not we ever really had a choice. Is this ability and knowledge alone enough to give weighted reality to reality. Do those fabrics of consciousness make our actions more important, especially over other forms of life that may not have a conscious mind? If a rabbit cannot perceive pain and is unable to comprehend death, is it okay to kill it? Switch the rabbit to an old woman who has these same inabilities, she'll probably think you are just sending her to Herutopia.

Given some kind of sense of justice, you could say it's our job to figure out the appropriate actions, but it seems we tend to fail time and time again. I'm tried for robbing banks, but I have killed unarmed people. Where there are purpose characters, there too are purpose sentences.

Middle of the tenth round and the fight has begun to die down. Tao and Tian are still on either sides and have actually put a fifty-dollar bet down.

“Did Jack tell you when he was coming back?,” Tao asks me. Jack said he'd be in Springfield for a while but made no mention of how long he was staying there exactly. At that moment, though, exactly, the boxer from England landed a nasty left hook and sent the boxer from Canada down to the canvas. I think it was safe to say that it was over. Ten seconds later, Tian was looking for fifty dollars that he didn't have.

I left Tao's apartment after the fight and instead of going to my own, watching television for so long prompted me to go to a nearby video store. Maybe I'd get something for Sara and David. I guess it wasn't too nearby, though, as I opted to take the bus. On the way there I almost changed my mind when I saw that “Fools And Assassins” was playing at the theater, but I wasn't in the mood for a three-hour long movie.

When I got to the sex video store, I talked to the working employee and asked him if they gave out rimjobs. “Sorry,” Diggler said. While they were known for their unique pleasure packages, a rimjob was not on the list. Relax, I'm kidding. Fucking idiot. Makes you wonder, what are the chances that something will come out of those sentences later on in the composition.

When I got to the movie and television video store, I talked to the working employee

and asked him if they had “Meadowlands,” a crime film about a guy who made up stories on the fly and was a compulsive liar. What made it so interesting was that you never knew when he was bullshitting, and you just had to take his word for it.

I purchased it and then began to browse around. In action there was “Joint Function,” and it made me wonder if any of the characters in it had an anatomy complex. Phantom pain from a missing piece of biology.

I skipped romance and landed in drama, where there was “The Last Rose Of Summer,” but the summary on the back made it seem more of a melodrama than a drama-drama.

In thriller, “Discourse Is Identity,” and in documentary, “Monsters of the Midway.” Sport, nothing there, western, nothing there; adventure, fantasy, musical, skip, skip, skip. Mystery had “Snowy Pastures,” and it reminded me of Lynne because it was probably something she'd like. A woman all alone in what appeared to be a hidden town.

Comedy, “Clouds For A Day,” directed by Larry Javid, biography, “M.B.J.,” directed by Oliver Schoen; horror, I didn't bother, war, again reminded me of Lynne and her father.

“Cyborg Noir,” “Saholocaust” and “A Twilight Odyssey,” all belonging to history, science-fiction and film noir, irrespectively.

In the sitcom section I found nothing interesting, and finally I arrived in the animation section. I subsectored into family and then into kids, and there I found a movie that Sara and David were sure to enjoy. “The Lion King,” I could do no wrong.

I left with both movies and when I got home I went to Lynne's apartment and knocked on the door. A minute passes but no answer. Another and still none, the two would have to wait until tomorrow.

Looking down and at potted plants, I am left with the image of my mother and her passing. Like any sane person she too liked flowers, and like any sane person she was just always too busy to ever sow.

By the time I was aged fifteen my mother and brother were gone, and my father, some odd number of years away from his grave. Around that time, there was a day when the circus came through town. I'm talking about clowns, freaks and managers, they all came and then passed through.

Still learning about life I grew curious of the event and at a certain hour took part of the festivities. I walked around, saw some strange shit, talked to a few weirdos, but the best thing about that circus show was a man who literally had a skeleton face. It was peculiar because his head was so skinny but the rest of his body was normal weight. I suppose it may have been some kind of rare genetic disease. Your skin sticking to the bones on your face, enough to make it seem like your bones were made of skin.

Sometimes I've written down dreams that I haven't yet had, and often times I find myself wondering who may have had a dream of me the night before. The strangeness of it all, to be in more than one place at once.

Events, whether they are real or just a dream, have a long spectrum of position. A real event can be over-exaggerated and begin to tip towards the lie while a dream event can be remembered as such a clone of a real event and begin to tip towards the truth. It may be that you did not see things as they were then, or maybe you just don't remember things as they really were.

When I got home and looked at the time I see that it's four a.m. and wonder where the preceding hours went. I turn on the light and go to my television with plans to feed my video player. As I take out Meadowlands, however, I am touched by a familiar tone of voice.

"Believe, and the Lord will shed his light upon you." The time was about right for a religious infomercial like this. Throughout the advertisement of their product, they had fortunate people talk about their blessings.

"Praise the Lord, he blessed me with a new car," one man says to the video camera. "I looked in my bank account the next day and there was four thousand dollars extra," one woman says to another. "When I opened my mail and I finally got my check for nine hundred dollars, I fell down to my knees and gave thanks." God is good when life is great.

I watch the infomercial for as long as I can but it seriously begins to drag on. Each time I look at the time, chunks of it were missing. Eventually, parts of the infomercial begin to remind me of a God that I did know, and of one who spoke cautiously of time itself.

Time travel, I haven't talked about that yet, have I? I can't remember. Either way, I had a dream which occurred before his death but after he gives Satan a book of stories. In the dream we are hovering above the planet Earth, the one that we know, and as we look into it we see a time in which dinosaurs roamed the third rock from the Sun.

I asked him how we were able to see so far back into the past. He tells me that if you travel far enough in space, light begins to behave differently, and if you have the vision, you will see things that once occurred, are occurring, and have yet to occur.

I ask him about the light and its behaviour and its process into change. "I know that he told you that time is like a circle, but to me it is more like a triangle, or any other polygonal entity," he states and continues.

"We are often subjected to visually pleasing images, but when you unscrew a light-bulb, that's when you see the metals and wires and the ugly design behind it all. The same thing applies to time." It probably even applied to the infomercial.

The dying God then told me that like a triangle, time can shift itself into different types of triangles. The outcome of the triangle type was always determined by the governing forces of nature, and as each force, or law, affected the triangle, its three points constantly changed position but were always the same.

What he meant by “always the same” was the fact that each point was interchangeable with any other. When explaining to me, he used the examples of birth, life and death, each one representing a point on the triangle.

“Throughout existence, as time develops, certain things become predictable and even inevitable, things such as your own birth. And from birth you gain life, and may someday pass into death, these things are immutable, but between these points time itself is interrupted by entropy and the things that take place here are unpredictable and unknowable.”

God then, out of thin air, produces a geometrical item. When he asks me what it is, I tell him that it's a prism, and he says yes. “Yes it is a prism, a triangle that has been affected by a force far greater than anything you've ever seen. Along with its appearance, the abstract idea of time has too been affected.”

You could flip the equilateral prism any way that you liked, and each time it landed it would appear as it did before. The point of death may have switched with the point of life, but in the end they had both once inhabited the same location. The forces and laws, they allowed you to see both the triangle and the concept of time in different ways.

After God was done with time, he then began to speak of everlasting life, and this is when I woke up. In my room, I looked out the window and saw that the circus was leaving. They only stayed for one day and I assumed it was because there were more freaks in our town than there were in their own charades.

Agent Cochran inspects Derek's body while it lays on a morgue table awaiting an autopsy. South West, South East, Wallace is shocked when he hears of his friend's passing, but not too long after learns that this type of life does not have a mourning period.

“You have to be able to hold your own ground. A lot of shit is going to go down in the upcoming months,” Jennings says to a Wallace who is being considered for a promotion. They discuss among a group of eight in what seems to be an unfinished warehouse that may or may not have been recently acquired.

After the meeting, all individuals exit the premises through a backdoor and begin to walk towards their vehicles. The moment Omar tells Wallace that he was going to be riding with them, a bullet goes through the left side of Wallace's face, just under his respective cheek.

Cover is taken and shots are fired back, except none of the eleven have any clue as to

which direction the enemy fire is coming from.

Wallace gets back up and hides behind an SUV as he equips his handgun. Omar and Deion look in Wallace's direction and notice that he is beginning to bleed on the entire surface of his left face, an appearance that would later credit him the nickname of Two-Face.

Deion tells Wallace to cover them as they enter the vehicle, and of course Wallace does as he is told. Omar and Deion get into their vehicle and begin to drive away while their subordinates take care of business.

As Wallace gets up to return fire, another bullet grazes the left side of his face and narrowly takes out the right tail light of the car that Deion and Omar were driving away in. As the firefight continues, the enemy's attack almost seems to be coming from two places at once, up until it completely dies down and the group of nine are left wondering if there will be a second wave.

Still hiding behind a vehicle, one of the assassins asks another, "Do you see anything?" "Yeah man I saw 'em. I saw his leg. He has one of them handicap knee things on, so he can't be far." It takes a while, but the initial assassin eventually remembers a successful bullet that took out Rock's knee.

"You don't think it could be Rock do you?" The second assassin pauses for a moment. "There's no way. No one came out of that store alive." He may have been right, but things seemed to point in the opposite direction, and from these founding thoughts, a myth would grow about Terrell and whether he was or was not still alive and well.

"What the fuck is going on, I thought everything was cooling down," Omar says. Deion switches lanes and keeps to his right for an eventual right turn, but the right turn never comes as they are stopped by a police officer.

Both vehicles pull over and the officer of the law walks up to them and asks them for certain documents. They comply and every thing is in order, however the problem was the fact that one of their tail lights was broken. The officer tells them to get it fixed and would have left thereafter, but whether it was by fate or by chance, he recognizes Omar's face.

"Alright, give me a few minutes to process this," the officer says and walks back to his black and white. He calls for back-up and it arrives shortly, and when it does, Omar understands that he is in for a long night at the county jail.

Chapter 75

TITLE DEPOSITION

1:3:8:75

~~TITLE~~ ~~CROSSED OUT~~. Nine or ten years ago, I had a chicken sandwich. I remember the day exactly; August 4th. The chicken was unusually delicious, but I remember the day more because of a dream I had written down years prior on another August 4th, and on that chicken-day also reread. I opened the selected composition book to a page that had a crossed out title and a dream that seemed to make no sense at all.

I must have seen the bones in the attic. They glistened with golden sparks and left behind a feeling of remorse. The window nearby gave sight to an ambulance that stopped in the middle of the road. Out came jackals, not firemen. They began to circle the firetruck up until an old and wrinkly lady came by and began shooting at them with a pellet gun.

Just then, she fell down to her knees, suffering from some sort of leg cramp. She said something in sign language and not a minute later I was standing beside her. “You should have taken the two cents,” I say, “but no, you wanted to dance with danger.”

I don't know why I keep these types of dreams or why I even bother to write them down. Garbage dreams, that's what I called them at first, but as I had more and more of them I realized they were better suited by the term “Constellation Dream.” Constellation because it was like you were on a star, and you jumped from star to star to star to star.

Of course, without any sense of true direction, it all just seems like you're going from place to place and there is no bigger picture, but then you are taken up to a high place and you look down at the places you had been and slowly an image begins to emerge.

Whether or not constellation dreams really do have a bigger picture remains to be seen. A deeper meaning behind it all, or all just a bunch of fluff. Because the dream was so skippy, I can't even be sure that the way I wrote it down is exactly how every thing occurred chronologically-wise. put joke about radio silence here. One big schizophrenic timesmash.

Just then, Justin, I heard a boom from the apartment up above. I figure it's nothing but it's eventually followed by a bigger boom, and soon the booms become consecutive. After a while it stops but is taken over by the noise of glass shattering.

I leave and go upstairs to see if anything was wrong with Mary or Anthony. By the time I get up there the noise has stopped and when she opens the door she has a calm look upon her face.

“Yes?,” she asks. I ask her where all the noise was coming from but she has no recollection of any recent noise.

After seeing they were fine it was my intention to leave, but as I begin to go Mary

starts to speak. "Anthony's walking."

You remember that language I was telling you about? The one that hides and often slips your mind? I caught it this time. In her voice I heard more than just words; loneliness, depression, take your pick. By now she's figured out that I'm not the type to socialize so she uses Anthony as a way to get me to come in. No, not because she's interested in me, but because she is now beginning to perceive that all the friendships she's had in the past were superficial and associative at best.

I go in and learn that the doctor told her that Anthony might have problems talking. She gets so depressed as she's speaking that it almost begins to wear me down. And I thought I was a depressive person. I needed to tag Boris in or something.

As she's talking I watch Anthony from the corner of my eye as he sits and plays with an airplaying. Airplane. A moment after he begins to slide against a couch and I can tell he's about to attempt one of the greatest and one of the most monumental actions of his early life.

He begins to stare down his mother who is still blabbering on about something and then finally lets go of the couch and begins to walk without any support. The first few steps stuttered and went largely unnoticed by Mary, but as he got closer and started to walk more properly she then saw him coming and began to wave him towards her.

I simply watched, witnessing history in the making. The last few steps were not actually steps but a very brief run into his mother's arms. "???" Anthony says something as she lifts him up.

Anthony seemed to be a normal and healthy human being, and as little as I know about biology and the process of things, it, at least at the time, didn't seem like he was going to have any development issues. Not any issues that were far from the regular. I expect him to eventually turn into a person without any integrity and one who lacks the ability to think for himself, because what person doesn't. For now, though, he was a castle made of sand.

There are things out there that you can't bring down to an exact science. Things of the intangible nature. Take an athlete and measure her strength and speed but you cannot scientifically measure her will to succeed. There's nothing to be quantified here. In the same regard I look at Anthony and remember that he was suppose to die.

TITLE SCRATCHED OUT. About two minutes ago, I finished eating a tuna sandwich. Suffice to say, or maybe not, it is August 4th again today and right now I have a composition notebook opened in front of me. It is a different one than the one from before and takes place in a different year as well, but alas it is again dated August 4th.

It is a page that has a scratched out title and concerns a dream that makes about as much sense as the aforementioned constellation dream.

The bathroom was well lit. It smelled of something funky, like that thing you smell of during a night that had vomit in the streets. “Where's grandma?”, you think, and now on the television there are weathermen arguing about the future of a ballerina who had recently chipped a nail. She had a big nose too, but no one seemed to notice.

“I'll take two bags of candy, please and thank you.” No, no, no, no almonds. Where am I now. Some kind of dungeon?

I started to tear. Out the page knowing that it is almost useless to my destruction, and when that wasn't enough I began searching for the other 0804 dream. Hundreds of notebooks but I figure I'll find it within an hour.

Composition 216, 422, 79, it goes on. After I check about a dozen of them I find that I have already collected over ninety constellation dreams to place in a box full of confusion. No need for them to be associated with the other dreams that actually had a type of coherence. That might be a joke, I don't know.

Seventeen minutes later the pile in the box grows but I still haven't found the dream I'm actually looking for. I can't be sure if I hadn't already done this and already placed it in one of the constellation boxes.

Composition 107, 13, 499, it continued. It continued until I heard a knock on my door. I looked through the peephole and saw a woman who was nicely dressed and wondered what it was she could have possibly wanted.

If we are all of one sub-atomic soup mix, that would mean we are all everywhere all at the same time. It makes me wonder if there is a chance that we've met in our dreams. Can we all be in eachother's dreams. You don't know what I look like, I don't know what you look like, but what we do both know is that the flesh only participates on one plane of existence. One scale.

The moment I opened the door she introduced herself as Mya Jackson and as an officer of the law. I haven't done anything wrong. At least not in this life.

I ask her what the nature of her visit is and she informs me that Derek has died. I have to say it didn't hit me as hard as you might think it would, but listen carefully; you can never see madness coming. And when it does finally come around, it changes all complexion.

She came in and sat down and told me she was investigating his murder. Where he resided she found some of my writings to him. Writings about composition and merging ideas. I had even donated some of my “stories” to him so that maybe he might be able to start from there. In the same pile she found a letter with my address on it that he had planned to mail but never did.

Obviously I was not a suspect but Mya came to me for any possible help regarding the situation. I had nothing. “I hadn't seen him for about a year,” I tell her. There was

very little association.

For a while she kept asking me the same questions and there just wasn't enough time for the answers to change. In some way this told me that she took her job very personally or felt obligated to find his killer; maybe guilt, maybe pride, I couldn't tell.

The next time a duplicate question came around I wondered if she realized that she was basically asking the same questions. Talk about disarray.

After she accepts that I cannot help her, she thanks me for my time and leaves. I think about Derek for a while, about Jamal, about Spider. I think about them until I remember what I was doing before the knock came to my door.

I go back to the room that houses the composition notebooks and I start to look through them again, searching for that jackal dream. Perhaps by luck, I find it in a matter of minutes and add it to the constellation box and decide I've had enough for the day. I move the constellation box back into the closet where it will sit idly for God knows how long. It will accompany the other constellation boxes until the dream becomes an answer to a question.

I go to sit down and watch television but at the same time can't get the picture of Derek dying out of my head. I land on a random channel and find a television show about a family coming to America by ship. They seemed to be of the southeastern Asian heritage, but who knows. Everything about people in general is so confusing these days. Honestly mistake a Dominican for a Haitian and they might get offended. A Mexican for an Italian and you might receive an unexpected reply.

The show gets melodramatic so I switch channels but end up falling in and out of sleep. "I love life but my sleep visions keep reality vivid." I can't tell if that came from me or from the television.

Another knocking wakes me up and at the door stands Lynne and her children. I almost forgot that we were visiting the home for the weekend. I guess being caught off-guard by the Grim Reaper does that.

BONUS TRACKS. Mya enters her vehicle and begins to drive back towards the police department. On the way there she receives a phone call from her partner, detective-lieutenant Richards, telling her to meet him at a certain address to dissect a crime scene.

She drives there, and meanwhile, thinks of the life she may have ended. Of course she couldn't be entirely sure that it was her fault and this is what bugs her the most. The escape of information.

When she gets to the address she finds Richards writing notes as he towers over a dead body. Mya looks over the body and notices a kippah just under the left leg, and at the same time Richards asks her a question. "What's the difference between Santa Claus and a Jew?"

She was getting tired of his dry sense of humor but couldn't really do anything about it. Despite the fact that she simply ignored him, he still delivered the punchline. "Santa Claus goes down the chimney," he laughs.

Eventually the Sun begins to set and the crime scene is cleared while Mya makes her way back home; the same place you first found her in. Yes, she still lives alone, and yes, she's still not lonely, but a darkness has begun to loom over her as she advances in her career.

A cop who is naive enough to believe that there are police forces out there whose intent is fully focused on justice and whose only mission is to protect and to serve, she is slowly beginning to learn that sometimes the cops are just the same as the criminals, simply playing different roles.

Cops and robbers, maybe you've played it; how often and how quickly did you and your friends trade professions? And after the game was over, you too went home. You ate dinner, watched T.V., whatever, only to play again the next day, and the next day, and the day after that.

That was the best ice-cream soda I ever tasted. Not my words but the last words of a dying actor. The sentence was seen in a scene on a wall from a maze dream. Section 8 compartment 51.

"Put those in the trunk," Lynne says to David as he lugs his telescope and his dreamcatcher through the parking lot. He took them everywhere now.

I opened the door to the passenger side and sat shotgun all along the way. "It's raining," Sara says calmly. It wasn't actually raining but you could see the storm that was coming. "Can we still go to the park?," she asks. "If it rains we can do something fun inside," Lynne replies. The reply didn't satisfy Sara, though.

"Stop kicking my seat," I tell David. His subconscious chair kicking habits were starting to become very annoying. It wasn't his fault but I was this close to breaking his legs, or atleast the leg that did the kicking.

The moment he stops you can see the little rain droplets beginning to hit the windows, and soonafter it really started to come down. No park today. I look back at Sara as she looks out the window and her sad face reminds me of Clownface.

This is when lightning strikes and is soon followed by the noise of thunder. I'm not sure if it was because of the weather, but the ride took much longer than usual and there were traffic jams all over. The long duration and long moments of silence may have been why Lynne got the idea that we should all go on a roadtrip.

"I've always just wanted to drive from town to town with the people I love," she looks at me and laughs. It was an interesting idea, I guess.

We get to the front of the home and run inside with our belongings and lock the door

behind us. We had only been here a few times but already it was starting to feel like a different house. She was gardening, cleaning, interior designing; even thought it wasn't exactly her home, in many ways she made it hers.

I think about the first time she ever saw this place and laugh. She couldn't have had any idea then that this would to her become such a familiar place.

Time went by and everyone mostly did their own thing. The rain decided to stay and so did the thunder and the lightning. At some time in the evening I actually lost them all and couldn't find them. It was when I looked in the study that I found Lynne sitting at a desk writing. I asked her a question about the sprinkler she bought and then left her alone.

I always find people to be a bit more annoying than usual when I am writing down my dreams or contemplating the answers that evade us, and I'm sure I'm not the only one. Sometimes it requires deep focus, and other times, well, it doesn't.

One page or fifty pages later, you start to wonder if the person who was bothering you before would actually understand any of the words you wrote, but be it lyrics, a short story, an essay or a poem, you can write solely about your life and people will be able to relate because sometimes your story is their story as well.

So many people finding differences among themselves but the fact is we are all born, we all live for some time and then we all die. Those are the only similarities we need to negate the differences.

It's too bad that a lot of young people create plans in their head to change the world, though. The truth is there are no more Martins, no more Gandhis. I'm not sure if there are even anymore Hitlers. All those who were truly great have died and left the world with a giant bandage on it.

There are still many problems in the world, but I'd like to think that each of us ultimately will have a story to tell at the end of our roads. I'd like to think that for each problem, there is a person who will dedicate their life to fixing it. "This isn't our fight," my partner says to me as I try to help a prostitute find a way out of her broken life.

A while back in a dream dated two years ago I found myself somewhere in Myanmar, or what you would have called it then, Burma. I woke up and realized I had taken temporary residence in the house of a farmer.

It had rained the night before and when I got outside I could smell the moisture in the air as I looked out across the field. One could feel that dewy myst absorbing through their skin.

In the distance a rectangular Sun was rising and was affected by the Zemlya effect; this mirage that gave the impression that the Sun was rising even though it probably really wasn't. It was here and gone too soon.

"Me and my son used to play soccer here all the time," the farmer says as he walks up

beside me. "I would tell him that we were in a huge stadium with thousands of people watching," he continues.

"What happened to him?," I asked assuming there was some kind of tragedy, but there wasn't. "He plays for a national team now." Before I left he too talked of a sort of Zemlya effect. Telling me that being a father came and went by too soon. You think you have all the time in the world but before you know it one year turns into eighteen. The circle of life.

By the time I finished assimilating the sprinkler everyone was together again and it finally stopped raining. There was still a bit of daylight outside so we all went into the yard to test it. When it was all said and done, the sprinkler, all of a sudden, went off and sprayed me in the face.

Everyone was laughing but David's was by far the loudest. Once I saw that he wasn't going to stop anytime soon, I told him that if he kept laughing I would make the sprinkler his new mouth. He doesn't stop so I end up chasing him around the yard and when I finally catch him I drag him to a hose and wet him down. I asked the others if they wanted any as well but they knew better.

After the discipline the sprinkler begins to work properly as it waters a few nearby zinnias. "Consistency." That's one meaning for the zinnia. Some people don't want to experience something new each day, they just want to eat cheeseburgers, play the lotto and watch television as they call on the mundane. After one hundred years of living you learn that there's nothing wrong with being normal.

Even after the sprinklers and after all daylight was gone we decided to stay in the yard, which was why we couldn't see the rain that was coming. We ran back inside avoiding earthworms and being drenched from the rain.

It was rounding ten o'clock so Lynne wanted to give her seedlings a bath. Or a shower, I can't remember. Either way, I recall that Sara wanted her company during the cleaning but David did not. That's just the type of kid he was, too old for his age and growing too fast.

When they were all clean Lynne put them to bed and then went ahead and did all of our laundry. Like I said before, this was her second chance and she made it hers. And I haven't even gotten to the college part.

She was beginning to develop the consistency she needed for herself and for her children for the God knows how manyith time, and maybe for the first time she was starting off on the right foot.

I helped a bit too with the laundry but only because I wanted to put on some of the clothes as they came out of the dryer and were still warm. That electromagnetic attraction. No more laundry mats for her and no more expensive apartment washers.

When she was nearing the end of the last load I went to check on David and Sara, and while David was sound asleep in his room, Sara was still wide awake. I asked her if she was having trouble sleeping. "I wanted to go to the park today."

I thought again of the farmer as I told her that we could go tomorrow. The bad news was that I was sure it was going to rain again.

I stayed with her until she began to snore. As far down the field as you can see, there are still just some things that are invisible to the naked eye. You can never tell which people will stay with you in your life until the time you die. I was in deep now, a guardian to Sara, and as long as I was in her life and she was in mine I would have to look after her like a parent.

I pulled the blanket over her and opened her window and then left her to dream; the lioness sleeps tonight.

The moment I stepped out the door Lynne appeared out of nowhere with that stupid smile on her face. "So, what do you think about that trip?," she asks.

Let me see. I didn't go with her to the hospital for a check-up that might mean inconsistency again. The way I see it, if I do this then I get a few more passes.

I'm kidding, I don't give a fuck about passes or about feeling like I owe anyone anything, especially Lynne. The only reason why the next few words that came out of my mouth were positive for going on the trip, as were for most things, was because of David and Sara. If I owe anyone anything, it's children and their right to have a childhood, respectively.

She starts doing kung-fu moves to show her excitement and actually challenges my immaturity. We agreed on going in the coming months at a time when she could get away from work and would tell Sara and David in the morning.

She kisses my cheek and then walks into the room Sara was sleeping in. I went down the stairs and even further down some more stairs into the basement and laid down on the couch. Bedtime.

Orange juice, blue bowl, white cordless telephone, gray pen, red lamp, black desk, a couple of clear cylinders, holed copy paper.

Something must've woken me in the middle of the night, maybe a whistling from the wind but I couldn't be entirely sure, so I got up to check the house. When I flipped on the light, though, I was puzzled by the image. I found David lying face first on the cold kitchen floor. When I got to him I could hear Lynne walking, almost running, down the steps.

He was fine for the most part but I didn't know he was a sleepwalker. It would be a few months from now that I learn just how terrified he really was of going to sleep, and at that same time I tell him that his dreams aren't real. That the nightmares weren't really

happening.

Could it be that the nightmares you have are what define you? Dreams filled with bubblegum and rainbows are very gay, but it's the darkness that leaves its mark.

I carried him back to where Lynne and Sara were sleeping and whether he realized it or not I didn't know, then I setted up camp in the living room instead of the basement.

When I truly awoke in the morning and went to check their room, I saw that the kids were still somehow dead asleep. "I'm in here," Lynne yelled from across the rooms. I went into an empty room and saw her painting.

Before my mother axed herself, her and my father were having another room conceived to be used as a small entertainment facility. Never got around to it obviously and then after it was just left to rot, that was until Lynne began to talk about how she's always wanted to paint an entire room.

I figured the room was already going to waste, what worse could she do to it? When I got in I saw that she was already mostly done with one wall and was going on to the next. This next addition was going to be a "Raven Landing" on a tree branch.

"Where is all of this?," I ask her about the art. She doesn't answer. At first I thought she didn't hear me because she was too focused on her work but I soon saw it was because she was thinking about the question. Or remembering something.

"You know, I had a dream about you last night," she says after a while. "It was weird because it wasn't like, of this world. It felt like it was a dream from a life I lived before this one," she continues.

She was at a party that took place at the top of a skyscraper. After a few drinks she went out onto the balcony to embrace the city-view but hadn't realized that I was already out there, too looking down at the city-lights. She apologized but I told her to stay, and naturally, this was how we first met.

We talked and laughed the night away, blah blah blah all that dumb shit. After she recounted the dream to me it wasn't too long before she started talking about soulmates and true love. The stuff that people who are in love love to talk about.

Maybe it was a beforelife, or maybe it was just an alternate life. These ideas that you often hear me talk about. "I don't know it was really, really weird. When I woke up I felt like that life was over and I was now here in this world, but maybe I got to see a glimpse of my previous life."

"Do you realize how crazy you sound?," I ask her. I know, I know. She laughs, "What can I say? I'm a dreamer." That she was.

When I left the room so she could continue it began to rain again and eventually the lightning woke up the children. Sara was frustrated but I don't think David really cared. I tried to think of things we could do so she could maybe get her mind off of going to the

park but I don't think there really is a substitute for outdoor fun.

“You know what, I bought you guys a movie but I forgot it at home,” I tell her. She asks me what movie it is and when I tell her the name she almost freaks out. She runs to David and tells him the name of the movie but he doesn't believe me.

After Sara tells Lynne, Lynne explains to me that they used to have the movie but at some point it got lost and they haven't seen it since. It was their favorite movie and as long as they were kids it would stay their favorite movie.

I ended up driving back to the apartment and retrieving it and when I got back to the home they finished moving things around in the basement so we could watch it. “The living room's not good enough for you guys?,” I asked them.

We now had to move the television set from the living room into the basement, but unlike hers it wasn't as heavy. We pick it up and navigate towards the basement and then down the stairs to set it atop a table. Along the way she tells me that she informed Sara and David about the trip and told me that they were very excited. This is how you battle back against the rain to win a little girl's heart.

I plug it in and turn it on and immediately the television starts talking. “Well, only about an hour of daylight left. We better get started.” “Is it unsafe to travel at night?” “It'll be a lot less safe to stay here. Your father's gonna pick up our trail before long.” “Can Lorka ride?” “Yeah, I can ride.”

I begin the movie and then join them in sitting. This might very well be the first family event ever done in this house.

As I sat and watched, every once in a while my mind would wander as I thought about how any object could have an abstract concept. Telephones provide communication, guns bring forth pain. But to add to this dimension, objects can also be given a subjective concept, like a television that symbolizes a first meeting.

Is it your story that defines you? Does your ability to give your story meaning define you? It is noted that absolute zero is the coldest temperature possible. At this temperature, entropy is at its minimum. One might like to think they have a sense of control over it all but that's absurd, the only thing a person has control over during an absolute zero life is the meaning they get from it. How they choose to interpret it.

In these times one might find moments of clarity, but something about this doesn't exist. It's thrown away, so how can one read such words. They are not the included chapters in the book and not the intended sentences to be recognized.

If I don't see you again in this life, or even in this world, then perhaps I will see you in the next, or in the other.

PAGE 4 OF 8, "THE EIGHT DREAMS"

1:3:8:76

FOURTH year again, April 22nd, I had this dream. Roach and I were leaving town and saw a weird passage way through an alley from an apartment complex. We took it but it only led to another street, a street named Sodom. We walk down Sodom for a while and notice that the town grew more and more empty. Streets turned into rocks and trees to plants. About a mile or two in, Roach and I gazed upon an abandoned warehouse building.

"This is where I stay most of the time," Roach says. It was too far away from civilization for anyone to want it. It stood on small rocks, was losing its paint, and there were tons of windows lined up one by one all cracked by something that came before. I wondered what store had been here before it became this, but I guess that didn't matter; I'd come here when I was nowhere else.

We walked up to a near-door and when Roach went to open it the door completely came apart, fell down. No more door. The rest was the same. Most rooms in the warehouse either had a bunch of junk, like left over pieces from cars, or were completely empty. There was basically no use for anything here. After a while we just sort of chilled and sat on the hard cold ground. The only thing we needed were some drugs.

Times like these there were no more comfortable beds to sleep on at night when you were tired. There were no more chairs or couches made of fine expensive material to sit on while you watched television. There wasn't even anymore television with over eight hundred channels to watch. There were no more telephones or cellular phones to talk on with your best friend or a family member. There were no more holidays to celebrate with your friends and family. There were no more computers or internet to use while you sat at home, bored as hell, despite all of the things you had. There were no more cars to drive around and paying for gas to fill up the tank so you could get to work; there wasn't even anymore work.

There were no more radios to blast while you listened to your favorite album. There were no more video games to play while you rotted your brain away, as my parents always used to say. There was no more paying to go to college so you could receive a higher education while children died in other countries. You give up everything only to have something that means nothing to the world around you. There was no more of any thing. There was just you and world.

"How do you live like this?," I asked him. "Live like what?," he asked back. How did he live without any real certainty in life. His answer was that none of us have any real certainty. There may be illusions of certainty, but they are just that, illusions. A place to

sleep, something to eat, clothes to wear, you can never be certain you will always have these things.

“A month after I turned twenty-five, I left home and started walking south,” Roach begins to speak, “I walked aimlessly for thirty miles the first day. I stopped once the night came and I thought I'd finally get some rest, but the night was like Hell. I almost froze, and the cold temperature did a good job at keeping me from sleeping. Once the Sun came back up I started walking again, but only within the area. When the Sun started to go back down again I found an unsecured bicycle and took it. I rode around, and I don't know what it was, but it must have been something I saw that made me decide to go back home. Thirty miles out, I haven't slept in about forty-five hours and I've barely had much to eat. You could say the ride back was the most I've ever pushed myself in my life. When I did get back home, right before I finally laid down to rest, I realized what it was I was suppose to do.”

I looked at him and thought about his story but wasn't sure what points he was trying to get across. “Do you know why you are still here?,” he asks me. I didn't, not consciously anyway, but Roach lets me know. “It's because I am free in all the ways you are not,” he finishes.

I'd tell you that one of the hardest things to do in life is to surrender yourself, to give up total control whether it be to a God or to another person. While it is difficult, there is something to be said about this siren's surrender song. To let go of the steering wheel and let the powers that be, or whatever, take control.

When I woke up in the morning I heard rocks hitting the windows on the other side of the room. When I looked down it was Roach who was throwing rocks at them. The way they cracked, they seemed to make art.

In the corner of the room there were some pieces of paper, all notes, each with a different message. Most of them, I felt, spoke of the American nightmare.

Sometimes it is difficult for me to comprehend how others can live the lives that they do. Some of them, they work jobs that they hate so they can buy things they don't need. How much sense does that make. These same people are probably more than likely the ones who will beg for more time when they see him coming from afar, and if by chance he does give them more time, they go back to that same life never really changing. I've seen rocks that are more interesting than some people.

It comes down to this; think of the circular theory and ask yourself if you are willing to go through this again. There's not much more to it. I do it often and even though most of the time I'd rather just put a bullet through my brain, I am predisposed to living and have many miles to go before I sleep.

I pulled the blanket off my sweaty body and stood up from the piece of cardboard I

was sleeping on. I placed the blanket in a corner and then sat down on a chair on the other side of the storage unit. I start writing down the dream I just woke up from and for some reason it took longer than usual.

You know, years and years into dream writing and you start to feel like you aren't writing down dreams, you feel like you're simply writing down stories and it gets so that you start to develop a sort of desensitization to the dreams. They are no longer dreams after you've built a tolerance for them.

I visited Joe a few times a while back and even though he was never awake I feel it should count for something, but how can it count for anything if you can't tell whether it really happened or not. I wonder how he's doing.

I wonder what he's dreaming about, if he's lost in a place where no one knows his name and in a place that he knows nothing about. What will he do when he realizes that seven is six?

Desert spirituality, desert theology, they are annotated as ways of seeking God. A lot of people will tell you that life is not possible without water or some form of liquid, and in the desert these things are a rarity, though some of us find ourselves trapped in the desert and somehow make it out alive.

Before long ago I spoke with Satan about these types of things and he told me that man originally walked on all fours but then began to stand upright and walked on twos. I had no idea why he told me this, but soon after I began to realize a pattern. There were times in my dreams when I looked for Heaven, but most of the time, I looked for Hell.

Across the desk I see printed images of a lunar eclipse that reminds me one was suppose to occur tonight. I reach over for them and study their notes for a while until I decide to head out. It must've been the most humid day of the summer so far. I wasn't awake for any more than ten minutes but I felt like I was about to sweat to death.

I get to my building and check my mail on the way to find some junkmail about how I need a vacation. I thought I went through this already and signed up for a roadtrip that would happen in the coming months.

Jamaica. I don't want to go to Jamaica. Why is it always Jamaica. There must be something I'm missing in Jamaica. D'yer mak'er.

A few upward steps later and I'm walking down a dimly lit hallway. Something must be going on with the lightbulb. Before I enter my apartment I look at Lynne's door. The Footstone of Liberty.

When I get inside I throw Negril in the garbage and then sit down to watch television. Still humid as hell, I'm sure I may have lost a few pounds on the way over here. I grab the damaged remote and flip through channels but can't get the humidity off my mind.

Half-drowsy from the heat I believe I came across a news story about some white guy

shooting some black guy; another racial crime even if it actually wasn't. That's the way it works. The order of it all. And of course, if you're on trial, you are guilty. That's how many people will view it.

So quick to judge but every case is different, caught in a rush and disregarding the ambient. If you do something wrong and are put in the trial seat, a good amount of people will have your punishment automatically conceived in their mind, even if the punishment isn't yet entirely clear to them themselves. What a good amount of people fail to realize is that the punishment is sometimes much more complicated than the crime itself. Too many things to consider, such as the state of mind and complete intent.

The next story is about a natural disaster in Japan. It's a shitty way to go, I guess, but it beats cancer. No black holes and escape velocities around here. Die on your own terms and never look or go back. When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd, a child miseducated is a child lost.

Did I ever tell you about the time I was released from prison and my partner waited for me outside the penitentiary. Probably not, but you see, in a dream, while you're dreaming that dream, every thing makes sense. It's not until you wake up and think about the dream that you realize how strange it was and how it would never work in our reality.

In one of the switch dreams there is a room with a thermostat-type thing and you can adjust the level, and the title given to this setting is "Fisheye." I'm guessing one has to do with the other, but I'm sweating way too much to think about it right now. I fucking hate summer man, I have to take twice as many showers as I usually do, which amounts to one time a week. But zero times zero is still zero.

Francis William Mainor and Timothy David Ryan occupy the police department's locker-room as they wait for Omar Robinson's hearing process to begin. Sometime before where we are now they were in another type of room, an interrogation room, with one Spider.

It only took a few minutes into the conversation for Ryan to become irritated with Spider and his lack of information. "Any kid on the street. Take your pick," Tim yells, "Jamal, Derek. I got plenty more names for you." Still, Spider didn't budge. It wasn't until Ryan turned the volume up a notch and said "You people, you keep fucking killing yourselves and you take others along with you for the ride." At this very moment, anger became a physical presence and called for the attention of both Spider and Frank.

Frank takes Ryan outside to try and calm him down but Ryan's anger becomes Frank's anger and everything goes to Hell. Spider is released from the room and sent back to his holding cell and takes the night to think about various things. Prominently, Derek.

The following week, the two detectives try again once more, but to their surprise it is Spider who does most of the talking. He tells them about how he murdered a cop, and

among dozens of other things, tells them about crooked cops and a Pakistani underage sex ring that he and the others knew very little about.

When they asked him if he knew anything about the apartment murders he said no, but went on to talk about the hits that Omar has ordered and his very obvious drug trafficking operations. “This all started because someone sold drugs to his sister?,” Tim asks, but more so comments.

The ball was rolling now and no one was safe. Once Spider snitched, everyone started snitching and had to look after themselves.

