

# black & Blue Devils

Volume I

-A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES-

2012

from

Bōman Eidyll

## *Stories*

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INSUPERABLE

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heroin is to Golf.

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(i.e. caramel)

## *Struthio Camelus*

it's in late march, -

the harbor seems to rift in pain now, i can't remember how many bodies went down with it.

dummies floated melancholy out there like cattle in a field.

i sat behind the glass, under the pickle green awnings-

Talina was so goddamn pretty today and yesterday, some reason.

i rolled a cigarette on the table.

I quit drinking some years back; about six back if i have it together, and i began carrying some real tough tobacco to make up for it, and it seemed to help in conjurin'.

i could hear mitchell smashing shit around like himself back in the kitchen. no sense of humor this man, except on game days. something he thought hilarious about the fuckin' Saints.

the whole factory kept sinking into the waters, and it was therapeutic just watching the slowness of it. not that i was happy for the nasty mishap that it was, or is, but i suppose awe can be had for the things that make other's suffer, no matter how tragic.

i began sketching the little misses and their young men that would pass in touring this side of the city, i guess you would call it a hobby, as well as the jotting these notes.

very pretty people, they never came out looking quite as pretty on the pages i have. little pencil strokes, lean bodies against the rolling suds and the powerful horizon.

this little cafe is my living room. my apartment is upstairs anyhow. Talina makes sure my cup is always ready to be drank from, but i never know what it is. game we'd play. i think she's always seen me as a grandfather type, although i'm not but 20 years older than her, just look it i guess.

i have to leave actually. i forgot about the berries and the milk altogether. the doctor said i ought to have a good dosage of fruit smoothies and juices, the real stuff. which i've gotten quite good at, making the blends. and i may as well get back to the commission i have on the easel upstairs. days of getting booted are out when you're the slightest bit crippled.

talina smarted me, pinching my arm in the morning, asking about my evening upstairs. i looked at her and grinned, which she took back to the kitchen, impressed that i had maybe had a woman, or something devious going on. but it was only a grin. she knew about my work anyhow, the jester she was when i was still waking up.

my true love, or at least the closest i had ever come to such a thing, well, she fell off the map of the heart and ended up moving to South America, i believe, i truly never understood why she left, but i let her go with good virtues out of my heart. i think there was another man, but i could care less, to be honest, it was almost two decades ago.

-so i made myself healthy last night, and thought about taking a stroll around the neighborhood, visiting someone, but all my old friends were still heavy into the sauce, they had better livers, or less lamenting ones than i. so i finished more of the naked frustration on the canvas. it wasn't quite awkward, but it hadn't grown on

me completely... this young one staying in my guest quarters, rather my din, but if that's what pays the bills, then that would be the way of things this month. this prickly man who commissioned the painting, brought me this girl, no more than 17 years of age, and told her not to speak at all while i worked, and told me that she would have to stay with me during the time. It wasn't anything bizarre or devious, just that she was homeless and he couldn't do with any other girl for the portrait, and he couldn't afford to put her up in my neighborhood, what with the tourism jacking up the prices around the area, and he knew, above all that he could trust me, and that i could trust myself.

anyway, i'm not sure what it matters. she is quite lovely in a way, i could imagine this doing well for her. maybe she could be a subject more often and rise up to be a fine model after the hardship of such a tedious life on the streets, and then getting hustled around like a doll or a piece of fruit; having that as a back story seems appropriate anyway.

I made great headway last night with the intent of having this finished soon, the portrait of her twisted, soul escaping and bone swollen body atop the leather-clad stage, the one Pelicano provided me with the day after he left the girl with me. She had only ever said hello on that day, to which Pelicano was mired in chagrin for a moment before slapping her on the cheek. i shuddered at the gesture, but let it go. he is an odd man.

it's been almost 3 weeks she's been here, & Talina thinks it's hilarious, especially that i leave her up there all day, sometimes forgetting my work for most of the day. If i could still masturbate, i probably can; i'd say i'd be lucky.

Pelicano didn't tell me her name, and without her being able to speak, even though i've asked her about 15 separate times to do so, I decided to give her the first, arbitrary thing i could think of: Sera. i usually hated the simplicity of the name, and the commonness, yet in this case, it wasn't real anyhow, and it somewhat represented her sad state in the portrait, that of an angel, those who weren't always so happy, in classical paintings anyway.

Sera ate very little, and only drank water, thus i started buying that green bottled sparkling water for the both of us. I just can't fathom spending any more time upstairs with her pouty face laying around or in the shower or in the little nook where i keep my manuals and reference library. but when i'm painting her, it's quite majestic in a way.

Sera finally left, along with the stage. the mysterious nature of my apartment seemed to evaporate with her. Back downstairs and Talina is looking at me less today than usual, as if she's preoccupied, and the weather is shit. all around it's not been so classy of a day. i feel hungover, though i haven't had a drink, and i'm still drowning in that sparkling water that i got for Sera and I; a whole case of it still up there.

So with the portrait finished and wrapped in brown paper, Pelicano should be stopping in today to relay his appreciation or whatever he feels about it and a cashiers check for 3,374 dollars. that would include all the supplies needed, the hours worked, and the cost of the talent.

to be honest, at the end of it, i realized how i didn't feel much like finishing- i could have had it go on much longer. and not because i'm some depraved older man who sits around on a stool with a hard-on doodling a bare-assed little girl, although that's mostly what was happening in the grand scheme. Sera was sweet and innocent, and part of me is still frightful about her safety beyond the 600 square feet of my apartment. she felt like a daughter, may as well have been one, rightly, most daughters about her age would have a detachment or rebellious nature towards their parents, which would have fictionally described her behavior.

I see that i'm dwelling. fuck, where's that man.

the water is looking mighty fresh today. there are no boats, only steady and static, humongous pages of blue.

Talina just swung by and loaded my mug again, sweet woman again today, it appears her worries have moved on. she seems to glide today. i would probably be in a pit if it weren't for her, i realize her moods tend to manifest themselves into me.

My white hair is getting much longer, which i've noticed because she'll put a hand through it occasionally. oh if i were younger again, i'd probably scare her to pieces. that's what i did to all of my dates and youthful mistresses.

i'm exhausted, but at least i can say Pelicano followed through with his end of the bargain, just a smidge late, though with a little *whipped topping on the check*.

an old friend visited at the cafe today.

Mr. Bronson we all called him, the guys and I. I miss his old stern face, moping around with a burnt out cigarette everywhere he went, his eyes almost closed most of the time, you had to smack him sometimes just to make sure he hadn't silently croaked.

he was just like that.

he only stayed for a few minutes, picking up a sandwich for his girlfriend, which i couldn't fucking believe when i heard the words. got some little ham on rye or something for his girlfriend that was living with him right the fuck-smack on Bourbon, which still doesn't make any sense to me. Bronson on Bourbon, elevated to the heavens on the ganja or whatever it was he was doing now. 'Some blonde number' he says like she was an automobile, pulling out a curved smile from underneath his grunge of a beard. He was absolutely stoned. I



think he just came by to brag actually, but then i remembered every lady he had along with him, back in our adventuring days, when the band was together, goddamn,...usually they were blonde and either incredibly stupid or had that whole west coast reverse psychology or political zeal, which always seemed to boil up whenever we were having a mellow moment. classic, very trite his women were. but at least they seemed to dig him i guess, while they pissed all over the rest of us. we might have deserved it.

now that i think back on it, the 2 and a half years we were touring and writing music, we were all miserable over some broad from week to week who couldn't for the life of herself stick around to even inspire something.

then again, i was lighter, much lighter on myself about things, and probably smelled like a distillery most of the time, puking in my shoes or something awful, maybe getting my rocks off beforehand, but the real bizarre thing about the whole scenario, was that i couldn't ever really get flush and inspired by the music myself. i think the other guys had it down, where as i, obviously (it makes perfect sense now), i really enjoyed doing the art for the couple of albums we put out. and that's probably one of the key factors why we all went our ways, almost unspoken, a tour ended and we went home expecting life to pick up from where it left off, i guess before our collaboration together. it's muddy in my mind.

and here i am, grottoed inside everyone's beloved pit stop. the shoreline vantage point is what really did it. always been attracted to bodies of water, thought of being a sailor when i was a kid, but it's so easy to get wrapped up in the idea of stardom and the simple pleasures that are more accessible to a boy.

my shoulder had been flaring up this morning, faded off thankfully, but now i'm getting some kind of medicinal buzz, - laziness begets laziness. i need to exercise or something aside from all of my sedentary jobs here.

until tomorrow - to the pocket. i think it's april still.

talina has been sick, oddly for the same period that i have also been sick this last week, -i've been huddled upstairs for 9 days actually. before it got to her, she was bringing paper cups to my door, more as a gag of good service. she'd smile and so would I through the pale strands of hair that i've gotten too lazy to push out of my face. i've been sleeping off most of the day, and sketching through the night, just from memory, or something i hadn't noticed from my little balcony.

right now it's about 5PM, and this is the first pang of hunger i've had since this time yesterday. apparently i don't have any expenses besides my rent here, i've noticed my stash of money hasn't dwindled much, although it hasn't grown at all, which i should consider.

i opened my freezer door earlier today and found a bottle of seagrams, and a bottle of bombay, and furthermore a small collection of minis in a black plastic bag in the rear. the two larger bottles, a liter of each, were barely touched, but i still couldn't pinpoint when i would have had those from, i was barely here before i quit drinking and haven't had but a couple impromptu guests with the guys, maybe in the last few months.

i'm starting to think someone else has access to my place, comes by to crash or something while i'm downstairs, but that's like some thriller movie paranoia! i could honestly care less, there isn't much an old man like myself covets besides a little craft now and again and the company of Talina, which i guess is a bit relative to just me.

i can't believe she would do this to me. after all the swollen

no it couldn't be,. i can't put away my thoughts. just a bad vibe of sickness going through my head tonight. i'm stuck to my chair and the lamp in the kitchen has gotten too bright for me. i wish someone was here to drag me into bed. the clock clicking, echoes, it's about 2 now. i'm going to bed, i'll go down tomorrow and tell her i love her, just for good measure.

Pelicano came by again, to the cafe, which was quite slow and i think i was the only one inside or out, actually sitting, for the entire day.

He looked me over for a moment before speaking, not so much in a homosexual way, but as if something was amiss about me. he started by mentioning something about Sera running off and hopping a train east to Atlanta or somewhere north. I asked how he knew and he just said that he had lower end connections. i felt slightly lonesome for a moment, but realized that it was probably best that she was seeing more of the world than just this place, where she'd continue to be abused, most likely.

he also mentioned that he had another job though, but it'd be another couple weeks before he found the perfect subject, and there was a significant chance i'd have to put this one up as well. Part of me still felt attached to little Sera, who had seemed so much younger because of her small body and lack of speech, but in reality was quite soon to become a woman. I told him i'd consider that part, but a job was a job and i was willing to do the painting any how and I told Pelicano that he should look into the hotel Lesler, it was new, sounded nice, but was actually a dump that was spruced up enough to call a 3 star, least that's what i heard from around the cafe some weeks back.

Talina seemed to give us a wide berth while Pelicano was around. i happened to be sitting outside to get some sun, doctor's recommendation, when he approached me. last thing i told him, before he looked as if he was going to leave, i said he could send a message or letter instead of having to drop in for just a notice like this. he didn't say a word, just tipped his hat and walked off back into the middle of the road and back through town.

more work, less dwindle. but i'm not sure if i could handle getting attached to another subject like I had with Sera.

I heard someone mention it was May 1st, which made me realize that cinco de mayo was coming up. always entertaining i thought.

Talina will start wearing more revealing clothes as the weather gets warmer, and i always enjoy the heat and the longer days, the gulf seems to glisten directly into my eye with a harmony.

yesterday, after i had fainted upstairs for about 2 hours in the bathroom, i guess my equilibrium was off. at least it felt like 2 hours, i can't be sure. I had a buzz at my door, which could have been going on for a while during my spell. it was like an alarm clock wakes you, and you can sense the chimes in your dream, though the dream escapes me.