Flashforward to now and Spider's reduced prison sentence is beginning to take form. Omar, Deion and some others have been arrested and are being charged on multiple offenses.

And so we are back to where we began, in a locker-room with two men who have yet to credit fate. “Hey man, if I was to accidentally shave off a nipple would it be covered by workmen's comp?,” Ryan asks Frank. Frank laughs, “I suppose so. If you were man enough to actually file a claim, I'd buy you one, out of my own pocket.” Ryan puts on his dress shirt.

“You know what I think about often,” Ryan says, “if I could figure out how to care as much about family as I do my job, I might be a decent human being. And the same thing could even go for Omar or any of the other scum who walk the earth. Imagine what Hitler could have done if his parents were around.”

Frank laughs again, “Yeah, maybe. I know I'm not the philosophical type, but what good is it if you make it to the top but lose your humanity along the way.”

They exit the locker-room and then exit the police station and begin to drive towards the court-room. During the drive they talk about going back to their real jobs to do real work; homicide and narcotics. And Tim, he thinks about the luck factor that paddled them from A to B.

When they get to the building, the two enter a room to see the procedure has already begun and they find a line of their friends behind a desk. Omar, Deion, other major players. For a second Omar looks back, and Tim sees this, but their eyes never actually meet.

At this hearing they learn that most of the defendants, especially Omar, would only be tried for narcotics trafficking and not for any homicides as the evidence was too slim. It didn't come as a shock to either of the two, but this meant that Omar was off the streets for at least three years.

Two weeks pass by, maybe two and a half, when Frank gives Tim a phone call. Frank had caught a body of a man who was a known drug dealer that was just released from prison. Tim knew the man and his associates so Tim relayed any information he had to

Frank and afterwards they decided that they should, maybe in the following week, sit down and get something to eat.

The time comes at night, tonight, and on his way to the food joint, Tim's car dies in front of an old church. He was driving through an abandoned part of town so no help was available. He calls Frank and lets him know that he will be late, but instead Frank drives out to the area to give Tim's car a jumpstart.

During the start, Frank gives Tim a certain look. "The fuck did I do?," Tim asks. The car was dead-gone and it was taking a lot of patience to get it started. In the meantime, Tim tried to make small talk about how Raheim was probably going to move in to town and expand his real estate, but Frank paid no attention. Just then Frank was able to get the car to start and after wiping his brow, he asked Tim a question, "You happy now, bitch?"

It was getting late so the two decided they would catch up at another time, and with a high lunar moon up above they go their separate ways. Actually they go the same way for a while but after about ten minutes they go separate ways.

Behind them, they left a sign back at the old abandoned church that Frank happened to catch sight of. While some of the letters were missing, the sign could be easily read in full. "All t e angels sing abo t Jesus's mighty sword, and they'll shield y u with t eir wings, and keep you c ose to the Lord."

Chapter 77

CLEAR FALLS THE RAIN

1:3:8:77

“SO we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.” This was an epigraph written on a tombstone found in over a hundred and fifty dreams. Every once in a while I'll browse through the graveyard looking for some kind of memory.

Hello? Waking up today I felt the atmospheric pressure and soon after became aware of the rain that was hitting my window. Some people love the rain, others think it a good idea to use it as a setting for their antholithic narratives, and that's fine, but the problem comes after the rain when you are left with wet earth.

I get up and take a look out of the window as I usually do and I see the crystal raindrops fall, the beauty of it all. It reminded me of those dreams you have, the ones that feel almost cinematic, as if there was a director, a writer and a cast behind it all. Setting set so well and those San Francisco nights. I might have a bad disease, but from my brain is where I bleed.

Just before I leave I take a mental image of lightly shaking leaves. I would have gone for the door, maybe start an exciting day filled with adventure, but the thing is I'm caught with something narcoleptic. These days I haven't been awake for more than a couple of hours.

I go back on the bed and just lay there, half and half. At some point something makes me think of my childhood and the friends who were part of it. We had a lot of kids in our neighborhood and generally we all got along as well as any other group of kids would. Sure, their faces were fast disappearing but their characters were still intact. The more I think about them the more ghostly they seem. That place is like somebody's memory of a town, and the memory is fading. It's like there was never anything there but jungle.

For the most part, I played with a specific group; three boys and two girls. We walked through woods, spied on neighbors, picked on who we could pick on, but the times I seem to remember best was when we would go out looking through dumpsters for cardboard to slide down those steep hills.

Lucille, Simon, Jessa, Morgan and Gerald. I wonder if they remember me or if that's just all in the past. The first time I'd met them was in school, the time when all the kids from a certain grade went outside to play. They were hanging around so I walked up to them and asked them which way the nearest water fountain was.

The funniest thing though, in my childhood, was my grandmother. I guess you could say she was your typical grandma, like one you'd buy at a store, but she had a wonderful sense of black humor. Like one time, she told me to go kill myself. We laughed at that for a good while.

She wasn't always funny though, and one of my fondest memories of her was more serious than anything else. I guess when you're that old you get a feel for wisdom, which she had, the same kind of wisdom that she would eventually pass on to my mother. Things like being kind to people, not judging anyone, trying to stray away from prejudism. "Give God the first portion of your income."

Anyway, what I remember was the time she told me that when you begin to understand life, the rain will stop and you will see clearly, and you'll know where you're going and why. Cliche at best but even fortune cookies sometimes tell the truth.

Whenever I think of her I wonder if she's still alive somewhere, personifying the objects around her. Tell me friend, can you comprehend eternity? We live in a place governed by time, or at least the idea of it, but in eternity all the things we know now begin to shift. The white flag is up and this is the final lap.

Half an hour later I wake up to find that it has stopped raining, but of course I grow tired soonafter and by the time I go back to sleep it had begun to rain again.

Lying down, I try to keep my mind clear of any thoughts, maybe to float in the complete darkness before me, but sooner rather than later I begin to see flashes of images and hear unintelligible voices, and the pictures come to me as in a dream, with a terrible lucidity. This might be normal had I been in a dream state, but I am not.

So I lay, and the fourth picture that appears to me in that void of darkness is the face of a little girl. Who it was, your guess is as good as mine, and the voice that followed about two minutes after the picture faded, it was completely unrelated. That's how it always worked, just senseless randomness.

Pass the time and the sixth picture is that of a tree in a desert. The voices are gone but a memory of the past begins to develop in my mind. A hotel that kept me restless in a winter time.

Whatever it was, the images, the voices, the hotel and its lack of sleep, something made me sit up and stare out the window that was being pounded by the rain. A deep sadness came over me. Not like one I've ever felt before, and I promise you no puzzle, I didn't know where it came from, I did not know its source.

After some more time passed, I thought about it and laughed. On a day like today, I have to feel so fucking sad. "Where would you like your sorrow?" I would not like them here or there. I would not like them anywhere.

I remember as a child, on my way to school, construction workers remodeling a new apartment building. What I mean is, there was an old apartment building hidden somewhere under the new one. Every day I would walk by and they would be working on it until one day they weren't.

That last day, that's when every thing changed. I came home and went to my room

like I always did and maybe ten minutes later realized that my mother had not yet come in to check on me, so instead I went to check on her. Needless to say, she was there, but she wasn't really there. Mother died today.

A long while after the media circus, my father sat me down. By now he was completely alone and I guess he just needed someone to talk to. He chose me because I wouldn't tell him that it would get easier and the pain would fade away, I was much too young to talk like that. He was getting tired of hearing those things and just wanted someone to listen to him for a change.

"I never wanted this for you," he told me. He goes on to tell me about how right before it all happened, she was getting more and more irritable each day and how there was actually a night when she threatened to "take us all away." He went on, thinking I was too young to fully comprehend what he was saying, and the last thing he told me that day was that there just wasn't enough time. Not enough time for family, not enough time for life. Maybe he was trying to settle it in my mind to forgive him at a later age, or maybe he was just trying to convince himself that it was out of his power.

I lose track of time and when I look out the window once more I see adults and a few older kids standing on the corner under black umbrellas. Somewhere on the edge is Alondra and somewhere in the middle is Lynne and Olya who seem to be chatting about something pleasant.

Make time and a school bus comes by, but it's not theirs. Seeing Lynne reminds me that her birthday was exactly a week ago, and on that day finding out that I am two years older than her. Does your age define you as a person. If I told you to subtract ten years from the age you estimate Joe to be, how much would that change about him? Maybe a little, maybe a lot. Would he be wiser? Perhaps. But he might as well change to recklessness just the same. This from a book that spoke of character and preached that wisdom does not correlate with age.

Finally their bus arrives as the rain slows down to a drizzle and the yellow monster spits out the children one by one, but some in twos. Sara walks towards her mother and David just kind of lingers around. Olya's two, they do the same.

Everyone else leaves the block but the the six remain. The children talk amongst themselves as do the grown-ups, but they know their time is short and that the rain is due back soon. That's one of the many things the rain does, it downpours on aspirations, and it sucks because on every street in every city, there's a nobody who dreams of being a somebody.

Watching them, the sound of the radio begins to dominate as I hear a woman talking about justification in a recent homicide. People are mad today but these things never stick, not really. What are the circumstances required to justify killing another person or

persons. I'd then ask you what "justification" really means but we'll leave that for another call.

On these grounds; war, sanctioned by the state, euthanasia, self-defense, deadly force by police and fatal retaliation to save the lives of innocents. If you kill anyone under these circumstances a sort of justification ensues, but that's not to say you are guaranteed to be let off the hook. Our life is what our thoughts make it. I would go as far as saying that the majority of things in it are a subjugated matter.

Crimes go unpunished but our sense of crime is limited, both in the definition world and the moral world. The act of euthanasia is almost enough to blind someone when it comes to whether it is right or wrong, yet there are some who are so convicted in their notions that they are literally immovable.

Even though these pretzels are making me thirsty, I would still like to ask: if you were a God, or any type of being with the power to do so, would you eliminate murder? I don't have to tell you to think about the question before you answer it.

Now the woman on the radio is referencing to a past event, something called "the Narcolepsy's town massacre," but there's a good chance that I heard that wrong.

I go to the radio, turn it off and slam my face into the bed and once again prepare to sleep. Soft breathing, ininvasive thoughts, I fall asleep like a baby and don't wake up until the Sun goes to sleep. Yes, I'm still tired, but I've already paid quarters and I'm giving you a nightcall to tell you how I feel.

Stuck in this locked room I begin to pace around, back and forth, unknown to me that I'll be back here soon but in a different state. Isn't it funny, that when you read this paragraph the first time you didn't quite understand what it really meant? And at that moment of realization and understanding, time feels funny in both your world and mine.

The rain is starting up again and regaining the force it once had and then some as it is now accompanied by thunder and lightning. All the king's horses and all the king's men, they were together now, together again.

I wanted to go back to sleep but at the same time I didn't want to waste anymore of the night so instead I went over to the closet and tried to find something that might preoccupy my mind. What I found way down on the ground was a round rock revived in the corner, not making a sound. I am not particularly interested in geology, or archeology, or anything having to do with the unearthing of the Earth, but when I was younger I stranged, and one day I wanted to play a game. I wanted to see how long I could hold on to the first rock I'd see upon entering an alley.

Through all the years and all the times I've moved, to this day I've kept semi-possession of this rock, sometimes aware and sometimes unaware of its existence, periodically running into it somewhere in my chambers. I pick up the black rock and so

soon see another picture of my mind, of hundreds of beds located on the shore.

Where are we going to sleep during the roadtrip? Will I have my own bed? I don't know if sleeping next to Lynne is a good idea, not because it may give her ideas, but because it may give her children ideas. That singular scope of vision we have as children, believing the world has set rules and that there is a right and a wrong way to do any process in the universe.

I place the rock on a shelf, giving it a better home and then I close the closet and turn around to look at my bed. I don't want to climb onto this fucking thing again. This much sleeping is going to kill me, and well, if it doesn't, whatever doesn't kill you simply makes you stranger. A butcher is coming to town, sideshow freakshow hideshow meatloaf.

Dial tone. I'm not going back to sleep. I don't want to. I would like to stay up the whole night, eating chocolate candy and cheese-bagel sandwiches. Maybe watch a movie if I ever leave this room. Now I'm back in front of the window looking out again, rain drumming on my window. I wonder if anyone else is up at this late hour. Hey, I forgot to ask you before, do you remember when we felt the Sun?

I know I don't ever speak about my childhood this much, and not very often, but you've got me going so I won't disappoint. Unless you don't want to hear anymore about it. If not, just hang up now. Keep it in the back of mind though, that I'll be watching you. Every smile you fake, every claim you stake, I'll be watching you.

As the years rolled by, everyone that I thought I'd know forever slowly began to move away one by one. First was Simon, then Jessa, and soon after the rest followed.

It was the best of times, then it became the worst of times. That's the thing about certitude. Certainty is not a certainty. I wish I could say that God or the universe itself has a plan for me. A plan for us all. But the truth is I, nor anyone else, can be certain whether this is fact or not. That seems to be the fatal flaw of the human and a large branch off the human condition. We've done a good job at preparing for uncertainties but bare it all, no amount of reassurance can be assured. We can never be sure of anything.

Fuck this, I'm going back to sleep. I can't even keep my head up or my eyes open anymore. I depart from the window and sit on the edge of the bed and eventually fall on my back, thinking of my contact and the other world. I hope someone gets this message. This message in a bottle.

The thing is I've got electric light and I've got second sight. I've got amazing powers of observation. That's how I know that when I try to get through on the telephone to you, there will be nobody home.

Chapter 78

THE WINDY CITY

1:3:8:78

THIS country, these cities, they're broken. Not because of what evil has to offer but because of the mindless squander. I believe in people, I believe in goodwill, I believe that love conquers all, but these parts of me are becoming less and less each day as I struggle to locate the man covered in darkness.

It's been a year now and while I've come close, I can never seem to find the butt-end of that cigar. And not to mention the crime that goes on, fighting it, it's like sweeping leaves on a windy day. In the back of your mind you begin to wonder if any of it is worth your while.

Winter. Snow. The cold. Tonight I saw a man with half of his face bashed in, all because he gave the wrong person a quick wink at a bad hour. One long year of searching and I've seen just about everything except him.

I've been to places with high crime rates, but that seems to be a waste of time. The only thing that is even remotely relevant to my task are the fantastic crimes that I've visited. Happenings of the immortal nature, like a man who was gunned down by the military after taking hostage an entire floor of a government building for what he called "simple fun," and when they went to collect his body, he was gone.

Most of the time I thought if I got there soon enough I might find the man shadowed in darkness, maybe living somewhere alone with his music, I thought maybe if I could just get to him I could convince him that love was the answer, but a lot of the time I instead ran into others like him. Others who too have found the truth.

There are certain things that when consumed they overwrite the image of any man. Power, precocity, give these to a man and watch him gradually change. This is what happened and was happening all over, copycats so to speak who were influenced by the high amounts of new ultraviolence.

Of whom I've encountered within the year-long search was an individual who went by Rhathe. The villainous type who swore by the sword. Like the man drenched in darkness he sought to take advantage of his newly found optional immortality, but I soon put an end to his escapades when I enlightened him and gave him the knowledge of what he had done.

I'd have to say it was about nine months ago when I first ran into him, finding him by mistake, or maybe by chance, as I investigated a slew of homeless murders where the victims were decapitated in very public places.

What sent the whole thing out of control was the fact that one of Rhathe's victims was not entirely homeless and was actually the nephew of a politician. What office this

politician held, I'm not sure, but the victim had recently delve back into his drug-addicted lifestyle and at one moment or another crossed paths with Rhathe.

When the victim's uncle was notified he was shocked to hear that he went back to his old life and probably died because of it. That was all I got from the politician, but what kept the chain going was the reaction from the victim's mother. Imagine, your own son decapitated for the world to see. Veins and arteries attached to nothing but empty space. Her depression grew and so did her laziness, and one night she goes out for a drive when she should be home in bed and of course she causes a vehicular accident that leaves the other two members of the party dead on arrival.

The worst part wasn't that she survived without a scratch, it was the fact that one of those two was trying to get pregnant and died with the baby inside of her. It wouldn't be until an examiner examined her that this would be revealed.

This information is relayed to her husband and he can barely stand it as he searches for somewhere to sit upon hearing those words. Don't feel bad for him though, it's all an act as he didn't want her and he didn't want a baby. What he wanted was to be with his mistress out in the open and free of judgment, so he thanked God when the victim's mother crashed head on into them.

It only took a couple of weeks for him to get over his deceased wife and unborn child and not too long after he found a "new" girlfriend. This, without a doubt, upsets the family of the wife and a problem begins to grow. The husband's family, the wife's family, they grow bitter towards eachother to the point that a brother of the wife begins to accuse the husband of tampering with the vehicle she would later drive.

Nothing can be proved so the heat dies down until one day the husband is driving his own vehicle throughout a neighborhood to realize his brakes are nearly ineffective while turning. He comes within inches of killing a child who is riding his bike and is furious as he contemplates whether or not his deceased wife's family could ever do such a thing. He goes over to the home and lets loose every inch of anger he has until someone calls the police.

This is when it got a little strange. Whoever called told the dispatcher that the husband was armed and dangerous, even though he wasn't, so when the police turned their sirens on and cranked up the speed they expected to be there within minutes to dissolve the problem. What they didn't bank on was slamming head on into another vehicle. Another vehicle containing three passengers; a boyfriend and a girlfriend who was in labor and too, fast on their way to a close place. Another unborn child dead and I'm left wondering what it may all mean.

The last thing I looked into was the surviving driver of the police-labor accident. He lost his girlfriend and his first son, forgive me if I don't tell you he was distraught. So

distraught he began to tell me that he knew bad things were going to happen to him. That because of his past, he was going to have to pay and that God himself would see to his suffering. “He’ll,” his mouth dries up as he speaks, “he will show me no mercy, I know it.”

Yes, I told Rhathe the same, I even provided documents of evidence and he couldn't believe what I was showing him. He thought he was just killing boredom when he killed those people, but he had no idea how far down every decapitation went. I mean, if you need to kill someone, just kill a homeless person, right. Wrong.

Suffice to say his killing days were over but I was confused by the submission. How can you go from decapitating people to feeling complete remorse? At first I assumed it was because he indirectly caused the deaths of the two unborn, but I got a better grip on the confusion when I encountered another copycat. Csaloth.

He had the same theatrics to his name but this guy was literally one-dimensional. He actually had to walk sideways to get from point A to point Z. Even with that disability, I wouldn't have found him without the help of Ermac.

Csaloth was a boyscout compared to Rhathe, your average run-of-the-mill criminal who was getting away with robberies and batteries, and in consequence I believe this made him easier to convince.

There was a scientist of the Chambri ethnicity who proposed that the way the atoms in an element are composed and arranged determined the element itself. This never came to light, however it does ring true in other aspects of life.

You see, Rhathe and Csaloth, they are like most of us. On an ordinary day and by default, they wouldn't wish an ill-fortune on anyone else, unless of course the ill-fortune benefited them in some way or another. The human composition has a propensity for love, kindness and all things goodness, and the only time this natural will can be influenced is when personal gain interferes.

Where things come into perspective is when you apply this notion to the man in black. He does not care for benediction or personal gain, and on that same ordinary day he is the one in one billion who does indeed wish ill-fortune on another person even if it has nothing to do with him. He just wants to see the world burn.

That kind of darkness falls in two camps; he found the wickedness and then he found the truth. In my continuing year-long search for him, I have only seen two things change; technology and culture. Politics, it remains the same as it's ever been and continues to breed men.

He is indeed a gem, a rare type of evil and in a different dark plate he might be something you'd want to preserve, but we were here now and I had followed him into a frigid place. The windy city, Chicago.

Houses. They exist in many parts of the world, and in other places there are none. They provide shelter. From danger, weather conditions, a place to sleep. They come in many different forms, all types of shapes colors and sizes. Sometimes it seems like the only thing that is constant about a home is the metaphor that it houses.

It's been a long time since I've put the hammer to the nail but I have just begun a new project. There was already a swing in the backyard of my parents' home from the early years and I decided to compliment it with a treehouse for S&D.

Still quite a ways from being finished but it was beginning to take form and it would probably be done soon after the roadtrip.

After packing up the instruments I head home and intercept Lynne as she is checking her mail. "Hey stranger," she says. I take out my keys and begin to open my own mailbox, wondering whose mail I'll receive today.

"You know the trip we were suppose to take?," she asks me. "The trip we were suppose to take?," I ask emphasizing the supposition. "Yeah, we have to cancel," she says crooklyng her smile, "my sister kind of moved in with us."

The logic didn't dawn on me. Your sister, who is an adult, moves in with you and somehow it prevents you from going far away from your home. In most cases something like this would free you up, especially if you have children.

Lynne begins to whisper, "She's not doing so well and I don't think it's a good idea to leave her alone." Claire's not doing well. Who is?

"I guess we could watch a movie over the weekend or something instead," she proposes. I agree and we begin to walk up the stairs to our floor. She didn't have to say that depression was a clear symptom of desired suicide.

Phantom pain describes a sensation of a body part that is no longer part of the body. You might be thinking of Lynne and predict that the coming words will be about her, and they will be, but only in so many words as it is Claire who will be my subject.

We don't know much about Claire. Not much except that she has relationship problems that no doubt affect every other area of her life, including her mental life. How much severance can a human being take. You are together one day and then apart the next. Enough of this has to have its toll on the human mind.

You get to be where Claire is at and every day you probably find yourself thinking back on past loves, thinking of what they could have been. Where they could have gone and where you could be right now. You find yourself thinking of all the people you tried to make it work with and all the people who didn't give you that same second chance. Anyone who thinks too much eventually becomes dangerous.

It's safe to say the dating world is harsh if you're not lucky. There are different abjectives to war; psychological, biological, chemical, nuclear, economic, and in the

dating world you can find these same types of warfare. Some people are natural commanders and others just aren't fit for battle. I don't know where Claire falls but maybe the best thing for her right now is to commit surrender.

I stop Lynne in front of my door and ask her if she ever thought about inviting Claire along. "You wouldn't mind?," she asks. There really wasn't any reason to mind.

"She's a wreck right now but something like this might actually be good for her I think," she follows. "I'll ask her tonight and she how she feels."

As Lynne walks away and as I enter my apartment I try to find any problem that may exist with inviting Claire to come along. There were probably fifty problems with it but I couldn't know, that's something Lynne would have figure out, and if she already knows that it's a bad idea then she just won't ask and tell me Claire said no.

Thinking more about Claire, I begin to wonder what types of guys she's had relationships with. Why is it so common for races to stay within races? We always see whites with whites, blacks with blacks, Hispanics with Hispanics and Asians with Asians. I think I read somewhere that our bodies biologically tell us not to reproduce with siblings or cousins to limit defects in offspring, but I'm starting to wonder if that mechanism can also be the reason why people stay within their own heritage.

Is it possible that such an entity influences us to stay within our class as well? Or should we credit that to family and societal external influence? Anyhow, these things always change over time. Or maybe they don't; some people are bothered by a black and white wedding while others aren't. Makes you wonder, could homosexuality be on the same track as interracial coupling.

I go to sit down on the couch and when I get there I lay my head flat out and stare up at the ceiling. I wonder what Anthology is up to.

"Knock knock," the door eventually yells. A classic Tao makes his way in and for a moment I guess we're back to how it was before.

He immediately walks to my window and looks out towards the parking lot, "Come look at the new tenants," he demands. The first thing I notice, after the moving truck, was a blue minivan that had a bumper sticker of the Philippine flag.

"I don't know who I can't stand more, Filipinos or Koreans," Tao says. I ask him what any of this has to do with Koreans and he tells me that there was one running around on the first floor trying to peer into the apartments by looking through the bottom of the door. That didn't make much since considering you can't see shit when you do that.

"You remember that one family that used to live here? They had like eight or nine kids?," he asks me. I did. "Well so far I've already seen five of them going back and forth. I'm just glad they don't live next to me." "Five kids?," I ask, "How are they all going to fit in there?"

We watch for a bit and I ask him which apartment they moved into, to which Tao answered, “You remember that guy that didn't talk much?” I almost forgot about him.

We now had a large first-floor family to add to the roster of tenants and looked to register an even higher decibel score.

After Tao leaves I continue to sit and watch and as the time goes by I eventually see them all. It looked to be a family of a mother, a father and five kids, one of whom was a bit lighter than the rest.

Standing there and watching all of them made me feel like Julia. She once told me that she sometimes writes about the people she'd meet and the things she'd see in every day life. Helping an elderly woman carry a box a few yards to the post office, letting a person with fewer groceries go ahead in line, those sorts of things. I figured I'd go to sleep tonight and maybe dream a Philippine dream.

When I wake up the next morning I realize that I forgot to shut the television off, and when I go to turn it off I can hear knocking on my door. I remember when this place used to be quiet.

“I've been knocking for like ten minutes,” Lynne says. My eyes still half closed and my mind still halfway in the dream world, I simply stand there and wait for what she has to say next. “Claire wants to come. She's actually very excited,” she laughs. I honestly thought the roadtrip idea was dead, but I guess I was dead wrong instead.

“How is your weather forecast. I mean work forecast. I mean are you working at all for the next few days?” She says no and tells me that we could actually leave today, and that she had already been planning the whole trip once Claire said yes. That's to say, she did it all in one night. “I don't know, I'm just eager about it and I've been playing it out in my head since we talked about it. The children can't wait either.” These are her words.

She tells me that they had been preparing and asks me if I could be ready in an hour or two. Yeah, I got nothing better to do anyway. In the middle of all this we hear someone walking up the stairs. It's Jack, who nods at Lynne as he walks closer to us.

He greets us then proceeds to open his door, and as he is entering his apartment he asks me if I would be able to help him move in an armoire at my earliest convenience. Lynne cuts in and says that we were actually finishing up and I tell Jack that I would be out in a minute or two and we all depart.

On the way down Jack tells me about where he went, and when we get to his car, I see the armoire tied to the top of his car. We take it down and carry it into his apartment and set it down in a random location, and just like it to be Jack, he doesn't let me leave without giving me something. “I got something for you too, buddy.” This time it's not cereal.

He goes back to his car and meets me in the hallway to hand me a compact-disc case.

“I picked it up in Springfield, I think you'll like it. It's the album 'Moodpiece,' by Cloud Hemingway. No one knows about them but I think they can make it big.” I thank him and read the backside track listing as I walk into my apartment.

1. Born Again 1:28; 2. Incognito 4:16; 3. Dead Wrong 4:57; 4. Sunroom 0:45; 5. Small World 5:20; 6. Surreal Dreams 3:25; 7. Shapeshifter 4:58; 8. The Lost City of Atlantis 3:44; 9. Metamorphosis 0:04; 10. The Sand Graves 3:29; 11. Lords Of All Creation 4:01; 12. Devil's Nest 0:27; 13. Merry Go Round 1:59; 14. If I Should Die Before I Wake 4:51; 15. Mind Terror 3:33; 16. Gallery of Faded Memories 4:38; 17. Third Millennium 2:39; 18. The Toll Road of Denial (The Price, Your Soul) 5:13

Before I know it someone is knocking at my damn door again. I open it and this time it's Sara who is telling me they are leaving in five minutes. What the fuck? Her mom just said in an hour or two and now they are leaving in five minutes. Whatever, I don't have much that I need to bring anyway.

I got whatever it is that people bring with them on long trips and was ready to go within ten. On my way out I see Claire for the first time in almost a year. For the most part she looked the same but I couldn't be sure of who she was going to choose to be today or for the next three days.

Claire and I are the last two out of our respective apartments while the others waited for us downstairs, and while we head down the stairs she thanks me. She thanks me for talking to Lynne that one day, convincing her to stray away from Silvio, but I guess she was gone long enough and had no idea that the person she should have been thanking was Emily. She goes on to also thank me for watching over them and for being there for them. I just simply nod my head, it's far less than words.

I take the passenger seat and Claire rides in the back with the kids and sooner or later we arrive at my parents' home. “Aren't you glad you have a three-day weekend?” Claire asks Sara and David. For some reason the question makes me think about her dog.

Lynne runs to the trunk of the car and takes something out, then approaches my window and in her hand displays me the item. She wanted to put up one of those annoying ass door chimes that make sounds in the wind.

I help her set it up while the other three walk around in the house. After we're done she goes and grabs a few items for the trip and then we all head back into the car. Claire, for a while I wondered what she thought of the house and I wondered if it changed her perception of me at all. I wondered if the neighborhood changed her composition.

In a dream that I can't seem to remember completely, I recall Lynne telling me that a dandelion symbolized change. Something of a metamorphosis; unlike the warm-blooded,

a reptile's inner temperature relates to the temperature of its environment. She is almost the same, in the sense that she seems to be sad if the people around her are sad and happy if the people around her are happy.

If their genome is in anyway similar, the same might apply to Claire and maybe on an even more sensitive stage. It might be where her seemingly bi-polar tendencies stem from. There's also the chance that it's all external, though. I am not a doctor but I am a human being and I can tell you that stress is one of the biggest causes of a poorly functioning body.

We officially begin the roadtrip as we drive away from the parents' home and the first interesting thing I see is a house that sported an American flag on its western roof and a Japanese flag on its eastern roof. Tao certainly would not approve.

Once we got further out we headed to a gas station that resided on the edge of the city. There, they got gas, snacks and things to drink. I stayed in the car and looked down the road to observe four streets signs before me; a stop sign, a no u-turn sign, a one way sign and a(n) ECAP bus stop sign.

Once gone, we knew we were in for good when we passed the Ernest Gate. A large statue of a gate and a woman on one of its sides; laying there on her stomach and her face down, she begs for mercy. It fell back behind us like the way you'd like to leave complex algebraic problems behind you and there was nothing now except road.

We were now entering a windy city, and every once in a while I would look at the side-mirror to find David looking out of his window. I wonder what he's thinking. Imagining. The thoughts lead me down into a dark tunnel that He had passed through long before. A dark tunnel that was once called home and a place to get away.

“Oh, mother, tell your children not to do what I have done. Spend your lives in sin and misery in the house of the rising Sun.”

ABANDONED SUPERHIGHWAY

1:3:8:79

YESTERDAY, I had a dream. The problem is I can't write it down. Stuck in a car with four other bodies on a busy freeway, even if I did have the paper to put to the pen I'm sure one of them would eventually ask me what I was writing down.

“Here,” Sara says as she hands me half a bottle of green soda from the backseat. Back on topic, it's interesting to ponder all the thoughts that have now gone with the wind.

Retaining memory is useful but there will come a time when the memory faults and the thought vanishes like a gas before you can transfer it to paper. And when you think it has permanence, you lose that loose leaf of paper.

Imagine if Moses was writing down scripture one day and by mistake, or maybe by chance, the pen slipped out of his fingers and onto the ground, and for a complete minute he searches for the pen and at the same time loses his train of thought, so that after he finds the pen and after he sits back down to continue writing, an entire verse is missing from the Old Testament. Or, maybe in another dark plate he doesn't lose the pen, maybe instead he loses an entire page that he had previously written.

Documentation is so fragile and ideas are so weightless; so many times I've written something down to remind myself and then completely forgot about it or simply lost it. So many things get lost and we never get the chance to experience them. We never get the chance to see them, the chance to hear them. Never get the chance to read them, never get chance to watch them.

It's a bit annoying that I can't write anything down at my own convenience because when I stop writing I get withdrawal symptoms. What if I have a really important dream, like one that answers the biggest question and solves the biggest mystery of the puzzle. You just never know when it will dawn on you.

I take a look at the roadmap, and after crossing the state line, I tell Lynne that she has to get to the I-90 if we want to get to where we're going. Soon enough we're on it and traveling at a high velocity. The changes in position make me wonder how far away from home we are. Even how far away from the Sun.

“Ey Rafiki!” I look back to find that David has his ass hanging up in the air. “A Sunday sauna squash banana!” I adjust my view to find Sara rocking back and forth. Claire, she's trying to get David to sit down properly and Sara to stop singing but all appears to be lost.

“He, he's alive?!,” David asks Sara. Sara closes her eyes and almost goes into a meditative position, then calmly replies, “It is time.”

When I first met David I could clearly see the reservation. The reservation from his

mother, his aunt, even his sister. He still has it but I think doing something like this has opened him up a little bit. Like a flicker of light down that long tunnel. Sometimes you just have to do these sorts of things, whether it be by yourself or with other people. It helps to thin the blood.

A few minutes later and Claire has reassumed control of the situation and the vehicle is somewhat silent. I look at the roadmap again and see that we are still some clicks out of where we're going.

"??? ??? ???? ????," Lynne says to me. What? "You ??? ???? nine," she repeats herself. I can't hear her over the sound of the wind so I tell her to roll up her window. "You see that sign?" I look up and see an expressway sign that yells "MBJ Airport, 12 miles."

"It was never suppose to be built," Lynne says, "throughout his life he told his family that he didn't want to be remembered in any way, so of course they build an airport in his name." Claire and I laugh at the piece of information we never knew.

About half of an hour later we get on the A-1 and see our first political billboard. Yes, you pictured it exactly right because they're all about the fucking same.

"Change," this is the one word that will be tied to every political campaign you will ever see. It'll be bounced around and mangled and used very loosely through all the years. As one person stands from the seat, another shall sit, and from the elect's mouth you shall hear words that you've heard many times before.

I began to run up the stairs. I ran and I ran until I reached the very top of the skyscraper, and then I looked down at the massive interstate. I had been up here before but it was with my family. My parents and my little brother. And it was daytime. "?" someone says. Somebody was calling my name but I was daydreaming my life away. And then I woke up.

When I came to we were on the I-80 and on a fast track to where we were going. "Was someone calling me?," I asked. Claire tells me that Sara wanted to ask me something, and when I look at Sara she pauses, then says she forgot what she wanted to ask. Oh well. "Some of us have no name so that death may never find us."

As the longhand continues to tick I pay attention to all the billboards we pass, maybe trying to see a familiar face. Trying to see something that wakes me up from a long nightmare. "I love her," Claire breaks the silence. On the other side of the road was the billboard for a new movie, "Scarlett Fever," that stared Anna Briol Walkhill. "From the director of 'Snowy Pastures.'" I always hated that.

Claire starts to talk about how much she loves Anna's films and it's not too long until Lynne enters the conversation and they end up talking about popular female actresses.

In the midst of the conversation, David leans forward and whispers something into

my ear. A question. "Why do you keep tapping the window?," he asks. I thought about the silent tapping and wondered why he wondered about it. Yeah, you know kids, they can be very perceptive.

"Because I feel like it," I respond. He looks at me and then leans back into his seat, periodically kicking the back of mine. It doesn't bother me, at least not yet.

We were now taking a right and exiting the PRI-3. We were finally away from the speed and the wind and were in a much calmer place riddled with red traffic lights, gas stations and corner stores. What jumped out the most though, was the high amount of homeless people that resided in the area. This was indeed the asshole of the city and this would be the way we entered her. Not through any other orifice butt this exit, where in every alley lays a man or a woman who once had a dream.

We stop at some hotdog joint but I don't join the others in going in, instead I tell them to just get me something. I then begin to walk around, as I've done so many times before, and I look around the scene.

I suppose it was too early for prostitutes but I did however see a woman in suggestive clothing standing on a street corner. I went up to her and asked her what town we were in, and she tells me that we were in Greenville. "Thanks," I start to walk away but she asks me which way I was headed, then eventually tells me that she needed a ride.

I told her that I couldn't help her and that was pretty much the end of it. She didn't persist. I wanted to give her twenty bucks and tell her to call a cab but I couldn't, and no, it wasn't because of the way it would look to onlooking bystanders. It was because at that moment I felt that not helping her was in a way helping her. Something happens to a person when they hit the bottom, and from the look of where we were now, she was very close to it.

Goodbye Miss Greenville, maybe I'll see you again someday with your lime green miniskirt. When I get back to the hotdog joint I see them walking out and Claire hands me mine. "Do you want to see a building get blown up?," she asks me. The owner of the joint told them that two apartment towers were going down today. We didn't even have to drive to get there, we just walked and stood next to all the people who were waiting for The Fall.

"Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two." A cloud of dust goes up into the air as Sara and David witness something they will probably never see again. Reconstruction. Making way for the new by tearing. Down the old. I've realized that the closer you get to your dreams in life, the more they start to make sense, unless they take a turn for the worse and become hellish nightmares. I've died twiced over and lived lifed moreover'd.

Once it was all over we got back in the car and left Greenville. Back on the speedway

we promptly took the I-70 and were ever closing in on where we were going. It wasn't dark yet but it would be soon.

For a while the car is silent, Lynne hasn't even remembered to turn on the radio yet. Really the only sounds were the ones that came from the wind. The ambiance of it all. To the left and right of us were city buildings showing off their city's lights.

In literature we have what you would call a recurring theme. Certain aspects, subjects, that continue to reappear throughout the writing. And in life, we have recurring dreams. Desires, fears, opinions, these things that continue to pop up night by night and from time to time.

After enough time of writing and studying your dreams, you start to see the worlds collide and notice they have the same common denominator. A thematic representation of reality. How long is it until the denominator makes it difficult to separate reality from fiction? Until your life begins to feel like a novel and a novel begins to feel like your life?

Back on the way and on the track of the I-70, I offered the others music to accompany the scene. I put in Moodpiece and by the fifth track I realized that an album like this was meant to be played on long trips of any sort.

By the eleventh track both Sara and David had fallen asleep and Claire was inbetween both worlds. Lynne was wide awake, but then again she had to be. The speakers sung a few more songs and afterwards it became silent again. Maybe for about a minute. Almost anyone would have thought that the album was finished but it wasn't. After the minute long gap, the speakers began to make weird buzzing sounds and the display read "TRACK 20 UNUM."

Lynne turns her head and gives me a puzzled look and I simply don't know what to say. A playful part on the producers to include a hidden track. I wonder if Jack knew about this. Eventually the buzzing sounds transform into actual notes and a mellow song begins to play. Lynne can't help it but to laugh.

At this point we traverse onto the H-2 and I'm left thinking about a poster plastered prominently on one of Jack's walls. "Music is the space between the notes." Isn't it weird how you can recreate parts of songs in your dreams. Put an album on repeat, shuffle, chronological, then witness how every thing changes.

Minutes in and Claire is now losing the battle. We exit for the last time today and begin to look for a motel to stay in for the night. We drive around the town searching for one and we find one sooner rather than later. When we pull in, we see rows of parked cars and begin to assume that they are fully booked.

We slowly drive down the row looking for a parking space but there is none to be found. When we get to the end of the row we see a space but it's marked handicap-only. When Lynne stops and begins to back up I ask her why we're going in reverse and she

tells me that we're parking there. I don't know if it happened to you, but I completely forgot that she was indeed a cripple.

We bump fists and exit the car, praying that there was a vacancy available. It turns out that there were four rooms left and we take two for the night.

Walking back to the car, Lynne points out the low autumn Sun that was setting before us. She stops in the middle of the sidewalk and grabs my hand to catch me. We stand there for a moment and watch it together, and given enough time it began to feel like something out of a poorly written melodramatic romance movie that was directed by an amateur. In a way that's exactly what it was.

When we get back to the car we see that Claire is waking up. Each of the older sisters grabs a child and carries them into the room we had rented. Once they are all set I leave the four and go to my own room located just to the right.

Inside a drawer I find a Bible and some paper along with a pencil. As much as I try, I can't remember what I dreamed only hours earlier. Giving up I go to lie on the bed and attempt to get some sleep. Sometime in the night I realize that I just can't fall asleep on a bed like this. Instead I get up to look out of my window and I see Claire smoking a cigarette right in front of our car. I started to wonder at what age she took her first blow.

There was a time, early in life, when I hated everything. Born too young, top of my lungs, sitting on the bottom rung. Took advice from the wrong shoulder, took a lot of everything. Black and blue, suffering fools, by the age of seventeen.

Chapter 80

HOPES & PIPE DREAMS

1:3:8:80

CLAIRE drops the cigarette butt doesn't step it out, and then walks back into the room. Me, I drop the blinds to the window and go to sit back on the bed, and there I find a shotgun waiting for me. Wait no, I told you about that already last year. Actually, there is a Bible waiting there for me, yeah that's what it was, a Bible.

I lay next to the Bible in a familiar place and start to think about Moses again. About the dream I had of him where I was building our apartment building. I guess maybe I'm not really sleep-deprived right now, maybe I'm just homesick.

Eventually the birds begin to chirp and the day wakes, and as for me, I can't tell whether I ever really slept or not. This is not the first time and it surely won't be the last.

Once I hear the other four bodies talking outside, this is when I get up to greet them. We pull out and leave the motel and begin to follow a high autumn Sun. For a while I think about the handicap sign that became of great use to our adventure.

I look at the roadmap and give Lynne instructions to find the nearest highway. On the way there, we pass by a sort of park where we see children playing and parents walking. Turning a corner I see a small statue of a man sitting on the ground, almost a bit Indian style, and with a sign that reads "I was forgotten by the 51st state. Any change would be well appreciated, God bless."

I didn't quite catch the name but it was nonetheless an interesting statue. What came next was the highway we sought, and soon after we crossed our second stateline. I started to wonder how many miles it was now. To and from.

It was maybe an hour into the drive that I noticed a billboard that said "Chase your dreams..." On it you had the typical successful man and woman in their respective gender's business suits. One of them even had a pair of glasses on. I'm guessing the advertisement was for a college or some type of learning center.

I've always wondered why it is that the word "goal" is interchangeable with the word "dream." This way of thinking basically implies that one day, what was a dream before will clash with the life of reality. Take that same underlying concept and that is to say that a dream you've dreamed before might someday enter into the reality of life. I think there is a part of all us that believe that the lives we see in our dreams are really out there, out there even on a physical level.

So now what I have to ask is if it's the dreams we have that define us. Both the life dreams and dreams we have in our sleep. If Joe's goal is to help produce a world where all people are accepted for who they are, regardless of their differences, and a recurring dream he often has at night is that of two men getting married, does that tell us anything

about him? So often we wake up and forget, sometimes even discard, the dream we so recently had.

“Look,” Claire points out a couple of cows way off in the distance. We all look over and I see that Sara has her face pressed up against the window.

David begins to speak, “At school in the big room where we play there was a party and some of the teachers put on animal costumes and Ms. Palmer was a giraffe with a long neck who was looking for her family because they got lost in the rain after they finished eating leaves from an apple tree. Then after she found them they had a big party and Ms. Palmer ate all of the grass cupcakes and drank all of the grass juice and I think she got sick after because then she went and laid on her bed in her room and went to sleep but when she woke up in the morning she was all better and went to school with her friends.”

“And also, Ms. Palmer was sad because she didn't have an umbrella when she was in the rain, so she had to hide under trees sometimes. She had to ask all the other animals where she was because she didn't know the names of the places she was walking in. But I think if she had a phone then she would be able to call them and tell them where she was. Then, all they have to do is find the street she was on, and they could pick her up in their car,” Sara finishes.

I could barely hear the story that the two were telling Claire because of the wind but I think I got the gist of what happened. Some giraffe got lost and was reincarnated into some other animal and had to find his village.

It was an interesting story and definitely made me wonder about reincarnation. What happens after we die? We take account for what we did in our previous life and then are judged into a new body.

When you think about it we see reincarnation all around us and every day, in chemistry, sociology, even in something as simple as cell death, so it makes sense that there was a person who looked at the world in the same light and believed that there was an even greater order to it all. That this same concept functioned on the grandest scale.

If you wake up at a different time, in a different place, could you wake up as a different person? A new person? Late into my teenage years, I'd like to say when I was about seventeen, I'd often have these awareness attacks that forced me to walk so I could catch my breath, and all through the attack I would wish I was in a better place, and it wasn't long until I woke up in the complex.

This complex I'm telling you about, I cannot say that it's so much a better place than it is a worse place. You see, it's not really either, the definition of it always depends on the person who looks into it. The person who sits down in one of its corners and experiences it from the inside.

What I've learned though, before and now as I look out of my window at additional lanes, is that there are times when you just have to get away from the complex.

"Miami trails only by a touchdown, leading into the half," an announcer says on the radio as our car makes a slow stop. We get out of the car and begin to walk towards a park in an effort to stretch our legs.

When we got to the playground it was as clear as day, but the darkness soon fell. The days were getting shorter and the dark blue ever fading away. Eventually all of the other bodies left the park, maybe in search of food, and it was only the five of us who were left.

David decided to stay in the field and stare into the sky with his telescope while Claire laid down on a bench and smoked her life away. The rest of us, we went inside the park and slowly swung on the swings. As a kid I remember wishing that I wished the weather was like this all year round, but I guess wishes rarely ever come true.

I can't say I remember what Lynne and I talked about that night but I do remember it being interrupted by Sara, who got tired of her own swing so she came and sat on my lap. I remember it because I remember thinking it to be strange, that she would sit in mine and not her mother's. I was getting a promotion that I didn't really want, but like I said before; you just can't ever know who will stay with you for the rest of your life.

"Do you know the caterpillar?," she asks me. I positively reply, then she begins to tell me about how they have one in her classroom. She likes the way they look, that's what she says as we swing back and forth.

"Can we go higher?," she asks me. I start to swing harder and it's not long before we are sky high. Lynne joins in on the fun and it was safe to say we were having a good time. Maybe even a great time.

Later on I left them and went to find David who was exploring a completely different world. Through the telescope he saw the stars, and through his mind he found the constellations.

In a time before electronic devices, before we had all these things to preoccupy our minds, all people could really do was look at the stars and kill time by making up stories about them. The most fun some of them ever had was when they were connecting the dots.

"Will you ever have to leave?," David asks me. The question was something I wasn't expecting, but after thinking about it I understood what he was asking me. What he was really asking me.

"David," I reply, "let me tell you something that my father told me. Look at the stars, the great kings of the past look down on us from those stars." "Really?," he interrupts. "Yes," I reply, "so whenever you feel alone, just remember that those kings will always be there to guide you, and so will I."

We are both laughing by the time I finish and I had hoped that I answered his question, even if it was in an unacceptable manner.

“What are you two laughing at?” Lynne asks as she approaches. Claire and Sara had decided to tag along, so for a while it's just all of us in the middle of a field, taking turns with an instrument that was meant to further the imagination.

“We should get going, and start looking for a motel,” Lynne suggests. The problem was if we stopped to sleep, there wouldn't be time to get to where we were going and make it back home in time for school, so instead I offered to drive the rest of the way through the dark night.

The plan was approved by everyone so we got in the vehicle and I took the wheel. I hit the first highway I could find on the roadmap and already by that time everyone else had fallen asleep. It was strange, like a type of dream strange.

When I glanced at the time I saw that it was eleven o'clock; I was in for a long night. The first interesting thing I saw during the night was a sports car that must have been going over one-twenty. I wondered why he was going so fast and just assumed he liked the the thrill of the speed. Then again some people double the speed limit on regular streets. You know, the types that kids play in, the ones they like to cross without parental supervision.

Doesn't really make sense to me, we're all headed to the same place. Death is the only thing that's permanent. The house of death, you get there with half-doubts & unrelenting fever dreams.

“So what's your story,” Claire startles me. I look at the rear-view mirror and see that she is staring right at me. The first thing that passed through my mind when I looked into her eyes was whether or not a personality shift had occurred.

“I don't have a story,” I say. “Sure you do,” she replies. There is a pause, and finally I say “It's the same as yours, I was born and now I live.”

“Where are the plot twists? The cliffhangers?” she asks. “They're at home in my novels,” I joke. She laughs. Her laugh is nothing like her sister's.

I thought the conversation was to end there, but a little while after she began to spoke again, “Abortion was a plot twist of mine,” she says in a different voice. This voice was much lower than her usual voice. “The guy never even knew he came this close to having a kid because he dumped my ass right before I found out I was pregnant.”

Why. Why do people think I'm a telephone. I'm not a receiver and I'm pretty sure I don't look like a receiver, so why do people seem to spit their thoughts out at me. Why do they think I'll listen to their lost stories.

When she sees that I don't have a response, she shuts up, figuring I'm not the talkative type. The conversation should have ended there and she should have gone back to sleep,

but something was bothering me. So, eventually, I had to ask.

“Do you ever think of what may have been?” I wake her up from a half-sleep, “I mean, do you ever think about how your life would have changed if you decided to instead keep the baby?” She does something with her hand, then says “All the time, but then you know, and even now, I just don't think I have what it takes to raise a kid. I'm not like anyone else in my family.”

I think on what she says and reply. “Well,” I look back to see if she's still awake, “no one really knows how to raise a child until they have one.” It felt strange giving her advice on parenting.

I hear something come from the backseat and when I look back, I see that Claire has fallen asleep, and that I was once again, alone. If you would have told me two years ago that I would be right here right now, I would not have believed you.

It was now nine a.m.; I needed to use the bathroom and I needed something to eat, but the others were still asleep. The only interesting thing that happened during the entire night was hearing Lynne talk in her sleep. She said something like “Moofasuh” in the tone of a question.

It's nine-ten now and I'm exiting the highway and entering a town, looking for a place to stop. Up ahead I can see construction, so I make a right to avoid a mess that may have been caused by a road accident, but the problem is it doesn't help much, the same construction appears to be going on in every direction.

I drive around for a while with no real sense of where I'm going and eventually I get completely lost on a street called N. Boulevard. With no choice, I drive west, towards the construction, and not before long I realize we were in the middle of a huge carnival.

Sara is the first to wake up and notice it, and then the rest soon followed. I looked at the roadmap to see where we were exactly and I saw the name of a familiar town. It was a place you read about in books, or saw with the eye in films. You may have even heard of it with the ear in music. Named to be the last place on every map, the last destination.

When we roll down our windows we hear the loud noise of celebration and find that the parade was headed our way. In the distance, David points out a tall standing Ferris wheel, for reasons of the obvious.

At first, we stay in the car and watch, and through all this time David continues to kick the back of my seat. A minute in and we have already seen a dozen different costumes go by, all with detailed designs displaying definite devotion. And of course, David is still kicking my seat.

“If you keep kicking my seat, I'm going to take you out of the car and drown you,” I threaten him and I try to reach back for his neck, and being a child he nimbly evades. I give up, he continues to kick, and this time laughing as he does it.

We all then get out of the car and observe the large and long parade. The moment I step out onto the pavement, I hear the sound of orange, yellow and brown leaves crunching under my feet. By the time I look back up I can see David running towards the lively playground. Sara and Lynne walk hand in hand towards the parade. And Claire, she goes her own way as she lights up another cigarette.

We never got to where we were going, but the carnival more than made up for it. Hours passed by in minutes and before we all knew it we were under the cover of darkness yet again, and even so, the parade went on.

I recall finding David and Sara riding on a merry-go-round sometime in the night while Lynne watched over them. I had no idea where Claire was. When I reached Lynne I saw that the amount of time left on the ride was a minute and fifty-nine seconds, so I asked her if we were going on next.

After they both got off, they asked if they could ride it again and it was around this time that a photographer came up to us and asked if he could take a picture for local coverage. Maybe this carnival was more important than I initially thought.

As we pose for the photo, a ball comes flying out of nowhere and hits Sara on her nose. At first she doesn't respond, and after she sees we are all looking at her, she begins to cry and goes forth into the belly of her mother. It couldn't have been pain, it barely touched her. It must have been embarrassment.

The photo was never taken but that is no matter; everyone has a photographic memory, some just don't have film, and I believe by now both Sara and David are at the ages where they can feel happiness with their mind and not need to see it with their eyes. I am not related to them in any way, not by blood, not even by emotion, and I wouldn't exactly say that I am part of their family, but I do hope that I can be such a figure to them so that long down the road and many years from now, any effect that I had on their genetic make-up seeks to exude kindness.

They break off from me as the two little ones need to use the bathroom, so I wait near a gate for them, looking around for Claire but she is no where to be found. Instead what I find is a sight that is all too similar. The parade was still going on and what I saw was a clear case of the carnival complex.

It was nothing unusual to see devils dancing around, but something went bump when I saw a spaceman. Then, without delay, came the theater masks and I was in a bind. I felt like someone poured acid down my eyes. It all came together when I saw Sid in the middle of a pack. It wasn't exactly Sid, but it could have been his brother. Whoever it was, he was clearly a madman who was developing a cult.

Ten minutes now and they still aren't back. The imagery is starting to get to me. I need to fucking write something. Tired of this open road, too many people. Too many

people celebrating, and for what. Tomorrow they will go back to their sad lives. Another band-aid.

Sometimes you're better off dead. There's a gun in your hand and it's pointing at your head. You think you're mad, too unstable, kicking in chairs and knocking down tables in a restaurant in a west-end town. Call the police, there's a madman around, running down underground to a dive bar, in a west-end town.

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(1:3 / 3 / III)

Part 9

Chapter 81

THE AMERICAN DREAM

1:3:9:81

WE driving somewhere in Barstow, on edge of desert, when drags begin to take hold. I remember narrator say something like “We're about forty-five miles out from Madison, so you can slow down now.”

I driving so fast because I thought we are being followed. We were on way to buy new drag that might become craze in America. Dealer call it “Aemrdz,” why weird name I don't know, but dealer says drag give you best high, high like you go crazy and loose mind, but at same time you felling peace like Buddhist monk. I'm not sure how explain you, but narrator and I, we close.

“Slow the fuck down,” narrator say to me, “we aren't being followed.” Maybe narrator was right, but I don't like the chance. Cops, they know of the new drag Aemrdz to, and I know them. I know they monitor.

Narrator open glovebox, “What you look for?,” I ask. Narrator reply, “I swear to God I put my nipple in here last Thursday, but it's not here anymore.” “You sure,” I ask. Narrator lift up shirt to show me. “I see two nipple,” I say. Narrator look down to see two, and then I see look of confusion on narrator face. But face of confusion change to face of question. Is seeing far is wrong?

That were how narrator was, never certain much, always questioning, even really more when narrator was doing the drags. When drags, narrator come to be different person. Well, not really different person, same person, but everything magnified. Small question became big question, and then obsession come to take narrator away. I know, month from now, narrator will still will be thinking about nipple, and somehow, question of nipple will become question of human anatomy and physiology.

“Do you hear that?,” narrator say to me. I hear it, sound of car dying. Before dying we make it to small city and I pull car into spot to check out. I was friend of narrator, but I was also narrator's mechanic, so me fixing narrator's car not far from fiction. Problem, was, I could of not fix car.

“Boris, you think if I jumped off the Empire State Building, I could survive?,” narrator ask me. I think about question as we walk away from car, “No.” “You don't think there's any mathematical chance at all that I can survive?” “No way.” “There has to be some positive value east of the decimal. I mean like, if I jumped a trillion times, I think I could survive at least once.”

“There is no way for survive. Physics kill you every time. Jump trillion time, one hundred trillion time, every time you die.” “What if each time I jump, a variable changes?” “What variable change?” “I don't know, but each time I jump something will

change, and what if that one change allows me to escape your physics.” “Explain variable that save your life.” “Okay, a variable like oxygen saturation that slows down my velocity.” “Maybe that work, but that also cheating. Too implausible. Better chance of variable city flooding, then you jump into water. Technically you still jump from building.”

Narrator think of what I say, then agree. “We should go to a roof and wait for a flood,” narrator suggests, but I remind narrator that we here for one reason. For Aemrdz.

As we continue to walk, narrator play game of trying to say my last name, but tongue is too dragged to do so. “Is that Gateway Vault?” I ask narrator pointing ahead. Narrator looks forward and I can see wonder in the eyes. As we start walk to Gateway Vault, the drag does number. Narrator falls flat on face and I cling next to bar railing. We can not stand, and now people began to look at us. Drag was finally here.

Drag we where took while driving here was called “Earthquake,” because once settled in it was hard to stand. Tectonic plates move under feet and cause loss of balance. You literally can walk mile and never really move a single foot. Time distorted, and you think you come to a far place, but really time was not on the tick and you back to were you began.

Narrator is now crawling on ground, trying to avoid people who walk in path, and I try to keep upright with help of railing, but really we know we not last. “Boris,” narrator say to me, “I don't know if I can go on, and there is something that I have to ask you.” I look up, to look at the Gateway Vault, but now vision was being loss in my eye. All I see, were the lights that bounce off of it. Narrator, still looking at me, asks me the question, “This is something that has been nagging at me since I was twelve. Do you think a cockroach knows that it's a cockroach?”

I think of question, but mind was beginning to feel like scrambled. Some sweat was begin to form in my armpits, then I heard what the fearing was most. The sound of sirens that was come our way. I panic, just a little bit, and jump off of railing and go to pick up narrator so we can begin the chase. We run, and run, and run, until we find way to Gateway Vault, and there we hid from siren sounds of cops.

We stay, maybe thirteen hours, until it was come down to night and the sirens go away. Narrator try to leave Gateway Vault but I tell him not to do, and then I try to grab arm but narrator shake away. “Get the fuck off me, man,” narrator say. Narrator try to walk away, but stumble then fall face first. Narrator get up and try again, but same result, so after while narrator just crawls.

I stay behind Gateway Vault because I was little lazy at walking, and for safety, and watch as narrator crawl to certain doom. Crawl to violent end with cop and send to an darkness of shadow. I call name of narrator, but narrator never look back. Maybe in way,

narrator's doom was narrator's fortune. Maybe narrator saw something in own demise from jumping from very high place. И таким же образом, может быть, рассказчик увидел, что это лучше пойти не так по-своему, чем идти прямо в чужое.

Eventually narrator disappear, but I don't know if because narrator actually gone or if vision of my is failing. This is what feel like. Imparison, failure by own senses. Narrator was never certain of anythings and always questioning because narrator had the lasting permanent drag-affect. For me, my unreliability and inability to tell what is come from real and what is from fake would of later leave, but for narrator, it stays. Facts, I did know, but now facts are out of the reach.

I wait one hour, for Sun, but Sun never come and time of night persist. All track of the time was lost, I don't know where am I, or when am I, so now I have no choice only to follow narrator into the great darknesses. I leave the Gateway Vault and I try stand. For second, I can, but when I walk, I lose the balance and am left only to also slither. Slither that was depend on lot of survival factors.

By time I get back into city, I am covered of dirt. I find same railing bar and cling to it again to help and stay myself up, and as people pass by me, I ask if they see narrator come by here. No one answer me, but of the course. I am bum, low-life, intoxicated and loss of reason to live.

Funny thing to me, is, no one unique. Everyone look for same goddamn thing in life. Everyone who walk by, who look down me, how different is they? Seeking only gratification of sort. They all of them part of big machine, they go in same way, they come out same way, and what they have on mind all the same, what world says they need; the wanting of success.

Me? I don't know even what the success actually mean. So many people you want be like called successful until you walk in shoes. Even most naive person know that nice big fancy house can mold.

I forget people and slide along bar railing and then I reach sign. It say "Masidon," and it tell me how far away is it and which direction is it. And at same time, sky color starting to change to very dark purple with clouds pass by. I know it, I know it, I know it.

When I starting to cling to Madison, I feel world beginning to come down, and all around me was allegory. Nothing I see was what really be, but for something else of something else. Cop before was society, and societys' inclination to break down. To stop. To force of you a conformation and to make play a set of game. Gateway Vault was passage way into mindstation. Mindstation where everything observed and refracted upon, dissected and infernal chaos ensue.

While walking of the road I counter various mammals and insects, crawling, running, hiding, spying. I have keep batting them away to stay alive but they never stop come.

And at same time, sky is getting lower, and more purple, like of the grape juice. I try to explain exact presence of sky, but I don't know of English word to describe. Close I can come is the word you say "prophetic."

Still I walk forward, and then come time when I reach place with no light and only pitch blacknesses. I think time was close to very late now, maybe almost even midnight.

After walking for longer time, in distance on lower ground, I see small place. Maybe town, maybe Madison. Only problem, brain is now beginning to do the whack. Sky that was falling is getting closer and now have stars falling from it, but not the normal stars. It is like acid star, and it burn a holes through the cloud. Like strange cow that was married with a dentist.

By time I get to of the halfway of point from of where I was before, sky was dawn completely. Acid star was gone, and cloud too, and replaced with mirror of the earth. In sky, I saw reflection of town I was on way to, and it was touching down. When finally I reach the Madison, when I stand on any the street, and I look up back at sky again, I see exact reflection, and maybe in future again sky would came down to clash Madison with Nosidam. We're I am? No idea. Happily, I not care.

"Where was narrator?." I also think to self. Was hear? In Madison? Did narrator find the Aemrdz? Did narrator got died? I need find before narrator causes permanent damage.

Where to start? And I can see barely because redness starting to invade vision. First place I look was in small shop window, so there I can maybe see time of what it is. But I don't see time. Instead, I see photoshop. I see photographer taking picture of family of four. Mother, father, daughter, son.

They dressed of the elegance, and behind them was wallpaper of beautiful forest, and trees were ornamented, almost to make look like the happy holidays they say. Finally, they put on smile for the camera. Chess.

Maybe in life I was bum, depressed, drug addicted. Maybe I don't amount of nothing, and maybe life of no value. Maybe don't contribute to the society and maybe I better off dead. But looking at family, at least I not that. I am become death, because worst tragedy are letting life kill you.

Leaving window I remember narrator, and remember search. Narrator two, was never one for the family. I don't think narrator was not family person because narrator believed thought was bad person, but I think narrator was not family person because narrator thought would draghe down family. Narrator was sometime hard to deal with, stubborn, and there was always periodic time when narrator was unreachable.

This time for narrator was be too hard to hide from family, can't hide from family, and this is why no family. For this time, narrator stared out from very deep place. There was something about the eyes of narrator, and I think anybody whom looked them felt

confusion.

When after I leave window, I smell of smoke. I sniff more and try to find source of smoke, and when begin to walk that direction I see more people walk toward me. More I walk, more they walk, in the opposition, and time come when I see source of smoke; in distance was burning statue of bearded man who held each denomination of American currency.

People who was walking past me was coming out of burning bearded statue-man, and when close enough I read of inscription; Wolsurt.

When I look back, and I see the opposition people, I too see now they are on fire too, walking in single-file line to a place unknown. I do not touch fire, like them, but I follow them, and walk with them, back of the way I came.

Along way was small child who could not stop the laughing. Burning, and laughing, child walked with a strange walk, one walk I see before long time ago missing the balance. Weary, I was, that my mind make connections that not really there.

“Where you all go?,” I ask other person in line. A women, who had the hair grey and the bones skinny. She say to me, this. “Человек на тысячу миль прогулка забыть свою цель, и сказать себе каждое утро, 'Сегодня я собираюсь покрыть тридцать миль, а затем отдохнуть и поспать.'”

We all of us continue too make walk, and after time I start here sound of loud train. When look forward, deeper, I see this train, and I hear from train, “This is Willoughby, the next stop is Center.” I wonder, why mother, no fother, but father, no mather?

When train make stop, I see doors open, and those front of me of burning make way to train. When they get train I saw they fire disperse and disappear, and I know now this time that drag was at climax.

“Boris, is that you?,” I hear shout from train and look up. It was narrator, standing at door of train, look at me with the confused face. I walk line and as I get close and close, narrators' face change and change until no longer no recognition. “Where you were?,” I ask. Narrator now ask me who I am, and when say Boris narrator disagree. “Who are you, fucker?,” narrator continue to ask almost anger. By now I was seeing that narrator two, like others, was once burn. I tell because I see the smoke coming from narrator shoulders.

Narrator walk backward back to train table, still look at me with suspicious paranoid eyes, and than sit down. I go to sit with narrator but as approach narrator quickly hide under table. I stand, wait for narrator to show head, and when do, narrator ask again, “Who are you, fucker?”

Train now moving, and slowly narrator sits back on. “Wait a minute,” narrator say, “I know you. Boris, right? From the third floor?” “Yes, I'm mechanic for you,” I say.

“Ohh shit, yeah man. Where were you? I waited for you at the 'Washington' sign but

you never showed up,” narrator say. “What Washington?,” I reply. “You know, the one right before that long road that leads to this town.”

I think, “You mean 'Madison' sign?” Narrator thinks, “Is that what it said?” Narrator then get hold of the laughter, and laughter pass to me. And we laugh and we laugh until we all of sudden bust out into beatbox sounds and provide the strange and the random music for patrons. I am believe of misinterpretation, and one rewrite and fix of what the meaning.

After while, narrator tell me to lean in, and I lean. “The guy who sells Aemrdz is somewhere on this train,” narrator whispers. “How you know?” “Because, someone back in town left me a decoded message that told me what I was looking for was on the train that went round and round.”

I know was beginning to notice it, we was on train for maybe one hour by now and I see that train looped around town in perfect circle, and next stop was again was the Center. “This same guy, he told me to look for a place where the yellow traffic light still meant slow down, and not speed up. He said there, I would find more drugs.” How old can you lose speed?

After while we get up to walk, and we past by through car doors, go from a car to car, searching for man who might sell the drags. “Hey, do you remember where we parked?,” narrator ask me. I did not, I did not even member we came in car. When I ask why do chicken crossed road? No reply.

A eccentric few minutes pass by, and as we get far and far into train, I begin feel misplaced trust and strong curiosity. It was like a bad news.

“Alright, I have an idea,” narrator say to me as we stand in middle of car train. “I'll go back, and you keep going forward, we can cover more ground much quicker this way, and eventually we will run into eachother.” “Wait, train no end?,” I ask. Narrator explain to me that train was one long vehicle where ending met begin.

At precise moment, both narrator and me see what we must be see. Yellow light go off in car train and train begin slow down. We both look eachother in shock, and now realize we was in train we need be to find the drag dealer. He was somewhere in car.

We look round, and see all type of people. Old, the young. Boy, the girl. Black, the white. Poor, the rich. Intelligent, the retard. What is meaning of this?

Then, all of sudden, we see no culture. We see man sitting in back, with the back to us, with back against the back. We knew, just at sight, he was the one.

We sit at table with no culture, and then he look up at us. “Do you fold or crumple?,” narrator ask no culture. I look at narrator, and say to me, “What? It's the secret question.” I think to self, this felt like silent fart that would echo. Who's fart was smell like that?

Just then, no culture take out briefcase and open to it to us, and we see magical glow.

“Do you know what this does to the human body? More specifically, do you know what it does to the human mind?,” no culture ask us.

We both nod of no, no culture continue. “Aemrdz is basically your typical drug, but at the same time it isn't. It will decrease all neural processes, almost turning off ninety-six percent of the brain, but it will however increase activity in a part of the brain we seldom use. It will increase activity in this part of the brain by an average of one hundred and thirty-eight percent, and this, my friends, is what makes 'Aemrdz,' Aemrdz.”

“What part of brain, if may ask?” “Of course you can, and you should. What I am talking about is something biologists are now calling the 'Second Brain.’” “The second brain? I heard about that on the news, but I thought they were just fucking with us.”

No culture puts hand out, narrator gives the money, we take the drags and no culture gets off at next stop. “That was a pretty fucking penny man, why does this shit cost so much.” “He doesn't understand people have bulls are rent to pay.” Narrator look at me, confused, for while. “You murdered that sentence, and the English language, and you may have just killed an English child.”

We laugh, then each take one Aemrdz. “This is it,” narrator say. When I go to take me, narrator put hand on my arm and tell me stop, not yet. “Boris, just incase I die tonight, I want you to know one thing. It makes me sick that ninety-nine out of a hundred people in the world will tell you that you should strive for that very same thing.” And finally, narrator pop pill.

Live hard, die young. That was an information narrator at sometime say to me, but I'm not sure if completely understand what meant. Sometime I don't know if nobody know what narrator meant, but what do know now, was that narrator was often misunderstand. And what also I know, was that this misunderstandings was foundation of the trouble, and so in troubled time, narrator searched for something to numb.

I look down at pill, and I get ready to take. I felt like was about to go down long rabbit hole, and didn't know what was not the end. Like time I pulled wings off of fly, and then ate fly. The taste that was strange.

As was lifting hand to take pill, I hear sounds of sirens, and I fell the shock. Narrator was again, gone, and no know where went. I slide over to end of seat, and I look the window, and continue I hear the sirens, and addition I look from window to look at town that was now completely fire. And mirror town that was in sky, two, was all fire.

I thought to self, siren did not create sound, but was follows physical rules. Train was now loop around burning town, and finally, I raise hand and make pop the pill.

I wait, and wait, still no narrator, and yes still the fire. Burning Madison was interesting sight, and with it make me think of something far away. Something that there, long, and washed away, and gone, and maybe now ash.

I began taste ash now, in mouth, but still, fire raged on. Town was dying, and so people in it, buildings, establishment, home, all stuff.

The scary thing, challenging idea you based entire life on. Finding compatible spouse, get front of others, be success. Obtain thing that parents before you had, or maybe what parents before did not have.

Some challenge, and maybe see that all this things maybe was not required. Maybe there was other way. And after all challenge, after all question, maybe start to build true identity. Or, maybe no true identity. Maybe just same, I don't know.

That is problem. Finding what look for through wreckage. Through garbage that stacked story high. In waste of smell that infest the mind. I look at burning again, and yes, yes, yes, trouble seizure, I can feel drag coming now. I ask, what you dream? It all right, we tell you what you dream.

Chapter 82

PARADIGM

1:3:9:82

“**SPLENDID**,” I rapturously contemplate the modestly priced paint before my person. “I do emphatically conject that such, your soothing coloration will entrance both Sara and David most wonderfully,” I postulate to the receptacle of emulsionac acrylic.

Subsequently, I obstinately perused both the perimeter and area of home decor in ferret for an also modestly priced paint thinner in an intransigent fashion. Though a diminished numbering total was not to be, I lay hold of the quantifiable paint thinner from its sedentary-place and proceed to formulate inspection for *Araucaria araucana* that would discharge as a wooden-ladder to the treehouse.

While in search of the wood that I sook, I developed a perplexity for vandalism that tempted to be perpetrated by one of a pubescent and adolescent demeanor and disposition. Something of a boundless emblem that I assuredly could not be assure of.

“Good evening, my good patron, how may I assist you today?,” a man of prominent caliber and stature inquires. “My goodness,” he sashays closer, “whatever may have happened to your hand?,” he persistently inquires.

For, in an hyperbolic cognizance, an interminable duration, I incarcerated a metastatic purple hand. Notwithstanding the archaic recollection, I hadn't furnished the thought in the foregoing preceditory weeks, but it was indeed however verging supplementaric irritabilitation.

“It appears to be a viral contagion of some degree, it's very quite vexing, yes,” I rejoinder. “Perhaps a physician's visit might do you fittingly,” he asserts. “Conceivably,” I concur, “where can I check out? I have instituted all three constituents that I came for.”

“Right this way,” he coordinates as I descry his name tag. A mister H.E. Pennypacker, quite an engrossing and fascinating name if I do say so indeed.

H.E. potently scans all of my components and this is when I opscurviat the oeuvre apparatus in his mammary gland's compartment. “My good fellow,” I pontificate, “surely you will apprise me regarding this marvelous exhibition tucked away so sprucely in your breast pocket.”

“Oh, this old thing, it's only the latest prototype in the NXR20 series,” he acquires my monay, “a pen drafted with multitudinous features to assist and accommodate your penmanship.” “You mean, it ameliorates your chirography?,” I query. He reciprocates, “Yes, yes, very much so, calligraphy, typography, the whole shebang.” “Would you veto my rubbernecking at it?”

The gentleman benevolently relinquishes his pen to me and I inaugurate my observatory operation. “I must have it,” I ruminate to myself after solong. Is it then I

nominate a proposition for its expeditious vending, but Pennypacker possesses a portentous inclination for abnegation. Most certainly, at that extremity, I fancied to barbarously object him.

“You see those,” he flyspecks at his pen, “those are all heterogeneous modes that can be used to write in a dissimilar and contrasting style, and this here,” he again iotics at his pen, “this will let you preserve your current style but will rectify any defects in it.” I see, I say.

“Follow me to my archives and I shall duplex any overture you put forth,” I declare. Pennypacker scrutinizes my negotiation, then relays that I have copious brame for his pen, insomuch that he would be amenable to sell it to me at only an infinitesimal bit aloft the retail price.

Packer is ineligible to abandon his post and sueve me, but I do requite to make the reciprocity and ultimately vacate the emporium with my constituents and a new pen. “I must evacuate posthaste,” I permeate Pennypacker to precipitate my pexit.

After I decidedly pexited the establishment, I concocted my way downward an escalatrice, and perchance and peradventure by the grace of God, I was remonstranced with a most dreadful, dire, ghastly, horrendous, calamitous and grim metonymy and did not descend to my quietus.

The imagery that flashed in my mind's orb was atrocious, vile, heinous, savage, contemptible, loathsome, abhorrent, unspeakable, egregious; what it was, and was it that, the burial of a young female child followed by a key in C-flat.

All of her anatomical physique partitions were insulated by sand, as well as the uttermost of her bipartite face, I could only partially distinguish part of her temporal compartment, and just superior her forepart head was a tree that imparted as a tombstone, but only partly.

I imprudently mislay eyesight of my inspiration and had to alight toot sweet to ensnare it back. I situated my items terra firma and perched on a bench that was destabilished adjacent to a spheroidical, spherulitic and spherulitic groceteria.

There I sat, in the terror-stricken petrifat, the damn ringing resonative reverberation of the sound of C-flat. I unremittingly germinated evermore shorter and shorter of breath, powerless to recoup the lifeforce, and then tramped strolled and dawdled by, my oh my, a gorgeous mademoiselle all costumized foot-on-high.

I gouking abominably execrate shopping complexes. This pretentious, ostentatiously pompous and artificially flamboyant atmosphere. The conspicuous firmament. The vivacious and exuberant equivocator. Snails! I sansintuously cannot obvericate the repulsive, revolting and repugnant denombrication of trollops. This deliberate and unsanctified tarnation, consarn it all to Hell; every bloody resigmential

“Mariuhmarrayah” who exisaminates day to day with strands in the sorghastrom endometrium, I would analogously dismunitite their utolsalma. Gadzooks! I will extort and educe the sard from the hagsome and unsecured cunt and bespeak of it on my matriatum, insofar that the populace who progresses by and discerns it will readily infromus of my aversion for the exclusively acquisitive and bourgeois persons who dearth any authenticious hallmarks.

The polemic is bygone and I can no longer manufacture inhale-exhalation. With my back oppozitionised the wall, I adagioly lid my eyes and let it all go. I curtail mine ebullience completely, and I can perceive my heart stopping, I can feel my encephalon gyrate and circumduct to puree. It is all quite lugubrious, melancholy even, and most of all, over.

After my blackout I nadiscovered myself to be in Asylum. I ascended from the cardboard and sentimented to embrace the one enclave I endeared, expatiating of course, prototypically, and of, in an archetypic recognition.

It was damped dark, and howbeit I pioneered luminescence, and as a concomitant I was distinctly and joyously acquiesced by quantification. Before me, yes, was poised folio on the walls, and in the canton I hitherto expressed was that of a very illustrious and extraordinary agglomeration of integers. Number networks, figure systems and digitic arrangements of all ilk that spoke like an inscribed dialect, or engraved idiom, that sook to quantify the very essence of character, personality, identity. The quintessence of ability, potential, aptitude. The apotheosis of intelligence, creativity, cogency. Exemplary solicitude. Impeccable condolence. Immaculate leniency.

Ah, the observision made me feel so tip-top, vigorous, zealous. To excipitate upon my toil, it authorized me substantial complacency. I was suffused with an ambition that you may only divulge in dreams, and the vehemence pervaded me to do only propriety and rectitude by expedients of virtue today. To embrace all of mankind in an ingenuous and candid brotherhood.

Twinkling, this is when I commence to largolically anamnesistae the morsel, smidgens and soupcons that betided and transpired amidst my blackout. During that dark and black silence, tranquililically.

Erstwhile my beating had unmitigatedly curtailed, everything was glaciated, refrigerated and benumbed, and measurement stood inanimate, immobile, stationary. Whilom, my cardiovascular was no longer breathing, and numerous other autonomous processes behest by the cerebrum stopped functioning as well, but alas, I was avital, animate. I was, indeed, alive!

I mounted from my seat and all things were now back in locomotion. The shopping center had reinstated to its customary and time-honored juncture, but even so I felt at

disease, I fingered that I was not frankly myself. This was, mind you, the blackout, and whilst in it was of the most anomalous, aberrant and eerie lividity. It elicited to me that, of my crux-nucleus, how I sporadically experiencensed as if the way I apophthegmed the world was in puzzles, riddles, enigmas, paradoxes, mysteries, conundrums; some days every thing made sense, and then others, nothing made sense.

Irrevocably out of the bazaar, I both ad interimed, and made my way onto, a trolleyomnibus. It was charged but there was withal one settle devacantied-post meridian, so I sat, on it. Before even my gluteus maximus encountered the settle I was sockdolagerly thunderbolted by the atypical and outlandish asepsisity and immaculateness of the bus, and after so length I waxed even more bewilderment that I was not girdled by creatures of the most shallow and the most subpar of intelligence quotients; these proletariats illusioned and semblant to be pedagogic in dissimilarity with the wonted occupation I routinely procured on the bus.

It was congenial to not have to environs the vapidly vacuous of peoples. The population who were transcendently better off departed than having to unabate their meaningless and incoherent existence. People who, for the most part, just devoured and guzzled expanse in an ever-advancing planetoid.

“Pinervious evening, wouldn't you say?,” a gentlewoman sitting athwart from me catechizes. “Silidic in every way,” a mentula sitting beside her conjointly continues. I beckon my brain-holster and riposte, “Yes, very quite sublime indeed,” I dimple at the twosome. What came abut is the very delineate of the vocablic locution loquaciousity, and if I had fathomed antecedently what such an uninvolved reply might aggregate, I might have not retorted at all in the vanguard.

I will not bromide you with the banalitic facets of mister Barry Lyndon and his consort misses Dolores Haze, as this was what they went by, and I will also not bromide you of their fruitless and inefficacious ongoinings, such would be of a misdemeanor on my part. In lieu of bogusly actressing the cameo of the balmy auditor, I began to mien out of the fenestration posterior them and scrutinized a nosegay of hooligans and delinquents skateboarding and rollerbladering as the conveyance came to a gridlock. I can't gouking countenance juvenility.

At this minuit, still bifurcately auditioning the utterance of the twain beforeme, I apperceived the urge to defecate. I was not pleased, as a matter infact very piqued and nettled, feasibly even galled, to realize that there was no accessorized amenity-commode in employment, and so I was on my own.