She wasn't more beautiful than Sera, she was equally beautiful and i looked at her so hard after i opened the door, Pelicano thought i was struggling with my vision and almost pushed his way into the apartment. "little less tidy this time around" i remember him saying that and i shook myself of her hypnosis. similar to Sera, this young girl, followed behind him like a pet on a leash, but she seemed more open to free movement and observation. some reason i had become a young man again, eying her entire body with its prestige curvature, and the typical leanness like many of my past subjects. i was again enthralled to have a guest. i told the strange bastard that i'd pick up, despite the fact that it isn't rightly his business how i keep things, and he mentioned that this would be a very similar scenario all around, ending in about 30 days, if feasible.

he and i left her in my living room and went to Cafe Torpedo down the street to have a discussion about the specifics of the new commission. he didn't want to talk downstairs, and i figured it'd be a good chance to stroll the neighborhood while the weather was so crisp and delightful.

the portrait would obviously be fashioned like the last, with different focal points and contortions and a different setting which i found more interesting than the stage for sure. Pelicano said he would have everything delivered to complete the set-up, as long as my apartment was made more spacious between the kitchen, the balcony and the living room. i guess that's why he noticed the conditions earlier. and he mentioned that for this 'inconvenience' the rate would be higher on my end. by the end of the day, the idea had become solidly formulated, that i had a bloody agent now.

not that it mattered, and not that it was contractual, but it was an odd and unfamiliar practice for me to have suddenly dropped in my lap. this man who i'd only known for maybe several months who found me through a friend was now nearly enforcing me to have things a certain way for him to make money in between. i knew full well that that was the method many people worked with, and hell, i could have had

any other normal job with some other cocky bastard breathing down my neck instead, but i was lucky it was only Pelicano and his pretty ragamuffins that i had to deal with. after consideration, it was a breath of fresh air, and i felt luckier by the second. i left Cafe Torpedo around 7:30 and walked home while it was still nice and fairly bright out.

i'm not going to wake up any longer. fuck it. she was amazing to me, yet i am such a pitiful couch potato man. and the temptation is too much now. where have the last few hours gone?

the whole apartment is wrecked. i get it now, maybe i'm not a changed man, it's a lie... and why do they let us lie to them, the great women of our lives. shit i'm tired.

This one has a name. she's allowed to speak and speak she does so well at me. My headache is peeling away at so many layers, i don't think i can paint today actually, yet she's waiting patient and famished upstairs. she's wearing a red dress, with burgundy swirling designs embroidered on it. her skin and her bones are florescent almost, pale and reflective under any amount of light. i watched her glow through all of last night. i was cornered, i was afraid of myself against this young and delicate: Gaia, with her extravagantly long pitch black whip of hair, something familiar about it and how it curls ever so slightly and falls to her front and back as well.

the cafe is swarmed today, after the much needed napping and then full night of sleep, i feel very unaccomplished with only a few strokes made on the new canvas, which really only had a faint resemblance to a background, any background; the sea, a warehouse, or a city surrounded by jungles...i could go anywhere. With talina paying less attention to me, and the commotion around me, and the brightness and more, i think i may have to retire upstairs for the remainder of the useless day. I should

bring her something, i think she mentioned something about thai or eastern types of food. I can imagine her body covered in green leaves and yellow curry sauce, that might make a nice portrait. Talina would call me a lecher or something, a nasty brute, if she were to see that. My glass is empty, completely empty.

The little, arrested mistress of mine is prancing around my things, my shelves, in the nude- i guarantee you, i feel much like Humbert in this ongoing scenario.

I poured myself a glass of icewater and sat behind the easel, eyeballing my tools and brushes, the palette and it's dried colours, with amassing ire.

the refrigerator clicked on, its now dramatic hum filling the awkward room, and Gaia strutting like a small winter bird glistening from the heat,  
- ah yes the AC people should be coming by in the next few days. i should hide her away when they come or they'll report me for an unsavory-looking getup around here, or unsavory deeds which i haven't committed, nor have they seen, (which truly only exist in my mind.) I am no real pervert, and i can tell you that with age, it's become a bummer how easily persecuted I feel even thinking of admiring the shape of something on the street -

I believe this young girl loves me. After my day trailed into a book about the saskatchuan region and it's metamorphosis in the last century, i found myself seeing her peripherally around the apartment like a bug. it was still warm enough, and she finally put on some kind of shawl or wrap, which didn't cover anything, but did make her look a little more civilized, in case anyone happened to be peeking through my skylight. at one point, she must have been completely bored or feeling imprisoned, and she came to me, where i was sitting in my most comfortable leather chair and squats down- and i couldn't comprehend at first that what

she was doing was out of the ordinary. . she started licking the back of my hand. i broke away immediately to look at her but it didn't register just then. the book tilted over, and then there she was, tits and tiny rump, about as new as a baby calf. i said to her,"Gaia, what are you doing?" and she began to stretch her eyes open with a comedic madness, ogling me as i might her, and continuing to tongue egregiously. i pulled back my hand, after a few moments, and she stood up, she was much taller than she looked, and she spun around and fell onto me. she said nothing the whole time, and my book had become invisible and had fallen also, to the floor. we both stayed in that very same position, falling asleep until the middle of the night when i had to piss.



## *INSUPERABLE*

The hunt for her obsession began, and would end, in a grueling manner, with a test of maternal negligence. How she yearned for it simply like a dog for his hydrant.

Awakening in a sludge of dream sweat, like a keen flu; fishy pillows. Nothing they did was good enough for each other. Tomas Gerliche, the practically mute adoptee, could manifest everything except numbers; he was mathematically disinclined, & figuratively disembodied.

As his mother, She remarkably loathed herself in secret. And was a black widow, illustrating supreme outward lust upon the digital non-humanity.

She'd watch stock tickers while she masturbated in the comforts of her room, which was shaped like an old hat alarm clock. The apartment was small, down in a wretched building covered in ants on the exterior.

Her mouth would dry out many times during certain hours from repeating equations off the tip of a whispering tongue.

She left one morning at the crack of dawn, leaving a bowl of dry meal on the small wooden table in the kitchenette. Her favorite clutch in the crease of her arm and breast, creeping covertly into the medium hustle of the financial district. tomas wouldn't wake until 2 in the afternoon as he did every day except Thursday; time was vital and zesty upon her brow. A homeless man asked her for change down on Montgomery, and she stopped almost as if in expectation, and began pillaging her bag for every cent, staring obliquely into the shady clutter.

She began throwing tampons, lint riddled make-up containers, and receipts out of her brown and tan purse like a magician, her face in an odd twist of undeniable responsibility.

with an impetuous glance, she then saw herself in the large glass pane of a building facade behind this panhandling assailant. She immediately shoved him to the ground with no prize and glamourised herself and the fury she had reigning in her crow footed eye sockets.

(like an infant who might insert currency into his or her nostrils, Yesimette would have inserted numerical figures into her vagina, were they tactile)  
she turned swiftly back against the Chicago-style wind.

a flicker of thought crossed her mind, her nose developing a vibrant blush, and she began to fly into the peaceful fog of the city.

up above the cable cars and the fistfuckers, the transmission of radiowaves smoldered upon her flesh and her ears rang deafeningly. like a seagull, her beak was clenched tight, while her legs and arms spread at 45 degrees.

tomas was waking shortly after she landed in the loud sand park, and he found the meal that was left for him with a bland and fearful look upon his face. he sat down in the single oak chair in the kitchenette, wearing his toga-like pajamas. at 13 he was already growing a beard and wore his hair in a mohawk that was the length of butter knives. he could hear the neighbors screwing, as per usual, through the wall directly in front of him; through the cabinets, the drywall, copper piping, and the thin air full of african musk perfumes.  
his comrade Richmond Leverte would be coming by to drink the regular cup of cold tea beside the fireplace. their conversations would entail only lengthy games of scrabble, describing the banality of youth. Richmond wore cordoroy pants, a cream thermal shirt and a conductor cap. never wearing shoes his feet were sinewy and burnt a deep tangerine. Richmond had no tongue.

she had landed in the park burying her purple head in the tiny pellets, elaborately naked and frostbitten. children were racing over to the foreign protuberance while their parents consumed each other between crackers on the park benches.

she could see the core of earth- and the spiral of it's insanity melted her molars.

as the children realized her organic nature they retreated to the monkey bars where they resumed a public strike on unsafe workloads and insufficient manhour compensation. she descended to the ground and flattened on her belly, and then rolled over to her back and glared at the clouds that looked like algebraic expressions.

her phone rang somewhere off in the distance where it had fallen with the rest of her spurious purse contents.

she sprung to her feet and let the city adjust in a swirl of vertigo.

Doctor Fiorelli was calling just then to notify her of a certain cancerous death omen. He overestimated a 17 hour bed time.

Yesimette shook off the sand, and began walking towards Korea Town.

her left arm was turning a malicious purple from the many watches she wore at the tightest circumference.

naked she strolled past the ghetto schools with the shouting basketball courts layered in bad mannered black children wearing garish, oversized clothing. her mouth was parched and for some reason it began to rain blood, which was actually just her imagination flowing from her nostrils onto her stomach.

an empty bus without a driver surged by on the empty street, scraping off the side mirrors from the mercedes and the hybrids, paralleled to her left. she checked the time in Paraguay and tripped listlessly over a daily paper, revealing to a statuesque pedestrian -the switch of her irises to white and her sclera to green. While her pink body flubbed through the anti-gravity, her buttocks matched the alliciency of the moon, which happened to be hours from it's dusking.

the pedestrian was only phased by the televisual storefront beside them, flashing red squares in a seizure of subliminal morse code. the man, before passing her, unsheathed his penis and urinated on her as she lie hapless on the spikes of root-broken cement.

Yesimette could detect it's warmth on her lower back, coursing down and around her waist like a cold hula hoop.

he shook himself thoroughly and staggered past it all without eyelids.

the boys back in the hovel condo on the half-eleventh floor decided on a stroll late in the afternoon after consuming ten and a half liters of tea. richmond had begun tearing one ear off from the soft pliable cartilage of the lobe upwards. assisted with a small exacto blade; it'd be finished by the following monday.

they stopped off at the market several blocks down and pocketed condoms and fishing wire, which happened to be there as a mistake. they had conceived a great malicious prank for one of their noxious classmates that would rival the penal system during the Tiberian reign.

leaving the market, the bright brown sky seems to glare for one last moment before soaking with a spill of pino noir up and across from the distant east.

Yesimette lied still for several more minutes caressing the moss of the tree that tilted over like a precious parasol. a gust of newsreel wind swept her up from the sidewalk and launched her into a southern intersection of koreatown, where beyond the lights clapped on ingeniously like dominoes away from her.

she landed in a contortion of cubist delight and continued on wearing black and white ribbons that crossed over the entirety of her lurching bodice. these garments growing from out of her spine.

she could have seen the yellow emblem from across the whole world if she so desired, but now it only appeared to her from four blocks ahead. up above the sane coat of black paint struck the meridian of the sky and 75 laughing constellations were severing each others' heads.