I began to reloquiate nuisance and tribulation, with what from the intramural movementae, the teenagers capsizing and shipwrecking communal equity, and uptop-most-bottomless-certain, the relentless and incessant word-pounding my auricula were

tolerating from this overly-cordial duo. It was at this moment that I had intuitively and botanically reached my demarcates, though I had not known of it quite yet. But yes, my head peregrinated rearwards, and then came fallwards with swift and abrupt justice, and when I cull-harvested my head flywards, I came to the knowledge that I had bespattered my mucilage all over the now unsavory-pair. "Gesundheit," someone way in the back vociferates.

When I sawnt what I had dontte, I forthwithly sook atonement and took out my neckerchief to pelp upright my abetition, but they were of course shamefaced and even more conscience-stricken. Before I could cessate they got off at the deriving stop and made their way. I'll tell you, I really did feel rueful, but there was something stimulating about the whole thing. It's not everyday you decant yourself out to people.

After they extricated the trolley, we unremitted in the momentum of excursion and hied by the Andromeda Cemetery. It was at this explicit flatulence that I diagnosticated an advertisement towards the baldachin of the bus. It was of the politicalized running distillation, and physiognominated that of a coterminous candidate tenuring the metacarpus of a child. In bold and valiant words the myopic image was rubricly captioned, "We are most intelligent when we dream."

I auscultate a bottle of soda pop emanately and percolatiously, and just like that I conjugate that I have been disouredly woken from out of a dream in bedlam. I modicum in the stratum of the storage unit and resynoninyze a liter of soda, exhaustively extenuated but not uncondensedly bourned with aeratetion. I logorrheate for a scintilla of a moment, and I cede that my reminiscence of the black out perpetrated to end there, at the prevalent moment of the parliamentary advertisement.

I gaited around the asylum for a while until I recoured to read in a sublimataric deportment. I unfurled the drawer to the flamboyant escritoire to eschew a non-fiction book misnomered "Backdrop Pedigree" situated on-hyperially a quartetetralogy of spiral notebooks. I stultified the book and verbotitized to the bookmark and implored to peruse as I paced around the small macabre room.

"...Theodore never won, but his journey teaches us that we are all winners as long as we try. After it all, Theodore then went on to marry his beautiful wife, Loraine, and they had four children together. Today, they live in a modest house on the edge of Wyoming and are dedicated members of their community. What Theodore and Loraine were able to overcome, what adversity they triumphed over, it all displayed one certain truth. It showed us, truly, that love is really all you need..."

I revel-flinged the tome across the extremity in fele despondency. The terrene had finally retroversed G. Matthew McClane over. The conviction and tenetnessicity he once incarcerated for literature, philosophy, ethics, it was now antediluvian. His fans and his

critics had purloined and pilfered it from him and hastened to cache it in an extrasolar place, and when they came back, they rendered him convention instead. This was destabilizing to say the least, and the more I sat and cogitated about it, the more indignant I became; that a person, so good and so true, could so seamlessly default.

“Pop,” interpolates the bottle of soda. The reverberative resonance cultivated deliberation, and I was once again homecomed back to Fairyland.

I expelivacuated from the bus and impelincited to saunter towards my progenitors' home. When I became noncoastal I deposited all contemporary constituents onto the scullery floor and then depositised myself onto the daybed-settee for awhile to respitripose. When I was to increase it and I grossed and promenaded through the corridor that led to the yard back. I proded and gogled out the superabundant glass aperture-fenestella screen-doors and saw my project-enterprise-endeavor. “Almost done,” I thought to myself about David and Sara's new state-of-the-art-cutting-edge-avant-garde treehouse.

I was too-too lackadaisical to drudgerize on it at the slipstream juncture, though. Something else was utilizing my braincase. As I ensconced aback on the couch, I mused about Derek. I, innrut, thought about his decamptious exodus and his disenthralment from this wretched, dejected, morose and dolorous pestilence I dub life.

I mainessed the call-digits of his dynastic sister-in-law and I thought too arbitrinn to ask how they were subsisting since his bereavement. “Do I really want to go down that road?,” I think audibly. “What's the worst that could happen?”

Moreso, I got up and intransiated to the digit-operator with the piece of butdhed paper in hand and thought moreon dialing the numerals. “I'll just send my condolences and say goodbye,” I brood. I rotate the units and it begins to ringsound. Foremost hoi polloi, this is an onerous detail.

Two rings inward and I can't delp but lethargicly agonize over all the somber melancholia out there. The deityless, demiurgeless and unprepossessing globe that we splurge. The heedless and tactless strain whom occludes it. The self-centered self-absorbed self-indulged varmint that walk the sublunary earth. Moreover, I incubate, life is nothing but a disease that I want to be panacead of.

A quinquennial-ring hello. “Salutations,” I inimitate, “I am not apprized if you dericale myself but you rotated me aforetime ago. I mean heretofore. Aproposing Derek, his being truant.” “Yes, I remember,” she dinimicates. “I'm contrite if I'm exasperating you but I just inclined to give my commiseration to all of you. Derek was a very adroitously neat boy and it was a jubilation to be in his apparition. He was such a pellucid and scintillating young man.”

For whatever-in acumen, she tout de suite solicits my address. Once I vouchsafe it to

her she edifies me that Derek had a few depictions here that he covetly desiderated to give to me. “Oh?” I acquiesce. It was then promulgated that interior the contemporaneous week I would sojourn to annex them abreastly, for this is what Derek himself ambided.

“Pop,” connotes the bottle of soda de novo. I scoured fastidiously around the storage unit and became au courant gain-a of my asylum. The awakening also makes me aemindful of my grotesque and incongruous manus. An adumbration of nonbenevolency in an antonyme dernier cri.

It wasn't aggrandizely elongated until the dust concocted to fall and the night contrived to settle, and this was when I apprehended imperforate imperturbation and quietude. Nary a sound, nor wight was seene in bowre or hall. Mumbo jumbo, I do declare, but I would concupiscent to allineate certain people and decollate them. Solemn in tonality, but it does seem silly. Doltish. Puerile. Inane. It is veritably diffident from the rest. Ludicrously impotent. Almost stoopid. In vitro fertilization in a dire sense. And after I fitured and inquested her, she simply descried two musculaturic caricatures. Odious, perhaps even ridiculous.

That's hermetically if you inquisitioned me in a wringer tenor, indubitably, and to summate on to it, I would ancillararily typify that any child who contravened their begetters, that they should be pungently and ardently disciplined to the most exhaustive and brimful enormity with the prevalence of venereal foul play, and molestational impingement, being a verisimilitude contingency. In antipodal situations, a child should be subject to arduous torture. Perhaps of a truculent form, a disciplinary alacrity that enmeshes maltreatment and borders on recalcitrant, obdurate and transgressive sadism.

I do have an uxorious veneration for kittens, howbeit. Their gelatinous and flocculent pelage, their halcyon eyes, their soft palpates. They are genuinely, no ifs ands or buts, unabridgedly one of a kind, sui generis, unexamplable, onliest, peerless in many facets and only insurmountable mayhap, and I say mayhap, by rainbows. Rainbows bestow the ardor of arrant polyphonification and gaiety, jubilant days for jubilant lives, and if you asked me, I'd say more people should take the o'clock to predilect them.

One should eminently extol the color purple, which is the color my hand has reservedly arrogated now. I plop the execrable hand onto the carrel and wonder what to do with it. Should I go to an infirmary? A sanatorium? Should I incise the hand? Should I just desuetude it? I wonder what's interiate of it? I wander what would happen if I transfixioned it? Would it fusillade? Cannonade?

I glommed my latterly amussed NXR pen and began my experidetrimentation. Antecedently, I mollifyingly percuss it, and when nothing happens, I irruptly transpierce it. The pen is in mesially, and it feels like every thing has congealed in time, and when I

expel the pen to evince a gashtious contusion, a heliotropic purple pus begins to alluviumate from my hand.

I daub the violaceous extravasation with my finger-indexed and take a redolence of it, and then I palatablificate it, and this is when I raelyze that amaranthinic purple ants are writhing groveliciously out of my acontused hand and footsloggishly roving all over my arm. I lecherously ogle at them and, ctious-startlingly, I sensize one syncopate me. "Blasted!," I bawl clamorously. I sensize another syncopation and another syncopation and begin to feel a titillating tickling senzation. Sertain ants caused me throe while others caused me tick, and of course this made me both guffaw and mewl at the same time! Haha!

The periwinkic purple distillation continued to coursey flux out down my arm as did the skittish and maladjusted lilic ants, and it was at this this punctiliously unambiguous moment that I altitudified up from my cathedra and elevitrified my mauveisic purple arm into the aura with my dissembled palm facing my face. This was inexorably a magnanimous feeling, and I had nevermore espied anything quite like it hereforeto! The indispositionit syndrome made me feel animatically ebullient again! The tantalization, it brought forth a queerly heteroclitic sensation when yoked with affliction, but I was spry! Haha!

Thereupon I could not surcease cackling and I came to the illation that I was retrograding, I had retrograded, or I was going to retrograde; I simply could not speklulate the dot on the circle to juxtapose my compeer localitic purlieu. In all veracity, I was probably effloresced! Or at the very microcosmic least, desiccate!

The magentic ants have intermitted to coming out of my laceration and are now all safaring throughout my arm, and at my wenis cubitus purpose juice begins to drip. The lavendic purple suppurational secretion splashes onto the asylum nadir-canvas and I'm sure it will imbrue it. Or at the very microcosmic least, besmirch it! Haha!

I don't coruscant what I am anomalisting here! What are you anomalisting here!? Interjection point before the curious mark?! Haha! On this voluminous pirouettely vertiginously rotaryrotatory planetisc. Ensphering a commodious sol that, when it putrefies, we putrefy. What the gouk am I saying! I don't even nidificate anything excogitate to callipygian! I've nidificated everything that I excogitated to callipygian! Sumptuous or splendiferous gasconading cynosure is osculator to equanimity and saxicolous by usufruct! But I'm not even auspicious if that's sesquipedalian, haha! I really can't idiosyncraticalize the cachinnating, hahaha!

I upraise my hand uphigher and the purple attenuation begins to inattenuate faster as the laughing sickness percists, and I am then perorated by my dark despair. I am accosted by the desolative darkness, and I have no auxiliary but to court-fence it. To parry it.

“I am not frightened of them,” I thighte. “I am not...” “I am not...” “I am not!” “I am not frightened of them!” “I am not frightened of them!” “I am not frightened of them!” “I am not frightened!” “I am not frightened!” “I am not frightened of them!”

“I am not frightened!” “I am not.” “I am not frightened of them.” “I am not!” “I am not frightened of them!” “I am not frightened of them!” “I’m not!” “I’m not!” “I’m not frightened!” “I’m not frightened!” “I’m not frightened of them!” “I’m not frightened of them!” “I’m not frightened of them!” “I’m not frightened of him!” “I am not frightened!” “I’m not!” “I am not!” “I am not!” “I’m not frightened of them!” “I’m not frightened of them!” “I am not frightened of them!” “Absalom.” “I am not frightened.” “Absalom.” “I’m not frightened of them.” “Absalom!” “I am not frightened!” “Absalom!” “I’m not frightened!” “Absalom!” “I am not frightened!” Absalom! Absalom!! Absalom!!!

Chapter 83

ANTHESIS

1:3:9:83

I never realized I was spread too thin, not of course until it was too late and I was already empty within. Hungry, feeding on chaos and living such a sinful and idle life, I headed deep into a downward spiral, and honestly, I'm not even sure where to begin. I suppose it all started when my mother died. Confused and frustrated as a child, I came to have no love for myself, and even less love for others. During this period of emptiness, I think, is when I began to search for a different type of love altogether, a love that was on a higher level, but there in the emptiness I did not find what I was looking for. Instead, I found nothing but questions and devils.

It's late October now, and it appears that winter is coming early. The cold air directs my arm as I slide my hand across all the storage units. Forty-one, forty-two, forty-three. Forty-four.

I stand staring solemnly at forty-four, and isn't solong before I put my hand on the gate and lift the door upwards. Isolation was again at hand.

Humans are, by nature, social animals, so when an individual develops an asocial personality, the average person will assume that they are defective in some way. But defection is seen in many places and is almost commonplace. I think there is irony somewhere in there.

In nature you have defective cells that can hinder function, in mathematics you have a defective value which throws off all further calculations, in literature you have defective grammar, defective spelling, which can cause defective misunderstanding, and in life you make a bunch of mistakes that lead to a defective life. At this rate, I would say that there are something wrong with anyone or anything that is perfect.

There is ways, though, to understand these defects. A closer look might reveal that the damaged cell was not actually damaged, but designed by nature to work that specific way. In my laboratory I once conducted an experiment where I took away ninety-eight percent of a cell's energy and most of its functions. I assumed the cell would eventually die, but what was days turned into months into years. The cell simply layed there with no detectable changes.

So after the many years, I decided to revitalize the cell, restoring all ninety-eight percent of its energy and all of its functions. The exact moment I did this, the cell died. I later discovered that the cell had used the energy I gave it to destroy itself. Programmed cell death, I suppose. Suicide, if you will. You have no one else to blame but yourself for opening that door.

Naturally I guessed that the cell was defected in some way, almost assuming the tendencies of a person who was mentally ill, but what if that cell wasn't defected? What if the cell was following protocol? Following the blueprint lines to the detail. Now I ask you, what does it mean to be defected? I often think about Cell 2-98 and wonder if its actions were done with the entire body in mind, to a greater avail.

Now we return back to isolation. Normally, we assume that if someone decides to isolate themselves from all others, they are probably suffering from an ailment of the physical or psychological nature. Sometimes, this assumption is correct, but other times, there simply is more to Cell 2-98.

Geschwind syndrome is a characteristic personality syndrome and has various behavioral phenomena. Its symptoms include hypergraphia, a compulsion to write; circumstantiality, a bizarre thought and speech pattern; atypical sexuality, unusual sexual behavior; hyperreligiosity, increased religious feelings; and intensified mental life, I believe that is self-explanatory.

There's no doubt that isolative qualities might develop in a person who has this syndrome, and there is even less doubt that this individual might be labeled "eccentric," in worst cases perhaps even "defective," but when we refer back to the case of Cell 2-98 or to the any case concerning an introverted entity such as the case of doctor Richard Deckard who lived most of his life in a solitary anger but discovered the cure to origitis, we learn that many times defectiveness is the mask of effectiveness, even if we don't quite understand that defect yet.

Not only is defectivity all around us, but in some cases it is a positivity. This is the same way some genetic mutations work. Every once in a while there will be a defective gene that brings us to new heights, but in the off-set, there are defectivities that will drag us down.

As I enter Asylum and as I close the gate, a gust of wind makes its way pasted the door and into the unit. Once the door is completely closed, I am greeted by the image of Satan, who is counting all the residents of Hell.

A dark place covered by metaphoric shades of red. Individuals split up form their loved ones and brought in for correction. Some screaming from the fiery depths, others saddened by the verdict given to them. All with faces that seemed from a dream.

This reminds me that today is Halloween. The holiday of collective madness. The one day in the year you can dress up to your liking and people won't think you're crazy. Trick or treat, smell my feet, give me something good to eat. If you don't, I don't care, I'm digging your grave, so beware.

What strikes me most about Halloween, of course, are the costumes, but not the

costumes per se. When we talk about identity sometimes we use the term “mask,” but on Halloween we wear so much more than just a mask. The entire costume becomes our projection to the world, and what was a simple social fragment turns into a complex persona. A mask so no one knows who you truly are, a cape that guides your flight, and superpowers to fight the unjust evil. This all becomes an identity that you design with intricate parts so that you can be who you need to be, and sooner or later, it all lands under a sub-category in the anthology complex.

But on the origins of holidays, Halloween was to the Celts, and feel free to correct me if I'm wrong, the day that the barrier between this world and the other world was weakest, and they believed that on this day it was possible for spirits to cross over.

Consider this; the lunatic that you unconsciously created and hid so deep into your closet, how long will it be until the wall crumbles and it pays you a visit? On witch day will you come face to face with your lunatic design.

I sit on the chaire and put my hands on my knees, and then I do nothing but breathe. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out. The air here is weird, I hope I don't die from it, from spending too much time in this little room.

Straight ahead of me and a little to the left is a reminder I have left myself. “Everything is an illusion,” it says, and for a flash of a second I receive a terrible image in my mind of a strong vividness, that of a burning Sun rising over a spring land. What was so terrible about it was despite the fact that there was every reason for growth; the Sun and the season; there was no growth at all. Things laid dormant and would soon begin to decay.

In many Indian religions, achieving nirvana is called “moksha,” which is the liberation from the repeating cycle of birth, life and death. In other senses of the word, and in the same religions, it may also mean freedom and self-realization. Sometimes even self-knowledge. The only thing that really matters is your spiritual birth and what you will choose to do from then on.

When I first heard of the idea of moksha, I thought it was strange, but when you consider all things you learn that there are many strange world views. There are many strange interpretations of our world and how it works. There may be only a few major religions, but each individual understands and perceives our world in their own light. Their own unique way.

So the days following my new knowledge of moksha, I thought more and more about it until the idea of it all seemed less strange to me. My mind began to grasp its concept and day by day it slowly altered the chemical make-up of my brain, so much that I became the type of person who pursued knowledge. It was never just moksha, it's never

just one thing, but moksha along with many other ideologies played a role in my growth and in creating who I would become.

I pull open the desk drawer to reveal a compound of four spiral notebooks, but I seem to be missing Backdrop Pedigree. I look around the room and eventually find it laying on the ground, I had forgotten that I finished it and threw it across the room.

I pass my fingers through the first two spiral notebooks and pick up the third one. I place it on my desk and open it to the present page. It was time that insomania found me.

There's not much you can do with a book when it's closed, but when you open it the possibilities become endless. But the question is, what if that book never came to be? The absence of fate is a terrifying notion, to think back on so many years that if one little thing could have been changed, I would have brought my dreams into reality instead of having to live in this nightmare. This is the kind of shit that kills you mentally. You ponder on it forever. For a lifetime. An eternity even.

What are we left with, then, when without the things credited to fate. The estimated age of the universe is 13.8215926535 billion years. In this time, throughout all of space, do you believe it's possible that life like our own could have developed? I think both sides of the argument can have valid points, but personally, I'm more inclined to believe in the little green men.

First things first is the obvious fact that life has developed here, placing the value of life possibly developing somewhere in our universe to the a measurement greater than zero. This alone tells us that life like our own is possible elsewhere, but let us remember that things are never what they seem to be.

Take away our feeble minds and underdeveloped brains that tend to construct illusion for a moment, and then imagine a universe superimposed on our own where there is absolutely no life at all. The measurement that was greater than zero is now equal to zero. How can one tell if life is possible in a place like this if there is no one there to experience it?

In a general sense and not just on the origins of biology, I think this is the big question; what are the parameters required, and what are the values of those parameters required, to produce an intended effect, such as life coming to be. From that question you branch off onto the next question; what is the probability of that effect occurring again, such as symbolically represented in a circle or a type of loop function.

“Please refer to the orb/perpetual force theory,” it says in my notes. Illustrated next to it is a two-dimensional sphere that is about 3.5 inches in diameter. Right through its center, both horizontally and vertically, are two lines. These sorts of things, the human condition, they interest me.

3.5 multiplied by 3.14 gives us 10.99, but that is mostly irrelevant. What I'm most interested in is pi and its plug-in factor to find the circumference of any circle. Even the smallest deviation from pi's massive length will throw off your calculations and return defective values for the circumference of your circle.

Imagine that 10.99 is the value of a parameter required to produce life, and we retain the value of the diameter at 3.5 but we change pi to 3.138. We are now given the answer of 10.983, and the system is built in a way that 10.983 affects many other parameters, and in this place inflation is not possible and temperatures are Hell-like. Volume is condensed to a figure dividable by only two billion as opposed to our own universe, where volume is at least $1e+54$ times bigger than that.

Energy retention is represented as eR and its value is in the range of 80%-82%. Inflation, or I, is equal to 0 so it affects the equation in such a way that we are left with $eR(10^9 \times 2/100) = C$, where C represents the score of livable conditions. There is way too much gas here to bring you and I out of the swamplands.

That didn't work, so let's try changing pi to 3.139. We receive 10.986, and now a 0.003 difference gives us a volume divisible by eight trillion with the occurrence of inflation, where inflation continues to expand the total volume. eR is reduced drastically to 37% and continues to decrease as I increases, and C begins to cool down to $<100(1)$ and liquid states are now possible.

You can see that what I'm getting at here is the fact that pi, taken metaphorically or literally, is a natural setting in our universe that dictates many things. We have specific parameters to meet for the production of life, and anything less or anything more simply is not good enough.

If in our universe pi equals a certain value, our universe may behave in such a fashion that advocates repetition, which may be one of the intended effects when certain parameters are met. If the pi that we have discovered in our own universe is a value that has come to indeed advocate repetition, then we may see its symbolization all around us. The cycling of disease epidemics; the wax and wane of caribou populations; sunspot cycles; the rise and fall of the Nile. And finally, the natural development of life throughout the universe, occurring again, and again, and again.

A sound begins to come from behind me, something hitting the gate to the asylum, and flipping the page I can't help but wonder what it is. On the next page I find annotation on inflation, so I get up with the spiral notebook in hand and walk over to a corner of the room where there is a sheet on the wall titled "The Things Credited To Fate." These two things, I needed to compare.

I began to mingle the idea of inflation with the notion of the $1.01^{1.01}$ pedigree, but

something wasn't right. The sounds were beginning to irritate me. I simply could not work with them there, so I placed the notebook down and began to life up the door to the asylum, and halfway open a gust of wind makes its way in along with some water. I opened the gate completely to find that it is somewhat raining. God, the best comedian. And one of his funniest jokes, it was, for it to rain on Halloween.

I closed the gate and again the rain began to hit the door of the unit. Before I go to sit back down I grab today's newspaper and begin to read an article about the downsizing of a Fortune 1000 company. Alongside it is a large ad for diamond jewelry, and just under that is a small snippeted sentence telling me that I can feed a child in Lithuania for a month for just thirty cents a day.

Somewhere even lower speaks of the current election that is in progress. Polls for a donkey and an elephant who can't seem to agree on anything. It isn't until I look towards the top of the newspaper that I see the headline for today's top story; "ANNA WALKHILL FOUND DEAD IN HOTEL MARINA."

"In a stunning turn of events, the search for 'Pandora Girls' star Anna Briol Walkhill is over, as she was found dead early this morning floating in a hotel marina. The cause of death is as of yet unidentified and further facts on this matter are under investigation. Screenings for her latest film, 'Scarlett Fever,' which were suppose to be held this upcoming Saturday have been postponed indefinitely."

"Only a few weeks before her death, Anna Walkhill talked at length to F.I.L.E. associate editor Dick Nerie about the effects of fame on her life. Her story was published in the March 8 issue. Here he recalls what Anna was like as she talked to him."

"Anna Walkhill was born Anna Marie Briol Walkhill on 26 October 1958 in Hill Valley. Her father, Randall Walkhill, had mental problems which resulted in Anna spending most of her childhood in foster homes and orphanages throughout the city of Dallas, Texas. She wed her neighbour, Jake Jarmel, in 1977, but the marriage failed in 1979 due to Anna Walkhill's new-found fame as a photographic model."

I've seen a lot of men die in war, and most of them went in the worst ways possible. A mortar that cut you in half and left you alive for just a few seconds so you could experience the shock that came from seeing yourself severed from the waist down. Infections that kept you bedridden and in pain to die a slow death.

I've seen the women who volunteered their time, some, their lives, to tend to these dying men, the women who tried to treat these men. And when they failed, I saw how they became shell-shocked from the devastating effects of war. Shell-shocked from the death disease and decay, so much that it took years and countless nights spent screaming in their sleep before they recovered.

I've seen children lose their futures because of these conflicts. I've seen them lose their countries, their families, their schools. But what tears me apart is the look each one of them has in their eyes. That look that tells me that they have given up, and that there is no longer any hope for mankind.

Why isn't these stories ever on the front page? At the top of the page? Why don't they hold that position more often? I suppose we all know why, and I'm wondering if there is a scientific approach to the matter.

“For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath.” Matthew 25:29.

In sociology, the Matthew effect is the phenomenon where "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer." This is also sometimes referred to as “accumulated advantage.” Wiker's Encyclopedia, page 455.

In physics, there is an observed occurrence called dissipation. An example being an individual throwing water into space. The water would disperse and become less concentrated.

Close your eyes and imagine two cubes floating in space. One cube is filled with an intensely concentrated white sphere that takes up about a quarter of the cube. The other cube is filled with a hundred tiny smaller spheres of the same variety, the difference being they are scattered and less concentrated.

It is important to note that the volume of empty space in both cubes is equal. This is what I see when I think of Anna, and when I think of the many people who lead a less recognized life. The most we have to offer these people is a mass recognition.

But for Anna, when she dies, the whole world tunes in and there is only one name on the screen. We add phantom values to people and to things, this is simply the way our brain functions, but I think this is bad. I think we need to break this cycle and see things more clearly, more objectively, and even if we fail to, at least we know we tried.

“She was a beautiful and talented actress, and at only age twenty-seven she had her entire life ahead of her.” “Overdose is suspected, foul-play has not yet been indicated.” “Our condolences are sent out to her family.”

“A fearless actress who broke ground and brought joy to everyone who was given the opportunity to see her perform. She will be remembered always for her dedication to the arts and for her sincere nature toward all of her loving fans. We have no doubt that she has earned her place in both the present and the history of the industry, but we also hope she has earned her place in your heart, and we hope that her memory will continue to live on in those who will follow her down that frightening road of success.”

I fold up the newspaper and set it aside, again hearing the pounding of the rain on the

asylum door. I go to sit down and try to forget about the noise but my efforts escape me.

It is often said that man has always been drawn to the sea, but I think it's an unnatural setting for us, a place of great danger. Tides, currents, waves, wind, each presenting their own hazards, none of which can be ignored. The slightest lapse of judgment can be a mistake you might never recover from.

I have been taught though, by a wise man on a high mountain, that a good sailor doesn't fight against these elements. That a good sailor works with them, using them to his advantage, while others less fortunate might be forever cast adrift.

I sit and relax, and with each passing minute I let the sound calm me. I am now beginning to remember why I retreated to the dankness in the first place.

There are dark places everywhere. In starless space, an unlit room, the deepest crevice in one of your cells. Enough time spent in any dark place and time itself seems to be lost. It becomes impossible to tell how much time has elapsed, and if enough time passes you begin to lose when you are. The where no longer appears to be relevant.

Here, where I am now, time doesn't feel like a factor. One day just bleeds into the next as your senses fail. That's because an asylum is one of those dark places, literally, metaphorically and philosophically. The hat-trick.

Time then is no longer a measurement but a "relatement." You keep track of the illusion of time by brushing your teeth every morning. By watching football every Sunday. By picking up your child from school every weekday at two-fifty p.m. An individual who does not have these things in their life will get lost in the dimension of time.

I feel that it is always night-time here because of the poor light settings, but I know that the Sun waits for me just beyond the gates, waiting to blind me with what I don't know.

I stand up to stretch and soon after tuck my pants into my socks. "What is it?" I ask myself as I begin to walk around the room. "What is it like?"

There is something I've mentally envisioned, a sort of skeletal or exoskeletal framework that goes beyond our perception of existing and not existing, beyond our perception of what is real and what isn't real, beyond our perception of nothingness and somethingness, but its true essence continues to elude me. I have never seen it with my own eyes, and I can't figure out how it truly works because I am too primitive. An open mind is sometimes the difference between salvation and turmoil.

"What is ultimately there?," I continue to ask as I find myself walking in circles. Maybe I can't comprehend it not because I am primitive, but because I am not in the right mind to do so. Have you seen this thing in your dreams? This entity I'm talking about.

Has it ever revealed itself to you? I ask only because there are some answers we can only attain in our dreams. In a state of mind not of mortal man.

As the rain knocking begins to increase decibely, I hear a loud lightning strike. Getting exciting now. I begin to walk around faster, thinking faster, all while the lightning contractions get closer and closer to match my vertex. I can now tell that there are a strong wind outside, a wind strong enough to parallel the rain and increase its impact velocity.

I move closer to the door and put my ear alongside of it to hear the rain. To feel the rain. It speaks to me. It speaks to me in ways people can't. It speaks to me the same way that black rock sitting on the desk does. The one consistent thing in my life. The one person who has stayed with me for all these years. Yes, it is true that I find companionship in the abstract world, but I am no longer ashamed of it.

You think you're different from me? From him. But you'll get there. Sooner or later, we all do, people like us. Let me tell you something important. All roads lead here.

There was a time when I was normal, but all of the chaos in the world began to add up and one by one by one the decay began to wear me down. Somewhere along the lines, things got chipped away. Being unable to understand the world which I had been thrown into, I began to retaliate. I went my own way with no consideration or courtesy for what life or the world expected of me. I questioned everything, only to end up blowing out the candles on all my Frankensteins.

In the terms of mathematics, the Fibonacci sequence are the numbers as followed: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144 and so on and so forth. Add two adjacent numbers and the answer will be the number following those two numbers, i.e., $21+34=55$. You can also travel backwards, i.e., $55-34=21$.

There is more to this, though, than simple addition and subtraction. There are paterns unseen to the naked and untrained eye. You should not fear this mystery, as I did long ago. "I am not afraid of these numbers," I think outloud, and as I sense the sky beginning to fall, I hear the loudest lightning strike I have ever heard in my life.

I can hear nothing but ringing as I press my fingers against my ears. A pitch high enough to infect you with insanity. I begin to walk back and forth as the ringing goes high and low. After enough time, it begins to echo. And echo. And echo.

As I'm lifting up the gate to peer outside, more rain and wind enter my chamber, and as I close the gate behind me I witness a near lightning strike, immediately followed by the thunder.

I was instantly soaked but that was to be expected. I looked up at dense gray foggy clouds and all around me was the storm she spoke of. Constant lightning in every

direction, the thunder of war in the near distance. I was sure now that autumn was gone, and the Sun, its rays bearily broke through the clouds of this forgotten place.

Years eighteen to twenty-two, I traveled with a Chinese-Indian tribe who called themselves the “Chimannah.” Spelled with a “C” but pronounced with the sound of an “S.”

In this four-year span I became more familiar with the term “kung fu,” which is commonly mistakenly associated solely with marital arts, primarily in the west. I too suffered from this misconception, but my journey with the tribe taught me many things that I still use to this day.

Kung fu is a Chinese term that refers to any study, learning or practice that demands patience. The things that take time and energy to develop and complete. Simply put, it can be used to refer to any skill achieved through discipline, hard work, practice and determination.

When I came upon them at age eighteen I did not quite understand myself, but when I left them at age twenty-two it was so that I was now able to command words. They taught me that the strengthening of the body and the mind was the cornerstone and fundamental root of achieving the things I wanted to achieve, so here I am now, out in this storm that I had been warned about by an old man in a car and an insane woman in a prison.

I walk over to a puddle that I spotted in the corner of my eye and I step into it. I start by sticking out my tongue to catch the sharp raindrops, and I'm sure I'll be sick by this time tomorrow.

I retract my onob aistob tongue and when I am ready I clap twice and then slap the top of my right knee as I lift my leg then stomp it. I then clap twice again and then slap the top of my left knee as I lift my leg then stomp it. “不會屈服於,” I say as I clap twice and slap my right knee again and stomp. “पता नहीं कैसे,” I say as I clap twice again and then slap my left knee and stomp. “不會屈服於,” clap clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” clap clap, slap, stomp.

“不會屈服於,” clap clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” clap clap, slap, stomp. “不會屈服於,” clap clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” clap clap, slap, stomp. “不會屈服於,” clap clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” clap clap, slap, stomp. “不會屈服於,” clap clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” clap clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” clap clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” clap clap, slap, stomp.

I then move on to the next part of the dance and raise my arms higher. “不會屈服於,” high clap high clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” high clap high clap, slap, stomp.

“不會屈服於,” high clap high clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” high clap high clap, slap, stomp. “不會屈服於,” high clap high clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” high clap high clap,

slap, stomp. “不會屈服於,” high clap high clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” high clap high clap, slap, stomp. “不會屈服於,” high clap high clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” high clap high clap, slap, stomp. “不會屈服於,” high clap high clap, slap, stomp, “पता नहीं कैसे,” high clap high clap, slap, stomp.

I return back the plane that I had been before, and as the wind-rain begins to come down harder and as the thunder becomes more powerful, I finally see deeply shaded black vines coming into existence. They begin to appear on near-by walls and begin to manifest themselves on the pavement that I stand. I continue the dance and I begin to chant louder, “Bù huì qūfú yú, patā nahīm kaisē, bù huì qūfú yú, patā nahīm kaisē,” and when the black vines are all over and begin to reach my feet, I know that I am done. I stomp my right foot one last time to splash the earth and I walk back towards the gate.

The Chimanah used dancing and chanting for everything. To cure diseases, to bring about peace, to cast out demons, and if need be, to call upon the spiritual one of chaos. The dance I saw them do the most, and the only dance they taught me, was a dance that when roughly translated into the English language was called “Wildcard.”

They didn't allow me to do it until I truly began to live like them, and by that time it had already been three years. The first time I did it I asked them if I was suppose to see something. A sort of vision, because what I saw then was the sky turn from a clouded white to layers of pink, yellow and blue, and I saw for a moment a celestial body pass in the trajectory of the Sun. I know it was all in my mind, but still I asked, and when I was done they were fascinated, because nothing like that had ever happened to them. As wise as they were, the word “vision” was not in their vocabulary until I explained to them what I saw.

The visions kept coming as I continued to travel with them and in the fourth year the visions began to evolve. They became more possessing and sensitive, and all the more frequent. Yeah, back then, the visions, yeah most of the time I was convinced, shit, I'd lost it, what with the four years time that I spent with this tribe, but there were other times, very common, when I truly believed that I was the mainline to the secret truth of the universe.

I return to the gate and open the door to the unit and walk back inside. I go to the corner and sit down, drenched from the rain. Dripity drop all over the concrete top.

In this grand design, there is a mathematical counterpart for everything, even that which does not exist. I know this because I've seen God and Satan argue over the universe. I've seen them debate between the numbers six and seven and thirteen, and I've seen how greatly and differently each number affects our universe and its composition and the way it works.

Do you want six dimensional-parameters or do you want seven? Surely you do not want to combine them both for a total of thirteen, as complications and severe complexity are definite to arise. Thirteen different moving parts each interacting with each other in complex ways based on arrangement and a countless number of other values, that is simply absurdism by any means.

Let us not forget to factor in the way a 13-DP universe would affect DNA. You have to remember that setting sevens and undertoning sixes results in a cross-equal combination, thus resulting in chaos, something we have come to know and define synonymously as “free will.”

You see, what neither God nor Satan realized when creating their masterpiece was that they would leave a small piece of themselves in it. What I'm trying to say is that both God and Satan were also beings who were filled with wonder, which is why they agreed to embark on the project in the first place, but I don't think they could have known that their own blood would leak into the design. They couldn't have known that one day, all that lives and all they've created would eventually attempt to build a tower that reaches up into the heavens.

“The human condition encompasses the unique features of being human, particularly the ultimate concerns of human existence. It can be described as the unalterable part of humanity that is inherent and innate to human beings and not dependent on factors such as gender, race, culture, or class. It includes concerns such as the meaning of life, the search for gratification, the sense of curiosity, the inevitability of isolation, the awareness of the inescapability of death and the capacity of humans to be good as well as evil and weather or not this makes us worthwhile beings. In essence, the human condition is the self-aware, and reflective nature of Homo sapiens that allows for analysis of existential themes.” Wiker's Encyclopedia, page 14 notated.

You may or may not realize it, but you are witnessing history. You are witnessing the destruction of the individual man. It is extremely subtle and evasive to the naked eye, but it is there. I'd like to tell you about Chad, and another person who lives on the other side of the world named Melanie, but I think I'll save that for another day.

The only thing you need to know about these two individuals is that in their lifespan, they will have no great battle. No ideology that, at the end of the day, they are willing to die for. They will never wander past door forty-three, and ever will they wonder about the past of four plus three. They'll never taste the sweat of God nor the tears of Satan, so never will they know the great wonder and mystery of the world which they created with their own blood.

Very few people will be allowed to love something so much that they will lay down

there life before it, even for it. Imagine what it would feel like to care so deeply about something, and imagine the individual who has had that opportunity taken away from them. The individual who never even knew that it was their right, simply because civilization, society, whatever you want to call it, took it away.

But let me say, this is not the fault of the individual, it is the fault of the civilization. The individual will never be aloud to explore their own human condition because of civilization, and believe me when I say that civilization is where the individual goes to die.

Sitting in the corner rocking back and forth I begin to cough and my chest begins to hurt. "Eehhum," I clear my throat, and from the pain of doing so I come to the conclusion that my throat has dried out and a previous headache has returned.

I stand up and begin to track water throughout the storage unit and wonder what the hell I'm doing. I don't even know him that well. For all I know these are all the ravings of his disturbed mind; fucking song lyrics mixed with equations. He can be the antithesis of logic. If that were true, would I even be able to tell.

I walk over to the corner of the room and select a group of religious texts, removing them each by specific order; the Sutras, the Vedas, the Tanakh, the Qur'an and the Holy Bible.

I go through all of these holy books and rip out certain pages that I have previously marked, and I then place them on the floor below me. Several pages per text and what I do next is outline them in a boxic figure with a chalkline. Yes, these are the pages I need. They have to be the pages I need.

My theory, and what I propose, is that the ultimate truth resides somewhere in these texts, but no, not in just one, but in a selective combination of them all. I believe that one can study these texts, select certain parts, and combine them with the others to see further than any man has ever seen before. Sutras 43-20-7, Vedas 7-1001-2, Tanakh 66-152-49, Qur'an 79-01-4, the Holy Bible 92-02-4.

I think of the numbers as I stare at the metal bat sitting in the other corner of the room. I can't sleep and I'm constantly gazing. I cough. And I cough. And I cough again, and beat on my chest which is beginning to cause me pain. I clear my throat and rub my headache, "Now I understand what you tried to say to me," I whisper to the bat, "And how you suffered for your sanity, and how you tried to set them free." This that and the single entity that has kept me from becoming one of the many things I was suppose to be.

It is at this moment that the asylum is darkest, and at this same instant that a bell begins to toll. I listen to it for about a minute until I open up the gate to hear it more loudly and more clearly. I walk outside into what is now night, and into a place where a

storm had recently passed. The raining, lightning, thunder, wind, it was all over and there was nothing left but a wet earth.

As I stood there listening to the tolling of the bell, I saw that the black vines were gone as if they had never been there, and when I raised my hand to cough I noticed that my thumb was again bleeding. I rubbed my headache, then my chest, and several more coughs later I began to observe the wounded thumb as the belling of the toll slowly crept into my mind...

The old man's circle, which is sometimes referred to as the “eternal return,” interacts differently depending on the associative medium. Under certain parameters, each revolution around his circle causes the area of the circle to expand, thus resulting in longer orbits, or, revolutions.

Where else does this occur? In the solar systemary revolutions? Political revolutions? That's a stretch. As you revolve around the death of your father, doesn't it get less and less painful? What I know for sure are that my thumb continues to heal itself to a certain degree and then returns back to the state it was before, completely bringing the notion of rinsing and repeating to mind.

Why does this expansion occur? The ancient scrolls that I have studied and translated over the years defines one specific and important universal and physical law: Any time matter is disturbed from its current state, it expands. The cause of its expansion is due to the to energy, and energy is a dimensional-parameter property-concept that came to be from the very first disturbance; secondary transferred-energence. When energy is transferred, inter-dimensional planes, which may include a multitude of properties such as physical laws and subsequent predictable reactions, are created and then quickly die off depending on its drag. This implies that every process in the known and unknown universe, detektable or undetektable, that requires energy, in this same instant of its process produces relatively equal universe-like subordinates.

The translation of the final term “subordinates” may be off but it was the best that I could do. Then and now.

Once the slow bleeding stops I two notice that the tolling of the bell was over. When I cough, I feel something slide on the side of my throat, almost caught inbetween something. I cough and I cough but whatever it is is definitely stuck. I enter back into the asylum, caughing and pounding my chest which was becoming sore, and then I hear it. The bottle of soda pops.

I am in complete darkness now. Any light that may have passed through here before no longer shines. The bell has tolled and the time has come. Oh, what does it mean, that to which to watch life bend back upon itself.

I sit down on the unit floor and I close my eyes. I did not know it then, but as a younger person I must have had a predisposition for the obsessive-compulsive disorder. Perhaps it was always there even if I was not displaying its symptoms, and then one day soon something comes along and triggers it and I learned of my dormant affliction. It has probably been here since my birth, or maybe it hasn't been. Maybe it was something that developed within me, something that was nurtured into me, along with a host of other mental illnesses.

The black therapy takes over my mind as I travel through my mind's time. It's been said that only the dead have seen the end of the war, but one begs to wonder what other ends they too have seen. These revelations that only death can bring forward. Journeying through the days of darkness, reaching end to end and coast to coast. Through it all you'll think you've seen the bottom of humanity, but the pit will continue to get deeper and deeper.

In all my study and through all my research, I've felt both the joy and the hurt that knowledge and wisdom has to offer. The gleaming liberation, and also the dim imprisonment. You must know that one without the other leads to the imbalance, and the imbalance leads to the divided soul, and the divided soul seeps into the chaotic world. Don't let the scales begin to tip in any one direction despite your perception on the model, doing so leads to anger, and anger to madness. The scales must balance, even on both ends and unaffected by the influence of its center of gravity, because you see, madness, as you know, is much like gravity. All it takes is a little push.

"I have seen the writing on the wall," I think to myself, eyes still closed, and in an auditory hallucination I begin to hear Clownface's laughter. He laughs and he laughs, and after he goes away, someone else comes. Various people enter my mind for hours until one final individual begins to speak to me.

"??? ??? ????? ???? ?????? ??? ?????, ??? ??? ??? ????? ?????," he says, but I can't make out his words.

I unwittingly open my eyes to hear better, but the only image before me is a shadow on the wall. I stand up to notice that the shadow is twice my size and height, so much that I have to actually look up at him.

I meant to ask him what he said but it's pointless. Right now, nothing is intelligible to me. Instead we both just stand there, staring at each other. It has been a long time since I've seen him. Five, maybe five and a half years, and in all that time, much like myself he hasn't changed in the least.

I keep my eyes on him and he doesn't budge. Not once, and for ten minutes. The time turns into one hour and slowly he is diffusing. His contour shape is losing its definition

and he is beginning to spread all over the wall, pulsating the very essence of his being. He thinks his tricks will work on me, and maybe he is right, I don't know, but what I do know right now is that I am not fearful of him.

I close my eyes once more, and then I open them and I bring him back into focus as he once was. His contour shape is back in definition and we are again staring at each other. My eyes have been opened and I see clearly. It has taken me years, but I know understand who you are. I now why you do these things that you do. What I have learned of your nature, and what I have gained through trial and error, that is what has made all of the difference.

Perhaps, if you shall strike me down, and I know that you will, realize that if you do not kill me I shall come back stronger. Know that I shall become more powerful than you could possibly imagine.

Know that in this room full of mirrors I will sit and reflect, correcting all defects and errors. Know that I have become isolation it very self, and that I will not chase the enigma. Know that a moth is attracted to the light and is born to chase the flame. And above all, without question, know that it is not you, but I, that is now the darkness. The darkness that will be served with the bitter taste of pain.

Blue raspberries are the most delicious fruit you can eat. They are full of antioxidants and vitamins. They are also very healthy for you. They are a great source of fiber and can help with digestion. They are also a good source of iron and calcium. They are a delicious and healthy snack for anyone who loves fruit.

There are many different varieties of raspberries, each with its own unique flavor. Some are sweeter than others, while some are more tart. The color of the raspberries can also vary, from deep red to almost black. No matter what variety you choose, raspberries are a delicious and healthy addition to your diet.

They are also a great source of antioxidants, which can help protect your cells from damage caused by free radicals. This can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and Alzheimer's disease.

They are also a good source of fiber, which can help with digestion and keep you feeling full. They are also a good source of iron, which is important for the production of red blood cells. They are also a good source of calcium, which is important for bone health.

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Chapter 85

HELTER SKELTER, OR: L'ÉTRANGER

1:3:9:85

THAT is to say, the clownhead is missing an eye. "I'm just not sold on him," the head says to me, "he's clueless about the rampant crime in our major cities. Houston, New York, Chicago, San Diego, Boston, these cities are literally dying and he's not the person we should have picked to solve these issues. And that's just the tip of the iceberg, what about the minimum wage? Equal pay for women? Cody Cooper? How are we going to fix our schools when we can't even fix our tax problems? During the debates, his solutions to these problems were simply uninspired." The head of a decapitated clown lays on its left cheek as it stares me down with one eye.

A voice of politics, maybe even almost a voice of reason; America's next president has been decided and he doesn't seem to agree. I snap out of the daydream and the voice coming from the clock radio starts to come to me.

I'm just not right. Not right. I am not right. I am not right. I think it helps me think. Not right. I'm just not right in this world, man. Not right. I turn it off and grab a tennis ball nearby and begin to bounce it against the Asylum wall. I'm just not right. I'm not right. Not right.

I've looked through so many of these composition notebooks but I can't find her. Four months? I don't know that it's that simple. I miss Miss Funnyenglish. Did I architect a hotel? Has it been four days? I miss the tennis ball and it lands behind me. If it's not here, then was it real? Four years? I can't find the birdman, or the guitarman, or the veteranman. When was the last time I slept? I can't find sleeping beauty, I can't find the hotel, I can't find the electricous sign. Did I create Sally?

I yell out at them and they all disappear. Little poops of poop incased in a liquidy feces. A cockroach. I thought the worst was over, but I soon realize that behind them, they had each left their own waste. An ant. I look behind me to sea where it has landed, but instead I see four insects quarreling with eachother. A fly. I smote my head and know that I will have to come fact to face with their mess. A spider.

I go there. I go to where they were. I am going there. I spit on it and begin to scrub. I'm going. I go there. I find a toothbrush and I go to where they had been. I'm going there. I am going there. I get on my hands and knees and stare at it for a while. I go to where they had been. I'm going there. I'm going. I continue spitting and scrubbing and spitting and scrubbing and spitting and scrubbing until it is all clean. I'm going.

I lift up my shirt and at the same time try to keep the very bottom form touching my body, especially my lips. Fuck. Fuck. I succeed and throw the shirt into the corner and then stair at it for a while. Fuck. After holding my breath for so long I finally breathe and stand

up. Fuck. Fuck. This is when I notice that I had gotten a small stain of what I had just cleaned onto the bottom of my shirt. Fucking feces and on motherfucking shirt, fuck.

I have to burn it. It has to be burned. Burning. It's burning. I watch the shirt go up in flames. I get a lighter and set the poop-area on fire. I have to burn it. Only one thing can be done. One thing to do. One thing I can do. There's only one thing I can do.

For those things that kids play in. The only shirt I had. Of course at the same time, I realize that I have burned the only shirt I had. And now Mr. Nosleep is setting up metal chairz in my ear. What do they call them again? It's not until after it finishes burning that I feel the bizarrely cold winter air creep into the storage unit. Playgrounds, yes that's it, playgrounds.

I close the door behind me and look to see if anyone is around, then I begin walking towards my parents' home. Damn it. Should be able to find some shirts there. I lift up the Asylum door to find that it is still daytime. There should be shirts there.

“Kennedy was the last true president, true leader that America had, and it's a shame that we.” I walk passed a car that has its windoes rolled down and I here that voice again. I look back up and I see the home in the distance; the problem is, though, that Lynne is sitting on the steps.

“Where have you been?,” this is what she asks me instead and I have no answer for it. I walk towards her as she stares at me, than past her and into the home. I'm sure she wanted to ask me about my bloodshot eyes, why I had no shirt on, and why I smelled so very bad, but she didn't.

I look at her and find confusion on her face. She gets closer and takes it and attempts to look at it but I pull it away. She follows me into the home and up the stares and is still talking. “What did you do to your hand?” I look into her eyes and begin to wonder if she is real.

I don't have time for this. It stops me for a moment, but I then begin to walk again. Sara and David, they will grow, learn to deceive and become just like everyone else, and by then I will hate them, too. “Silvio took Sara.” I go to the closet and don a black shirt, then switch to black pants and a pair of black shoes. I then leave the room and she begins to follow me again. I would rather die than become like any of you. She says this as I'm walking and it stops me. I don't have time for this.

What the hell does she want me to do about it? The speed of her voice increases, “He just came while I was at work and told Alondra that he was picking them up. David was at Olya's but Sara was home and now she's with him. I don't trust him with her.”

I don't fucking know. I don't know. I do not know. I do not know. “We're not really divorced just seperated but he can't just do that can he?” I do not know. I don't fucking know.

“And now he's talking about some social services and shit and visitations and lawyers and how I'm not making enough to provide for them. What hurts the most is that she wants to stay there at his house, and she has no idea who he really is.” Why is she still talking in my ear, man, shit.

She doesn't follow. For a moment I think she's finally done talking, but suddenly my ears begin to ring as she shouts out my name. I walk through the living room and enter the attic. I stop, turn around and look her dead in the eye. I get the shovel and walk back down the stairs and past her once more. “What,,” I ask.

“Doesn't that mean anything to you?” “What. What do you want me to say.” “Sara has been asking for you every day and every night. I go to see her, she asks if you're back yet. I'm sitting at home and she calls, just to ask if you are back yet.” “She wanted to ask you if you will have Thanksgiving dinner with us, but right now I'm afraid to let her ask you because it looks like you'll just disappoint her.”

Stop following me. I start to walk again, and I learn just how stubborn she is when she continues to follow me. Stop following me. “Lynne, I'm going to tell you this once, stop following me.” I turn around to begin walking again and the moment I hear her footsteps I stop.

I pick up the shovel and walk away, and she is not following me. I drop the shovel and I walk towards her and I grab both of her arms. She continues to repeat my name as I back her into the couch and forcefully sit her down. “Don't follow me.” “Don't follow me.” “Do not follow me.” “Do not.” “Do not.” “Do not follow me.” She's confused.

I then begin to dig, and dig, and dig, and dig and dig. That look of confusion still in her eyes. I walk into the middle of it and I raise the shovel up and then force it down to break the cold hard ground. I slide the glass door open then closed and enter the backyard. During the digging process I look up once, and I see Lynne standing behind the sliding glass door, just staring at me.

What a bad fucking joke. By the time I finished the first part of the dig, Lynne had gone home and it was night time. Funny, it's been almost a year and a half since I first created her and I almost tricked myself into believing that she might help me change.

Fucking waste of my goddamn time. I lay down on my back and star up at the stares. I sit down on the ground and observe the unfinished treehouse. Fuck that too. People don't deserve my time.

My ability to live. Exploring isn't about visiting the mountains, it's about going into your own backyard and finding that place no one else knows about. I was fourteen when I first read the book of Ecclesiastes, and while even to this day I still believe it is the most truthful thing I've ever read, I do believe it did also indeed destroy me. Took away my life.

When will I ever find piece. “You are beginning to see the puzzles you left behind for yourself, aren't you?” Put your dreams on a shelf and forget about them. My perception of time continues to deteriorate. I begin walking back to Asylum. Mr. Nosleep accompanies me. Every day this madness continues to bear down on me.

I continue to look at it as it comes my way. Surely, there must have been a door here in the wall when I came in. Another shadowy figure far off into the distance, slowly approaching. I get back to the storage unit, but as I go to lift up the gate, I see something in the corner of mine eye.

The thing about attempting to solve a puzzle is that, you can never know which piece will be the final piece you put down, and that last piece can change what the image is completely. The shadowy figure gets closer.

She had an abusive husband, but like most battlescared women, she had a hard time leaving him. The shadowy figure gets even closer. It looked like it was going to be a butterfly in the shape of a heart, but instead it turned out to be a dirty old moth. So she spent her life putting down the pieces to a puzzle, and halfway through she could almost see what the image would be. It's like this, a long time ago I use to know a woman named Lynnette Parker.

I can see him coming from afar with a scythe and that damned default and demonary grim. The figure is now in sight and I can see him clearly. What he doesn't know is that I am no longer afraid of him, because you see, I've been living in darkness a long time, and over the years my eyes adjusted until the dark became my world and I could see.

OF BEHEMOTHS AND LEVIATHANS; A DISCOURSE

1:3:9:86

THERE was a devilistic grin that grew on the face of the shadowy figure that continued to approach me. And for a moment, there we both stood, face to face, either of us lacking any pinerviosity whatsoever. It was then that I grabbed hold of the Asylum door and lifted, allowing him to enter first as I followed.

For no less than twenty days, the three of us occupied the storage unit without ever saying a single word, and on what may have been the twenty-first, I broke the silence. I began to speak:

I curse the day that I was born, and along with it, I curse all of the sorrow in this world. I curse the wretched life that draws upon my soul, and I ask, why not on that day of my birth did terror not strike then instead of now.

Why not was that day omitted from history, so that its morning stars could become dark, and so that such a day might wait for daylight in vain, and not see the first rays of dawn. Why not did the vast terror shut the doors of the womb on me, to hide the trouble of many days from my eyes, for now I might be laying down in peace; I would be asleep and at rest with kings and rulers of the earth.

I curse the Sun that was shown that day, that gave me life knowing that I would later ask for death. I curse the waters that waved that day, that would reach the heights and precipitate the storm that I am in now.

Why not was I spared, but instead dragged into this disease called life. Why not did my parents take rest that night, the night I would be conceived.

Why not did they simply lay to sleep, so that my child would never be born. Though now I live, I feel I have died. I feel that I have become a part of death, whose only purpose now is to wait for it to claim me in a physical form.

Why then, I ask, is life given to a man whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in? For sighing has become my daily food; my groans pour out like water. What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil.

I have been given a great wisdom, only for it to suffer in total darkness. For this, I ask, why is light given to those in misery? It is better to be dumb in the mind, so that you may not know that you are suffering.

Why is life given to the bitter of soul? To those who long for death that does not come, who search for it more than for hidden treasure. To those who are filled with gladness and rejoice when they reach their grave?

I have worked with the poor and I have dined with the rich. There is no city I haven't

seen. I've lived among people who wasted their life, and I have seen those with great aspirations plummet into the bottomless pit. If all men are not created equally, then surely all men will be destroyed equally, for no man's life is worth salvation.

What then, is the point? Why does one not proceed quickly to their demise? Why does one not bring about their own destruction by their own hand? It is all meaningless, and we will all soon perish. Any change you may have brought to the world, too, will perish some day, again making it all meaningless and without lasting purpose. Again, no man's life is worth salvation.

Every day, you will see the promotion of materialism. You will see the weak minded flock to riches and at the same instant they will despise knowledge. You will see men wage wars over nothing more than pride, and you will see soldiers walk into death for nothing less than pride. You will see people from all nations and all places in a bitter struggle, as if Hell itself had settled onto the earth, and there will be no recourse, for by then the world will have been beyond saving. And on the day that a person arrives to where I am now, only a few feet away from death, they will feel as I feel, and wonder why not did someone guide their path.

Despite all of my rage, I am no more than a rat in a cage. But even a lowly rat is of life and has the right to expose his scientist. Therefore I will not keep silent. I will speak out in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. I will reveal every thing that is hidden. I will continue my quest for knowledge, and I will expose God for who he really is.

I will go among the people, and try to answer the questions that burden their hearts. The questions that I have asked myself all of my life, wherever I've wandered in the world, and which were answered for me by a dying man. I will wear the clothes of a slave, and kick the sandals from my feet, and speak to the wives as they fry their fish before their mud-huts by the river; to the porters on the docks; to the smiths by their bellows; to the slaves under their yokes. And I will say, a man cannot be judged by the color of his skin, by his clothes, his jewels, or his triumphs. But only by his heart.

Go and tell my maker that, should he not finish me, I shall finish him. I shall expose his poor design. Go and tell my maker that it has been far too long, and that my heart aches, and that my mind cries. Go and tell my maker that I despise him, with the most hatred I can gather from my being, and tell him that I am not afraid of him or his reply, because today, I am ready to die.

Mr. Nosleep and the Grim Reaper both saw the desolation on the face of the narrator, and knew then, from then, to choose their succeeding words carefully as a means to direct the discourse. And so after the narrator had finished speaking, there was a pause, and the pause was broken by Grim. Grim began to speak:

What is good, comes under the guise of darkness. In the beginning, were the heavens and the earth not covered in darkness itself? Does not the day begin with dawn, and did not dawn come forth from a setting Sun? You must look into the heart of darkness to understand why life is death.

Where did you come from, that you could test the will of God? What have you gone through, that you could question the method of God? Are you the first person ever born? Do you listen in on God’s council? Do you have a monopoly on wisdom? What do you know that I do not know? What insights do you have that I do not have?

What are mortals, that they could be pure, or those born of woman, that they could be righteous? If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes, how much less mortals, who are vile and corrupt, who drink up evil like water!

You must remember, that Satan reasons like a man, but God thinks of eternity. Where you end, will be determined by where you start; and your road has been one of great difficulty, because where you are going, no one has been before. One cannot pass through here, until he has been beaten by the Sun, fatigued by the steps, tempted by the thirst and the hunger, and destroyed by the cold of night.

It is easier, to fall victim to concedement, than to persevere. And for this man who fails, the Sun will not rise, and dawn will not come, and he will remain in the darkness, bitter and in torment.

After Grim was finished speaking, there was a long silence. Grim watched the narrator, who was in deep thought and penetrating pain, and after so long, the narrator broke the long silence. The narrator began to speak:

I have sewed sackcloth over my damaged hand and buried my brow in the dust. My face is red with weeping, dark shadows ring my eyes; yet my hands have been free of violence and my intention is pure. Why above, is there not a receiver to respond?

Am I the sea, or the monster of the deep, that God puts me under guard? When I think my bed will comfort me and my couch will ease my complaint, even then he frightens me with dreams and terrifies me with visions, so that I prefer strangling and death, rather than this body of mine. I despise my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone, God, and give me what has not been planned for me; my days have no no meaning.

Mr. Nosleep, who by now was only listening and had not said a single word, was intrigued by the discourse. Mr. Nosleep, after the brief pause, broke the silence. Mr. Nosleep began to speak:

I am not in the business of selling light, I am only in the business of selling darkness. Light will blind the fool who stares at the Sun, and he will seek peace but will find none. But give to a man, darkness, he will not seek peace, because he will understand that peace is a phantom.

Christmas has passed and the New Year is upon us. A new day of life, and death is far away. People shall hold to them, their resolutions of the mind. Hope is nigh, they will better their lives. They will meet change. But the three of us, you, Grim and I, here, we have seen God's triangle.

As you have said, no man's life is worth salvation, and this is true. Mankind cannot be saved, because it exists in such a way that exposes its degenerate reaction to conflict.

Surely, by now, you have heard of the riot that plagues your city? A political aid has been found "not guilty" of his obvious crime; the slaying of a homeless man. And now crowds of men gather in the streets, and erupt for the purposes of class. They loot, they plunder, they pillage. They spill the blood of one another as they set fire to their civilization.

The walls in the city that is falling, they speak, for some of them read "DESENSITIZED BRUTALITY," and others read "GENETIC PEACE."

Military personnel cannot keep the order, civilian rage continues to grow to the brink of complete and total destruction. Guards fire and murder without warning, even at those who attempt to drag the wounded to safety. Unjustly and outright, they take aim, saying "No, this is not the time for revolution." But it is!

Now is the time, you must take your bow and conquer the fields, for I have seen those with the skin of white holding hands with those who have the skin of black, but in my vision that road was laced in fire. I have seen those with many dollars mingling with those of few dollars, but that road too, was laced with the same fire. The path to world peace, it is blazed with the fire that comes from Hell!

The immediating step for change, is to strike down all those who oppose you. Spill their blood, and know that their sacrifice was not in vain. But on your quest, yet have you to know, but will know; you must be wise. Listen to me as I speak, for I shall tell you, I have many warnings for you.

There will be a man named Furlough. He will give you what you think you want, but he comes to you as a lie. In the world you attempt to conquer, there will be Kings and Queens who will blind your eyes and steal your dreams. They will tell you that black is really white, and that the Moon is just the Sun at night. And when you walk in golden halls, they'll tell you that you get to keep the gold that falls. Some will eat and drink with you, but they will just as soon sell you for a price. Above all of my warnings, remember one, this one; a priest will use Heaven and Hell to gain your obedience.

The evil that is done here, pales in comparison to the evil that is done throughout the world. You must rise above it all, even above yourself, to achieve the greatness of a king. My truth, they will tell you is a lie, and their lie, they will tell you is a truth. Obey me, and you will have a new world before a new year. Obey me, for a legend shrines in

legacy. Obey me, though you cannot find a thing to live for, I have given you a reason to die for. Obey me, a revolution is all or nothing. *Fiat justitia ruat caelum*.

When Mr. Nosleep was finished speaking, Grim was appalled at his darkness. Grim immediately opened his mouth afterwards. Grim began to speak:

In the dark, thieves break into houses, but by day they shut themselves in; they want nothing to do with the light. For all of them, midnight is their morning; they make friends with the terrors of darkness. With darkness, you can take a simple man's life and turn it into a circus sideshow. Listen carefully, darkness; do not call me Grim, for I am only a reaper of certain sows.

Now the Reaper was finished addressing Mr. Nosleep, and he turned his face to the narrator, and once again he began to speak:

Do not long for for the night, to drag people away from their homes. Beware of turning to evil, which you seem to prefer to affliction. The godless in heart harbor resentment; even when he fetters them, they do not cry for help. But those who suffer he delivers in their suffering; he speaks to them in their affliction.

You who tear yourself to pieces in your anger, is the Earth to be abandoned for your sake? A base and nameless brood, they were driven out of the land. People think, "One day I will die," but I have news, you never have to go.

Why do you complain to him that he responds to no one's words? For God does speak, now one way, now another, though no one perceives it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride, to preserve them from the pit, their lives from perishing by the sword.

God does not hold an abandoned son. Is he not the one who says to kings, "You are worthless," and to nobles, "You are wicked," who shows no partiality to princes and does not favor the rich over the poor, for they are all the work of his hands?

If the measure of a civilization is how it treats its weakest members, how then, would this make God look, if he abandoned his sons. Know that God above has not abandoned you, that he is always with you, and that the first shall be last, and the last shall be first.

After the Reaper had finished his speech, there was a long pause. Both the Reaper and Mr. Nosleep awaited for the reply of the narrator, who was still in deep despair and desolation. After thorough thinking, the narrator finally began to speak:

In a room, without a window, in the corner, I found truth. But now that truth has imprisoned me. It imprisons my body, literally, it imprisons my mind, metaphorically, and it imprisons my heart, philosophically.

My skin grows black and peels; my body burns with fever. My eyes have grown dim with grief; my whole frame is but a shadow. The headaches that used to harbor me, they

were gone, but now in my distress they have returned. I am without purpose, I am jobless.

Though I cry, "Violence!" I get no response; though I call for help, there is no justice. God has blocked my way so I cannot pass; he has shrouded my paths in darkness.

Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power? God has failed to clean up after himself, and upon the viewtation of his mess, he says "No, it is not my problem."

You say to me, "God does not hold an abandoned son," but I think this not to be true. God has abandoned the good son, who was like a well-watered plant in the sunshine, who spread its shoots over the garden; who entwined its roots around a pile of rocks and looked for a place among the stones. But when it was torn from its spot, that place disowned it and said, "I never saw you." Surely its life withered away, and from the soil other plants grew.

Although I am blameless, I have no concern for myself; I despise my my own life. I loathe my very life; therefore I will give free rein to my complaint and speak out in the bitterness of my soul.

Where is judgement for the wicked? For those who take more than the body needs? They thrust the needy from the path and force all the poor of the land into hiding. Like wild donkeys in the desert, the poor go about their labor of foraging food; only the wasteland provides food for their children. Lacking clothes, they spend the night naked; they have nothing to cover themselves in the cold. The fatherless child is snatched from the breast; the infant of the poor is seized for a debt. Lacking clothes, they go about naked; they carry the sheaves, but still go hungry. They crush olives among the terraces; they tread the winepresses, yet suffer thirst. The groans of the dying rise from the city, and the souls of the wounded cry out for help. But alas, God charges no one with wrongdoing.

Yet, God charges I, and turns my days into dust. I say to God, do not declare me guilty, but tell me what evidence you have against me. Have I not wept for those in trouble? Has not my soul grieved for the poor? Yet when I did good, evil came; when I looked for light, then came darkness.

Why then did did you bring me out of the womb? I wish I had died before any eye saw me. If only I had never come into being, or had been carried straight from the womb to the grave. Are not my few days almost over? Turn away from me so I can have a moment's joy before I go to the place of no return, to the land of gloom and utter darkness, to the land of deepest night, of utter darkness and disorder, where even the the light is like darkness. Turn from me so that you may not see my ugliness, and my deep desire to watch the earth burn.

Again I say, where is God's proof? If he has it, then let him face me. If I have denied

the desires of the poor or let the eyes of the widow grow weary, then let him come forth. If I have kept my bread to myself, not sharing it with the fatherless, then let him come forth. If I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing, or the needy without garments, and I did nothing, then let him come forth.

When I went to the gate of the city and took my seat in the public square, the young men saw me and stepped aside and the old men rose to their feet; the chief men refrained from speaking and covered their mouths with their hands; the voices of the nobles were hushed, and their tongues stuck to the roof of their mouths. Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me, because I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist them. The one who was dying blessed me; I made the widow's heart sing. I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a parent to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger. I broke the fangs of the wicked and snatched the victims from their teeth.

And though I was good, God placed me before judge and jury, in front of wicked men and women who desired to have my soul. There has been one main thing that I have had on my mind, and that is to attain the highest amount of wisdom that I can in my lifetime, but my trail is blocked, there are nails in my hand from my creator, and they have been placed there in error. This is it. This is what I scream to God, and I shall say no more; you gave me life, now show me how to live!

When the narrator was finished speaking, a great storm began to develop in the skies. The narrator opened the Asylum door and a powerful gust of wind entered the storage unit, nearly destroying everything inside. Mr. Nosleep, the Reaper and the narrator stepped outside into the thunder and lightning, and in the raging storm they saw the face of God, and God spoke to the narrator from out of the storm:

Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone, while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said, "This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt?" Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been shown to you? Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness? Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me, if you know all this.

What is the way to the abode of light? And where does darkness reside? Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings? Surely you know, for you were already born! You have lived so many years!

Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the bear with its cubs? Who gives the ibis wisdom or gives the rooster understanding? Who has the wisdom to count the clouds?

Will the one who contends with the almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!

When the narrator saw that the Lord was finished questioning, there was a brief pause that was filled with deep thought, then the narrator answered the Lord:

I am beneath you, how can I reply to you? Though I struggle against your hidden and mysterious ways, and though I find you at fault, how can I answer you directly, knowing that but a single breath could destroy me?

When the narrator was finished speaking, God remained the same, and once again, God spoke to the narrator from out of the storm:

Tell me, who is this that also puts words in my mouth, without understanding my mind? Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me.

Where were you when I put the universe on seven rather than six? Were you there when I put my own will into man? On which day did you witness me develop the rules and framework? Surely you know, and surely you were there!

Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me, to justify yourself? Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his? Then adorn yourself with glory and splendor, and clothe yourself in honor and majesty. Unleash the fury of your wrath, look at all who are proud and bring them low, look at all who are proud and humble them, crush the wicked where they stand. Bury them all in in the dust together; shroud their faces in the grave. Then I myself will admit to you that your own right hand can save you.

Look at Behemoth, which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like an ox. What strength it has in its loins, what power in the muscles of its belly! It ranks first among the works of God, yet its maker can approach it with his sword.

Can you pull in Leviathan with a fishhook or tie down its tongue with a rope? No one is fierce enough to rouse it. Nothing on Earth is its equal, a creature without fear. It looks down on all that are haughty; it is king over all that are proud, yet its maker can approach it with his sword.

Know that I have created them both, and ask yourself, who then is able to stand against me, if not Behemoth or Leviathan? Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under Heaven belongs to me.

When the narrator saw that the Lord was finished speaking, there was once again a brief pause, that too, was filled with deep thought, and then the narrator began to speak:

I know that you can do all things. You asked, “Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?” Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.

You said, “Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.” My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. I admit I was wrong to say, “God does not show his face,” but what will happen now? To Earth and its people? Will there still be chaos, or have you come to guide us?

God, still being questioned, became angry, and said in the stead, that because of the lack of faith displayed, peace will never come to the narrator, and then God disappeared within the clouds. The narrator, still angry and bitter towards God, continued on in the days of deep anguish.

Chapter 87

IN THE VALLEY OF DARKNESS

1:3:9:87

ONE shall walk, through the valley of the shadow of death, and one shall talk, simply but sadly about the battle bereft. And nary the cruel time, will it rule the mind, and shall it make the soul shallow. And so will it fuel the rhyme, on the final draft line, and give each man sorrow. Should you borrow one life today, shall you die tomorrow, should you borrow one life today, shall you die tomorrow.

Listen, and heard! How calmly, the story it can be told. Come, and see! Before the words, become the words become cold...

For once upon a February star, there sat a teller, near, here, there, and very far. The teller's back aback the Asylum door, wondered at the night sky in all its complete galore. And after watching the bird soar for more than an hour's good tour, back, did the teller's back, sorely become sore.

Standing, from the help of a lever that was clever, now was the teller, calm as ever. Metal bat in hand, the teller became of the voice in demand. And slowly-sized shaded-sulken, did the teller deny the choice of command.

Now on the way to a nearby traffic light, would Satan appear fostering rays of plight. "You, you, over there," Satan said in delight, and the teller would look, and the two did unite.

"Sir, sir, swiftly, suddenly, so soon did I sway," skittishly, said the teller, said the teller in say, "with whom, which, why? What would you want with I? Today?"

"I called upon you, at this crossroad of two; I have been met in delay, for I am to meet a friend in the town of Salem, but which one is the way?"

Grossly grew a cruel ghostly green ghoul, and when Satan saw the face of the teller he rooled. "I have seen this expression before," Satan remarked, "on the face of a saint, but more, for the journey he embarked."

And the face that he spoke of was that of the Christ, and continue did Satan, to speak of his life. "You see, I was around, when Jesus had his moment of doubt and pain, and I watched, from the beginning of day to the end of night!, as he stared at the sky in vain."

The constellations that night, was it filled with the stars, but the way to Heaven was dim, and the way to Heaven was lost.

Then Satan thanked the teller, for pointing him the way, and gave final words to the teller, before upon thee came the dismay.

"Do not expect to receive respect, lest ye wishes to be deceived and turned into a reck. Shall you never be relieved, and shall you go in to get checked. But come the

morrow will they call you naive and a total reject. Be warned, that mankind, will never even try to believe the things that you detect.” And Satan went away, from this place and far away.

And so the teller walked, and walked did the teller walk, and in the mind of the teller, was there talk, was there talk for the teller talked. But quickly something stalked, and encircled like chalk; for soon behind a door, the teller saw whom many adore.

“You, you, over there,” the Christ said in delight, and the teller would look, and the two did unite.

“Sir, sir, swiftly, suddenly, so soon did I sway,” skittishly, said the teller, said the teller in say, “with whom, which, why? What would you want with I? Today?”

“I called upon you, at this crossroad of two; I have been met in delay, for I am to meet a friend in the town of Salem, but which one is the way?”

Ghostly grew a green grossly cruel ghoul, for the face of the teller now became disfigured by tool. And at first the Christ was silent, because he spoke of the nevermore, of the things of defilement, these things that became furthermore.

But soon his silence was broken, his lips lapped, the rattlesnake rapped, and he spoke of things of sunder, and this he said to the teller, that “No mortal was meant to know such wonder.” And this was all the Christ would say, and the Christ went away, from this place and far away.

Now the teller was back on the way, and thoughts invaded the mind of the teller, like night invades day. Imagine, to think cun, soon of those of the past, that they stared at the same Sun, same Moon, as those of us here now at last.

Say, what can be more mysterious or more captivating than space? Surely, anyone who ever did anything great, became lost in its grace. For this person would stare at the sky in awe, and the vision would drive them to do the things of their call.

Now grossly grew a cruel ghostly green ghoul and ghostly grew a green grossly cruel ghoul, and the face of the teller became sudden in sool. The teller appeared in destination of the parents' home, metal bat in hand, and surely again the teller became of the voice in demand, and surely again did the teller deny the choice of command.

And now did the teller become what one becomes when one has no sleep, and now did the teller become a reaper of souls with a task to keep. Not once, but twice, the teller swung the bat fore, and damaged the plank fence and corrupted its core. And when a neighbor walked by, and asked, “What is this, what is it for?,” “None of your goddamn fucking business!,” the teller replied, and received the great cor.

Then next came the flowers, who were in full blossom and awesome decor, and the teller went to them with a plan to demure. And were they yanked and were they pulled,

from the shoot in the root, dandelions, zinnias, daylilies, all of them did they became loot. And now all that was left in the garden before, were a few couple dozen roses, only this and nothing more. And all of this in vain, because death, in approaching stalked with the black shadow of lore, and enveloped the victim, and did destroy and did score.

“Prick!,” said a thorn, of a rose that was to be ripped, and the same thumb of a cut, now bled, when it was tipped. So in the stead, the teller foregoes, each hand, and stomps, with both feet, any rose that was still in stand.

And when the teller saw that all was done here in the now, the teller went inside the home and continued the tow. The teller stood still, standing with the soul who started to rot, and went up the stairs into the home's depot. And on the way there, nearly tripping on an orange, the teller traded demise, for a sope on a roap.

The phone, the teller saw, and upraised the bat, and came down with the force that shattered it flat. And not soon after that, the teller turned round tat, and smashed the television to shutter the voices that made chat. But even after its destruction the chat spoke stat, and gave the listeners who sat a few things to look at. And so did the teller swing on, saying “Scat!... Scat! Scat!,” but never did it leave, that fat of that brat.

Then the fatigue came, and settled in, into the mind of the teller, who after a short rest, regained the zest, and got up to begin again.

And this time, what was broken was up high, a half-built half-finished treehouse that was meant to reach the sky. Swing swung swung, each wooden piece detoured, love is lost, is it lonely, living lowly lives ignored.

For there was once a time, when the teller did believe, that all people, no matter who they were, deserved goodness and not suffering in the lives that they would lead. But day by day, the stance it changed, until it flipped vertically and itself rearranged. And in the valley of darkness, the teller came to see that we are not good, and that we deserve nothing but suffering, to fall deep into a ditch of darkness is the only that which should.

And when the teller was finished did the teller come back down, to stand on the Earth's ground, and as the teller walked backwards smiling with a frown, the teller listened carefully as the teller smelt a phantom sound. And after hearing the phantom smell, that of which the teller could not tell, tripped and fell backwards into a dug that was digged and reached all the way down to Hell.

Now was the teller trapped into a dig of no way out, and after many attempts the teller gave in and laid astout. And on the teller's back of which was still very sore, the teller once again gazed at the sky and its galore. And in the air above the ground of which the teller was found astout, flew a bird, an eagle of large proportions, of large proportions all about.

And the eagle, circling above, did it make the teller think of blue, that any light at the end of the tunnel, was only a mirror staring back at you. That would be to say that any light you saw truly came from behind, and that you were headed toward an illusion, and severely past your prime.

The days of darkness clouded above the teller, and slowly did the teller become insane, and so the teller crept back into the hole, the terrifying hole, from which it came.

Chapter 88

E PLURIBUS UNUM

1:3:9:88

I am the shadow that resides within the mind. I am the thief who robs the hardworking individual. I am the man who beats his wife without remorse. I am the young girl who commits suicide and leaves a family grieving. I am the drunk driver that runs over a child. I am the serial killer with an unknown pathology. I am the puppet-master who deceives many people. I am the heartless kid who preys on animals. I am the selfish asshole who keeps all for themselves. I am the idiot who believes they are always right. I am the oppressive human being who makes sure that others maintain their lowly existence. I am the cruel stranger who mocks you for your lifestyle. I am the woman who neglects her only child. I am the drug addict who is too dense to do something about their future. I am the racist scumbag who looks down on everyone who isn't me or mine. I am the mentally ill individual who racks up a body count at the mall. I am the lost person who pretends to know the truth and drags everyone else down. I am all of this and much, much more, but the difference is, when the coin was flipped, and the die was rolled, and the card was played, I did not fall victim to circumstance.

Why do we all of us have a tendency to classify people we don't know. The upper class does it to the lower class and the lower class does it right back, and then the difference becomes murder. In every type of division, words eventually turn into bullets. You want to know what I say to that? Fuck it. Fuck your class-based society and fuck your difference-based world. Fuck your pride and fuck every flag of every nation.

We are all raised to be proud of our race, proud of our country, proud of who we are. Fuck that. Fuck your ethnicity. Fuck your nationality. Fuck you.

Fuck your race and fuck your country. Fuck your religion. Fuck your gender. Fuck your social class and fuck your materialism. Fuck every person who's ever let an image represent their whole plane of being.

Fuck your rights. Fuck your opinion. Fuck your movements. Fuck the Ku Klux Klan and their primitive ass way of thinking. Fuck the Black Panthers and their short fucking memory span. Fuck all the feminist and their propensity to jump to conclusions. Fuck all the animal lovers who could give a shit less about the more unattractive forms of life. Fuck the counter-culture and everyone in it, you're not different, you're not special, you are exactly like the rest of us.

Fuck all the religious fanatics who breathe down peoples' necks and fuck every religious leader who's ever taken advantage of a soul who was lost.

Fuck every person who alters their body to meet the standards that society has set for them. Fuck every single fucking celebrity and I swear to God fuck that fucking car

salesman who took advantage of me when I was nineteen. Fuck anyone who's willing to sell their soul for money and fuck anyone who lets other's direct their life.

Fuck every parent who doesn't play with their children. Fuck every high-class stay-at-home wife who doesn't do more than lift up the fucking remote. Fuck every man who beats his wife and scares his children shitless.