the streets remained fairly vacant although the noise grew quite loud and overbearing. rock music from all over the world seemed to be pushing out of the strongest amplifiers pointed directly down upon her. The word 𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑𐄒𐄓𐄔𐄕𐄖𐄗𐄘𐄙𐄚𐄛𐄜𐄝𐄞𐄟𐄠𐄡𐄢𐄣𐄤𐄥𐄦𐄧𐄨𐄩𐄪𐄫𐄬𐄭𐄮𐄯𐄰𐄱𐄲𐄳𐄴𐄵𐄶𐄷𐄸𐄹𐄺𐄻𐄼𐄽𐄾𐄿𐅀𐅁𐅂𐅃𐅄𐅅𐅆𐅇𐅈𐅉𐅊𐅋𐅌𐅍𐅎𐅏𐅐𐅑𐅒𐅓𐅔𐅕𐅖𐅗𐅘𐅙𐅚𐅛𐅜𐅝𐅞𐅟𐅠𐅡𐅢𐅣𐅤𐅥𐅦𐅧𐅨𐅩𐅪𐅫𐅬𐅭𐅮𐅯𐅰𐅱𐅲𐅳𐅴𐅵𐅶𐅷𐅸𐅹𐅺𐅻𐅼𐅽𐅾𐅿𐆀𐆁𐆂𐆃𐆄𐆅𐆆𐆇𐆈𐆉𐆊𐆋𐆌𐆍𐆎𐆏𐆐𐆑𐆒𐆓𐆔𐆕𐆖𐆗𐆘𐆙𐆚𐆛𐆜𐆝𐆞𐆟𐆠𐆡𐆢𐆣𐆤𐆥𐆦𐆧𐆨𐆩𐆪𐆫𐆬𐆭𐆮𐆯𐆰𐆱𐆲𐆳𐆴𐆵𐆶𐆷𐆸𐆹𐆺𐆻𐆼𐆽𐆾𐆿𐇀𐇁𐇂𐇃𐇄𐇅𐇆𐇇𐇈𐇉𐇊𐇋𐇌𐇍𐇎𐇏𐇐𐇑𐇒𐇓𐇔𐇕𐇖𐇗𐇘𐇙𐇚𐇛𐇜𐇝𐇞𐇟𐇠𐇡𐇢𐇣𐇤𐇥𐇦𐇧𐇨𐇩𐇪𐇫𐇬𐇭𐇮𐇯𐇰𐇱𐇲𐇳𐇴𐇵𐇶𐇷𐇸𐇹𐇺𐇻𐇼𐇽𐇾𐇿𐈀𐈁𐈂𐈃𐈄𐈅𐈆𐈇𐈈𐈉𐈊𐈋𐈌𐈍𐈎𐈏𐈐𐈑𐈒𐈓𐈔𐈕𐈖𐈗𐈘𐈙𐈚𐈛𐈜𐈝𐈞𐈟𐈠𐈡𐈢𐈣𐈤𐈥𐈦𐈧𐈨𐈩𐈪𐈫𐈬𐈭𐈮𐈯𐈰𐈱𐈲𐈳𐈴𐈵𐈶𐈷𐈸𐈹𐈺𐈻𐈼𐈽𐈾𐈿𐉀𐉁𐉂𐉃𐉄𐉅𐉆𐉇𐉈𐉉𐉊𐉋𐉌𐉍𐉎𐉏𐉐𐉑𐉒𐉓𐉔𐉕𐉖𐉗𐉘𐉙𐉚𐉛𐉜𐉝𐉞𐉟𐉠𐉡𐉢𐉣𐉤𐉥𐉦𐉧𐉨𐉩𐉪𐉫𐉬𐉭𐉮𐉯𐉰𐉱𐉲𐉳𐉴𐉵𐉶𐉷𐉸𐉹𐉺𐉻𐉼𐉽𐉾𐉿𐊀𐊁𐊂𐊃𐊄𐊅𐊆𐊇𐊈𐊉𐊊𐊋𐊌𐊍𐊎𐊏𐊐𐊑𐊒𐊓𐊔𐊕𐊖𐊗𐊘𐊙𐊚𐊛𐊜𐊝𐊞𐊟𐊠𐊡𐊢𐊣𐊤𐊥𐊦𐊧𐊨𐊩𐊪𐊫𐊬𐊭𐊮𐊯𐊰𐊱𐊲𐊳𐊴𐊵𐊶𐊷𐊸𐊹𐊺𐊻𐊼𐊽𐊾𐊿𐋀𐋁𐋂𐋃𐋄𐋅𐋆𐋇𐋈𐋉𐋊𐋋𐋌𐋍𐋎𐋏𐋐𐋑𐋒𐋓𐋔𐋕𐋖𐋗𐋘𐋙𐋚𐋛𐋜𐋝𐋞𐋟𐋠𐋡𐋢𐋣𐋤𐋥𐋦𐋧𐋨𐋩𐋪𐋫𐋬𐋭𐋮𐋯𐋰𐋱𐋲𐋳𐋴𐋵𐋶𐋷𐋸𐋹𐋺𐋻𐋼𐋽𐋾𐋿𐌀𐌁𐌂𐌃𐌄𐌅𐌆𐌇𐌈𐌉𐌊𐌋𐌌𐌍𐌎𐌏𐌐𐌑𐌒𐌓𐌔𐌕𐌖𐌗𐌘𐌙𐌚𐌛𐌜𐌝𐌞𐌟𐌠𐌡𐌢𐌣𐌤𐌥𐌦𐌧𐌨𐌩𐌪𐌫𐌬𐌭𐌮𐌯𐌰𐌱𐌲𐌳𐌴𐌵𐌶𐌷𐌸𐌹𐌺𐌻𐌼𐌽𐌾𐌿𐍀𐍁𐍂𐍃𐍄𐍅𐍆𐍇𐍈𐍉𐍊𐍋𐍌𐍍𐍎𐍏𐍐𐍑𐍒𐍓𐍔𐍕𐍖𐍗𐍘𐍙𐍚𐍛𐍜𐍝𐍞𐍟𐍠𐍡𐍢𐍣𐍤𐍥𐍦𐍧𐍨𐍩𐍪𐍫𐍬𐍭𐍮𐍯𐍰𐍱𐍲𐍳𐍴𐍵𐍶𐍷𐍸𐍹𐍺𐍻𐍼𐍽𐍾𐍿𐎀𐎁𐎂𐎃𐎄𐎅𐎆𐎇𐎈𐎉𐎊𐎋𐎌𐎍𐎎𐎏𐎐𐎑𐎒𐎓𐎔𐎕𐎖𐎗𐎘𐎙𐎚𐎛𐎜𐎝𐎞𐎟𐎠𐎡𐎢𐎣𐎤𐎥𐎦𐎧𐎨𐎩𐎪𐎫𐎬𐎭𐎮𐎯𐎰𐎱𐎲𐎳𐎴𐎵𐎶𐎷𐎸𐎹𐎺𐎻𐎼𐎽𐎾𐎿𐏀𐏁𐏂𐏃𐏄𐏅𐏆𐏇𐏈𐏉𐏊𐏋𐏌𐏍𐏎𐏏𐏐𐏑𐏒𐏓𐏔𐏕𐏖𐏗𐏘𐏙𐏚𐏛𐏜𐏝𐏞𐏟𐏠𐏡𐏢𐏣𐏤𐏥𐏦𐏧𐏨𐏩𐏪𐏫𐏬𐏭𐏮𐏯𐏰𐏱𐏲𐏳𐏴𐏵𐏶𐏷𐏸𐏹𐏺𐏻𐏼𐏽𐏾𐏿𐐀𐐁𐐂𐐃𐐄𐐅𐐆𐐇𐐈𐐉𐐊𐐋𐐌𐐍𐐎𐐏𐐐𐐑𐐒𐐓𐐔𐐕𐐖𐐗𐐘𐐙𐐚𐐛𐐜𐐝𐐞𐐟𐐠𐐡𐐢𐐣𐐤𐐥𐐦𐐧𐐨𐐩𐐪𐐫𐐬𐐭𐐮𐐯𐐰𐐱𐐲𐐳𐐴𐐵𐐶𐐷𐐸𐐹𐐺𐐻𐐼𐐽𐐾𐐿𐑀𐑁𐑂𐑃𐑄𐑅𐑆𐑇𐑈𐑉𐑊𐑋𐑌𐑍𐑎𐑏𐑐𐑑𐑒𐑓𐑔𐑕𐑖𐑗𐑘𐑙𐑚𐑛𐑜𐑝𐑞𐑟𐑠𐑡𐑢𐑣𐑤𐑥𐑦𐑧𐑨𐑩𐑪𐑫𐑬𐑭𐑮𐑯𐑰𐑱𐑲𐑳𐑴𐑵𐑶𐑷𐑸𐑹𐑺𐑻𐑼𐑽𐑾𐑿𐒀𐒁𐒂𐒃𐒄𐒅𐒆𐒇𐒈𐒉𐒊𐒋𐒌𐒍𐒎𐒏𐒐𐒑𐒒𐒓𐒔𐒕𐒖𐒗𐒘𐒙𐒚𐒛𐒜𐒝𐒞𐒟𐒠𐒡𐒢𐒣𐒤𐒥𐒦𐒧𐒨𐒩𐒪𐒫𐒬𐒭𐒮𐒯𐒰𐒱𐒲𐒳𐒴𐒵𐒶𐒷𐒸𐒹𐒺𐒻𐒼𐒽𐒾𐒿𐓀𐓁𐓂𐓃𐓄𐓅𐓆𐓇𐓈𐓉𐓊𐓋𐓌𐓍𐓎𐓏𐓐𐓑𐓒𐓓𐓔𐓕𐓖𐓗𐓘𐓙𐓚𐓛𐓜𐓝𐓞𐓟𐓠𐓡𐓢𐓣𐓤𐓥𐓦𐓧𐓨𐓩𐓪𐓫𐓬𐓭𐓮𐓯𐓰𐓱𐓲𐓳𐓴𐓵𐓶𐓷𐓸𐓹𐓺𐓻𐓼𐓽𐓾𐓿𐔀𐔁𐔂𐔃𐔄𐔅𐔆𐔇𐔈𐔉𐔊𐔋𐔌𐔍𐔎𐔏𐔐𐔑𐔒𐔓𐔔𐔕𐔖𐔗𐔘𐔙𐔚𐔛𐔜𐔝𐔞𐔟𐔠𐔡𐔢𐔣𐔤𐔥𐔦𐔧𐔨𐔩𐔪𐔫𐔬𐔭𐔮𐔯𐔰𐔱𐔲𐔳𐔴𐔵𐔶𐔷𐔸𐔹𐔺𐔻𐔼𐔽𐔾𐔿𐕀𐕁𐕂𐕃𐕄𐕅𐕆𐕇𐕈𐕉𐕊𐕋𐕌𐕍𐕎𐕏𐕐𐕑𐕒𐕓𐕔𐕕𐕖𐕗𐕘𐕙𐕚𐕛𐕜𐕝𐕞𐕟𐕠𐕡𐕢𐕣𐕤𐕥𐕦𐕧𐕨𐕩𐕪𐕫𐕬𐕭𐕮𐕯𐕰𐕱𐕲𐕳𐕴𐕵𐕶𐕷𐕸𐕹𐕺𐕻𐕼𐕽𐕾𐕿𐖀𐖁𐖂𐖃𐖄𐖅𐖆𐖇𐖈𐖉𐖊𐖋𐖌𐖍𐖎𐖏𐖐𐖑𐖒𐖓𐖔𐖕𐖖𐖗𐖘𐖙𐖚𐖛𐖜𐖝𐖞𐖟𐖠𐖡𐖢𐖣𐖤𐖥𐖦𐖧𐖨𐖩𐖪𐖫𐖬𐖭𐖮𐖯𐖰𐖱𐖲𐖳𐖴𐖵𐖶𐖷𐖸𐖹𐖺𐖻𐖼𐖽𐖾𐖿𐗀𐗁𐗂𐗃𐗄𐗅𐗆𐗇𐗈𐗉𐗊𐗋𐗌𐗍𐗎𐗏𐗐𐗑𐗒𐗓𐗔𐗕𐗖𐗗𐗘𐗙𐗚𐗛𐗜𐗝𐗞𐗟𐗠𐗡𐗢𐗣𐗤𐗥𐗦𐗧𐗨𐗩𐗪𐗫𐗬𐗭𐗮𐗯𐗰𐗱𐗲𐗳𐗴𐗵𐗶𐗷𐗸𐗹𐗺𐗻𐗼𐗽𐗾𐗿𐘀𐘁𐘂𐘃𐘄𐘅𐘆𐘇𐘈𐘉𐘊𐘋𐘌𐘍𐘎𐘏𐘐𐘑𐘒𐘓𐘔𐘕𐘖𐘗𐘘𐘙𐘚𐘛𐘜𐘝𐘞𐘟𐘠𐘡𐘢𐘣𐘤𐘥𐘦𐘧𐘨𐘩𐘪𐘫𐘬𐘭𐘮𐘯𐘰𐘱𐘲𐘳𐘴𐘵𐘶𐘷𐘸𐘹𐘺𐘻𐘼𐘽𐘾𐘿𐙀𐙁𐙂𐙃𐙄𐙅𐙆𐙇𐙈𐙉𐙊𐙋𐙌𐙍𐙎𐙏𐙐𐙑𐙒𐙓𐙔𐙕𐙖𐙗𐙘𐙙𐙚𐙛𐙜𐙝𐙞𐙟𐙠𐙡𐙢𐙣𐙤𐙥𐙦𐙧𐙨𐙩𐙪𐙫𐙬𐙭𐙮𐙯𐙰𐙱𐙲𐙳𐙴𐙵𐙶𐙷𐙸𐙹𐙺