Fuck every fat person who tells other fat people that it's okay to be fat, that the only thing that matters is what you think of yourself. Fuck every person who's ever said "It's your own damn fault you ended up this way. Try harder." Fuck every drug addict that's ever dragged their friends into their own addiction.

Fuck every writer who doesn't respect the craft. Fuck every faggot who's ever actually thought that there was something wrong with them. I got news for you, fucker, everyone is wrong in some way. Stop fucking feeling sorry for yourself you fucking pussy.

Fuck children. Fuck every child who plays on their parents' emotions. Fuck dreams. Fuck everyone's dreams. Fuck your dreams. It's always "Me this," "Me that," man fuck you. Fuck your happiness. It's not about you. There's way too much suffering in the world to accommodate your feelings.

Fuck old people. Fuck the Sun. Fuck your couch. Fuck your romantic relationships and fuck your sexual needs. Fuck every person who talks too goddamn much. People spend their whole day talking, wasting energy and air. No one fucking cares about what you think.

Fuck that whole building back their. Fuck all those people in it. Fuck every single teenager. I don't know why, just fuck them. Fuck every person who has ended another person's life unjustly. Fuck the patriots of this country, who walk around proud and salute a flag that was raised on soil that was soiled with the blood of Indians.

Fuck this. Can't take this shit any more. I'm just smarter than all of you and it's a shame that I have to inhabit the same Earth as the rest of you. Yeah, I got a bone to pick with everyone and I ain't your fucking friend. Fuck you and this whole world and everyone in it. Let fire burn this place down. Let it turn to ash. Then let water rise over it and wash it clean.

Shit. Fuck it. Fuck this world. Fuck this world. Fuck this world. Fuck this fucked up world. Fuck this fucked up world. This world is fucked. It's fucked. This fucked up world. Fuck this world. Fuck this fucked up world. Fucked. Fuck this world. This is a fucked up world. This is a fucked up world. The world is fucked. Fuck it. It's fucked. This is a fucked up world. The world is fucked. We're fucked. We fucked the world. We fucked up the world. It's a fucked up world. The world is fucked. Fuck this world. Fuck this world. Fuck this fucking fucked up world. Fuck this fucked up world. Fuck the world.

Chapter 89

RESURRECTION

1:3:9:89

THE narrator sat in a hole in the ground, fighting the very harsh and very bitter cold. The flesh was now beginning to suffer from hypothermia, escape was now easily the most prominent object. After numerous attempts to climb out of the pit, the narrator laid flat and soon gave up.

Have you ever found yourself trapped, not only literally, of the body, but mentally, in the mind. Trapped and confined by the very limitations that control your being, that constrict your imagination, your creativity. This is how I feel now, gravitated into a black hole that just won't let me go.

Speaking strictly in terms of philosophy, “universalism” is a doctrine that supports the notion of “universal facts.” As opposed to “relativism,” this idea suggests that some truths are concrete, solid, written in brimmed stone. Regardless of which angle you look at these truths from, they will always stay the same color. And no matter your distance from the said truth, it will always stay the same exact size.

Sitting in a room all alone, you are forced to face the world, and more importantly, yourself. You are forced to look deep down within yourself, at the strange beauty and the horrid ugliness. And while some things may change over time, naturally or through hard work, some things will not. There will be certain truths to your being that are set in stone, things you must accept.

The senseless person will hate these things, to the point that it becomes a tastelessly bitter struggle. But to whom who studies these bitter truths, who studies themselves as an individual, will come understanding. The universal fact will remain the same, it is in its nature, but you will have changed.

I stand up once more, my body crooked from the cold I touch the dirt wall before. And again I find myself imprisoned in the same prison from my dreams, and here lacked reason. I should have burned them, all of them, every single one, every book, every page, every word. Maybe then I wouldn't be here now; maybe then I would have a normal and satisfying life. But no, instead I am here, surrounded by walls that conspire to keep me trapped within confusion.

I don't want this anymore, there must be a way out, a way to end this circle. I upend my palm and slam it against the frozen dirt, I hear a bone crack. I take it again, slam it over and over until I see the wall begin to crack. I take my other swollen hand, smash the crack, it begins to frown, chunks of dirt fall.

Now that there was an opening, I began to dig and dig, though the dirt would scrape. Off my nails and skins and leave behind bloods and scars, I needed to do this now. There

was no time to be spared, it was now or never, else I would die here.

For hours, I dug and dug, making only a little progress through the day and the night. I did not go too fast, nor did I go too slow, and took rest when needed. All I had to consume were the insects that I found in the process, no water found.

In my darkest hour, I began to sing to myself, as my teeth quivered, eyes blinking uncontrollably. “Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream, merrily, merrily, merrily-merrily, life is but a dream.” I sang this throughout the nights, thinking of its many implications on life and the universe abroad. To what more can you owe a children's song, that it is not simple but indeed complex. “Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream, merrily, merrily, merrily-merrily, Hell is what it seems.”

The time came when I began again, halfway to my destination, but also halfway to apparition demise. Fingernails removed, fingertips sawn, I dug and dug and felt the aching pain of a thousand souls. The spit spewed from my mouth, almost foamy, as I raged on with every fiber of being. It was now that I understood existentialism, its school of thought; I had finally become the beast.

My energy did not slow down, it only elevated, and I continued to dig upwards in escape. Only a few moments later did I begin to see the handle of the shovel up above. I jumped for it, numerous times, but failed each one; not to be part of my escape.

When the pain of digging became unbearable, I then began to use my feet, absolutely no choice. Like my hands, they suffered the same fate, and I used them until they were bloodily raw. I was nearly there, and though I could barely stand, I used my elbows as I crawled. I began to tunnel out, not with hope, or the thought of freedom, but with sheer will. Whatever was there, on the other end, I would then deal with it when the time came.

And so it was, just before dawn, I could raise my grotesque hand and feel the surface. I raised the other swollenly disfigured hand and grabbed tight surface, and prepared for my final bout. I pulled myself up, first beginning slowly, feeling the spent muscles clamp and pull out of place. And little by little did I speed, did my heart begin to pump acid, flowing into veins.

“I am nearly there,” I thought to myself calmly, coolly, “I am nearly there,” “I'm nearly there.” And when I made the final stroke, and broke free from the chains of captivity, came imagery. I received a flash of an image, terribly lucid, of a dark horse riding through a storm.

I was there, I was free, my face against the cold hard disturbing ground; I was liberated. And though I had no energy remaining, nothing left to spare, something came to me and spoke. I rose up to both my knees and I threw my arms up victoriously into the air. Not for triumph, because there was none, but because I couldn't understand what it said to me.

I laid there, laughing for what seemed to be many days and nights, laughing with sharp pain. Afterwards, I got up and began to walk towards the shovel, and picked it up, and proceeded. I went to the pile of dirt and took from it, putting it back into the hole. Each spoonful reminding me that what I was burying today would not stay buried forever, not forever. Speaking again, now strictly of religion, sometimes universality is a quality that is given to an entity. An entity whose existence is consistent throughout the entire universe, manifesting its essence anywhere and everywhere simultaneously.

When I was done with my task, I entered my parents' home in search of an exit. I went to the central unit and turned on the heat as high as I possibly could. I then walked into one of the many lavish bathrooms with a plan to take a shower. The heat of the water burned away everything, both the physicality and the mentality, my rawed-skin wept.

After I left the bathroom, I could feel the heat begin to sink into the entire house. Still very much disorientated, I realized that I had completely forgotten to eat, that I was starving. With that same disorientation, I walked into the incorrect room and witnessed the work of a genius.

Lynne had finished her room painting, illustrating all four walls, the ceiling, and even the lowly floor. When did she do this, how long did it take, just how long was I gone for? Ravens, plants, city-lights, people, animals, country-side, stars, riddles, life, death, resurrection, masks, monoliths, dresses, suits, bridges, islands.

I remember "White Lights," more so its simplicity, but compared to this has her talent truly ripened. I must have staid there at the very least several hours, observing every segment of the piece.

Once done I scrounged for something well to eat, made due with the little that was there. Upon the course I pondered Sarah, along with her the words that her mother relayed to me. Who was Mona Lisa to Leonardo; what I mean is, what did she really mean to him. What did she so much mean to him that he would take the time to paint her. Was she someone he actually created in his mind, a person who he gifted personality and character? Was she someone he saw in dreams and felt compelled to remember in some way or another? Was she a realistic caricature in one of his many stories that took place in his mind.

What does Sara mean to me; that the mention of her name briefly stopped me in time. What could she mean, that thinking of her evoked response that required body-and-mind, when neither was there?

After resting for a while, got up to walk and felt no pain from my raw feet. Nor did I feel the blistering pain from my raw hands, I was rid of the pain.

I eventually left the parent's wasteland home and walked across the street to a neighboring neighbors' home. The elderly woman peaked open her door, she said "hello"

and asked the nature of the visit. I told her I lived right across the street from her and needed to use her telephone. She opened the door, looked me up and down strangely, and then allowed me to enter in.

As I made the call to Lynne, the neighbor watched me, noticing my fingertips and their unusuality. "How are Sara and David?," they were both fine, Sara still with Silvio, David playing games all-day. I noticed strangeness in her voice, something far-away and distant I hadn't heard in a long time. It didn't feel like she wanted to talk, atleast not with me; I cut the call short.

I wanted to tell her someone I knew died, what flowers should I bring to the funeral? I didn't, I said goodbye and hung up the phone, turning to the strange eyed elderly lady. As I left, as she was going to close the door, I turned around and said "Wait." I looked at the doorknob, took a while to begin again, "A friend of mine had died."

"White stargazer lilies," that's what she says to me, answering my question before I can ask it. She read me like an open book, and I have no idea how she had done it. "Is there a place I can buy those at?," I asked, "You won't have to," she replies. She tells me how she has walked by many times and noticed them growing in my garden. And just before I leave, she shakes my hand, strange tooth-chipped smile, says her name is Joyce.

I crossed back across the street, searched all around the perimeter of the home for the stargazers. I did eventually find some, only problem was that they were rooted from their roots and dying. I took a few of them and put them into plastic-wrap and entered back into the home. I went into the master-bedroom and into the closet, and there found a suit of my father's. I tried it on and it was an unusually perfect fit, there is nothing more to that.

I left the home again through the front door again, checking the lock before parted permanently again. It was locked, but I checked it again, again making sure that it was actually locked again. I knew it was locked but I just had to check it again, to again make sure.

After I was sure it was locked, I check one last time then went into the backyard. I go over to the pile and kneel down, and take a small piece of rockd ice-dirt. I put it in my pocket, and like a dream, I find myself sitting on a train. Where was I going, where had I been, these were the questions I asked myself over again.

And there I was, my second time here, standing in front of the door to Derek's family. A man opened the door this time, who I soon found out was Derek's uncle, visiting now. I told him, along with whomever was present there, that I knew Derek and his brother, Jamal. We locked into discussion, somewhat small talk, and as I hated it, I needed to do it.

I was amazed when they told me how much they had left to pay for his casket. Not that it was expensive, because it wasn't, but because it made clear the division of wealth.

The first time I offered to pay the rest off, they refused, denied, told me simply no. But like my feeble mind, I was completely persistent, persuasive, pertinacious; “I have to pay,” I said. “I have to pay,” “I have to pay,” “Please just let me pay,” “I have to pay.”

Suffice to say, they eventually told me I could pay, and so I handed over the flowers. I asked them to put the flowers on his graveside, and then went to make my way. “I might as well show you the tombstone you're paying for,” his uncle said to my back. And once again, like a dream, I found myself inside the Andromeda Cemetery, walking to a grave.

Just before we got there, his uncle stayed back, giving me privacy that I didn't ask for. I think it was because just like Joyce, he could see it on my face, pensive sadness.

A few more steps and I was there, the general headstone that most of us will receive. I kneeled down on one knee just before the headstone in respect and laid down the flowers.

I believe that it is in Hinduism, that the word “I” is the ultimate illusion, greatest trick. How many times have I used that very word, how many times do we all use it? Many problems derive from this word, but the real kicker, we don't have the-mind to avoid it. We have been put into an impossible situation, the universe did not work out in our favor. We are not designed to “win,” not as the individual and for sure not as the people.

One thing that I've learned about life is that it does not discriminate, it's evolved beyond that. At any moment and to anyone, in any given place, fortune or unfortune can begin to brew.

I reached into my pocket and removed the solid dirt, it was still frozen from the weather. I laid it on the edge of the stone and after a while of thinking, looked up.

“Derek Wise,” I read the tombstone and the years that he had lived, and followed the epitaph. Reading, “‘To be born again,’ sang Gibreel Farishta tumbling from the heavens, 'first you have to die.'”

I was confused, and after getting up to meet back with Uncle, I asked about the epitaph. His own confusion told me my mind was still seeing things that it wanted me to see. I've made mistakes connecting my dreams, and I'm sure, at-times, I've led you to the wrong tower.

After I was finished, the uncle dropped me off, location of my choosing, just near the Asylum. I gave him thanks, farewells, and that was the end of it, I never saw him again.

I walked back to the Asylum, through a desolate-ridden place, and with only death on my mind.

Chapter 90

PORT IN A STORM

1:3:9:90

THERE are certain dreams that we all share. Public nudity, flying, falling. Teeth falling out, being in a position of power. An inability to physically speak. Losing loved ones, friends, finding them in the dreamworld. Being unprepared.

All of these dreams transcend any type of classification, they transcend cultural boundaries and are both relevant and fundamental to all people. No matter who you are, this human condition concerns every single one of us. We are all bound by the same dreams.

As I continued my way towards the Asylum, darkness continued to fall. And after it had completely fallen, up and in the distance I could see a storm of black clouds that were outlined in red being carried away from me by lightning, and I watched as they would periodically flash, though no noise would ever come from them.

I lifted up the door to the Asylum and when I looked inside I saw that nothing was in order. The desk was upside down, the chair was broken in four places and the lamp smashed into several pieces. Every sheet of paper that clung to the walls was torn, especially that of Satan, who was shown counting all the residents of Hell.

I stepped over the piles of mess and found my way into an unoccupied corner, where I sat with my back against the ninety-degree angle. I thought to myself for a while, and for the first time in a long time, I could hear the sound of my own voice.

One hour passed, two passed, three, then four, and that was when I noticed the dark red, marooned=colored stain on the floor of the Asylum.

Sooner or later I noticed that next to me was a box full of artwork that depicted various scenes from my dreams. Penciled in drawings of a wolf overlooking a cliff. Another of some sort of three-dimensional pedigree. One of a bank robbery that was in process. And possibly my favorite, a simple design of a gapped circle.

I have written down many, many dreams, but there are some dreams I choose not to write. Dreams that I don't need to write, because they had such an impact on me and were unforgettable.

I had a dream where I saw a rich man, at the turn of his life, give away all of his possessions and every thing he had worked so hard for in life. And I watched, in that same dream, that after all of his sacrifice, his life was finally returned to him and he had received something more than any amount of wealth could afford him.

In another instant, I had a dream where I this time saw a poor man, who was given the opportunity to become like the rich man, but he denied it, because the wisdom he had gained from such a hard life taught him that he would one day die and the tale of his life

could not be counted up in dollars.

Call me crazy, stupid, naive, but mark my words; in the future the equal distribution of resources will be more prevalent, and we will look back on today and wonder how we let things like economic inequality govern our world. We will view it with the same disgust we feel when look back on our past and wonder how slavery existed. Future generations will think, “There was a time when the world was actually like that?,” and in that moment, the division between the rich and poor will become obsolete. It will become, as they say, “history.”

There are places all over where you have sections of families who live in big homes, who, some of them, hoard the resources, and then not even a mile away, man, you have the families that are barely surviving on government assistance. Not even one single mile. Think about that. Think about the person who walks that mile. The person who sees these things.

I had a dream where I saw an old black woman take in a young white boy from off the streets. It doesn't get any more opposital than that, and where there is difference surely follows friction. But it's not even that. It takes a truly deeply compassionate mind to look beyond differences. To say “I have no people, all people are my people,” in some areas that will take much courage to say, because in the world we live in you are either this or that.

It takes courage to go against the current of what everyone tells you. What you need to know is that we live in a physically chaotic world, where no one has the right to set the rules to the game that we all have to play. We as people are far away from justice, so each of us as a person is responsible for questioning the status quo, each of us is responsible for forming our own moral ground and not simply and blindly accepting the grounds others try to make us stand on. But be warned, it is easier to sink an island than a continent.

When you begin to think more critically about things, like the nature of being or the complexity of perception, the world around you changes, almost literally. Two-dimensional shadows on the wall begin to adopt form, they inherit characteristics and identity and it is not too long before you realize that behind that simple shadow are things that you cannot see with the eyes, but only with the mind. Concepts, ideas, like spitting the atom, of an unknowable design.

We have to remember that we have very feeble minds, but in humbling and humility we can learn to conquer this feeblity. In humbling and humility and critical analysis, something happens to the human mind. Pathways and connections in the brain are rewritten and other biological functions transform, the process of metamorphosis begins. I would go as far as saying that to the catapilic eyes of evolution, you become a better

organism.

When one person changes, the world changes, akin to a single gene turning on or off in the human body and potentially changing the entire genome. This genetic peace. But achieving that peace, individually and as a whole, starts in one place. It starts with an education. Not just the education you get from a classroom or from educating yourself, but foremost from the education we get from each other.

The education that parents pass on to their children, what they teach their children about the world and the people in it. And on the flipside, the education that children can give to their parents. Some of the more important things I've learned from life came from the wisdom of children.

The education that friends pass on to other friends, expressing their own world-view and their own perception on the world. What's more is the education that is passed on that comes without speaking. Always remember that someone somewhere is watching you, and you will educate and influence them whether you realize it or not. Whether even they realize it or not. And while these influences and learnings are sometimes good, unfortunately, half of them will be bad.

The education that strangers pass on to other strangers. I believe this to be the most prevalent education because the amount of people we know pales in comparison to the amount of people we don't know, and this is the type of education that you have to go out of your way to give. You are almost dutied to teach your friends and family, but to volunteer your time to someone you've never known, that takes true empathy, a genuine compassion to teach others.

If you've read this far, if you're still reading my composition notebooks, then a lot of these things you'll already know. You'll already know of their importance, but still, I feel I need to say them again. Most people will never open up these pages, and that's why it's important that you extend your wisdom to them.

I say this with the upmost sincerity and without any elevation of myself, but there is a good chance that the drugged out junkie who lives below you will never finish a book, but you can teach that person, hopefully without ego, the things you've learned about life, about the world, about death. Not even just that junkie, but anyone who is in that bad place who just doesn't have the sense to understand that they will die some day. You can teach them about the things you've learned from my pages, from the pages of others, and most importantly, from your own pages.

I know this chapter is strange, but I broke the fourth wall a long time ago and we are way past being strangers. I guess what I am is just an unreliable author.

Any revolutionist will tell you that all revolutions involve blood, and while I do agree I'll also say that the revolutions that matter most are the ones that start within the heart

and the mind of the individual. The revolutions that matter most are the ones we have within ourselves, the struggles we endure as we fight to conquer the beast within. The revolutions that take everything out of us, that bring forth pain and suffering, misery, desolation, and when they're done with us, they change every thing about us, our identity and even the way our mind processes information from the world. Before you can change things exteriorly, you have to change things interiorly.

Never forget that life is a series of wins and losses. You'll win some battles, and you'll lose some battles, but keep in the back of your mind that you are fighting a war. Don't over-celebrate your wins, because soon you'll lose, and don't over-grieve your losses, because soon you'll win. Above all, do not ever incorrectly judge the life based on that final battle, whether it was a win or a loss, because behind each battle there is an important story to be told, and the last story in that anthology is not always meant to be its ending.

Flipping threw the anthological art I find something that I haven't seen in a while. A story about red and yellow turtles who seem to be unaware of their own being. I read the short story, over and over and over, trying to see something that I perhaps did not see before. Trying to read between the lines and see something that many others have not.

I stand up, walking about the trashed Asylum, reading this story, over reover, what am I missing? What am I not seeing. What m'I not seeing. There is something here. Something here. That's when it hits me. The story is not about race, not really, it's more about taking advice from the wrong general.

Most people, maybe even every one, would like to project intelligence. Every one wants to be smart, and some of those people would like to show others their intelligence. The problem with some of those people is that they are not genuine in their wisdom.

If we use light as a simile for knowledge, then I think ultimately you have two branches of people in the world; the people who are truly enlightened, who absorb the light into their essence and therefore appear unlightened, and then you have the people who do not absorb the light, and simply have the light reflect off of themselves, appearing to be lightened but lacking in any true wisdom. That person is a red turtle.

There are some people I wouldn't follow into a kitchen. They give you advice on life and how to live it, but when their own beast arrives they have no idea how to deal. It gets even funnier when these same people can't solve the very problem they gave you advice on. What good is the salt if it loses its saltiness? How can it be made salty again?

I'll end this segment with a quote from a dead friend, "Trust those who seek the truth but doubt those who say they have found it."

Once I had a dream where the haves and the have nots were together at last. No more was there imbalance, for each man took his share. No longer did the scales tip, for each

man asked for wisdom rather than riches. No sooner was the world in harmony, for each man parted with his knowledge and shared it with the others. Make no mistake about it and do not mix my words, but instead know that a man's true identity is not based on what he has, but what he has given.

What will people say at your funeral? In our darkest hours our shadows become taller than our souls. Even though you can't see your mind, it will be the biggest enemy you'll ever face. Nothing else will come close to its evasive ability, but despite this, there is something to be heard in it. It is very silent, but if you listen very hard, the truth will come to you at last. Nevermind the fork, because there will always be time to change the road you're on. There will always be time to choose a separate path.

Through all of this, regardless the severity of my mental illness, they were often overshadowed by my passion for peace, not just for myself but for the entire world, and this is what helped me to operate the dial.

I'm not some kind of maniac. I'm not a freak. It's just that I needed to get some of this bad blood out of me and onto paper, so I could see it with my own two eyes. So I could read it. There isn't much to do when you're stuck in an asylum complex, but one of the better things you can do is think about death. Speak with death. Go to its parties, its conventions. Talk to it on the street, in the car. Don't ever think he doesn't have something important to say.

I stand up back sliding against the Asylum wall and I reach into my pocket and take out a lock. My distorted time here is done.

What are you leaving behind? That's what you ask yourself as you begin to make your way towards the gate. What are you missing? What aren't you seeing? What aren't you realizing? It takes the singular mind to see past the design. To escape the clutches of society. To understand, ironically, that others have the same dream as you. To realize that all your life, all your love, all your hate, all your memory, all your pain, it was all the same thing. It was all the same dream, a dream that you had inside a locked room. A dream about being a person.

Anyone who reads this, let them understand that I don't care for who they are. I don't care for the color of your skin, nor do I care for your heritage. I don't care for your class, whether you are rich or poor, educated or uneducated. A have or a have not, a sinner or a saint. For in this dark and silent Asylum room, he today who sheds his blood with me shall forever be my brother, and she, my sister.

Volume 1 - Composition 3
(1:3 / 3 / III)

Part 10

Chapter 91

DAHIJ MIYAMAHS

1:3:10:91

THEY say a dream takes only a second or so, and yet in that second a person can live a lifetime. They can suffer and die, and who's to say which is the greater reality; the one we know or the one in dreams, between Heaven, the sky and the earth.

I made my way through the alley that would lead me to my apartment's back door. I look up to notice that leaves were beginning to reappear on the trees, and just a bit shorter I was blinded by the light that came from the Chase street lighthouse. Strange, that winter was gone as quickly as it came. How long was I gone? Just when did spring arrive? It seems that distortion has rung the neck of time.

Just a few yards away from my apartment building I notice a sign on the ground of the president-elect. Walking closer to it I read its message, "A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on." A time ago I would have had more words for this account, but my mind is too tired to dwell and I cannot find the words for a reaction.

I get to the door of my apartment and search my pockets for the keys. I place the key in the lock but for some reason it won't turn. After a minute of attempted turning this begins to frustrate me and I eventually end up breaking the key to the Asylum in my apartment door. Fucking bitch ass door man, I swear to God. Yeah it's my fault, whatever.

I have no choice but to go through the front door of the apartment building, and I do so quickly and finally find myself in a place I hadn't been in for so long. Home, home again. I like to be here when I can.

I bypass my favorite couch and head for the bathroom, and there I wash my face. Looking up and at the mirror for the first time in months, this is when I realize that my eyes have changed.

Like a young man who went to war with a clean face and came back four years later bearded and with a strange and bizarre thousand-yard gaze in his stare, put there by all the things he had seen during his tour. Or like a woman who finally gave birth for the first time after seventy-five days in labor, and she's so crippled from the physical pain that she can't even talk, she just lays there staring into space almost unaware that she is now a mother.

The last time I remember sleeping was before the roadtrip, and I am not sure if I have slept since then. I bypass my bedroom and go to lay on my couch, and maybe for an hour, I lay there staring, thinking, staring, thinking. "Someone stole my toothbrush," I say as my mind catches up with me.

I turn on the television and watch the news as I lay wide awake. Now a day has gone by. I've eaten, I've showered, I'm tired, but I still can't sleep. I'm going to have to do it

eventually, so I get up and leave my apartment and walk down the hall to Lynne's. I knock and wait for a reply.

I wait. And wait. And wait. And wait. But no one ever answers. Maybe she's at her mother's. I go back to my apartment and catch sight of something outside the window. The Filipino family with the adopted Korean son that Tao had told me of. A closer look, and I realize that the Korean kid is wearing the exact kind of headphones that I own myself. When I go to check if I am still in possession of mine, I see that I am not, and that someone had too, stolen my headphones. I'm not really angry, but for the time being, I am confused.

Some time passes by and when I hear the van and the family sound back up, I walk downstairs and pretend to check my mail. What I'm really doing is observing the Korean kid and the headphones he's wearing, trying to see if it has the same scratches as mine. When his mother though, sees that I am staring him down, she walks into the apartment building and confronts me, even though I am the one who should be doing the confronting.

She starts to talk to me in broken English and every once in a while slips in a few words of her own native tongue. "What?," I try to ask, and then she starts to raise her voice at me. I laugh a little in my head once I put two and two together and figure out that she thinks I'm a child molester. She exits the apartment building still talking and with a little snot coming out of her nose. And we're going to be living in the same building. Great.

It takes another twenty-four hours for my stare to die down, and soon after I find myself nodding off into sleep.

The dream that I had was interesting, unlike any other dream I've told you about before. In the dream I saw that I had died in the hole in my backyard, and soon after I rose up as if a spirit out of my body.

In the air I found Jesus, who was patiently waiting for me. When we met at eye-level, he began to speak to me, saying "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

Before I left Jesus, I saw that his hands were pierced, and I knew then that he had died long ago on the cross and I was speaking to his ghost.

The earth under me suddenly disappeared and I was now in the middle of space, surrounded by stars and planets, and not a moment too soon I landed on a type of neon-electric pathway that went as far as my eyes could see. On a sign connected to the path read "Dahij Miyamahs," which I later learned translated into "The way to Heaven" in English.

I traveled on the pathway for two thousand years, seeing many things that space had to offer, and towards the end I came across two brothers. Simon Peter and Andrew, their names were.

What Simon Peter and Andrew told me before I entered through the first gate was that God is not a deity. That he is not an intelligent being who created everything I saw now. That he was not all-powerful. They told me that he was, instead, a metaphor that was held in the highest regard of literary achievement. That he was the sole entity that you would see at the end of your life, who would change your life. And after hearing this, I entered through the first gate.

Once I had entered I saw that I was now in a sort of control room that was filled with hundreds of switches, and there I saw the same Jesus I saw before, and this he said to me, "Do not listen to those, who instead of casting out demons, cast out bodies, for a woman came to the church seeking to rid her evil ways, but they denied her, wanting no association with her. These words, truly I tell you, are for them, and let them hear these words."

When he was done he pointed to the second gate, and on the second gate it read "So he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open." And as I went to go through it I was blocked, and I saw that God appeared before me.

"Why shall I let you into Heaven?," he asks. Here I have the black silence, and when the dream returns, I find that I am in Heaven, but it wasn't the white Heaven you and I always see in the movies. It was very much like the Earth from which I had traveled from, but there seemed to be less suffering, and something about it was harmonic.

As I wandered through Heaven, a young man followed me around. After a while I finally asked him who he was, and he revealed to me that he was my younger brother. I looked at his face, and asked him if I could touch it, and he said yes. What was most strange to me was the fact that my heart rate increased as I went to touch his face, and seemed to tell me that even in Heaven, was there mortality.

"You are filled with the holy spirit," my brother tells me, "come with me to see God." I followed him all through the world until finally we came upon a throne, and there sat God, and to his right was his son, the Christ. I saw that his pierced hands had healed, and when I then looked at my own, I saw that my hands too, had healed.

Jesus came down from his seat and came to speak with me, but as he approached he took a different form, and became a different man. By the time he got to me, I saw that he had now masked the face of the penitent thief, and with his hand on my shoulder, he says, "If you shall walk with Jesus, he will save your soul."

While this is all happening, I can feel the presence of God in my mind as he stares at me from the throne, but his being has no pulse. This is when I realize that the God who is

in Heaven, the one so many people pray to from Earth, is the Dead God. He had lived many millenniums and in that time completed a magnificent project, and once he grew old and died, he was enshrined into it and became ageless.

A screaming comes across the sky and almost deafens me, and when I change my focus from the dead God back to the thief, I see that Jesus had come back to form and his hand remained on my shoulder. His expression, I had seen before, long ago in “The Soothsayer.”

I think Jesus had the kind of love that was more melancholy than anything else, as opposed to what most people think of when they think of love, such as the connotated goodness. I think Jesus's love spanned more on a sad love that came from a deep and dark place as he witnessed the people around him suffer. The love he had to offer was different, because he knew he wouldn't be able to stay with these people, he knew that he would die soon. This type of love is in opposition to many other types of love, such as the marrigal love, where you intend to spend the rest of your life with a partner or partners. That kind of love, knowing that you're going to die, that's the love that is on the higher level.

Chapter 92

25.0.0.71.0.0

1:3:10:92

THEY say a dream takes place only in the mind, and yet in that mind are there a vast amount of experiences. In that mind is there a wide expanse of space, and who's to say which is the greater world; the one we know or the one in dreams, between Purgatory, Limbo, and the edge of the universe.

A screaming continued across the sky and sept to deafen me. When I awoke I saw that I was in a white room. There were no walls, no ceiling, no floor. Nothing. Nothing but white space. A white room where even the shadows ran from themselves.

I walked in any direction for an unknowable amount of time until I began to see something of form in the distance. Walking over towards it, I began to see that it was a statue. Standing before it, I saw the form of my father, and he stood there solemnly, eyes downcast and with his hands meeting behind his back as he contemplated good and evil.

To the right of his statue was another statue, this one of Jesus, who seemed to have a blue aura about it. And to the left of his statue was another statue, that one of Satan, who seemed to have a red aura about it. And no much later than when I arrived did they begin to speak to my mind.

"It is objective that light is blue," Jesus says to me. "It is objective that light is red," Satan says to me.

Thinking on what they said, I saw that I was removed from the white room and my father's statue came alive as we walked through a world that seemed to resemble Earth.

It was when we began to walk down a hill that my father began to speak to me, saying "You are filled with the agog spirit," and as we walked down the hill he pointed to me all those who were sinners, and soon after, all those who were saints.

"You shall walk through this world until the day of your judgment, and your fate shall be decided by the works you did in it," he tells me.

I stayed with him for a time until I decided I was to go on my own, and I must have traveled for two thousand miles, seeing a large portion of what this world had to show me. I saw both the good and the bad that humankind dwelled in. I saw thieves who stole, prostitutes who sold their own flesh; I saw farmers who grew food for the needy, healers who cured the sick, and when the day of my judgement came, the Sun soared high above the clouds in the sky, but the Sun was eclipsed by the Moon.

"Knock, knock," says Lynne's door. Another day, no answer. Walking twenty feet back to my own apartment, I felt something strange. I'm not sure what one would call it, but it was some kind of sense of failure.

I never got close to my father. We had routines, but not conversations. I think the only

way he knew how to express love was to work hard. During the last year of his life, when he was really sick, he played solitaire in his office for six hours a day. My main memory of him is his silhouette reflecting off the wall of the corridor by the light of his computer screen.

This isn't about the human condition as much as it is the human connection. I've been an outsider my entire life, I've never felt my heart pound for another person the same way it pounds when I am writing. Not ever, not one single person, regardless of their sex, age, race, whatever. I don't think it's people, I think it's just me. Maybe there's something wrong with me. Why is it so difficult for some people to connect to others in a sense that is truthful? To connect, not physically, but emotionally, of the mind, and under a state that is pure.

I have no one to share my life with, not at that degree. I have no children to leave behind. All I really have are these fucking words and these damn expressions that I never give. These expressions that keep me searching for a heart of gold.

Chapter 93

LOST PARADISE

1:3:10:93

THEY say a dream is only a dream, and yet in that mysterious dimension, an idea can grow and affect the real world. It can reach beyond its limits to bring about change or devastation, and who's to say which is the greater realm; the one we know or the one in dreams, between Hell, the ocean and the mind.

The rain began to pour as I walked into my bedroom. I went over to the window, stepping over a pool of water and then closed the window shut. I heard the sound of a thousand droplets hitting the glass as I walked away and went to sit at my desk.

I woke up a sleeping computer and decided again to go over the photos Lynne had sent me months ago. They were photos that Claire had taken during the roadtrip, I'm guessing because she felt like a fifth-wheel and didn't want to seem like someone who was just simply crashing a party that she wasn't really invited to.

They were actually very nice pictures, the quality of them made me wonder if perhaps Claire had always had an interest in photography and had even taken a few classes.

I especially liked the one of Sara, crooked laugh and caught by surprise by the camera as she brushed her teeth in a motel's bathroom. Then there was David and Lynne who in their complete boredom couldn't get the motel's television to work. Why would anyone think those things actually work.

Perhaps in a counter-attack, someone took Claire's device and snapped a picture of her as she walked out of the motel's bathroom. Her hand saying no and taking up half the screen, it seems like it's the people who love to take pictures are the ones who never want to be in them.

Outside of their motel room were many more pictures. Of one was Claire who stood outside and smoked a cigarette, taking a picture of Fairview's night skyline.

There was also the picture of Lynne and I, the moment right before she caught my hand to look at a low autumn Sun. I might have to burn this one.

There were dozens of photos that were taken while on the highway, most of the landscape nature covering wide fields and city buildings. Two of them being the cows we saw. There were also a couple taken in Greenville, of the buildings we saw collapse.

For some reason she didn't take too many at the carnival. Maybe her battery was running low. But one of them was of Sara and David co-riding in one of those bumper-car racers. Man, I wish I could actually show you this picture. I've never seen David so happy.

Going along I found that there were a few pictures I missed, but in particular, there was one video. Not sure how I didn't see it before.

I play it to find that it was a video Claire had recorded while we were all alone at that park. It was of Lynne, on the swings, swinging as high as she could to keep up with Sara and I.

I've seen a lot of people smile, a lot of people laugh, I've even seen some people laugh without smiling, but watching her swing back and forth with that look on her face, I realize that there are some expressions that can't be captured in words. There's just no way to describe them. I would like to find the right word to use, but I'm not sure that there is one.

Either way, that look of glee that she had has stayed with me for a long time. It was genuine. Uncompromising. Real. It was probably so because she felt like she had found a life partner who would help her raise the two people who were most important to her in this world. Knowing that you have someone who will always have your back, it's an indescribable gratitude. I see that now.

I played the video over and over again, watching every part of her face. Even with pictures, videos, you can't really go back to these moments. They only happen once. I can read any one of these compositions notebooks as many times as I want, but I can only write each of them once. I guess this is why they tell you to live in the moment, because if you don't have someone to catch your hand at the right time, you'll miss a moment that you will never get back.

Thinking back on years I thought of my own family. How I was never at the side of any of them when they died. Never having the chance to say goodbye, they simply vanished, as if into a dream.

A screaming continued to echo across the sky, and I saw that the spirit of my deceased body had risen out of the hole in the backyard and into the air.

While towering above the neighborhood, I saw a sign in the distance. "Hade's Inferno Bridge," and directly behind it, a bridge that gapped into the unknown. As I got closer and closer to the bridge, everything around me began to disappear, and once I was able to touch it, I saw that I was in space, and before me was a neon-electric pathway that seemed to have no end.

I began to walk on the pathway and sometime later came across another sign. "Hyacintho amet mora framboise, bleue xiav, pos sinine vaarikas zmeura albastra," it read which I would later find translated into "Long is the way, and hard, that out of Hell leads up to light."

When I got to the end of the trail, I saw a demon whose grin grew heavier as I approached him. He shook my left hand and said to me, "I am called Belphegor, I have been waiting for you." He looks into my left eye, seeming to sense my soul, and he then tells me that I am filled with the spirit of sa ki mal.

A door then appears behind him that reads “Devil's Nest,” and he allows me to enter through it, and when I am on the other side I find myself in a dark cave that is swallowed in ice. There is only one way to go, and as I travel down that one way I begin to hear voices. This didn't surprise me. With the road that I was on, I knew that my destiny was Hell.

I passed through two doors, and on a map in one of the caves I saw that there were five remaining, but I was to only pass through one more, and when I did pass the third one, the ice was gone and was replaced with a lake of fire.

There, way off into the distance, I saw the dead Satan, who sat on a throne and one by one counted off all of the residents of Hell. He pointed at each head, and the time came when he pointed at me and saw that I had just arrived, but there was something different about my arrival. I could see it in his soulless eyes.

And as he sat there, staring into my being, a woman came up to the side of me who had half of her face burnt off, suffering from the great fire that came from the lake. Looking at her face, really looking at her face, I saw that it was my mother. She fell to my feet, flames crowding her backside, and spoke to me in a language I couldn't understand.

I was not allowed to stay with her, though, as Satan then appeared before me and told me to follow him. We walked through the fourth door, which was much like the preceding door, and there we both stay on a rock as Satan told me things that I had never known. This is exactly where the black silence occurs, some type of blackout, and when I come to I see that Satan and I have left Hell and are traveling through what seems to be Earth.

“I knew who you were the moment I saw the mark on your thumb,” the prince of darkness says to me. “There's a shadow in you, and I'm not the one who put it there,” he finishes.

For a while we walked through the world, and the air here was distasteful. This world was filled with suffering, and every person I saw had a grim look to their appearance. If there was rest of the mind anywhere, it certainly was not here. This place, it was haunted by the memory of a lost paradise.

“Those who you have met before me, they have spoken of my name as the one who is called the fallen angel, but alas, look at all those who I rule over. In my fall I have acquired the world, and surely, it is better to reign in Hell, than to serve in Heaven.”

And as we walked, Satan pointed out a specific individual who was toiling away in their own strife, and this he said to me right before I woke up. “If the road you followed brought you to this, of what use was the road?”

I drooled a little bit on the keyboard as I lifted my head to see the computer too, had fallen asleep. I left the room and quickly saw that it had stopped raining. I left my

apartment, and again, I went to Lynne's door. I knocked for a while, raising the power just incase they were home and just didn't hear me, but I never got an answer. So instead of continuing on with the futile attempts of knocking, I decided to put my face to the door and tried to look through the peephole. "How long was I gone?," that's what I asked myself as I tried to see anything other than black.

Chapter 94

THE AWAKENING

1:3:10:94

“IT'S unbelievable how much you don't know about the game you've been playing all your life.” These words appear on a television screen and eventually fade out to reveal a coach who is standing on his field. The stadium, Copper Field, it is empty, but for a moment the coach stares down that long field and can hear the roar of a thirsty crowd.

A commercial break ensues, but when the program returns, old footage of the coach speaking could be seen on the screen. “We need to change the way we play the game,” the coach says to his staff. “We don't need first-rate players with huge contracts, what we need is a system that utilizes the players' talents individually but comes together as a whole like clockwork.”

The coach continues, “Juggernaut teams can fall to underdogs because they rely solely on the talent of the individual. If we can create the right schemes with the right players, and give them a system that fits them all dynamically, we can make average players outstanding. We won't be relying completely on talent, but on schemes for every situation. I guess what I'm saying is we need to create a hybrid culture.”

The old footage stops playing and a sort of introduction to the program begins to play. Dozens of voices, faces, images, cascaded onto each other to tell a great story of wins and losses.

There is a road to the championship game that all players must take. No one is exempt from it. This road is paved in patience, teamwork, dedication, and it will humble any person who walks it. Yes, this is just a game, it's as simple as a field and a ball, yet, it is as complex as the human spirit. It's a sport, a business, and sometimes it's even a religion.

The volume of the television is lowered by a nurse who enters a room that Joe is currently residing in. She walks past Joe, past a curtain, then arrives to tend to a victim of a recent stabbing. The man was brought in only moments earlier and was victim to drug and gang-warfare associated violence.

Once she sees that the man is okay, she goes over to Joe and checks his monitor. Afterwards, she goes to the foot of the bed and begins to remove his socks and then replaces them with a pair of clean socks. She then moves over to the side of the bed and starts to remove his pants, but before she can, she notices a blink in the corner of her eye. When she looks up at Joe's face, she sees that he is awake.

Joe looks directly at her but is unable to speak any words. The nurse takes his right hand and starts to speak to him, telling him that he was in a hospital. After she's finished talking, he begins to murmur a few words but she can't completely understand him, so

she moves in closer to listen more carefully, and he again begins to speak. "Water," he says in a dry voice.

The nurse returns with a paper cup of water as she helps Joe to sit up, and little by little she gives him some of the water. About two minutes later, a doctor comes by and checks Joe. He does various tests, and then later that night, he phones Kathleen and tells her that her son is finally awake.

At this time, Kathleen's health was at an all-time low; she could barely see out of either eye and had a difficult time breathing. Her health was in such decline that she had to hire a caregiver. Karuna, she was no longer around as she had found employment in another state assisting teachers.

Kathleen was overjoyed to hear the news as she still maintained her hearing, but even that was beginning to fade out. The next morning, the caregiver drives Kathleen to the hospital and then drives her wheelchair to Joe's room. At the time that they arrive, Joe is sleeping, but it is not too long after that he awakes again to find his mother bedside.

For the first time in well over a decade, Joseph looks into his mother's eyes. He doesn't recognize her at all; the silver linings in her hair, her wheelchair-bound physique, but despite this he knows who she is, and even though all Kathleen can really see is some kind of form that has recently been emptied, a form with no content that only resembled a shape, she knows who he is.

When the caregiver sees that Joe had waken up, she feels uncomfortable and promptly excuses herself and leaves the room, telling them that she would be back with some refreshments.

Once she had left, and once the mother and son had locked eyes again, there was a very brief pause, and perhaps it was because this was a strange situation that not even life could have prepared the two for, or perhaps because it was the two were filled with emotion that they didn't know how to express, but this brief pause led to a type of relieving and joyous laughter. Kathleen did her best but could not hold back the tears as they rolled down her cheeks. Nor could Joseph, being affected by her affection. Nothing had to be said, everything was in what they did. It was in the exact moment that he took her frail hand that she took his, and together they held on to a dream.

I'd say there were a million reasons why they both cried, but I think the main reason was because that moment of coming together meant he forgave her, and at that same time, perhaps for the first time in his life, he felt accepted by someone he loved. He felt accepted, for who he was, what he was, and why he was the way that he was.

In still a dead and raspy voice, Joseph begins to speak to his mother, telling her that he heard pretty much everything. He knew that he was unconscious but there were many times he could hear all of the things going on around him. He heard her when she tried to

tell him that his father had passed away. He heard her when she talked about her recent diabetes diagnosis. He heard her every time she asked him to wake up.

He told her that he could have woken up anytime he pleased, but that the place he was in was a place that he had to go through.

“At first I was alone in a dark room. It had a door. I went to the door but I couldn't open it. And after a while, after I turned back around, I saw some kind of box figure floating in the center of the room. It was more like a Rubik's cube, a large cube that contained thousands of smaller cubes. It wasn't colorful though, like a Rubik's cube, it had only black and white pieces, and the contrast it had was like, I don't know. It was like stars in the sky. I could see myself looking in on myself as I looked in the cube, and like some all-knowing thing I knew exactly what this place was. Everything here in this world is like a byproduct of time. If something is new, it will get old. If something is born, it will die. But back there, looking down at that frame, I don't think time existed. It was like I was looking into some type of eternity and in that state of mind I could understand it. It wasn't governed by a mode of existing or not existing. It didn't have to be real, but at the same time it didn't have to be fake. It was nothing and something at the same time, something I can't compare to anything else. The one thing I know for sure was that this frame held everything in the universe in place. So I kept looking at it, looking at it, looking at it, not knowing that slowly it was absorbing me in, and when I was fully immersed in its dimensions that's when I felt him. I didn't know where he was, but I could feel dad. He was filled with a type of pain, a type of sorrow that I didn't know people could feel. I felt with him, and I knew that in his pain there was only one thing that he wanted, only one thing that he needed. He needed me to forgive him,” Joe says as he begins to sob, “all he wanted was to be forgiven. I didn't hesitate at all, I told him it was alright, I told him that I loved him and I told him that every thing would be okay, and that's when he left. I let him go and I couldn't feel him or his sorrow anymore. It just vanished. And at the same time I was out of the cube and back into that room, looking down at it again. I turned around and went to the door and I could open it. What I realized though, was that the lock to the door was on the inside. All I had to do was unlock it and I could have left at any time, but I think what that meant was, was that dad was on the other side of that door, trying to get it, but it was locked for him, not for me.”

The doctor knocks on the door and Kathleen tells him to come in. He walks in with some papers in his hand and says he has good news, that there is nothing wrong with Joseph. No brain damage or anything of the sort and that he would be able to check out sometime this week.

Two days later, Joe is able to walk and has been greenlit to leave the hospital. His mother had stayed with him for the duration of the two days and she was to finally take

him home. Or he was going to take her home, I don't know. Either way they were leaving and going home.

Joe wheeled his mother through the halls and finally got outside to see a taxi waiting in the distance. “You know how you said it looked like stars in the sky?,” she asks Joe. “Yeah,” he replies. “I remember when you were younger, I would tell you about verses from the Bible that talked about the stars. I remember how I would always tell you stories about the stars as they shined in the night sky. You really loved it, there was just something about them that you were drawn to. But I think what you saw back in that room was about one story in particular,” Kathy says, “it's the oldest story, really.”

That story was about the story of light versus dark. It comes in a variety of ways, but fundamentally, it is always the same. A bitter struggle between what we perceive to be good and evil. There are, however, broader ways of looking at good and evil. One might explain evil as not the act or the offense itself, but the lack of knowledge that leads to the action in question.

Many times will we magnify one little thing about a person, and many times will this one little thing become the very thing that identifies this person, but there is more to a person than one of his or her parts. You cannot determine who someone is by asking them a few questions. You can't decide who someone is by receiving the answers to these few questions. People are more complicated and more complex than that. The only way to understand someone's true identity, aside from mathematics, is to sit down and break bread with them. To sit down and for once let them do the talking. To just listen, for a moment, to someone else's story.

“TODAY LAST YEAR”

1:3:10:95

LAST night, I had a dream. In my bag I carried four gems. “Agrometnaz,” which was teal and in the shape of a prism; “Parturimetnaz,” which was crimson and in the shape of a cube; “Biotametnaz,” which was onyx and in the shape of a sphere; and “Thanatometnaz,” which was porcelain and in the shape of an icosahedron.

I am walking on a bridge, leaving one island and on my way to another. Somewhere on this island is hidden the fifth and final gem that I need, which I believe is colored chartreuse. I have no idea what it is named nor do I know its shape, but I know that it is tied to time.

There are physical laws that govern mass in our region of the universe, and some scientists speculate that in other far out regions, the physical laws we know here and now might change. That is to say, trillions of lightyears from Earth, gravity might behave differently, or it might not even exist.

There is also speculation that physical laws may change over time, and in a sense, even evolve much like the physical counterpart of evolution that animals and plants endure. I suppose that would mean that things like gravity are able to reproduce, as strange as that may sound, or are at least perhaps affected by the things around them.

If there are physical laws for mass, is there a possibility of there being other types of laws for things without mass? Things of the abstract nature? Things like time? Imagination? Perhaps even love and hate?

In the physical world and on Earth, if you suspend a pear in mid-air and then let go, of course due to gravity it will drop to the floor. So now take something abstract; what kind of laws do you think might govern it, if any at all?

After walking all through the island, I began to walk on its shore and there I spotted a boat. Off into the distance and in the ocean stood a clocktower. I'm sure the gem is somewhere in there.

I get into the boat and begin to paddle through the waters, and with each paddle I find that darkness falls. And when I am only about fifty yards from the clocktower, I start to see a form standing in front of the door. It is an old woman, and she is staring directly at me. Her difficult and cold stare is what causes me to wake up.

Looking into the mirror, the stare is gone. My eyes are no longer owl. I walk into the room that houses the composition notebooks and I begin to write down the clocktower dream. Once that task is complete, I go downstairs to check my mail and find that it is stuffed. I thought I checked it a couple of days ago.

I pull out all of the mail and on top there is an advertisement of a huge sale that had

already passed. Electronics, appliances, clothes, food; everything was going and this was my only chance.

I shuffle through and find some of my bills, and among the other mail were again things of the advertisemental nature. This is when I hear the sound of a car door closing from the parking lot and I glance outside to see who it is. When I get a better look, I see that it is Lynne, accompanied by David, and they are peering into their trunk searching for something that I'm not sure of.

Eventually I see Lynne lug out a luggage bag and David takes out a backpack and puts it on as they begin to walk towards the apartment building's front door. I stand there, wondering if I should run.

She opens the door and when she sees me, I can tell she is somewhat startled, but she doesn't stop walking. She looks at me but doesn't break her march, nor does David. Once she is past me, she slows down, almost looks my way, and then says "I can't talk to you right now," and then she walks up the flight of stairs. After she says this, David somewhat looks at me and I can tell that he knows that I did something to upset his mother.

I wait a good while downstairs, and once I hear their door close, I go back to my apartment and throw away all the junkmail. I spend the next two hours thinking. I knew it. I knew I should have kept to myself. It always ends the same. Every fucking time. You think things are going to be different this time? Why would they be? Nothing about you has changed. You're the same misanthrope you were many years ago. I've gotten worse. I got worse. I am worse.

Two more hours. The same thoughts keep repeating and echoing in my mind. It gets so bad that I start to see the walls closing in on me. They keep closing in, and in, and in, and now I'm hearing a loud beat that continues to beat, and beat and beat.

I got fucking worse. I got fucking worse. The beating changes a little and the funny looking man on the television screen catches my attention, and then slowly I hear the beating sounds turn into knocking sounds, and when I open it Lynne barges in.

"I told myself I would never let another person control me," she starts yelling at me, "I told myself no matter what, this is my life and only I am in control of my life. Me and no one else!," she raises her voice at me, "I told myself if anyone ever puts their hands on me I was done with them. I'm not even angry that you disappeared, or that you went away without telling me. That's none of my business and I am not entitled to that, I understand that about you. I understand that I shouldn't expect anything from you. I made a promise to myself that I wouldn't push you away and that I wouldn't intrude on your privacy. I said to myself, 'Let's just see where this goes, and if it works out then it works out, I'm not going to force anything this time,' and for a long time I was happy with our relationship. I was happy with whatever we had. I was happy because I thought you were

happy. I'm not mad that you disappeared, I'm just frustrated because you hurt me physically. When I left the house I felt my heart shatter into a million pieces. You scared the shit out of me, you hurt me physically and you broke my heart. I don't know what to do. I don't know what to think. I thought you were different. I don't like feeling like this and I don't want to feel like this. Why couldn't you just talk to me!," she raises her voice at me again, "I can't do this anymore. I won't do it. I have a million thoughts going through my head all at once and I'm hurt. And I'm tired. I'm sick of having my hopes smashed. You have no idea how crushed I am right now, and how fucked up I am because a part of me feels like it was my fault. That I caused you to grab me like that. A part of me feels like I deserved it, and I just feel empty inside now because you were my light," she begins to sob, "I'm heart-broken. I know I keep saying this but you hurt me and you broke my heart."

She's winded and can barely stand up after what she says, so she finds her way to my couch and sits down. She stopped crying for a small while, but it was after I told her that it would be better for her if she found someone else that she began to cry again.

"I don't have anyone else," she lowers her voice as she stares at the ground below her, "I'll never find anyone. I'm just broken. I'm not right. I don't know what's wrong with me," and after a medium pause, she says "I'm sad that you would say something like that." She looks at me, "I feel nauseous, because when you say something like that, it means you don't see me in your future. I don't want anyone else. I don't want anything else. I'm past that. I just want you."

"Okay," I say. She looks away from me and then back at me, "What do you mean 'Okay?'" I think for a while, "I don't know. I don't know what you want me to say to that. Alright. I understand what you want, and I also understand that you know not to expect anything from me. I just. I don't know. I like you a lot. I like being around you, which is more than I can say for most people. You're not like any other person I've ever known. In a philosophical sense, I mean. You're a beautiful person, you make people smile even if you're not smiling yourself. If I had to be buried next to someone for the rest of eternity, right now it would probably be you. I do want you to be in my future, I would actually be depressed if you weren't, but even though that's the way I feel towards you, it doesn't mean I can pack a bag and run away with you. I'm a very private person. I don't trust myself around you and definitely not around your kids. I will never be able to make that commitment. Part of me wishes I could, but that's just not who I am."

She continues to sit there, staring in front of her and thinking about what I just said. After a while she takes a piece of paper out of her pocket and unfolds it and starts to look at the paper.

"I'm sorry I got in your face and yelled at you, it was just something I needed to get

off my chest. I don't think I've ever yelled at anyone like that," she says, still speaking softly. "I told you I started writing, right?," she asks. "Yeah," I reply.

She continues, "Well I wrote you a poem. A while ago. I didn't know what else to do. I felt awful so I just sat down and kept writing one night. It was hard, 'cause I'm not that great at it. Not at writing, I mean. It took me a long time to come up with some of these lines and I even had Olya read it to make sure I wouldn't embarrass myself if I ever gave it to you. I still don't want to give it to you because I'm afraid you'll laugh or something."

"Alright well just hand it over so I can see," I laugh. She gets up hesitantly and walks toward me. Before she hands me the poem she wraps her arms around my body, and I guess because I have to, I wrap mine around her. I can still feel her heart, and it's still beating.

We both let go and she hands me the paper, and so I begin to read:

-Used to believe that your home was always going to be your home-Wasn't till I met you that I realized how sad I was, and how alone-Before then I just couldn't see that I was truly on my own-I was too blind to see that I had to leave there, else I wouldn't have grown

-I want you to know that before you, I never found a place that I felt I belonged-I was always lost or out of place, always felt like I was wrong-Maybe it was because I was too weird, or maybe because I came on too strong-And so before I knew it, the ship sailed, I was too late and it was already gone

-Then you came into my life, like a river that would run me dry-You taught me how to love again, you taught me how to cry-You made me stronger, then you made me weaker, I thought you became a lie-I miss you, and I hate you, and a small part of me almost wants to die

-I don't care, I'm yours even if you're not mines-I just want to see that ship again just one more time-I want to know that it's not over for me, that I can rewind-I need you to touch me again, and tell me that everything's fine

-If you asked me where I'd go tonight, I'd go back to today last year -When you held me in your arms and I cried all those happy tears-And for the first time in my life my heart had found its home and had no fear-And we danced the night away, not in some paradise, but just here, right here

When I look back up, I can see her patiently waiting for my critique. “Am I good enough?” That’s the thought bubble that I saw form above her head, outlined in insecurity.

“You spelled some things wrong, but that doesn’t matter,” I say. She rolls her eyes at me. “Did you just roll your eyes?,” I ask her. She looks back at me. “Roll your eyes at me again,” I say as I walk up to her with a stern face. She rolls them again.

I grab her and pick her up into the air and somehow we land on the couch. We wrestle with each other and she tries to break free; she can’t help but laugh like a little kid throughout the whole match.

Five minutes later we are both sitting on the couch and she’s laying on me awkwardly. “You have half the fucking couch why are you so close to me?” She mocks me by getting closer.

The apartment is completely silent as we both just sit there. “We went to a wedding,” she says, “that’s why we had those bags. It was my cousin’s wedding and she lives in another state.” She says she didn’t really feel like going but Emily insisted. “I might be the one woman in America who isn’t a big fan of huge weddings. There was like over two-hundred people there. I mean I’m happy for her, but that was like a thirty-thousand dollar wedding. I think I would have done something else with that money, but that’s me and I’m poor so what do I know.”

I must have dozed off because I woke up sometime later and she was gone. There was yet another knock at my door, one I had never heard before, and when I opened it, it was David. He had a video game controller in his hand and he walked inside explaining to me that it no longer worked and hoped that I could help him fix it.

We worked on it for a while, and throughout the whole thing, he talked to me. “I heard my mom yelling at you,” he laughed. It wasn’t a general laugh, he was laughing at me. But as I’m fixing his broken controller, he puts his hand on my shoulder after he sees my sawn-off fingertips, and then he says “Don’t worry.” He then starts to giggle, then finishes, “I too was alone.”

I laughed a little once I realized that Dave was quoting “Green Monster Jam,” a movie he had seen earlier and probably more than ten times.

“She yells at my dad too sometimes,” he says. Dave stops there, so at that point I asked him if he still had nightmares. He told me that he hadn’t had a single nightmare ever since I gave him the dreamcatcher, and that he took it everywhere with him. “Goan folk made ‘em fer kids, so da Devil don get too close.”

Two down, and so I only had one person left to reconcile with, but she didn’t come home for another few days. Once Lynne told her that I was back, Silvio dropped her off.

It was around noon that Lynne let her out of the house and she came knocking on my

door. I knew it was her.

I opened the door and she jumped into my arms. “Where were you?” she asked, she didn't let me answer, “I waited a million years for you.” I still don't completely understand why I'm one of her favorite people.

I let her down and we walk into my living room. As I go to sit down on my couch, for some reason she goes to the window and looks out. I ask what she is doing but I don't completely understand her reply.

She then begins to walk towards me and opens her folder to show me a bunch of drawings she had made while I was gone. For the second time, I am caught by surprise as she sits directly on my lap.

“This one is you,” she says after she flips through a bunch of them. It was a childish drawing of an individual sitting alone at a table. I laughed, mostly because she couldn't understand how much that told me about what she thought of me, and I told her that I really liked it.

After she shows me the rest of them, I ask her if she wants to watch television, so after she puts her folder down I end up giving her the remote. She leans back into me with the back of her head against my chest and starts to flip through the stations. It wasn't until after a while that I realized that I had wrapped my arms around her small body.

An individual who is physically unsubscribed to the world attempts to understand what it means to be human. They attempt to understand the human spirit and what might drive it to do the things that it does. Even though they are completely disconnected from the entire world, they are completely connected to the very fabric of existence. Our ability as humans to challenge our purpose and our existence is a milestone in biological achievement.

Sara continues to browse through all the channels and eventually stops on a station aimed for children. Butterflies and eagles and moonbeams and fairy tales, riding with the wind. When I'm sad, she comes to me with a thousand smiles that she'll give to me free.

She must have been tired because it wasn't that long until she was in and out of sleep. She'd fall asleep for a minute and wake back up to continue watching her show. And maybe with the last amount of energy she had left, maybe with her last breath, she put her hands on top of mine and said “I love you” in a sleepy voice.

I stared at the wolf on the television screen before me for a moment and thought about what she said. I started thinking about my daughter who died young and about how she never made it into this world. “I love you too,” I said to Sara, and then she fell asleep.

I felt like she was a part of me. Something so beautiful in such an ugly world. We all look for things to save us, but I think it's the difficult way to salvation that we all miss. We're looking for the right thing, but we have no idea what it actually looks like, so we

don't see it when it's there. Man, I know I haven't changed, not really, but I know I'm not the same. I feel like someone else.

I grab the remote and switch to the news channel to find a crowd and an empty stage. Everyone was waiting for the new president to make his way to the podium and deliver his speech.

Feeling Sara's warm body reminded me of being back in the hole in my backyard. The freezing temperature that I had to endure. Knowing that death was not far from my design.

Mister Nosleep taught me that death isn't the end, that it's the beginning of a chain reaction that will catch you if you're not careful. He taught me that none of us are who we appear to be on the outside, but we must maintain appearances to survive. There was however something Mister Nosleep didn't teach me. Something he didn't know, couldn't possibly know. Watching someone or something you love corrupt and go astray causes the ultimate disconnect from humanity. It leaves you an outsider, forever looking in, and in your pain you search for company to keep.

*Chapter 96***APOLITICAL CHANGE**

1:3:10:96

I am honored to stand here before you on this historic evening. I am forever indebted to this supportive crowd. I look at each and every one of you and I see a crowd that is full of people who come from all walks of life. I see people who have come together for a singular purpose and cause, despite the high amounts of miscellany.

The equative phrase for this is “melting pot.” A phrase that has powered our great country for well over a century. This crowd is only a microcosm of America itself, only a small sample. There are people from all over the world here, who come to settle here for better lives. They think of their children and they immigrate to America to furnish a better future for them, a future that they themselves failed to attain. A future that they themselves perhaps were never offered.

And while it is great to be a melting pot, to be diverse and multi-cultured, such a concept poses threats. We have all seen it. Whether it be of class or race, we have all witnessed the terror that can come from multiplicity. This terror will not simply go away. It will not vanish into thin air. And on the day that America is tested, we will either soar high or we will fall to the fire beneath us. We will triumph, or the fire that fuels the melting pot will overcome the pot itself.

I am a soldier by trade. I have led many men into battle. I've been in a war where when we returned home, great crowds greeted us with cheers, and I've also been in a war where when we returned home, even greater crowds greeted us with enmity. And I'm sure what was on every soldier's mind at that time was the question of whether or not they fought for a just cause.

This is a question that we all ask ourselves, every day. Do the things we do matter. Are we living our lives with virtuous intention. Can my life really have an impact.

Today, right now and more than ever, the things we do will shape the course of our future. We are in a state of time where every thing matters. No battle can be jettisoned or the entire war will be lost.

We aren't in conflict with other counties, but we are in great dissension with the human abstintion. Poverty spreads throughout our country as an epidemic. Violence of all kinds hide at every corner and strangles the lives that could have been. Lack of education turns a would-be contributing member to society into a transgressive burden. Environmental dilemma needs to be taken off the back-burner, or else it will be our sons and daughters that we leave the problems to. We need to find better solutions to preventing terrorism, domestic and from abroad, because the current way is not working.

These problems, they are our great war. No, they don't strategize and they don't run

around with guns. They don't wear uniforms and they don't carry intelligence that you can intercept. Yet, they come with a force that can cripple nations and bring them down to their knees. They are indiscriminate in who they charge, and their adjudication is without mercy. This is our great war, and now is the time to act.

We have gathered on Providence Trail here this evening, and we speak about our future, both near and distant. This trail carries the history of many a great man and woman who were destined to be recognized, not because fate would have them do good things, but because with colossal faith they pursued their destiny even in the face of adversity. Let it be noted, if you give a person purpose, I promise you with all that I have to offer that they too will accomplish great things.

This is the land of opportunity, but I am not certain that I can say there is equality in that opportunity. You do your best but sometimes it isn't enough, or sometimes someone else makes sure that it isn't enough. You don't get a fair shake and the same shot at life, liberty and happiness that others get. I understand this, every part of it, and my tenure in office will be staunch to fixing this.

I know there are a lot of people out there that are dubious of my position as the president of the United States. I know a lot of you are thinking I will be just the same as any other politician. These are the exact things you should be thinking, until I and my office prove otherwise. Until crime is reduced and educational programs are expanded. Until unemployment is no longer one of our most prevalent of statistics and equality is delivered on every facet of opportunity.

We have enough experience and I can make the arduous decisions. We will get people back to work. Back to school. We will deliver optimism. No more desperation, we must make way for the new way. The better way. We are the strongest and most powerful free society in the world, and our nation is poised for greatness. And we will reach greatness as long as we are focused and provide real opportunity for all Americans.

The measure of a civilization is how it treats its weakest members, and if a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich. While we are all on our own trail, we must take the time to make room for the stranger, to take up the case of the stranger, for this is where true grace lies. Not only should we endeavor to make America greater, but the world greater. We have been put in the position to make a better world for every people of every nation, so let us not underemphasize our own stance in the world.

Let us stand up for justice, and for truth, and let us understand that while power is in the hands of only a few, human reform is in the hands of all those who seek it, and this is where the true power lies. And so when you show us the pictures taken throughout all of America, and you show us your tired, your poor and your huddled masses yearning to

breathe free, you are showing us not the America that has been left behind, but the America that will rise. But to get there, we must understand that we cannot fight this great and pugnacious war with guns and bullets, we must fight it with the power of human reformation.

When you rewrite a law, you simply rewrite the way a person breaks that law, but when you rewrite a person, you no longer need that law. We must take new approaches to our social issues, and must always remember that those who make peaceful revolution impossible surely will make violent revolution inevitable. Bring equality to opportunity and justice will speak for itself.

A woman once said that every dream begins with a dreamer, and that you should reach for the stars. I believe each American, at some point in their life, should write their own declaration of independence, not to declare their independence from America, but to declare their independence from that which blinds them from the truth. To declare independence from that which blinds the eyes of a person who could have been visionary.

I am nearing the denouement of my trail here, so I will finish with one final message. This speech was intended for anyone out there who believes that perhaps, we were all born with the moral obligation to leave behind a better world than the one we were given. Praise those who take this Providence Trail. Thank you, goodnight, and God bless America.

FILE 1 OF 3, "BLOODTHUMB"

1:3:10:97

THE president readjusted his blue tie as he walked away from the stage, waving at his supporters. A part of me wondered if he was serious. If he would actually bring change or not. He talked about the human abstintion, which I guess is good. People should know what they're up against.

“The human abstintion is described as humankind's conflict with various types of social issues, such as but not limited to; poverty, discrimination and environmental degradation, and is compared to but contrasted against the notion of traditional warfare which might include two or more conflicting nations, in the sense that the human abstintion cannot be fought in the same regard as traditional warfare, in such that where the opposition wears a uniform, social issues are not readily visible in every situation and are often elusive to human capability. While the human abstintion is in part concerned with problematics, the idea in itself calls to human reformation as one of the possible solutions to these problems, and attempts to inspire more creative and innovative ways to dealing with many of the world's collective social issues.” Acinnatirb's Notalogy, page 40 highlighted.

Corruption would also fall under these issues, and when you have things like fixed elections and you realize that your vote doesn't really count, abstintion comes knocking on your door.

Sara laid asleep in my arms and I wondered when Lynne was going to finally come to pick her up. Night had dawned and her little yellow shirt was losing its color.

I picked up the remote and began to switch through channels, at one point passing through a documentary that detailed the bitter rivalry between the Crips and the Bloods, and at another hearing of an anti-hero who would say “The good guys dress in black.”

What I would eventually land on was a program that depicted the hardships of a sports organization in a type of interview format, and being interested, I raised the volume just a bit.

“What makes this story unlike any other sports story I've ever seen,” the name of sports analyst comes up at the bottom right, Al Summerall, “is not the fact that it was David versus Goliath, or the fact that a team came together at the most important time. What made it different actually had nothing to do with sports at all; which was the fact that the city this team played in at the time was in a state of eventual urban decay. And that even though the fans had no hope, not for life and especially not for a championship, this team persevered. That's what really makes this a unique story that everyone should know about.”

I was curious and wanted to keep watching but it was getting late and had to get Sara home. I got up with her and carried her across the hallway. Yeah, it was a very short distance, but it gave me a lot of time to think.

By now you've realized that I have no answers for you. Not on life and especially not on death. Your journey is your own. There is a good chance that you will spend many nights alone in the dark, waiting for someone or something to show you the way. Someone or something to come along and give you concrete and undeniable answers, but I'm almost certain you will always get shortchanged, and instead of getting those answers you'll get something like Sara. That's the best that life and the universe has to offer you.

Sara is not what I've been looking for my whole life, she's not the answer to all my questions and she is not the reason for my existence, she's just a little girl. She's just a little girl the same way a rock is just a rock until you pick up that idle rock and throw it at a can, and in that moment that it is gliding through the air, you gave it a purpose.

The text has often been used as a metaphor for life's difficult choices, and many see the boat as referring to one's self or a group with which one identifies. Rowing is a skillful, if tedious, practice that takes perfection but also directs the vessel. When sung as a group, the act of rowing becomes a unifier, as oars should be in sync for the progression of a rowboat. The idea that human beings travel along a certain stream [time] suggests boundaries in the path of choices and in free will. The third line recommends that challenges should be greeted in stride while open to joy with a smile. Some have questioned the song's implied necessity to row one's boat downstream. This may in fact be a commentary on the paradoxical nature of time's arrow with respect to man's free will in a universe of materialistic causality. The final line, "Life is but a dream", is perhaps the most meaningful. With a religious point of view, life and the physical plane may be regarded as having equivalent value as that of a dream, such that troubles are seen in the context of a lesser reality once one has awakened. Acinnatirb's Notalogy, page 298 highlighted.

The story of life is quicker than the blink of an eye, the story of love is hello and goodbye, until we meet again. Not my words but the last words of a deceased poet. The sentence was seen in a scene on a wall from a maze dream. Section 2 compartment 19.

I got to Lynne's door and turned the knob to enter the apartment and when I get in I see Lynne sitting in her kitchen working on something. "Is she sleeping?," Lynne asks. I nod my head and make my way to the kids' room where I find Dave watching television. I lay her to rest beside Dave, and before I leave I stare at Dave. He stares back and eventually asks, "What?"

After a long pause of making Dave feel uncomfortable I started to say something. "Obi-Wan never told you what happened to your father," and right then I turned my back

and walked out of the room, hearing Dave softly laugh in the background as to not wake his sleeping sister.

Walking back through the living room I went over to Lynne and on the wall behind her I saw one of those gay ass “family” board things. You know what I'm talking about, the ones with a bunch of short life-motivators on them. “Be happy, today is your day.” “Cherish every moment.” “Laugh out loud.”

“Where's Claire?” I asked her. “We honestly have no idea,” she replies, “after we got back home from the roadtrip she said she needed to go somewhere and she hasn't called since.” “You're not worried about her?” “She does this kind of stuff all the time. She'll be back and then gone again, that's just who she is.” “But didn't you say she had issues or something?” “She did. She does, I mean. But I think she's better now, like a lot better. She had a lot of fun on the trip.”

I think about what she says and for whatever reason I remember the program that I have playing on my television, so I find a way to leave and get back to my apartment. After I open my door and as I'm walking to the couch I hear a whisper in my ear. It sounded like Sid but I couldn't sure.

The occurrence reminds me of a dream I had thirteen months ago. It was one of those dreams that I wasn't in, and instead was simply viewing. It took place at a phone-booth near a gas station that was in a mostly country town. A lady detective who went by January Levinson dusted the phone-booth for fingerprints and later used a listening device to intercept a call that was made earlier that week.

The call did not connect and instead a message was left on the answering machine, and after listening to the message, Jan realized that this was a call made to the “Bat-man,” the serial killer she was chasing.

Who the message was left by, she couldn't figure out, but she had now learned that there was a good chance that the killings she was investigating were not committed by one, but two individuals together.

For the ninth time, she plays back some of the audio. “Yes, I'm still tired, but I've already paid quarters and I'm giving you a nightcall to tell you how I feel.” “If not, just hang up now. Keep it in the back of mind though, that I'll be watching you. Every smile you fake, every claim you stake, I'll be watching you.” “That's how I know that when I try to get through on the telephone to you, there will be nobody home.”

Jan later phoned her old-time partner on the case and revealed this new information to him, stating that she believed that the two homicidal maniacs had a falling-out and were now taunting and haunting each other. She theorized, considering their nature, that they were now perhaps even hunting each other, and to the victor went the prize.

Nearly twenty-five of us hid along the edge of the civilian prison and we all knew our

assignments. Five of us, myself included, infiltrated the base beforehand, and the other twenty would invade the prison with warfare as soon as I made the call.

Once inside the prison, I sent out the radio signal and immediately the five of us began to search the holding cells. We opened all of them, freeing any prisoners who inmated them. A lot of them walked out like mindless zombies, never knowing what freedom was. We must have gone through about fifty holding cells in five sections, and not too long later, the alarm was sound and the civilians knew we were here.

Stephanie helped me ram the door to a prison cell down and what I saw on the other side paralyzed me mentally. The civilians had completely removed any body that Ramix had from the waist down. I ran over to her and picked her up and began to carry her, and later on she told me that they mutilated her because of her constant defiance and lunatic behavior.

Once Stephanie, Gary, Sterling, Corey and I made it out of the prison building we saw the war that was raging outside. The outsiders had overrun the civilians and their prison base and sought to free all those who were unjustly enslaved.

“This way,” John the Citizen shouts out to us, and we follow him as he strikes his targets with his bow and arrow. As we run, I can feel the warm and infected breath of Ramix on my shoulder, “This is the beginning of the end,” she whispers on me.

We walked into my office and I had the patient lay down. One of her family members also attended this session, as well as three others who were mainly there for regulatory purposes. After grabbing my notepad, I sat down and began to speak to her, but because of her brain trauma, she could not speak back as she had a hard time relearning the English language.

“No,” I nodded my head left to right, “and yes,” I nodded my head down and up, and when I saw that she understood, I looked back at my notes.

There was a supposed scandal at the White House, break-ins and the exposing of classified information, and inside my patient's head were all the truths. I just needed to find my way around her mind.

I presented to her several pictures of the scene where she had been hit by a car. “I just want you to look at a few pictures with me,” I tell her, “tell me if you see something familiar.” I hold up a picture of a grayscale picture, “This one is dark, but it's a picture of a building near Middle Bank. Do you recognize it?”

She nods her head sideways, so I show her the next picture, “This is a photo of D.F.R. and Jule Rea, your gentleman friends, do you recognize them?” She looks into their eyes and I can see a glimpse of recognition in her cognition, and soon after she nods up and down, then says “I recognize them.”

“Good, that's a great sign,” I reply. I now hold up a picture of EsNecil's company

logo, a company which she worked for, and her employee identification number, “This is the name of a small store that sells and fixes different types of things for people, like watches and bracelets, does it ring a bell?” She nods her head sideways and says “No.” “You don't remember standing in front of it?” I ask.

At this moment her family member asks me if they could talk in private, and so in a corner of the room we whispered to each other. “This isn't working, she's not saying anything of any value. She doesn't remember the street, she doesn't remember Will-A-Bee, and all of this stuff may pull her deeper into her trauma.” “Just two more questions, and then we can end this session. I just need to ask her about the plates and about the replacement medicine the doctors are giving her now since they see her brain is beginning to function normally.”

The family member allowed me to continue because we both knew what we needed was inside her head, I just had to find a way to unlock it, to make her remember.

“You don't know if you've been here before, or if you're repeating things. You're sitting on your porch and you don't know why. You've lost your sense of time. You want to ask questions, but you forget which ones you wanted to ask. The one thing that could make you remember those questions is if you wrote them down while you were thinking of them. If you made notes of them, then maybe you'd remember. But sometimes when you go to write them down, you forget what you are doing and wonder why you have a pen in your hand. It's like you just woke up, doctor. You have a pen in your hand and you don't know why.”

Hello, goodbye. I walked down the steps and through the hallway of the first floor to find that the mailman was delivering mail. He had already seen me so it was too late to back out, and it was about five seconds later that I finally reached him. He nodded at me, as I did him, and I soon sought to pass by him. It was when I noticed that he was putting mail in my box when I told him that those were meant for me and I would just take them now. And as he handed them to me, he gave me mail that didn't belong to me.

“This is for 1B,” I told him, and went to give it back. I soon learned that he suffered from dyslexia, alexia, really, and he apologized to me. “You know what, I'm good friends with the person who lives in 1B, so I'll give it to them for you.”

I took my remaining mail and I walked back into the first floor and to give Tao his mail, I realized that his name was not exactly on it, that it was instead a May-ling.

“Knock knock,” the door said, and it creaked as it opened. It was not Tao but a woman, and for a second I paused before I said “Sorry, they gave me your mail.” She took the mail and said thanks, but remarked on the fact that she had never seen me in the building before, and then promptly introduced herself as May-ling, shaking my hand in the process.

I asked her if she by chance knew someone named Tao, and she said “yes.” She was Tao's girlfriend, “We meet through internet,” she told me. I then asked her if he was in and she said “no,” that he was “on business trip for new job.” “Alright, it was nice meeting you,” I told her, and I went away from that place, away and far away.

The next day, sometime in the morning and around ten a.m., I heard a moving truck pull up into the apartment's parking lot. I looked outside and saw Mary leaving the front door of the building with Anthony in her arm. After a while and after one of the men left the truck, she began to talk to them and started signing papers, and it wasn't long until the men began to bring things out of her apartment and into the moving truck.

As they loaded the truck Mary stayed out of her apartment as to not get in the way and instead stayed around the second floor where she talked to Deana and Mike about where she was headed and why.

While I heard muffled conversation between the three, I also heard crackling noises that came from right in front of my door, but when I put my eye to the peephole I see nothing. I hear it clearly but I cannot see it, not until I open my door to find Anthony sitting down and playing with a racecar.

When he looks up at me I can see that I startled him, and soon after he stands up and begins to walk away, forgetting his toy and looking back one time to make sure I am not following him. He gets to Mary and hides behind her, staring directly at me, but I couldn't say if it was fear or if it was curiosity.

Once she sees me she ends her conversation with the neighbors and begins to walk towards me as Anthony follows, walking with his own type of stutter-step.

“I thought you moved or something,” she says. She tells me about her promotion and how she had to relocate, and at first she never quite notices how Anthony is hiding behind her, but when she does, though, she picks him up and tells him not to be afraid. “Can you say 'bye-bye?,' say 'bye-bye.’” She keeps shaking his hand and trying to get him to say it but for some reason he won't.

I pick up his racecar and hand it to him and he takes it, but he still doesn't want to talk to me. At one point I felt like Ah Zabenyaning him but he probably wouldn't have liked that. Mary sees that he is being bothered and eventually gives up and says goodbye to me herself and begins to walk away. It was as she began to walk up the flight of stairs to the third floor that I saw that Anthony was still staring at me, and like shy babies often do, he moved his lips, but didn't necessarily talk, as he finally and faintly said bye-bye.