𐙻𐙼𐙽𐙾𐙿𐚀𐚁𐚂𐚃𐚄𐚅𐚆𐚇𐚈𐚉𐚊𐚋𐚌𐚍𐚎𐚏𐚐𐚑𐚒𐚓𐚔𐚕𐚖𐚗𐚘𐚙𐚚𐚛𐚜𐚝𐚞𐚟𐚠𐚡𐚢𐚣𐚤𐚥𐚦𐚧𐚨𐚩𐚪𐚫𐚬𐚭𐚮𐚯𐚰𐚱𐚲𐚳𐚴𐚵𐚶𐚷𐚸𐚹𐚺𐚻𐚼𐚽𐚾𐚿𐛀𐛁𐛂𐛃𐛄𐛅𐛆𐛇𐛈𐛉𐛊𐛋𐛌𐛍𐛎𐛏𐛐𐛑𐛒𐛓𐛔𐛕𐛖𐛗𐛘𐛙𐛚𐛛𐛜𐛝𐛞𐛟𐛠𐛡𐛢𐛣𐛤𐛥𐛦𐛧𐛨𐛩𐛪𐛫𐛬𐛭𐛮𐛯𐛰𐛱𐛲𐛳𐛴𐛵𐛶𐛷𐛸𐛹𐛺𐛻𐛼𐛽𐛾𐛿𐜀𐜁𐜂𐜃𐜄𐜅𐜆𐜇𐜈𐜉𐜊𐜋𐜌𐜍𐜎𐜏𐜐𐜑𐜒𐜓𐜔𐜕𐜖𐜗𐜘𐜙𐜚𐜛𐜜𐜝𐜞𐜟𐜠𐜡𐜢𐜣𐜤𐜥𐜦𐜧𐜨𐜩𐜪𐜫𐜬𐜭𐜮𐜯𐜰𐜱𐜲𐜳𐜴𐜵𐜶𐜷𐜸𐜹𐜺𐜻𐜼𐜽𐜾𐜿𐝀𐝁𐝂𐝃𐝄𐝅𐝆𐝇𐝈𐝉𐝊𐝋𐝌𐝍𐝎𐝏𐝐𐝑𐝒𐝓𐝔𐝕𐝖𐝗𐝘𐝙𐝚𐝛𐝜𐝝𐝞𐝟𐝠𐝡𐝢𐝣𐝤𐝥𐝦𐝧𐝨𐝩𐝪𐝫𐝬𐝭𐝮𐝯𐝰𐝱𐝲𐝳𐝴𐝵𐝶𐝷𐝸𐝹𐝺𐝻𐝼𐝽𐝾𐝿𐞀𐞁𐞂𐞃𐞄𐞅𐞆𐞇𐞈𐞉𐞊𐞋𐞌𐞍𐞎𐞏𐞐𐞑𐞒𐞓𐞔𐞕𐞖𐞗𐞘𐞙𐞚𐞛𐞜𐞝𐞞𐞟𐞠𐞡𐞢𐞣𐞤𐞥𐞦𐞧𐞨𐞩𐞪𐞫𐞬𐞭𐞮𐞯𐞰𐞱𐞲𐞳𐞴𐞵𐞶𐞷𐞸𐞹𐞺𐞻𐞼𐞽𐞾𐞿𐟀𐟁𐟂𐟃𐟄𐟅𐟆𐟇𐟈𐟉𐟊𐟋𐟌𐟍𐟎𐟏𐟐𐟑𐟒𐟓𐟔𐟕𐟖𐟗𐟘𐟙𐟚𐟛𐟜𐟝𐟞𐟟𐟠𐟡𐟢𐟣𐟤𐟥𐟦𐟧𐟨𐟩𐟪𐟫𐟬𐟭𐟮𐟯𐟰𐟱𐟲𐟳𐟴𐟵𐟶𐟷𐟸𐟹𐟺𐟻𐟼𐟽𐟾𐟿𐠀𐠁𐠂𐠃𐠄𐠅𐠆𐠇𐠈𐠉𐠊𐠋𐠌𐠍𐠎𐠏𐠐𐠑𐠒𐠓𐠔𐠕𐠖𐠗𐠘𐠙𐠚𐠛𐠜𐠝𐠞𐠟𐠠𐠡𐠢𐠣𐠤𐠥𐠦𐠧𐠨𐠩𐠪𐠫𐠬𐠭𐠮𐠯𐠰𐠱𐠲𐠳𐠴𐠵𐠶𐠷𐠸𐠹𐠺𐠻𐠼𐠽𐠾𐠿𐡀𐡁𐡂𐡃𐡄𐡅𐡆𐡇𐡈𐡉𐡊𐡋𐡌𐡍𐡎𐡏𐡐𐡑𐡒𐡓𐡔𐡕𐡖𐡗𐡘𐡙𐡚𐡛𐡜𐡝𐡞𐡟𐡠𐡡𐡢𐡣𐡤𐡥𐡦𐡧𐡨𐡩𐡪𐡫𐡬𐡭𐡮𐡯𐡰𐡱𐡲𐡳𐡴𐡵𐡶𐡷𐡸𐡹𐡺𐡻𐡼𐡽𐡾𐡿𐢀𐢁𐢂𐢃𐢄𐢅𐢆𐢇𐢈𐢉𐢊𐢋𐢌𐢍𐢎𐢏𐢐𐢑𐢒𐢓𐢔𐢕𐢖𐢗𐢘𐢙𐢚𐢛𐢜𐢝𐢞𐢟𐢠𐢡𐢢𐢣𐢤𐢥𐢦𐢧𐢨𐢩𐢪𐢫𐢬𐢭𐢮𐢯𐢰𐢱𐢲𐢳𐢴𐢵𐢶𐢷𐢸𐢹𐢺𐢻𐢼𐢽𐢾𐢿𐣀𐣁𐣂𐣃𐣄𐣅𐣆𐣇𐣈𐣉𐣊𐣋𐣌𐣍𐣎𐣏𐣐𐣑𐣒𐣓𐣔𐣕𐣖𐣗𐣘𐣙𐣚𐣛𐣜𐣝𐣞𐣟𐣠𐣡𐣢𐣣𐣤𐣥𐣦𐣧𐣨𐣩𐣪𐣫𐣬𐣭𐣮𐣯𐣰𐣱𐣲𐣳𐣴𐣵𐣶𐣷𐣸𐣹𐣺𐣻𐣼𐣽𐣾𐣿𐤀𐤁𐤂𐤃𐤄𐤅𐤆𐤇𐤈𐤉𐤊𐤋𐤌𐤍𐤎𐤏𐤐𐤑𐤒𐤓𐤔𐤕𐤖𐤗𐤘𐤙𐤚𐤛𐤜𐤝𐤞𐤟𐤠𐤡𐤢𐤣𐤤𐤥𐤦𐤧𐤨𐤩𐤪𐤫𐤬𐤭𐤮𐤯𐤰𐤱𐤲𐤳𐤴𐤵𐤶𐤷𐤸𐤹𐤺𐤻𐤼𐤽𐤾𐤿𐥀𐥁𐥂𐥃𐥄𐥅𐥆𐥇𐥈𐥉𐥊𐥋𐥌𐥍𐥎𐥏𐥐𐥑𐥒𐥓𐥔𐥕𐥖𐥗𐥘𐥙𐥚𐥛𐥜𐥝𐥞𐥟𐥠𐥡𐥢𐥣𐥤𐥥𐥦𐥧𐥨𐥩𐥪𐥫𐥬𐥭𐥮𐥯𐥰𐥱𐥲𐥳𐥴𐥵𐥶𐥷𐥸𐥹𐥺𐥻𐥼𐥽𐥾𐥿𐦀𐦁𐦂𐦃𐦄𐦅𐦆𐦇𐦈𐦉𐦊𐦋𐦌𐦍𐦎𐦏𐦐𐦑𐦒𐦓𐦔𐦕𐦖𐦗𐦘𐦙𐦚𐦛𐦜𐦝𐦞𐦟𐦠𐦡𐦢𐦣𐦤𐦥𐦦𐦧𐦨𐦩𐦪𐦫𐦬𐦭𐦮𐦯𐦰𐦱𐦲𐦳𐦴𐦵𐦶𐦷𐦸𐦹𐦺𐦻𐦼𐦽𐦾𐦿𐧀𐧁𐧂𐧃𐧄𐧅𐧆𐧇𐧈𐧉𐧊𐧋𐧌𐧍𐧎𐧏𐧐𐧑𐧒𐧓𐧔𐧕𐧖𐧗𐧘𐧙𐧚𐧛𐧜𐧝𐧞𐧟𐧠𐧡𐧢𐧣𐧤𐧥𐧦𐧧𐧨𐧩𐧪𐧫𐧬𐧭𐧮𐧯𐧰𐧱𐧲𐧳𐧴𐧵𐧶𐧷𐧸𐧹𐧺𐧻𐧼𐧽𐧾𐧿𐨀𐨁𐨂𐨃𐨄𐨅𐨆𐨇𐨈𐨉𐨊𐨋𐨌𐨍𐨎𐨏𐨐𐨑𐨒𐨓𐨔𐨕𐨖𐨗𐨘𐨙𐨚𐨛𐨜𐨝𐨞𐨟𐨠𐨡𐨢𐨣𐨤𐨥𐨦𐨧𐨨𐨩𐨪𐨫𐨬𐨭𐨮𐨯𐨰𐨱𐨲𐨳𐨴𐨵𐨶𐨷𐨹𐨺𐨸𐨻𐨼𐨽𐨾𐨿𐩀𐩁𐩂𐩃𐩄𐩅𐩆𐩇𐩈𐩉𐩊𐩋𐩌𐩍𐩎𐩏𐩐𐩑𐩒𐩓𐩔𐩕𐩖𐩗𐩘𐩙𐩚𐩛𐩜𐩝𐩞𐩟𐩠𐩡𐩢𐩣𐩤𐩥𐩦𐩧𐩨𐩩𐩪𐩫𐩬𐩭𐩮𐩯𐩰𐩱𐩲𐩳𐩴𐩵𐩶𐩷𐩸𐩹𐩺𐩻𐩼𐩽𐩾𐩿𐪀𐪁𐪂𐪃𐪄𐪅𐪆𐪇𐪈𐪉𐪊𐪋𐪌𐪍𐪎𐪏𐪐𐪑𐪒𐪓𐪔𐪕𐪖𐪗𐪘𐪙𐪚𐪛𐪜𐪝𐪞𐪟𐪠𐪡𐪢𐪣𐪤𐪥𐪦𐪧𐪨𐪩𐪪𐪫𐪬𐪭𐪮𐪯𐪰𐪱𐪲𐪳𐪴𐪵𐪶𐪷𐪸𐪹𐪺𐪻𐪼𐪽𐪾𐪿𐫀𐫁𐫂𐫃𐫄𐫅𐫆𐫇𐫈𐫉𐫊𐫋𐫌𐫍𐫎𐫏𐫐𐫑𐫒𐫓𐫔𐫕𐫖𐫗𐫘𐫙𐫚𐫛𐫜𐫝𐫞𐫟𐫠𐫡𐫢𐫣𐫤𐫦𐫥𐫧𐫨𐫩𐫪𐫫𐫬𐫭𐫮𐫯𐫰𐫱𐫲𐫳𐫴𐫵𐫶𐫷𐫸𐫹𐫺𐫻𐫼𐫽𐫾𐫿𐬀𐬁𐬂𐬃𐬄𐬅𐬆𐬇𐬈𐬉𐬊𐬋𐬌𐬍𐬎𐬏𐬐𐬑𐬒𐬓𐬔𐬕𐬖𐬗𐬘𐬙𐬚𐬛𐬜𐬝𐬞𐬟𐬠𐬡𐬢𐬣𐬤𐬥𐬦𐬧𐬨𐬩𐬪𐬫𐬬𐬭𐬮𐬯𐬰𐬱𐬲𐬳𐬴𐬵𐬶𐬷𐬸𐬹𐬺𐬻𐬼𐬽𐬾𐬿𐭀𐭁𐭂𐭃𐭄𐭅𐭆𐭇𐭈𐭉𐭊𐭋𐭌𐭍𐭎𐭏𐭐𐭑𐭒𐭓𐭔𐭕𐭖𐭗𐭘𐭙𐭚𐭛𐭜𐭝𐭞𐭟𐭠𐭡𐭢𐭣𐭤𐭥𐭦𐭧𐭨𐭩𐭪𐭫𐭬𐭭𐭮𐭯𐭰𐭱𐭲𐭳𐭴𐭵𐭶𐭷𐭸𐭹𐭺𐭻𐭼𐭽𐭾𐭿𐮀𐮁𐮂𐮃𐮄𐮅𐮆𐮇𐮈𐮉𐮊𐮋𐮌𐮍𐮎𐮏𐮐𐮑𐮒𐮓𐮔𐮕𐮖𐮗𐮘𐮙𐮚𐮛𐮜𐮝𐮞𐮟𐮠𐮡𐮢𐮣𐮤𐮥𐮦𐮧𐮨𐮩𐮪𐮫𐮬𐮭𐮮𐮯𐮰𐮱𐮲𐮳𐮴𐮵𐮶𐮷𐮸𐮹𐮺𐮻𐮼𐮽𐮾𐮿𐯀𐯁𐯂𐯃𐯄𐯅𐯆𐯇𐯈𐯉𐯊𐯋𐯌𐯍𐯎𐯏𐯐𐯑𐯒𐯓𐯔𐯕𐯖𐯗𐯘𐯙𐯚𐯛𐯜𐯝𐯞𐯟𐯠𐯡𐯢𐯣𐯤𐯥𐯦𐯧𐯨𐯩𐯪𐯫𐯬𐯭𐯮𐯯𐯰𐯱𐯲𐯳𐯴𐯵𐯶𐯷𐯸𐯹𐯺𐯻𐯼𐯽𐯾𐯿𐰀𐰁𐰂𐰃𐰄𐰅𐰆𐰇𐰈𐰉𐰊𐰋𐰌𐰍𐰎𐰏𐰐𐰑𐰒𐰓𐰔𐰕𐰖𐰗𐰘𐰙𐰚𐰛𐰜𐰝𐰞𐰟𐰠𐰡𐰢𐰣𐰤𐰥𐰦𐰧𐰨𐰩𐰪𐰫𐰬𐰭𐰮𐰯𐰰𐰱𐰲𐰳𐰴𐰵𐰶𐰷𐰸𐰹𐰺𐰻𐰼𐰽𐰾𐰿𐱀𐱁𐱂𐱃𐱄𐱅𐱆𐱇𐱈𐱉𐱊𐱋𐱌𐱍𐱎𐱏𐱐𐱑𐱒𐱓𐱔𐱕𐱖𐱗𐱘𐱙𐱚𐱛𐱜𐱝𐱞𐱟𐱠𐱡𐱢𐱣𐱤𐱥𐱦𐱧𐱨𐱩𐱪𐱫𐱬𐱭𐱮𐱯𐱰𐱱𐱲𐱳𐱴𐱵𐱶𐱷𐱸𐱹𐱺𐱻𐱼𐱽𐱾𐱿𐲀𐲁𐲂𐲃𐲄𐲅𐲆𐲇𐲈𐲉𐲊𐲋𐲌𐲍𐲎𐲏𐲐𐲑𐲒𐲓𐲔𐲕𐲖𐲗𐲘𐲙𐲚𐲛𐲜𐲝𐲞𐲟𐲠𐲡𐲢𐲣𐲤𐲥𐲦𐲧𐲨𐲩𐲪𐲫𐲬𐲭𐲮𐲯𐲰𐲱𐲲𐲳𐲴𐲵𐲶𐲷𐲸𐲹𐲺𐲻𐲼𐲽𐲾𐲿𐳀𐳁𐳂𐳃𐳄𐳅𐳆𐳇𐳈𐳉𐳊𐳋𐳌𐳍𐳎𐳏𐳐𐳑𐳒𐳓𐳔𐳕𐳖𐳗𐳘𐳙𐳚𐳛𐳜𐳝𐳞𐳟𐳠𐳡𐳢𐳣𐳤𐳥𐳦𐳧𐳨𐳩𐳪𐳫𐳬𐳭𐳮𐳯𐳰𐳱