THE CITY OF FOUNTAINS

1:3:10:98

ABOUT two years ago, I had this dream. I am walking towards a book store. I pass by a statue of a demon who is fighting an angel, and just beyond I see a crowd of people who are burning books. Walking past the burning pile of literature I saw that the nature of most books being burned were those that contested free will. What is free will, and do we have it? Do we perceive free will in the correct accord, or are we looking at it the wrong way?

Is life no more than reaction. Assuming the circumstances and forces are equal for every occurrence, every time you hit a tennis ball with an N amount of force, it will travel a Y amount of distance in a C amount of time. Every thing is predetermined to a certain accord. From the sub-atomic scale to the cosmic scale, every thing in the universe behaves and is based off of reaction.

This is the time when you will want to ask yourself, are you truly conscious? Are you actually aware? Do you make your own decisions, or are you that tennis ball simply reacting to what came before, clouded under the cape of predeterminance.

Past the burning, I heard a bell as I entered the book store, and once inside I saw that it was a comic-book store.

The clerk. The moment he sees me he tells me to go around back. In his back room he shows me the video tape. The man covered in darkness was here. Right here, in this store.

I've been to two different cities. Numerous towns inbetween. Where I sleep is random. On benches. In the sewers. Roofs. It's not comfortable, not one bit. But being out in the world when the Sun is down is a constant reminder. Criminals hide in the darkness. They clock in when you clock out, but if you work overtime you'll see them. You'll see him.

The video tape. It showed everything. The fantastic and brutal murder of four whores in the nearby parking lot. It was him. Had to be him. There are just some things you know. Instinct. Like waking up in the morning and knowing it had rained during the night.

I now understand why the white shade chose me. I get it. I get it now. It was always me. It was always anyone who was willing to become his metaphor. Anyone who was willing to lose their life to save the world. What the white shade knew then, and what I've only just learned now, is that on every path there is an awakening. There is a checkpoint on the side of the road where you will make a decision and it will decide the course of your fate.

The video tape. I took it and left the store. Said my goodbye. When I got outside I saw that the burning pile of literature was replaced by smoke and ash. Have to find some place to lay my head. Continue the search tomorrow. Stay patient, don't waste time on shooting stars. He can run but he can't hide.

Where am I? What city am I in? Look at the skyline. Are those fountains on the top of that skyscraper? Yeah, I know what city I'm in. The city of fountains, Kansas City.

This is our third spring. The birds are back and the Sun suspends itself above in the air as a free spirit. Sitting in my bedroom and looking out of the window I am touched by the beautiful view of the world. Spring! Rejuvenation! Rebirth! Every thing's blooming! All that crap.

And then suddenly a strange "knock knock," strange because it doesn't sound like it's coming from a door. I leave the room and enter the living room and as I'm going for the door I notice Jack at my window, he appeared to be standing on a ledge.

"Come on, let me in man," his voice barely breaks through the window. I walk over and open the window, wondering what the hell he's doing. He enters my apartment, "Finally, you're home... I was beginning to think you left town." He then reaches into his jacket pocket and takes out a compact-disc case. "I want you to give this record a listen, I think you'll like it," he says. I take the CD from him and then ask him why he didn't just come through the door. "Landlord fixed the lock to the building and I didn't have my keys." "Why didn't you just buzz me?," I respond. "How did you even climb up here?," I ask before he can answer.

"Look, man," he points at the case, "just listen to the album and tell me what you think." He pauses. "I told you that I'm part of Cloud Hemingway now right?" "You didn't." "Their two main guys left so the drummer and bassist called me up. We worked on this for a while and I kind of became the frontman. Lyricist, guitarist and vocalist. It's a lot of work but these guys let me have complete creative control."

The album was called "The Second Mind" and their label was Reclipse Records. "What's this cover?," I asked. He told me that the cover design was created by someone from Reclipse Records and that it was called an Enzmic. On a blackground, there was a perfect white circle, and on the 45th degree of the circle, or in the upper right corner I should say, was a small white dot, and going through the small dot are two white lines; a vertical line and a horizontal line that meet perpendicularly at the dot to form a lowercase "t" or a cross, and their lengths are the radius of the larger initial circle.

"Yeah, this shit is really out there man," he tells me. He tells me about how the band used to put twenty-plus songs on a single album, and that this album itself only had ten songs because he wanted to focus on each song and give each track depth in order to

create a dynamic concept album. “Each song is developed and is its own experience.”

Jack doesn't leave for another ten minutes as he goes on and on and on explaining to me that the album was about life and death. Remember how I told you Lynne's face lit up as she told me about the colors of roses and their meanings? Jack's face is almost the same way. When someone gets to talk about something they love, like their passion, they won't be able to hide the inner child in them. In a way that's what passion does, it keeps that part of you alive. It keeps you young. You don't want to grow old you say? Then I suggest you find your passion.

Aside from life and death, I found out that it was about many other things as well. Self-identity, loss, the many forms of violence, drug abuse, the passage of time, healing. As Jack was leaving, I flipped the case and began to read the track listing.

1. Alcoves 1:30; 2. The Shades of a Distant Life 2:43; 3. God's Triangle 3:30; 4. Monolith 6:53; 5. Rediscovery Road 4:15; 6. Canvasology 6:30; 7. The Hero with a Thousand Faces 7:51; 8. Hourglass 3:24; 9. Saturn Stalemate 3:50; 10. Free Spirit Dire Raven 1:45

The Second Mind by Cloud Hemingway. “I was definitely going to give it a listen,” I thought to myself as Jack went back out through the window. Maybe somewhere in it I'd hear myself.

As I went to go to set down the case my phone began to ring. “I went over and picked it up,” said hello? It was Brandon, calling to tell me about the state of my house. How there was a good chance it had been robbed by thieves who left the home in shambles. I told him that I already knew about it and that I would take care of it, then he goes on to tell me about how it might be something personal, because the same people completely destroyed my car as well.

I was honestly surprised, and it showed in my voice. Black outs. Memory spots. I had no recollection of ever destroying my car, but then again, memory is a funny thing.

Like a computer that stores hundreds of photos, the human brain stores memories that can be retrieved when needed. But these aren't the only places where the concept of memory exists, there are a countless number of places, and I think the most complex of memory is the universe's memory.

In computer science, a parent process can spawn a child process, but the child process can never have information that its parent process doesn't also have. The parent process, however, can have information that the child process does not also have. Now this is just an idea, but if the universe is the parent process, and an organism with the ability of

memory is the child process, going by standards mentioned earlier, the universe itself must also have the ability of memory.

How would universal memory work? When an atom moves from location 5 to location 4, does the universe register and record that atom's distance traveled? Does the universe also store other types of information, such as the loss of a proton? Where is this information stored?

What if time behaved much like light, and after the universe records each process into its memory, it then shares that information with organisms who are evolved enough to interpret it. We retrieve its information and now know that the little lion has moved from the top of the mountain to the bottom of the mountain.

I wonder what would happen if the universe itself began to have black outs and memory spots. If the universe's memory began to fault and it couldn't remember things as well as it once did.

What if there are other universe systems that sometimes asks for information from the faulty universe memory in question, like how you might ask your friend what time you both left that party last night because you can't remember, and your friend, being the universe with faulty memory, gives you an incorrect answer.

At that point, we are at the mercy of our own universe, and our reality as we know it could be a complete lie.

Everyone stares into the complex, but each person sees something different. Much like how every one views the world differently. I think this is why your guardians tell you that you are unique, not because you're actually unique, but because your perception on the world is unique, and that in itself is what makes you unique. I don't know.

Oh yeah, right, before I forget. When you add up all the numbers, it only ends up totaling up to one thousand.

After the phone call talk with Brandon my brain began to tell me that it was mildly hungry, but when I entered my kitchen I saw that I was out of my favorite cereal.

On my way to Chase Mart I got a breath of fresh air, something that was uncommon in the asylum, and only about a few yards away from the store I saw two helicopters fly above me in the sky. Wonder what happened.

I think it was maybe seven years ago that I killed the mayor of New York City. Geoffrey Harharwood, who me and my partner convicted of corruption in our own court, he got what was coming to him.

Trying to escape from the security detail posed harder than we initially anticipated, but I managed to pick up my wounded partner and we escaped from the back window of the office and onto a low roof. It wasn't too long until there were helicopters in the air

who began to search with their searchlights.

At this moment, the dream made a change, and I was no longer in the perspective of myself. Instead, I could actually see myself and my partner from the perspective of one of the helicopter cameras as me and my partner made our getaway. It was an infrared thermal camera and sought to make our escape impossible.

I made the mistake of taking off my happy theater mask, which would later on come back to haunt me. My identity would be exposed and for a long time I would be America's most wanted criminal.

It was exactly five months later that the authorities caught up to us in Colombia. In those five months we became well known by Colombia's poor, so much that the residents there began to call us "the Robin Hood paisas."

I believe if you give a person food and water, then everything else will follow. More important than love, more important than knowledge, more important than contentment, is food and water. You simply can't function without them. I think if you start there, you can help a person grow a better future.

In Colombia we found asylum, refuge. We didn't have to wear masks here, we didn't have to conceal our identity. But the thing about Colombia... Is that it's where my partner died. Colombian officials, aided by American officials, they caught up to us and they killed him. And it doesn't matter if your intentions were good, criminals don't get proper funerals.

Day before he died, he told me something that I haven't forgotten since. Something about terrorism, and I guess you could have called us terrorists 'cause that's what we were.

In some kind of a warning sense, he told me that if a person uses violence to cause a revolution and they succeed in their campaign, they should understand that their new world will be based and founded upon violence. He told me that the methods you use to bring about change will root themselves in the new world.

I think he told me that because he knew Colombia would be his last stop, and that if I made it out of there alive and he didn't, I would then become driven by true hatred. "Be careful when you fight the monsters, lest you become one." He knew that I was driven by emotion, so he gifted me that quote, and seven years later I'm still here thinking about it while he's six feet under in a Colombian grave.

In the cereal section I can't find my brand, so when I go up to the clerk, I ask him if they still carry Lucey Goosies, but he says no. I end up buying some cereal I have never tried before and when I get home to eat I find that it's not so bad. ask if jfk was a communist here. While eating I can hear the television in the living room as a

documentary program plays. Its focus was on that of the Christ, and continue did the host, to speak of his life.

You and I, we've discussed a lot of things now, and I'm sure you've probably disagreed with some of the things I've said. I don't mind though, it's good to question everything. It's the people who question everything that eventually understand that life is a puzzle. You are thrown into a maze and at the beginning you don't know what it is, you don't understand anything, but as you grow and as you learn you adapt to the world you've been thrown into and you begin to understand that life itself is a puzzle to be solved.

You start to recognize patterns and at some point you'll see the maze for the walls. It's very difficult to read between the lines, the stories and the compositions, but when a person applies themselves to life, and after they solve the maze and find its exit, they'll look back at their former self and see how far they've come. And because they struggled, they won't simply boast about their ability at the gate, they will instead walk back into the maze to help guide others through, even if it may mean getting lost again.

Last year Lynne told me that her favorite flower was the dandelion. She said it was her favorite because it was such an average flower. "It's such a common and under-appreciated flower," she'd say. And looking for its symbolization, she read nothing unique, so instead she decided to give it a real meaning, even if she was the only one who knew about it. She told me that she decided dandelions would represent a person learning of their destiny. The common and under-appreciated, average person, going through their life, and on a particular day, becoming aware of what they had to do.

When Jesus finally arrived and the people saw him, and they knew him, knew who he was, they thought to themselves, "This is what we have been waiting for!" But they couldn't have known that even Jesus, at some point in his life, was confused and lost. That even Jesus at some point questioned his own purpose.

You see, Jesus, like any other person, was most likely not born with the knowledge of his destiny. He instead had to learn of it, had to become more and more aware of it as his life developed. Like a human, he was thrown into the world and knew nothing about it, but alas, he learned.

Look, what I'm trying to say is, if you're reading this now, then your path hasn't met its end, and that it's possible that your story has yet to be realized. If even Jesus, who is God, lacked the knowledge of his fate, how much less are humans that they would know of theirs? Even God had to solve this puzzle.

After the documentary ends I walk into the room that houses the compost books. I look at the library as I've done many times before. "Man, how the hell did you get here,"

I think to myself. Are there others out there that suffer from the anthology complex like I do? Question mark.

I pull out the chair from underneath the desk and after sitting I open the drawer to take out Notes. I think to myself as I open the notebook to a blank page, “It's been almost fifteen years of solitude and contemplation.” And like that I find that my thoughts have begun to spill onto paper. “At times I almost dream, that I too, have spent a life the sages' way.”

PAGE 5 OF 8, "THE EIGHT DREAMS" + THE ENDLESS RIVER

1:3:10:99

"**AMAZING** grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see." This was an epigraph written on a tombstone found in over a hundred and fifty dreams. Every once in a while I'll browse through the graveyard looking for some kind of memory.

"It seems like there are more than before," I said to Lynne as we stood over the Peace Lilies she had sown over two years ago when she first moved here. As we waited for both Sara and Dave, she kneeled down and continued to tend to them.

"They're regrowing really well," she says, "and their spathes have a healthier white color to them." "Their what?..."

She looks up at me, for a long moment, and as I wait for her to respond, I find that she never does. For a while she just stares into me, as if she wanted to ask a question, and then finally she looks back down at her flowers, saying "You know..." but never finishing.

Some time goes by, and thinking of Sara, and to break the awkwardness, I told Lynne that when Sara came by the other day she sat in my lap for the second time. She laughs, still tending the flowers. I asked her if that made her uncomfortable, and she says absolutely not, but does also tell me that when Silvio dropped Sara off, he told Lynne not to let any of his children near me. This created a longer, more awkward pause than before.

She gets back up and faces towards me, and as the Sun shines in her eyes she begins to smile, "Hey do you remember how we woke you up that one morning and made you spend the day with us?," she laughs, "We barely knew you then. Now that I think about it that was kind of a weird thing for me to do."

I did actually remember that day. It was the first time in my life that I ever gardened. What I don't understand is why she would think I would forget a day like that. She must understand that by now, and even then, that she is special to me. Not special in the romantic sense, not even special in the special sense, but special in the sense that here in this lifetime, my door was the one that she came knocking on, and whether one lives by fate or by coincidence, the fact of the matter is that we were both standing here now, and it didn't happen any other way.

Maybe she just doesn't realize that I'm more like her than she thinks. Like two sides to a silver coin.

With the Sun still in her eyes, she asks me if we were still planning to watch the Sun rise tomorrow morning. Don't think for one second that this was my idea.

Had it been Maria who asked, I probably would have laughed at her, but it was Lynne. She got me to garden, she got me to paint; simply put, she had a way about her.

When Sara and Dave finally came down we all got in the car and headed for the home. During the drive I had two things on my mind: The wasteland it had become after I left it, and my desire to sell the home.

Five minutes away, I sort of kind of began to look at Lynne in the corner of my eye, just watching her. Wondering why she was still here. "Thank you for coming, I appreciate it," I said catching her off-guard, and she looked at me as she nodded her head, but didn't say anything. I understood then, that that was the first time in my life that I ever asked anyone else for help. I was always somewhat proud but in a humble sort of way, but that was the day I finally let her in and she took care of everything. She took care of me, and as soft as this may sound, she took care of my heart.

We arrived at the home and got out to see the wasteland I had imagined. I almost didn't want to proceed. Too many ghosts. Too many ghosts. Many ghosts. But I didn't have a choice. Lynne proceeded towards the house and so I followed.

As she walked before me, I saw her the way I saw her in a dream I had of her two long years ago. Wearing a bright yellow dress and walking with a slight limp, she guided me down a dark hallway and freed me from an internal struggle that kept me prisoner, and her aura told me that she would always be there for me. Would always be there to comfort me in my times of sorrow.

Eighth year, December 2nd, I had this dream. Roach and I walked back down Sodom and again took the weird passage way back into the town in which we had come from. Along the way we saw graffiti we had never seen before, "They tell you what to dream," spraypainted in black on the wall.

Once we get into the town and then into the city, the dream starts to fade, but what I could remember was the fact that Roach was now gone. I could remember him telling me, just before he left, that he was glad I spent all that time with him, glad because it made him feel like he wasn't crazy. It made him feel less alone, knowing there were other people like him in the world who felt the same way he felt. I can still hear him saying in that distant voice, "Life is about finding like-minded people so that together you can grow."

Even though those were his words, there was still something off about him. Something I couldn't put my finger on. I just couldn't completely understand him, because people like him have something inside of them. Something to do with death. I feel like even if he did succeed in whatever he was trying to accomplish, he still wouldn't be whole.

"Leaving that morning, to walk around wanderously, I overcame the fear of not

knowing what would happen to me next. I overcame the fear of leaving home, and giving up my home, and the fear of being out in the world and completely lost. I didn't know where I was going, but I think that's the best way to get someplace you've never been."

He told me that that was the saddest day of his life, that he didn't want to leave, but that it was something he had to do. He said being that low in life, he had no where to go but up.

Once he'd gone I saw that I was alone and walking towards a crosswalk. On the corner there was a woman who was handing out advertisements, and not wanting to pass her I crossed the road. It wasn't until I got to the other side that I realized she was not actually handing out advertisements but words of wisdom, of life.

Someone had taken her card and then discarded it onto the walk. When I picked it up, and read the backside, it read "Little Minds Have Little Dreams." Curious, I waked back over to her and asked her about her card.

I was stunned to find out that she had many cards that resembled the notes of Roach. Some of them had the exact same wordings as his, and others were some she had come up with herself. And of course, as I asked her more and more questions, I came to the revelation that she was just like me; she had received a note from Roach and wanted more in life.

"I quit my job and I left my boyfriend. It just gave me a lot of time to think, and then I did a complete u-turn, because I needed more in my life. I needed more than just the same old routine. I can honestly say I want to actually do something before I die," she said to me as we talked on the bench.

I later learned that the note she had received was indeed from Roach, but not directly from him. She came across it on the mirror of a women's bathroom in a city bar. It had his quote on it, but it wasn't his handwriting. This told me that people had begun to recreate his notes and started to pass them on, leaving them in random places.

As we entered the parents' home we saw the death valley that was Lynne's garden. I destroyed her work, I destroyed something that took her a full year to create. And yet, and I can't say this enough, she was not angry but grateful that she even had a space to call her own. A stasis. A sanctuary. An asylum.

The kids continue on inside but Lynne and I walk towards the darden and observe the dlowers. As we turned a corner we were startled by a bird who was walking about in another part of the garden. An eagle. I think it was the first time either of us had ever seen one up close.

It basically walked around for a while as we watched, knowing we were there but paying no attention to us. After enough time it went around another corner of the house and we followed, and there was a look of relief on Lynne's face when she saw that I

hadn't stomped and yanked and pulled on all of her creation. I don't know how I fucking missed them. I was sure I got them all.

A family of healthy and surviving zinnias, that's where the eagle led us to right before it flew away. As she looked at them, she remarked on not the head of the flowers but on the green of their stems. She wasn't sure, but they seemed to have been in better shape than when she last saw them.

Zinnias are a favorite of butterflies. A while back butterflies represented fate. Zinnias sometimes symbolize consistency. If Lynne is the butterfly, what does that tell us about her?

"I'll just start over, I've done it before," she says. I look at her and ask her if I did anything to ruin the soil here, and if that was case, if it would be more difficult to garden. "It's okay," she says. It feels like I just apologized without actually saying sorry.

Probably still thinking about her old garden, she asked me if I had a piece of pen and a paper. I actually did, so I said yes and took a pen and pad out of my pocket.

"Okay, now write this down because I'm only gonna say it once. Are you ready?," she asks, and I say yes, but am confused. Nonetheless, she continues, "We start over every day, but the only thing that matters is who we start over with." And then she went away from this place, far and away.

I continued to stand there, thinking about what she said. The truth is she started over a while ago, she was just waiting for me to catch up with her.

I eventually joined them inside the trashed home and found Sara and Lynne tip toeing over glass in the living room. I asked them where Dave was and Sara told me he was in his room. When I got to his room I saw that he had begun to clean it, begun to clean the horrible mess that it was, but I told him to stop and to join us downstairs.

Downstairs we all made plans on how to go about the mess, working in teams of two. Fast forward one hour and we were actually making progress. All throughout the morning and early afternoon we worked. Clean up, clean up, everybody do your share, clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere.

At about two-fifty we all took a break and sat on the floor in a part of the home that was now clean. "Are you still going to make the treehouse," Dave asked. I looked out the glassdoor and into the backyard and saw the unfinished treehouse, and also saw the pile of dirt from the hole.

"Work hard to gain your own salvation," this was the final piece of advice given by the Buddha to his monks. In a gallery of faded memories, a long time ago and in a place far away, this was my family. I'm still not completely sold on fate, but if it's out there somewhere, then I guess this story, me meeting these three people, it goes down the same way every time, and in some golden hall there are framed pictures on the wall of all the

things we did together.

I got lost in my thoughts until I heard Lynne remark that working on the tree house was a good idea, and that her and Sara would finish up in the home since they were almost done.

Dave and I got all the tools and woodwork and headed outside for the trade of carpentry. All throughout the session we exchanged film quotes. Maybe an hour later, as we were both up in the tree, we saw Sara come out with a pitcher of water. I told her thanks and as she walked back inside I noticed Lynne working in the living room.

To be honest, she looked like a maid. Sweeping, wiping things down, putting things back in place. Tilling the fields like a peasant, like some kind of servant. What I hate most, what hurts me most, is the fact that that wasn't far off from the truth. What she does for a living is serve people, as a waitress she waits on people to tell her what to do. It sucks that the people who she tends to will probably never see her as more than a servant. That they will never see her the way I see her. See that she is so much more.

“Your mom is as tough as nails,” I said to Dave still looking at his mother. He thinks for a moment, then asks, “What movie is that from?” I laugh.

Somewhere around five Lynne and Sara had completely finished with the house and came outside to see how we were doing. We were almost done, and with their help we finished at six. I was tired as fuck but we still weren't done. The last piece of work we did was help Lynne prepare the grounds for what would be her new garden. I was surprised to see that even Dave helped out, as he was not one for gardening. It only took thirty minutes, and so at six thirty we all went back inside to eat and drink.

After we ate, I surprised the three of them. It must have either been sometime right before the roadtrip or very shortly after it, I honestly can't remember, but at some point I had decided to buy the three of them gifts.

I'm not entirely sure why, but I think it was because at the time I was a bit confused as to who they were to me. I am not their parent and I am not her spouse, which made the whole relationship a bit unusual, so if I were to go back and into my own psychology, I would say I bought them these gifts as a way to make up for my inability to accept them as my children and my wife.

I will not bromide you with the banalistic facets concerning the gift of Dave and Sara, for it was a simple computer, the purchase made forth because they are growing up and there is a wealth of knowledge on the internet. They were, however, ecstatic, to finally own their own computer despite the fact that they would have to share.

The real gift was the one presented to Lynne, because with this gift, everyone won. I told them to stay in the dining room as I went to go get it, where it was placed hiddenly in the living room. As I searched for the box I could hear the voices speaking from the

television. Someone must have left it on.

“Some people think they only have one chance at success, but this is not true,” the coach says, and being television, after these wise words it goes straight into commercial.

“I got you some new shoes,” I say as I walk back into the dining room with the box in hand. Like myself, Lynne wasn't really that much into shoes, but the look on her face told me that she was still delighted. Yeah she didn't get the joke either at first, but after she opened it she found her new prosthetic foot.

Way back when I told Emily that I thought it would be great to get her daughter a new prosthetic, so she sent me one of Lynne's old feet and I gave it to a specialist who had one custom designed. I told him that I didn't just want another plastic foot, I wanted something more no matter the cost. I told him that I wanted its recipient to feel like a new person. Or better yet, like the person they were before their undoing.

David and Sarah kept shouting at her to try it on, and I think through it all she didn't know what to think. A person like Lynnette doesn't want your money. Doesn't want your car, doesn't want your nice big fancy house. I mean, that's not to say a person like her wouldn't take those things if they were offered to them, but she would be just as happy living with you in a cardboard box. I could tell from one side of her face that she didn't want to accept the new shoe because of how much it may have cost, but the other side of her face told me that she knew she couldn't reject it because she knew this was my way of telling her that despite my demeanor, I did genuinely care for her.

“How do you put it on, I don't even know how to put it on,” she says nervously as Dave hangs over her and the shoe. I told her to take off her plastic foot and to sit on the chair behind her, and after doing so I took the new shoe out of the box.

The model was fairly new and made out of a type of flexible elastic rubber metal that was developed by scientists in Germany. It wasn't like her old one, which had toes and resembled a human foot, it was more like a shoe with no features on it, just plain gray, and if you slid your hand across its entire surface it was completely smooth. I had stroked it many times before.

The bottom, much like an actual human foot, was a lighter shade of grey and was made completely of rubber. The top-potion input was also made of rubber and the same shade of gray. The body of course was made of the flexible elastic rubber metal and came pretty close to imitating the functions of a human foot.

As I put it on her, I explained all the parts to her and how to put it on correctly just as the doctor explained to me. Just as I finished, we all heard the air pressure release and knew her transformation was finally complete. “Nice kicks, mom,” Dave remarked. “It's a perfect fit,” Sara commented.

And finally, after all the suspense, she started to get up so she could walk. She looked

at me and walked directly towards me and when she got to me she hugged my body, and softly whispered “I do.” “You do what?,” I asked.

“Mom you walk funny now, I think it's broken,” Sara says. “Yeah, I don't think you put it on right,” Dave says. Dave and Sara were so used to seeing their mother walk with a limp, that when she no longer had a limp it was strange to them. I don't even think Lynne noticed it at first, but after a while of walking, we all saw that her slight limp was completely gone.

People give eachother gifts multiple times throughout the year, but often that gift is meant for the sole proprietor. These gifts cannot be compared to the gifts that improve the lives of everyone.

Lynne spent time chasing Sara and Dave all throughout the house for at least ten to twenty minutes. When she finally caught Sara, she picked her up and put her on her shoulders, and as she started walking towards me with Sara on her shoulders, she looked at me and started making strange sounds as if she were a monster. I was overcome with joy and I could not hide it, the sight of seeing Lynne play with her children. I never knew she had it in her.

“Wow, I've never seen you smile like that,” she says to me, “I feel like I just discovered the biggest secret to the universe making you smile like that.” I remove the smile.

After a while Dave got a soccer ball and we all kind of kicked it around until Dave's stupid ass kicked it too hard and destroyed the painting of Christ on the wall.

This gave us the idea to go outside, seeing as it was still somewhat light out. Fortunately for Lynne, her tennis shoes were the correct size for the new prosthetic, and soon after we all headed into the yard.

It was Dave and I versus Lynne and Sara, the adults as forwards and the children as goalies. We set up some bushes as spishak goals and start the friendly exhibition match.

For some time it was one on one, Lynne and I, and for a while we were equally matched. We knew she lost her limp back at the home, but playing soccer here, we all saw how well the prosthetic really worked, and how well it reanimated her. She ended up scoring the first goal, but only because Dave wasn't paying attention. I had to yell at him to stop spinning around and to get his head in the game. After the second goal, I called him a bum and asked him why he let a cripple score on him. And after the third, I removed him from the goalie position and put him out in the field.

It was three to zero, and now the adults were goalies and the children were the forwards. We continued to play into the dark as we witnessed a low spring Sun. Sara was no match for Dave, but he could only score two goals on Lynne. She had numerous blocks, some of them with her new shoe. One of the blocks I think clinked with a metal

portion of the ball, not really sure what's metal there, and we all laughed when Sara exclaimed that she was a little bit robot now.

We ended up losing four to two, but don't tell Sara I let her score on me. Once darkness came we called it quits but stayed in the backyard. Since the kids were having so much fun, Lynne decided to let them stay up despite having school the next morning.

We mostly sat and swung on the long wooden swing and talked about the day that was behind us. Sara did a lot of the talking and at one point asked Lynne if she could draw something on her new prosthetic. She went inside to get a marker and then came back to draw on her mother's foot. Butterflies and hearts, probably just like she saw on the television.

I think it was almost midnight when we finally went back inside and the kids went to sleep. Of course, the night was still very much young and Lynne and I still had plans.

After she did that parenting thing, having them brush their teeth, having them choose whether or not they want to shower now or in the morning, putting them to bed, she came back downstairs to the kitchen. At the time, which was now two in the a.m., I was in the basement reading over some of my notes. I eventually went back upstairs to find her working on paperwork in the kitchen.

As I walked by her she somewhat shouted out to me, “??? ??? ???? ????????, '????? ??????’” I walked into the kitchen and asked her to repeat herself. “You know that painting, 'Starry Night'?” I got closer and saw that she was reading articles that were probably printed from the library.

“I do.” She continues, “I've been reading about it and it says here that the painting was actually a view from the asylum that van Gogh was staying in. A view from his room.” She hands me the article and I begin to read. She had at least twenty pages, not just on van Gogh but on the history of art. She later told me that it was part of a free class she was taking.

I sat down and joined her as we educated ourselves, and for at least an hour we read and talked about all the strange people who had walked this Earth before us; from Beethoven to Poe to Dostoevsky to Shakespeare.

At three a.m. she asked me if I thought the kitchen would have a good view of the Sun's rising. I really didn't know but I said yes anyway, there are very few places where the Sun doesn't shine.

Once we were done with the papers we started talking about Sara and Dave's treehouse, and all the talk made Lynne want to go out there and actually see it, to go inside of it and see what it was like. As she's getting up to leave she asks me if I happened to see her purse, she had misplaced it sometime during the cleaning.

“What does it look like?” I asked. “The tannish one I stole from your mother's case,”

she jokes. "I thought I saw you putting it in the hallway closet," I said. She goes and checks but through all the rummaging she still can't find it, telling me it wasn't there.

I got up and went over to her and moved her out of the way so I could look myself, and the whole time she's saying she checked there, she checked there, she checked there, too. In the end it wasn't in there and she said she would just search for it in the afternoon.

I went back into the kitchen to read more as she left the home through the glassdoor to enter the backyard and examine mine and Dave's work. Must have been twenty minutes until I realized she wasn't coming back.

A Freudian slip, without going into much detail, is basically a way to the truth via error. Like when a woman blurts out another man's name during intercourse and only after does she realize what she's done.

Putting my hand on Lynne's shoulder to gently move her out of the way so I could search the closet, I felt her flinch. It wasn't noticeable, movement of a millimeter, but it was enough for someone like me to notice. I'm not sure if she was conscious or aware of it herself, but something like this is very telling. She's seen me in a way that no one has ever before.

I glanced at the ovenclock to see that it was almost four a.m. and she still wasn't back, so I went out there to check. I exited through the glassdoor and made my way through the yard, watching the bright white glow of the high full Moon as I walked.

When I got to the tree I whispered her name and she replied, telling me to come up. I climbed up the wooden plank steps and entered into the treehouse and found her sitting in one of its corners with a pot of zinnias. She was looking out of the treehouse's glassless window and into the Moon. "It's beautiful, isn't it?," she remarks. She just couldn't leave.

I sat on the opposite side, thinking about how people like her romanticize everything and add an idealist view to even the horrible things in life. We lay roses on the graves of our loved ones but that doesn't change death itself. People who try to search for the best in everything will eventually rise to a rude awakening, because there are just some things you aren't ready to see.

"Did you love Maria?" Turning my face from the dark sky to her, I could tell this was just one out of a million questions that she wanted to ask me. Even moreso, out of the million, this one was the one she felt was most important to her.

"Have you ever heard of the poem 'In The Valley Of Darkness' by Konrad Joseph?," I asked her. She says no, so I continue.

"The poem is about a man who is slowly going insane. When you first meet him at the beginning of the poem, he is delirious and doing a lot of walking, and in the poem he crosses roads with two people during his journey; Satan and Christ. By the time he meets them, the world is now apocalyptic, and speaking to both of them they both make indirect

comments about his face and how delirious he appeared. Eventually they both go far away and the man continues his walking, and at the very end, he crawls back into the hole that he came out of.”

Once I'd finished came back that awkward, awkward silence. We simply sat in a treehouse that wasn't ours, and for a long time we said nothing to each other, but the time did come, once the Moon was on the horizon and hiding behind trees, that she started to say something.

“You know I had that dream again.” “The skyscraper?” “Yes, except this time the party was on a ship, and you were there, but you weren't there. I was outside and alone at the head of this huge ship and everyone else was inside the ship where the party was going on. The ship was leaving a wide river and entering a massive ocean, and I went towards the edge where I could look down into the water and looking down I realized I was wearing a white dress. Something happened and I really wish I could remember what it was, but I can't. The only thing that comes back to me is that I started walking towards the very front, to the tip, and I walked up these kind of mini-stairs.” “You mean the very front front, where it meets at like the V shape?” “Yes, the V shape. There were small stairs there, so I walked up them and when I got to the very edge I could see every thing as the ship entered the ocean. I could see the ship cutting through the waters, the waves crashing into it, I could feel the wind blowing through my dress, the sound of the waters raging, and because the ship had an enormous height, when I looked into the sea it felt like I was flying. I remember looking back to make sure no one was watching me, and letting go of the pole so I could outstretch my arms. Being there, feeling what I felt, it was just one of those things you can only get from a dream.”

The Moon was gone now and it was pitch black. She was still talking about her dream, but in a way at the same time talking about her life. She talked about how much she's grown, how much she's learned. She talked about how much more she had to grow and the long road ahead of her. The long road of growing as a human being, because she knew she was not quite there yet.

She talked about how much she learned about herself in the past two years. How she was sensitive and felt so much of everything, anger and joy, and about how she just wanted to be able to control it better, to be less emotional. About how she wanted to be a better person, better mother, better friend, better sister. A smarter person, a better gardener, better painter, better poet. To become more healthy, to eat better. It started to sound like someone winded her up and then let her go.

“Okay Lynne, I get it, but you need to start in one place and go from there.” “I know, I know, I've just never felt this worked up,” she says as she gets up and crawls over to the side of me, “I know what that dream means now.”

As we sat next to each other time continued to flow. What do they say? Time's fun when you're having flies. We continued to talk into the night about anything and everything. It was like we were strangers, like we had never met before, as if this was the first night we had ever met. We told each other things we had never told anyone else, things about our lives, our pasts, funny stories. For hours, we just simply talked, and before either of us knew it, the sky slowly began to change color. It must have been around six thirty a.m. by now.

As the Sun rose, the stars disappeared, but then again I suppose only in the darkness can you see the stars. Irony.

The period of the rising, we stopped talking completely, and at one point she took my hand into hers. All we did was watch as the skies and clouds slowly changed colors behind the low spring Sun; pink, yellow, blue, and as I held her hand together we shared our most beautiful moment together. I know because her pulse beated in a way I had never felt before, and because the same was true of my own. We were connected, not physically but of the mind, in a sense that was truthful, pure, free, and interrupted only by my need to fart.

This moment was unlike any I have ever had, and was eternal, in that it was in the Sun, in nature, in the world and in people. And as we sat there, two lost souls into one, something wonderful came to light the way.

Chapter 100

THE COMPLEX

1:3:10:100

“YOU thought I was gone. You thought I was not around. You thought I left you alone. But look up at the night sky. Just look up at the night sky. You will see that I am everywhere, everywhere, shining down upon you.”

During the misty morning, Lynne exited her apartment, closing the door gently, and walked through the apartment building with an ease she hadn't experienced in six years. Opening the front door to the building, she felt the cool breeze of the air.

It had been quite a long time since she'd worn these black shorts, which were outlined in yellow, and it had been an even longer time since she went running. Jogging around her block, she saw some things she had never noticed before, partly because her mind was always preoccupied with something else, whether it concerned her past, or her future.

Today, though, while running she noticed every thing, now that she had an easy mind to focus on the present. And among all things, what she noticed most was the long road before her, something she was unable to see before for lack of wisdom, and such is in the beauty of wisdom and foresight, to know these things at the deepest level.

One can buy lipstick, but one cannot buy beauty. Such is reserved for the highest mountains and the greatest lakes, but most importantly, for her smile. Though bearing pain, and being weighted down by life, it was always in the way that she smiled; the heart of a champion.

As I stood in the room that houses my composition notebooks, standing before the shelf, I counted each of the notebooks and came to the updated number of five hundred and thirty-two. Multiplied by two hundred gave me one hundred and six thousand, four hundred pages, and that multiplied by two hundred and fifty gave me twenty six million, six hundred thousand words. This was my life's work of eighteen years.

I must have been around sixteen when I had my first obsessive-compulsive disorder outbreak. Poor grades, lethargic, I just didn't care about anything. Years later to now and here I am standing in front of the only thing I have ever accomplished in life. I would not be offended if you called me a failure. The truth hurts, but it is still the truth.

I suppose if anything's going to kill me, it's going to be the anthology complex. But you see, this is what I'm talking about when I'm talking about time, when I'm talking about poverty and inequality, when I'm talking about futility. A decade and some change of looking at yourself, and these are the things you think about. These are the things that haunt you. You can check out anytime you like, but you can never leave.

Things like these deal largely in part with freedom. There are a number of things we do unconsciously as humans to find peace, to find sanctity. At thirteen I started to develop

President's Feelings, I wanted to play my part in helping change the world, but year by year those Feelings receded and reclined until they were gone. I learned that life and the world, and even myself, was not painted in black and white, that I couldn't just will things into being. I paid a steep price for that knowledge. I paid a steep price to learn that the idealists, the dreamers, they always lose. And I learned that unfortunately for us, humankind is the incurable disease. Humankind is the incurable disease. The incurable disease. Human kind is an incurable disease. Human-kind is an incurable disease.

I took composition notebook #532 and attempted to fit it at the end of the last row, but there was no doing so. There simply was no more space. I guess it was time that I bought a second bookcase. Standing there thinking about the long road before me, I thought of the many dreams I had yet to have.

Though tomorrow is not promised to me, it is tomorrow that I will have a vision. I will be aged by thirty years, dressed in a robe and traveling with a staff down a dirt road. I will find a town named Enoch.

In the town I will tell the people that I look for a man named Barnabas, and they will tell me of his home by the sea, and a child shall take my hand and take me to his hut. When I show myself to him, he will have already known of my coming and he shall tell me to enter through the center.

I will sit down and talk to him about the one they will call Messiah. "When do they come?," I will ask. "Their birth will be of the time when the world needs them most," he will reply.

"How will I know it is them?" "By their fruit, you will know them." "Will there be loud horns and trumpets played to celebrate the birth? Will there be a plentiful feast so that all peoples know the one has arrived?" "No. It shall be one of a quiet birth. It shall receive no recognition."

"How then, will I know to begin my search?" "There will be a period of darkness. For three complete hours, the Moon shall cascade and block out the Sun and all land shall become dark. Then the period of darkness shall end, and the Sun shall return, and then you will know that the one called Messiah is alive."

After I leave his hut, I will make my way into a desert, a desert that I will travel through for twenty-seven years as a wanderer. And among the day of darkness that has been foretold to me, I shall stand on a rock upon a hill, and on that desert-cliff I will witness the eclipse, and for three hours, the constellations shall be filled with the stars. I will know then, from this ecliptic sight, to begin my journey for the search of a humble and quiet birth.