he spoke to her in monotonous but pleasant words that smelled, to her, like dandelions.

slowly her skin began coating itself in rigid, illegible braille, and her mouth dropped wide open. she died in the midst of his monologue. his words of great sensual arabic tossed her brain into a mess the consistency of chicken salad. shortly after he had finished his final phrases, he moved to a small wheel cart layered in glass vials and jugs and moved towards her with it, intently and cripple footed.

tomas was stuffed and richmond was slowly toying with his nipple imagining the delight of the next asceticism. sitting on their comfortable curb, they gazed like two narcissistic youths at the mysterious storm of young and old females fighting across the street from their recent consumption hole.

no one would ever win and they'd never go home.

## *heroin is to Golf.*

‘beating someone to death with particle board, well, it seems unpractical. it’s not the most ideal weapon. probably catch a lot of wind. be like, a slap on the wrist, but bigger.’ laughing a little at the top of his throat, he continued to move through the projects while the dawn ahead of him made light of the wretched halo of garbage that twirled around him.

having various explicit thoughts, Christian Caros, happened to trance his way over to west peninsula, earlier on the crowded train and was hating a little bit of everything, which is considerably worse than focusing on one particular object of loathing. the stench of all the cold clammy-necked people, the surprising amount of tourists during the absurdly toxic spring season, and the intermittent drizzle. Carol chose a spot on a woman’s cheek to glare at like a primal wildcat, and dug deep into his cranial nest of woe and viciousness.

Rasta Paint Thinner was another thought that managed into his stream of consciousness. This term was recently coined by patrons of the *black market*. The recipe was made up of one small portion cyanide, one portion pre-diluted mineral spirits, and another (the largest) portion sparkling apple cider. there was the notion that it was an accidental concoction all around but became a sort-of new cult method of offing people, usually several at a time. like a silent bomb, or spike the punch bowl gag.

a good example of this was three months prior when Gulis, the *follower* as they called him, had been a bit of the short stick in the Bishops tribe. after enough hubbub, verbal & physical hazing and the alleged rape of his new ladyfriend, which happened at the hands of Weiner, of one of his own “mates,” he outright punished them all to death with a good dose of it. Luckily C.C. had disbanded not too long before the incident, on good enough terms. Gulis started the tribe again with a different, though still shaky demeanor, and became Gulis the

Stomach. To some, he was the Pussy poisoner, as they discovered the story that he had secretly infiltrated everyone's beverage supply, member by member, acting low and servile all the while.

Caros had a lot on his mind, and he could feel it; feel it also in his loins.

he wore a bowlers hat and a deep v-neck shirt that exposed a cluster of swirling wings tattoo'd on his pectorals. his old stomping grounds, where he sometimes called 'home,' had been heavily drenched while he was abroad on other illicit business. the bad waters that lay out before him on the reflective road had an ominous stench. he hadn't eaten in several days, and was currently surviving on smoothies or cocktails, depending on the time of day.

the tram was running loudly above him as he passed under the 29th st. service bridge, tarps and small khaki canopies stretched out on either side of the road in the shadows, dripping and sallow like their inhabitants. the first of the alleyways of the Nordic District was coming up just after the tram bridge and he had the faintest hint of something actually aromatic and decent that triggered a break in his consternation, his thoughts of the past slowly fragmenting and falling behind him on the road like pebbles from a hillside.

:Magpie was on the balcony attached to the harem that she kept, on 17th. St. at the Surrand Hotel building, past the bakery where Christian's father would take him when he was 6 years old. That was just before Mr. Caros Sr. was murdered in broad daylight at the Centennial Park around the corner and down a few blocks. Surprisingly enough, the memory hadn't come upon him, and wouldn't for the rest of that day, or possibly ever again.

Christian could hear the erratic percussion of recorded latin music coming from inside the room on the second floor, which was practically blasting down into the street. Magpie had the curtains drawn open to heat up the room, from the cold spring night's temperature, and she sat on the wicker chair, gazing deep out into the new morning with a sheer, orange dress sparsely covering her own reserved merchandise and yellowish brown skin. She didn't notice him approaching, farther down the sidewalk that ran beneath her, although she wouldn't



have been miffed in the slightest. Her hair was tussled and still had a few remaining barrettes arranged into one side. Christian moved in closer to the street entrance and stalled for a second checking his watch and comparing it to the city hall clock which was at least 7 blocks away, but could still be seen with his impeccable vision. It was 8:26. He wasn't surprised that she was up.

Magpie pondered under the tiny parasol that was lodged in a clay pot full of sand and colored stones beside her wicker chair. Pulling out an extremely long and thin cigarette from somewhere in her mess of hair, she called into the room for the girl named Frescha. Her inflection was a higher pitched, yet deep and classic latin, which seemed to hum or roll out of her mouth into the main room of the condo.

Inside the sultry little abode of sin, there were silken clothes strung up in various parts of the main room, hung on doors and drawers. There were mischievous pillows leaning or dead in several corners, prophylactics jettisoned from their previous, absent members, - golden doorknobs, golden posts at the ends of the stand-alone kingsize bed, which was utilized by each and every girl who was working the streets down below their Mother. They would ravish the men out of their suits or trousers and drain them down to bone, their small bodies of red hot skin pulsating underneath or in front of them. Contorting like strange creatures, the prostitutes of the Mother Magpie, they usually made enough cash in a day to lose a little unknowingly around the condo which MM would clean up later, which was technically her only real occupation aside from the irregular visit from her very sardonic love interest. She had become so much more aggressive in her older age, even she would have agreed. C.C. and Magpie had once set fire to one part of a room while they made their fierce and heated coitus on a satin spread.

Mr. Caros Jr. entered the building, hanging around the vestibule for an extra unusual moment, letting the quietude settle over him; the heat had become quite intolerable and mean as of late.

"Frescha, necesito fuego, mi amor." Magpie waited with the unlit cigarette teetering between her moist and natural lips, glazed and pink. Off in the distance a garbage truck began its route, roaring down the vacant streets. Pigeons were huddled on the tops of buildings and telephone wires silhouetted by the rising sun, the

entire city, from the projects to the victorian neighborhoods, where thick moss was let grow along with the imported ivy and the natural patina on the columns, looked to be coated with an amalgamation of mud and lacquer. She was bemused, with crossed legs, lightly dreaming of a different outcome for herself, when she heard the distant rapping from inside the room.

Frescha came out to her with the silver zippo, already lit, and her other hand cupping the flame as she drew it up close to Magpie's face. Her great and doting mother stood up at the same time and let the flame quickly pass over the end of her cigarette.

“Por un momento, no te mueves mi amor, goza la belleza de la madrugada.”

Frescha said nothing and replaced Magpie in the wicker chair.

Christian Caros stood on the other side of the door, with a single yellow flower rolling between his index, middle finger and thumb. His eyes were still yet adjusting to the dimness of the corridors on the second floor. He could sense through the thin plank of wooden door, that his lover and partner was approaching and as she drew closer to it, a sensation of lightness rose gently over his intestines, stomach, lungs and heart while another grew like a tiny pit in his throat, and for once he understood why he felt a less aggressive longing for other things while he still belonged to the Bishops, or the Cannondale Redhearts, or any of the other gangs that he had taken part in over the last several years, since he left his poor and humble home and woman. He was returning to no family, with no fortune, a singular desire, and a blank slate.

MM opened the door to him, she with the demure slice across her face, standing with bad posture waiting for him to enter, unsure of his mood, unsure of what he may do first. he presented his small, petalled token, and pushed himself through the threshold, to envelop the fragile and modest frame of her body like a wrestler.

They left the door open and sunk into the still thrashed lair of the hotel room, guided only by untrained dancing feet, before losing balance and crashing into a heap on the long-haired carpet.

Frescha found her own half-cigarette and stared off, somewhat squinting, across the spinning fans and rusted metal boxes on the rooftops of the other hotels, rehabilitation centers, duplexes, and beyond where the soft hills of the north presented their imperfect shape.

## *POMEGRANATE*

“a burnt orange sofa,.. and’a brown wicker chair; that was my living room...”she twirled and trailed off, heading towards the kitchen, every motion with a discontenting manner.

she then swept a pile of crumbs with one palm into the other and dumped them in a pail below the countertop. Her pagan guests, eyeballed her occasionally, as she appeared somewhat amiss and mentally detached. barbara cleto, the leasing agent, spelled ‘minimal’ incorrectly.

lopsided, mucul and somewhat fuzzy hairball mounted above the short brow of her face. various aspects of Barbara seemed to lean gradually off into a blur, but the young overly dressed couple, couldn’t be positive if it wasn’t the molly from the night before, or the oxy from sometime in the dark morning of that day.

the paper screen door that led to the back patio, glimmered briefly with the fiery pink of a passing emergency vehicle, the strepor of the siren seemed much more faint than realistic. the street was a muffled argument of metallic and concrete friction.

just outside of the complex, by the corner store and by himself ranting; Blue-eye Salts, with the yard of blondness running down his spine like the mane of a dead llama, “i don’t ever trample my neighbor, and i always loved the children of your God, my God, he’s all our god.” he pushed on with his brown singed-looking jumpsuit and loafers, matching his footprints from the day before. same speech, same polka dotted tie and crinkled hat as well.

Barbara was glinting from the eyes, as the couple continued browsing the flaking peel of absurd royal purple paint on the walls, which they almost adored, and around at all the dented corners, into the black-hole rooms that smelled of unwashed sheets and matted mildew of carpet, or the rot of hardwood, which had been chewed open in various spots by rodents. there were strange veins that drew away from these holes, reminiscent of a friend they’d found several weeks back in the harmony of overdose on the rear patio of his condominium.

barbara stood motionless while they inspected the other rooms, struggling to find stability in her brain. after about 6 minutes she exclaimed - 'PISS-SHIT-FUCK!' with a suddenness that muted the sounds of traffic and discord outside. the decibel level of her words was almost lethal, yet the couple returned to the living space area with a renewed sense of interest towards the apartment. Barbara brushed the front of her dress and tried to disguise her slight embarrassment with an equally uncouth smile. they looked at each other for several moments, the man and the woman before barbara had hair which was colored in almost a full spectrum of white, gray and black shades, styled differently, and the young lady had somewhere between 10 and 20 assorted piercings from her chest to her eyebrows. the young lad was thinking deeply about what type of rugs he would be purchasing, and from where.

barbara seemed pleased:

"You'll have to excuse me, i stubbed a toe," she lied, realizing how ridiculous a statement that was as it was obvious she was wearing closed-toe shoes.

"i think we're definitely interested Ms. Cleto, what's the next step in all this?" the man seemed to ignore her tragic nature and was ready to move on.

"we can do a signing tomorrow actually, after a background check and some other paperwork. I'll give you an appointment card, if you'd like to come back with me to the leasing office." her voice quivering.

the three of them left through the front door, and descended the concrete steps into the poorly maintained courtyard. neither of them noticed Musavi underneath the staircase, whittling silently beneath their shadows and the stripes of of the concrete that landed on his face and body. his capsizing afro had been collecting dust over the course of the day. he let them leave, watching them with a melancholy disinterest. he cursed at his shoes, patiently, which were filled with his tingling feet. the big lunar blade that hung directly up above annoyed him with its inappropriate smiles. he couldn't justify anything.

around the corner, the pagan couple followed behind their new agent, who happened to stroll with the same gait as a dwarf.

Musavi could hear bizarre french rap in a neighboring tenement, the lilies were blooming underneath a window to his 2 o'clock. a blue light emanated from the window, he felt no magnetism. he felt shallow, but he felt a little bit like nothing, knowing he was slightly irritable and wouldn't be able to sleep later.

earlier that day, he found a pillow embroidered with golden flowers, the velvety kind of pillow you may find at some outlet store with tons of art deco garbage and discounted name brands, but it was soft as a fat baby's ass cheek and small enough to fit inside his bag.

the agent and the pair of giacometti sculptures had long since disappeared and Musavi made his way slowly, with little caution, out of the shade and mulch and around the prickly bushes to surmount the stairs that led up to the apartment above with the peeling purple wallpaper. he could hear the traffic beyond the buildings and a small dog griping through the walls nearby. Musavi scratched the back of his neck, and kicked the door in, which splintered the wood surrounded the locking mechanism. he traipsed inside the apartment looking over his shoulder at the idiotic moon pinned high up in the indigo canvas.

he carried with him the knapsack he'd had for 2 years, and a bottle of marble colored vitamins, and pockets full of other important accessories.

Musavi had crossed through 8 states in the last 4 months. -being honest with himself, he didn't know whether or not he was making good time for something, or he was just thinking about it too hard. at least, he thought, he didn't know what state he was in. he had a song stuck deep into him, one that he'd heard while passing a storefront with an open door.

the blazer he wore had become loose on him, while the shirt underneath kept close and irritable from the many spots of crusty sweat.

he had to piss. & jesus wept.

after he dropped his luggage into a corner, Musavi went to the sliding door by the kitchen and opened the blinds, witness a rustling sweep of the pine tree= branches outside. he walked out onto the wooden porch and took out his penis, aiming it between the small white pillars.

despite the relief, he felt the heaviness of gloom and communal despair crushing down upon him in this unit of time and space. there was a humid stillness outside that followed him back in after he was done with the lizard.

-a thought crossed his mind- 'God (or yeah) you funny fucking joker, you gave us pleasure sources, a hole and a staff, something of a perfect combo to loath and love with, to confuse us into the submission of jealousy and hedonism. what else could happen. goddamn. it's been quite a while since i've been in the war-bed. i'm not sure if i really miss it, or just the partner...'

he grimaced, involuntarily, at the thought of a spider biting him on the pecker.

;

the sun rose the next morning and he could see a grayish silhouette hovering over him, through the wavering rays of brilliant and stern light. the figure looked amorphous, and he realized with the rubbing of both eyes in a puerile fashion, that he was probably developing some kind of optic problem. nothing was in the room but a cracked closet door and the belongings he'd had on the road during this recent chunk of life, scattered upon the floor in trendy piles. the morning traffic had created a lulling hum outside of his temporary squat, where the siren lights and pine trees and gloomy weather had all been yesterday. he looked bleakly out and up at the ceiling, staring, and admiring all of the flying insects that had collected and died in the dome lamp, positioned in the center of the dripping pattern of stucco. he continued to stare into the morphed, braille-like visualizations that appeared above him like a mirage. his whole face, especially the blackening circles around his eyes, was becoming chapped and dry from the incessant heat wave and overexertion he'd had while traversing the hard road.

he propped himself up and found his little blade on the ground beside him. he pulled out a little scrap of flat wood, the size of a coaster but about a third of the thickness, which was tucked tightly in his breast pocket. he carved something quickly into it seeming to take time to articulate the calligraphy that was already laid into the grain of the wood. this would be the 14th finished haiku, always accompanied by the image of some incongruous object. several had been fruit, and several had been types of birds. there wasn't even a specific correlation in his conscience, only what he felt.

he glanced around him at the slow movement of light in the room and saw his polaroids dispersed in all directions. his knapsack lay open above where his head had been, spilling out a small, round canteen, a gnarly set of different sized knives and other slivers and scraps of wood, as well as certain essential hygienic products, which were plainly labelled, & reading 'organic' somewhere on the packaging.

he had been up quite late after locking the door and settling in to this vacant place. he had spent a fair amount of the evening working on the carving of the slab of wood, and the rest of the evening meditating, stargazing from some hidden vantage point, or sewing the parts of his clothes that had become somewhat worn from travel.

Musavi got up from the floor, leaving everything scattered, and shuffled to the kitchen, to the sink that was surprisingly providing a stream of water, though it was lukewarm. he threw some in his face and peered out of the tiny window into the cruddy back street, jailed by thinner trees; the same tragic view from the patio, which was almost as soporific as the rest of the cut and pasted moldings and contemptuous structures that were planted so harshly around him. though at this moment, nor any other on his journey, did he feel like a hypocrite.

he couldn't tell what day it was, but the sun still spoke to him in numbers.

glancing at his fingernails, which had browned in some spots, chipping jaggedly, although the skin was overall in great shape, he held himself upon the counter and dreamed down through an invisible hand, as the creases in his face seemed to be alleviated.



Musavi returned to the room where he'd slept, grabbed up his maudlin pictures and his personal effects; his body weak and worthy all at once. He needed a heavier breakfast; Day in and out, the bones needed it, to be carried as far as they were. he'd seen a Coastal Friers fast food restaurant on his way into town, and he couldn't get it out of his dome, the macaroni that they had was delicious & actually made to order with real cheese and wheat pasta. he was fixated, but wasn't interested in backtracking through the obscene little suburb, bedazzled by its soulless fixtures of consumption and further consumption.

he packed and left the complex quickly, via an offside trail where he saw children throwing tennis shoes at the telephone wires by a trailer that had a sign reading 'bait and tackle' almost falling off its mounts. everything he encountered, especially this small tableau, seemed surreal.

like a daylight ghost, tripping on the acid of hunger, he mounted the sidewalk and made the 8 mile hike into the city square, where his only reason for being there remained to be seen. Musavi's great uncle had worked as a small claims judge and led a modest life with his great aunt Crimmy, who used to create Musavi's clothes from the very first stitch, when he was an infant. he knew they were both dead, but he wanted to meet their stones anyhow.

melancholia visited those leather colored eyes that morning, during the trek. Red roots branching through white soil- he had a thought of his lost lover while crossing a street where the scent of ammonia quickly exchanged for lavender, as a car cruised by with the window rolled down and the strain of a weaselly, muted trumpet faded in and out, paralyzing him in a blank moment on the edge of the sidewalk\_.

(his dearest, they spent years on the road, the old plymouth struck to the longest of highways, and they'd make love out where only the cacti could see them dine so wildly.

the last thing he remembered of her was the scent of lavender oil. she used it after they finally got the little town home, and before they both learned about the cancer she had swelling up in two different places. The abode, which they had barely ever furnished, was small, and simple, and reminded him of prison when she left the realm that he stayed in. He still had flashes of her moving throughout the living room, back and forth to the

island in the kitchen, always retrieving something. she was a woman of many scents, actually, some of them herbal, some saccharine, and some savory)

crossing the streets suicidally, his eyes were stuck and angled to an abundant sky where lazy rabbits and vaporous apparitions drifted.

-closer in towards the square, steep rolling lanes without sidewalks came upon him; Musavi could see dozens of colorful rectangles plunged into the earth, interrupting his view of the sky, on posts of thick matter like steel or cement, and all of the usual parking lots and concrete strips, the smell of mutated, hormonal chicken wafting from the sight of it. there was a plethora of cedar homes to the left of the road before a chinese restaurant with pagoda style exterior designs and lots of red paint.

his eyes began to regain some moisture, and a sheen of dew began to accumulate on his forehead, as the sun had finally caught up with him, directly above like an obnoxious and familiar spotlight. the tense and taut brainwaves were beginning to relax for a moment, and there was a greater density of trees surrounding this bend in the road, which gave to the subconscious act of deep, intoxicating breaths.

“you been walking for a while haven’t you?”

skittish at the voice, Musavi turned around to someone who had emerged from the weeds that grew beside the road.

the man was short, much shorter than Musavi who towered at 6’2” and another few with the untamed afro. the man looked somewhat hispanic from extremely dark skin and facial hair, but his intonation and mannerisms explained him to be a full mutt of an american. he also seemed to somewhat younger than his facial hair and rigid face would tell, and dressed as if it were closer to the middle of winter than summer.

“indeed i have,” Musavi said after another moment, without looking back at him. “I’m not inviting company; .. no offense.” Continuing to move along the gravitation and downward trajectory toward the strip malls, coming up upon a small hotel roundabout on the righthand side, he could see peripherally that the fellow tramp had surrendered to the mass of yellow weeds again.

the circle of the sun was slow and Musavi felt like he was in a microwave for the afternoon. it had been a couple hours since his commitment to a hearty breakfast and he was now on the brink of being irritated with this little town, and somewhat at himself, which wasn't an unusual result of his famine. Passing some pharmacies and small gift stores, a boutique and tons of signs advertising specials for the upcoming Valentine's Day, he moved in towards a small grocer with several tents at the edge of a parking lot. the soles of his boots almost dragging flat against the little pebbles, where the asphalt met a small enclosure of grass.

The man with the ruffled white shirt and peaceful eyes, billions of wrinkles and short arms, one of which was amputated, stood patiently while Musavi looked over the long table covered in labelled tupperware. He had a decent variety of homegrown food, organic nuts and berries, preserves, olives, and some herbs as well.

"I also have some falafel that i just need to heat up; i made it this morning, so it's fresh, very good." the man had little accent but was obviously of mixed lineage, some from the middle east, some from eastern europe maybe. he said he was mostly Ukrainian, when asked about his nationality.

Musavi was down to his last, pitiful handful of dollars, but this was all that he needed anymore. One good meal a day, until he reached some form of nirvana.

"why not- i'll have one. please, and if i can get an ounce of the almonds as well."

Musavi pointed at a container.

"it'll be 5.50" - the man stood patiently waiting to see money, based on Musavi's looks, scanning over his weathered brown vest, the stains underneath it on his shirt, and the illegible markings up and down his arms that ran down amongst streams of thicker black strokes to where bands of tangled gold encircled his wrist.

Musavi swung down his sack and opened a small side pocket, dug inside and pulled out the bills and coins that were there, and set it all down on the metal table in front of him. he pushed aside 6 dollars and the man picked it up and began moving towards some packages and equipment behind him, underneath another, smaller table. Musavi put the last of his cash, 1.46 back into the small pocket, and swung the bag back onto his shoulder.

The sun relentlessly raging down on his neck; several swarms of gnats in the air around the tent. In less than two minutes the wrap was finished heating and the man inside the tent with the one arm, managed to wrap it in wax paper, and then a layer of napkin, and try to return change which Musavi nodded at, as he took the first of 7 massive bites that would devour the entire sandwich.

He moved along. sweat rolling down his legs into his handmade socks. the newly developed flaps on the bottom-side of his boots began clapping again, softly with each step.

before reaching the courthouse and the square, he passed several more mundane fixtures of the little community, including a series of plaster molded complexes, much like the one he slept in previously, some with large wrought iron gates and large plaques, encompassed by neat foliage, where phrases like 'Sovereign Sky' or 'Copper Crescent' read. he was thrilled to be alone at least, despite the nauseating continuation of such simple and bad taste. his mood hadn't yet completely ameliorated from the eating, but it would shortly, and he paced himself, walking flatfooted down and around the ophidian roadways of Harroville, onto Millhouse Rd. off of County 74, which he'd be returning to shortly.

the square was quiet and very unpopulated, although most of the parking spots were taken. the courthouse reared up to the right of Musavi, displaying 6 proud columns about 50 feet high from street level, and beside it was a long, single story building that looked like a secondary location for people after their sentence or case had been heard. directly before him was an octagon of grass with other shapes and prisms of recreational furniture designed into it. 4 benches, small posts with hanging lanterns, crossing paths of triangular white stones, all underneath a cumulation of clouds that only seemed to materialize above the square.

he glanced around in a daze of simultaneous boredom and bewilderment. off to the left was a grouping of restaurants and cafes that led up to a small cinema with a blank marquee and blackened windows, the words 'post no bills,' and beyond that was a local bank where someone had just exited through a set of glass double doors.

(for a moment he thought again of his home, right after Geneva had passed, the gray fuzziness and languor that seemed to staple him to the sofa, and barely drag himself through the house. It was more than her death, he felt that she had left him with some kind of curse, or cancer of his own. he obviously knew of the availability of support groups, and other options to free him of the burden, yet inside he laughed at them, ridiculed the idea itself for having entered his mightier brain. his isolation was crucial and exponential for the first few weeks after the funeral.

he set fire to the sofa and threw the phonograph through their bedroom window. Thinking much later, with a minimal grin on his face, that it had been the song that he played which instigated the rage, he hummed the same choral tune as he trudged beside the open-aired freeway, bare-chested at times in the infernal climate of the mid-southern region. when he absconded from the town house, all of the faucets were left running over plugged basins, while everything he thought of as electrical was plugged into an outlet, just for good measure. Musavi left the front door wide open, taking with him the bag he'd packed several days before in a fit of confused desperation. he hadn't thought of it until he'd made it down the road in the plymouth, that the neighboring townhouse had just recently been leased by some middle-aged lesbian women-

he had extinguished any further thought of that life once upon the unimpeded expressways of the nation, and kept driving until he ran out of gas and money 75 miles deep into the next state over, which was most likely Mississippi, though couldn't remember precisely. the car wasn't hard to hawk, which surprised him. Some jejune plantation dweller needed something for the teen back home and the price was mutually satisfactory.)

at this point in his ambulation , he considered it safe to reminisce somewhat, and surmised that the frequency of such thought was due to the familiarity of his current milieu.

despite a slight discomfort, he understood that this little township would be along the way. he was only a boy when he'd seen it last, and overall, it hadn't changed much, and he was only miffed at the occasional wave of memory that seemed to bully upon his mind, trying to crack open the lock of zen that he'd managed to install over his rigid persona.

Crimmy and uncle Gregor waited in their plots behind the courthouse surrounded by stumpy hills, lushly bursting with the deepest of hunter green leaves, intertwined with the pale limbs of dead trees, and spotted with baby's breath bushes and ivy that crossed freely in various places, sometimes seen over the bluish stone path that led down the middle of the cemetery. Musavi entered the grounds between the ends of a humble stone wall that barely came up to his chest. There was a metallic sign and a crest on the wall, stating that the cemetery was managed by a local family which also ran the mortuary of the self-same town.

there was only a lean sliver of azure left in the sky, cutting through the trees at the rear of the graveyard. the rest of the heavens had been engulfed and devoured by the monstrous cloud formation above the square, which was somewhat disconcerting in it's magnitude and opalescent behavior. Musavi could feel a storm brewing in the silence, pressing upon his shoulders and back as he scraped his soles through the grass and gravel. the wind began kicking up, tugging at portions of his shirt and vest and cool streams of air passed between the folds of the fabric, followed by a strange humidity which blanketed him and all of the pale glazed and grey tombstones.

he vaguely remembered the words, 'plum coloration' 'old' 'gigantic tree' 'side by side' 'closer to the center of the right half' 'you can see a clearing beyond the cemetery at a lower level' - his mother's directions from a time they'd spoken several years before he met Geneva. Musavi reached two nearly identical slabs, older chunks of dark rock, which were stained and broken by unfriendly elements, possibly some disgruntled recipient of a sentence passed by the old judge.

he realized all of a sudden, that he wasn't ever that close to either of them, despite the fact that they had partly raised him during certain rough patches; father's addiction, mother's incarceration.

and subsequently, almost as if his winding passage of thought had begun to create a friction, which generated a latent energy within; the flashes of his whole existence, like a vivid flip-book, were painted florescently across his charmed scope of internal vision; the warmth of the air was suddenly replaced by an instant iciness, followed by a scorching siege upon his entire body. his eyes, that had seen a fair amount of the

country on foot, visiting nooks of obscure importance, or of spiritual relevance, had finally struck their last gaze upon the matted surface of earth between the two burial plots laid out before him. brilliantly and inexplicably, Musavi stood paralyzed by the unseen bolt from the sky, the first and only of a quiet storm who's only purpose was to steal his soul into the blackness of the roving clouds, while the rest of him would remain upright in the little village of dead simpletons where not another person would visit for decades to come. in that way, he was at peace.

## *GOLD leathers*

Joseph planted a foot on the other's throat. The big animal was helpless at this point, separating from consciousness slowly as a long sword divided his chest like a scalpel. Careful not to damage the heart muscle. Joseph stared down hawk-eyed. The struggle was uneventful and cheap. And there was a modest heave of the prey's body before loosening into a jellylike slab on the gravel patch. The pleats of his mutilated sweater began to dye with a red regime of blood.

DREAM 06/24

(.christmas tomorrow

indeed.

.let's suppose we had supper back at camp..

consequences great.

.no need to shout- Haltorein wouldn't know and the weather...

you have, too sentimental. check east budro.

.allo good cloud, and you too. ah for a split mignon

check northeast, your two.

.I'd forgive a missile for a cup of pea gravy

you and yours- dreaming....

watch your head flasher!.

.-

.Sargento?)



all the feeling moved through his hands like electricity. the act of cutting was debilitating, liberating, and erection inducing. cutting the flesh, he remembered an article in the midst, also something about David Carradine, and continued on with the labor. sinew snaps like candy worms.

the cove on the rooftop was warm, away from the mass zephyrs of downtown Detroit.

overall, estimation in the bag, 9:35.

heart thudding.

the mess he'd leave. blood pigmented outline.

the creature's name had been Samual. and that second 'a' disturbed Joseph from the day of their brief introduction in the rosy modern breakroom. His name on the cork board, new member such this history and that interest. Archery, and leagues of various kinds.

There was an acute and formidable rottenness to Samual, that sent Joseph to the bin at least once a day to invoke a great green slime of ghost from out his esophagus. ogling the simple secretaries like a phile. Samual Petty, had a knack for making coquettish little stabs at peoples lifestyles, as a way of levity, which seemed otherwise appropriate at the mill. without whimpering, joseph continued his bovine work, during his co-worker's folly.

viruses aren't exactly subtle.

after several months, Jo went ahead and threw a quasi-anonymous letter into the section head's mailbox:

the letter read:

Dear Mr. Haltorein,

I'm desperately afraid for my anus. I enjoy dressing casually around the office, as you may have noticed, but with the new guy, Sam, I don't feel respected. In fact, twice now, he has attempted to insert his terrible, untrimmed fingers into my private orifices, ape-grabbing at me, and I have scratches to show for it. I'm

surprised he would try to do this around the office, but I *have* seem him carry quite an humongous erection between the cubicles, and a sinister yoke in his lookers. I don't necessarily want anyone to speak to him about this incident, but I think I may have to be relocated within the company to avoid any further interaction with his rapist paws. Please keep this between you and I, there's only so much I'm willing to do as a secretary, as you well know.-

Soon after, yes he was removed, with no questioning whatsoever, which was a relief, and Jobaby went back to being a little more comfortable in his fibbing skin.

Joseph's father died two Saturdays ago of a heart CONDITION of some kind, they were still skeptical about in the ol' hospice du Grand. too much pork & beans, special requested. his father, in his older ages, wore a business suit to sleep.

nurse Venorika, a middle-aged, somewhat rotund Nigerian woman, took a liking to Mr. Herbervian's son after the first moment he came and visited. she had a thesbian manner of complaining between the two men as if she had a normal foothold in their most complicated past, but entirely made no sense and had little rhetorical value. "You, Mr. herb, you and your son here *need* to have some respect for me, i'm here ain't I, and I know what Mrs. H would say if you had a lickin' of good sense, I'm sorry dear, but it's only right I speak my mind. I can speak with you later Jo?" and so on like a pull-string doll who'd been cut off.

Joseph lived in a small unit above Bluxome Ave. by a dozen or more piccadillies, which had been looted by the very employees who went on strike, thus putting most of them out of business after 29 straight days of protesting with hot pink banners and a man with a rainbow colored guitar.

His only friend lived down seven flights of stairs across the street in the building owned by the same landlord, which looked identical. Burlingame had 2 telescopes, a set of binoculars, microscopes, bifocals perched on his petite nose, 35mm cameras galore from the 1930's up until current, projectors, and a vast

collection of magnifying glasses (which kept their own room while he slept on the sofa bed under the bluish blast of the shopping network), though he had no eye hole in his door. Two nights a week they went down to HeavyHearts Bar & Grill to shoot shuffleboard and have a cocktail, very seldom more or less.

o Jo had been promoted to manager, as a permanent deal. his cataracts had gone up in a stormy cream, shortly after. Burlingame had suggestions that weren't adhered to, as Joseph began to dream about new hobbies, like defining what type of serial murderer he may be, on the inside. shortly after, he was dirty with the results of his first experiment with Samual.

that first time he slaughtered flesh on the roof was a mental high. a body extravaganza. yellow shirt, opal buttons, and a borrowed scimitar. his eyebrows were splashed and his armpits were wet with adrenal moisture. he later felt it somewhat rash to have done it on the rooftop of Burlingame's building, yet the pure satisfaction and silence, were rewards from a hot queen.

questioned like a hundred others, his act was status quo, wondering whether they'd search his apartment and find his stash of Bold Beauties or Little Dumpsters of Man Sludge mags.

His father died a week before the whole excitement. his inheritance was meek. his groin itched like a dogs ear, and he thought of eddie murphy for a moment sitting in his ergonomic home office chair, clutching at a fading pen. "what makes 2 and slides into a dark place?" silly execution.

after the christmas and new years holidays, he had a slew of other candidates for idealistic bird leavings. no one, after all ever visited those rooftops, and a little blood never scared a soul on this side of the tracks.

Mildred Holie, Carry Gillman, Frank B. Frankfurt...; oh the list had tripled in size on a daily basis, to the point where he forgot some of their faces, but remembered their names like celebrities who had little quotations of terror-breeding bullshit.

he soon enough gave up on the whole enterprise, as the list grew intimidating; and he'd find some of the same names printed more than once. some of the names were written with more distress than others. Jojo's whole body became pocked and he'd wake to sporadic mornings of crusty blood and green mutant looking asteroids of organic skin all over the bed. mutilated peacock on a marble slab-

{the mill?

.i haven't thought about working any longer  
too bad, good job, no suck, bladehblah, loved.

.fill in doing poor?

not the man we knew, another jester on meds with a slick eardrum, like....

.i'll consider, don't mention anything. i had a dream the other day, nevermind it, when's Haltorein back  
from Sweden or wherever?

thursday, OH PLEEZ DO! =

asparagus, 2% milk, cake mix, hunk of cheddar, double-wide box of cereal, toothbrush with the vibratory  
function, 8 inch chef blade, periodical with Frank Zappa on the cover, and 2 bottles of diet sprite.  
a deviant and almost retarded sense of diversion.

his leg became black and tense, just the left, later the right. a phantom frostbite with actual symptoms,  
motioning on like a parent through the several steamed blocks with Carrion on his shoulder. all was not well.

Joseph with a gruesome look on his face. trudging in illusory shackles, back to his elevated cottage::  
overlooking the sewage plant that connected with the sea where the seagulls rampantly nosedived like meteors  
in the distance.

losing feeling in his arm, the fingers slowly listless. the paper bags dropped and split open from the side,  
draining the curious contents onto the sidewalk, several blocks from home.

a groan emitted from within his sore cave of a mouth. happy days had been forgotten, if any, and the toothbrush  
plummeted down through a sewer grate. something was smashed by a tire in the roadway, no remorse. children  
laughed and braindead women shouted noxiously into their phones as he lurched over to the curb, crossing the  
intersection. cyclists being overconfident and dodging the obstacles and white streams of parted milk, useless  
and gravel drunk.

a public spectacle.

he looked around himself and hated all that crossed his vision, he clutched at the chef blade and the quarter  
pound block of cheddar. his widow's peak became Niagara, and exophthalmos eyes led him home on his bad  
bottom limbs.

returning soft, with the recycled paper handle of a bag still in one his clenched mitts. something like  
blood ran down the inner thigh, and he stepped on a remote. the television clicked on for the poltergeist,  
godawful soap opera dedicated to new jersey denizens with dark deeds and bad hair. he had finally ground the  
handle to a brown dust, and for the first time in quite a while, he wanted more than just a couple martinis. he  
wanted a thousand, but simultaneously he knew of an alternative.

yet yet yet.

there was no name, he lost the paper with all the names, it was crumpled in some pale around the flat. he  
continuing clutching the knife and cheese.

835 came to mind and a lot of voices, and he realized who it was.

there was a night whence he and Burlingame had ventured out to HeavyHeart and were shooting the shit, until some dunce had drained a giants share of 12 oz. bottles and began to speak about industrial waste, some of which Joseph's company was responsible for, to which he and Burlingame both chuckled, guffawed, winced, and died at for a split second and then had a potent dash of deja vu. but they continued examining the little circles on the enameled wood counter. exhausted and cheerful to a minimal extent.

the music was loud. some jukebox obsessor was frantic about a single, and kept stocking up a hundred songs on an annoying playlist, before he finally found the perfect one and sent it to the beginning of the queue. packed beyond the stools yet they could still hear his pathetic voice reigning over the poppy delirium.

someone poured a heavy shot of bourbon, and another was dared, and another birthday, and bullshit beyond the volume of tolerance.

months ago?

weeks ago?

yeah. it'd gone too long, he realized and every night that passed was a more appropriate time to reconquer the rooftop with a sacrifice to the almighty Guy.

two days later.

clack.

click

clack...

slfksf;jsff-- I hate this job.'''''''

damned, it was too late. but was it. there was a pivotal moment as Joseph had reached his empty kitchen. and there was clarity. the sense of great clarity reached when you're body has succumbed to an apex of suffering.

.....

. his symptoms had regressed in some and amplified in others. he'd lost two toenails, and those digits wrapped  
in gossamer.

he looked at his stupid self in the mirror in the shabby bathroom, and peered at the corners, looked back at himself and thought humorously at how much he should burn down this place and the next unit and keep going until every city block was a bonfire, and he could hang out with all the homeless people like a man renewed. senses gave way to a heaven of no class system. he realized something was bleeding and all the alcohol in him (which had become a habit) wasn't going to stop anything, even the pain. he made a misjudgment. no one loved him, and he wondered how he got to that particular point in his life, but he wasn't bothered anymore, just more peeved at the human race. the single bulb that hung above him in the lavatory oscillated lightly through his nest of uncut hair. the shower was moldy, and he heard a rotary dial phone ringing in a room somewhere beyond the thin series of apartment walls.

he took his bandaged self back into the living room and took out the large double barreled shotgun from underneath his futon couch. his first shot was several minutes after admiring the metal, straight at the tele.

the neighbors were blasting their own and seemed to have no response, but parts of the wall were affected and had splintered back at him. he decided that was enough, his right arm may need amputation.

he went to sleep grasping the cooled weapon, and woke up in a tanktop, trackpants, and a pair of wooly slippers that looked infested with cum gum.

he ignored the stress and fatigue and continued out to his sedan with his keys limp on a finger and the shotgun beside his crooked stature like a rose for a woman who never showed.

10 minutes of driving and he could spot the monolith in which he worked, diagonally across from a network of quickened eateries and, of course, 7 varieties of coffee shops.

no one seemed to notice him entering the revolving door in such a manner as he was, the stupor of tuesday on everyone's cretinous brow, and the hallucination of himself made it almost without a hitch to the center of the third floor where his cubicle had once been and where he had originally and personally met many

of the current and past employees of the firm. some kind of alarm had been triggered and the rest of the building was in an obscure panic as he realized he had only a single shell remaining in the shotgun and no spares on his person. everyone was evacuating and he began to smile and contemplate his ultimate mission, he had chosen to be the pinnacle of punishment in every aspect of his life. up until that moment, he had never seen anything in color.

Joseph crept like a child over to his newly appointed office, and flipped out his ring of keys. opening the door, the sun blossomed over him, and he sauntered like a cowboy over to the other side of his desk and plopped into his chair, not understanding any of the figures or paperwork laid out before him. he swiveled once in the wheeled throne and stared out beyond the bleakness of his office, hearing the faint alert throughout nearer parts of the building. He took out the shotgun and pushed himself back in the chair until it reached the large center pane of the floor to ceiling windows. he remembered the time he fucked a girl in college and how she had a very disproportionate nose. with the thrusting of that memory, he launched himself through the window with a grand expulsion of brain and glass. The single red shell not given its full glory. the paramedics and fire engines arrived on the scene to find a very good looking man with blond hair in a designer suit, laid out in the shrubbery at the base of the building; Upon further investigation and an autopsy, a wedding band was discovered in his intestines and a picture of two adopted children in his wallet.



## *Con Erinyes*

Standing upright, lumpy like a full contractor bag, the girl-woman was darkly confused. Under the florescent tube-lights in the train station, she was illuminated and appeared really quite stupid. she was the color of urine as her baby doll hair swirled in the stifling air into gnat infested clouds like revelations; her eyes were slanted like japanese cartoons. she leaned over and spewed a little, there was nothing in it but bilious charms shaped like T-bones and rabbit's feet. the rest of the gallon of ooze moved out across the tiled trenches of gum, like a pale rorschach.

GOD belched from out of the hollow, engineered path of charcoal earth and splintered of blue spark.  
A man dissolved as he came closer to her entity.

His briefcase was all that remained immaculate and black and coated with wealthy luster and more metallic brilliance of spiritlessness. She did not touch it. She thought of conspiracy as much as a thai chef thinks of cheyenne and cumin.

'Who harks there?, in the crazy dick train,'

as the doors slid open and the stench of rotten old sweaty man with guts like planets and bettie paige glued herself to the mouth of the mind, she was thinking.

"Hey fucks, all aboards. you're late for supper." - MR. CONDUCTOR BELLOWED BEFORE  
LETTING IT HALT.

She rolled inside to sex the chair with her noisy clitoris, the blame all her own, and then there was Miltner and his seventeen samurai that punched her full of empty placentas, she was convinced that it wasn't rape. the Train filled with bitches and bastards, shut it's doors and roared off. It left it's flatulent reputation to the johnny-come-laterz.

some voice came through the lovely silver ceiling, like an angel, it told of parables and destinations, something cheerful and infection free.

A couple were having a good romp on the ceiling, and she grunted as they rolled over the delicious voice box of the train car. They moved like caterpillars with their hundreds of legs pretzeled into each other and contracting.

And nine pole dancers were singing christmas carols as the flicker of florescent tubes made them ugly, pretty, ugly, gorgeous, dragon, snakes lubed in fiery gasoline.

the grim Reaper was sleeping a few seats down, while a little boy continued playing with his scythe in the middle of the aisle, like highlander with a cunning grin plastered where his tater tots go.

the train reaches the next stop and everyone evaporates except for the puddled woman with her boa constrictor weave.

before the doors open, a whip of gentlemen are idly standing on the platform, staring blankly with cigarettes pressed in between their chartreuse lips. she slips out. then plainly and politely in tandem, several of those gents enter through the automatic doors. only six make their way in before it's closed off. the rest remain grunting in their line, taking long tokes from the cigarettes, angrily viewing the penis dart off. boarding passes are clenched comically in all of their hands.

she walks entirely to the end of the scruffy shag carpet platform until there is a single opening between these men in their hawaiian shirts and hugo boss business attire.

-The sun blasted down the stairwell beyond the turnstiles, melting the concrete steps into a water-slide of vegetable oil and devil spit.

and it opened up to her, the massive crustacean of city mega-mega Broken skyplex. the heaven's early neon strung along out into the passive avenues, green and grey, green and grey.

slurping at the air that tasted like industrial plastics and strychnine berry popsicle, She continues.

how she loved the cramp in her thighs like a newborn.

pennies, and pennies on top of more copper, her bag full and round. hey eyes drooping into galaxies.

hundreds of yards away there is a dumpster with her name on it, but today, she's got the passion stick to beat off temptation and buy a scram burger from the handsome street vendor.

ah, romance. torn fishnets and shadowed faces, youth and beer goggles.

fluttering eyes show the path into hell's manifestations.

and the foot traffic is zigging across the jam of 5th and Go\_FUck-YourSelf.

her shiny gold dress has lost it's sheen to blanket-less sleep at plenty of rat'n'maggot motels.

A phone booth continues ringing through the creations end, as the blue line trolley speeds past and people spontaneously combust on the crosswalks reaching outwards and running on rotating legs.

(it's fear that does it, she thinks, and nothing more.)

she's had too much vodka, and not enough oxygen.

The spine was perplexed about it's proper latitude.

And suddenly, there was the moon, the same color as bone, soothing with coolness the sleepers on the tarmac, who had awaited their position in the spotlight of doom's clutch. Someone sang from the sky. someone who has anonymous beauty, and someone who has an clear path to everyone's Serotonin receptors.

somewhere beyond a bourgeois anal clamp brasserie with hot cakes rolling into the street, She stepped through a glass entryway, and past an ATM with HPSEDIY written in scribbled fat marker on the side. She had a man, oh yes, and one who couldn't toy with her like anything but a Tonka truck.

into the wall, into the wall, dammit.

his way was always good for whoever.

inside the spartan standalone building, the staircase buckled under her psychosis, and red lights clicked over from black, and all the goths ran out of the lettered doors and up towards the roof, spiraling and naked.

fortuitous, and then there was silence, but only for a moment.

the sounds began to pour through the spackled walls like sweat and black mold. whipping music and low shrieking sirens hissed through the cloud of smoke that rolled down the stairwell.

K was stenciled poorly on the door, on the 3rd floor. The threshold was cracked and missing segments. With the second rap she made on it, there was an instant hush that echoed throughout the tenements. A deep warlike, thudding of footsteps was all that ensued, from within the apartment.

The door swung open and she stared down at the dwarf with the yellow fedora, and a tissue in one nostril. He looked up at her expectantly, and walked back into the flickering blackness of his din. Around his ankle was a shackle the color of worn tar, with a long chain that ran into some unseen corner.

She walked in, squeezing through the miniature doorway.

He threw toast at her, and she began to see through her maladjusted pupils.

The old TV was flickering on the floor, underneath the window, where the blinds ran vertically, and were kept neat. The pink children's chair slid underneath her and she fell into it gazing forward into an abyss of wild plants that seemed to fight one another. She could see the yellow hat somewhere beyond. The chair apparently had little animated lion's feet attached to the legs.

A never-ending sizzle pleased her with the scent of crying lust.

He returned from the kitchen wearing nothing but the hat and white long johns, waving a mallet. Slowly, liping a mantra.

He walked past her and began to beat the shit out of the television, which kept on flickering and showing \$19.97 in one of the fragments of glass, and lots of arctic commodities quivering like beads in an unmedicated hand.

She sat still for a few more moments. Her fingernails had reached three-quarters of an inch, painted like piano keys on scabby digits.

He spoke- 'I need quality money for my quality goulash, -no free ejaculato!, see.'

He listened.

The copper rustled in her gigantic purse as she pulled it off her shoulder.

Kuusma snatched it from her, unzipped the top and peaked inside with a glorious deviation on his face. A splash of metallic illumination filled the clefts in his face as he pulled off his hat and threw it into the darkness behind her.

She watched him blandly, her hair settling out into a giant plate and her nose bleeding onto her lap. In a shriek of ecstasy, that sounded like a brontosaurus, he poured the shining pennies in a waterfall over her head and face, gently.

Her eyes closed, the balls rolling down into the crevice of her body and becoming her kidneys. Tossing the bag off where the hat had landed, he walked back into the plant shrouded kitchen, and burst open the doors of a humongous floor level cabinet, which revealed a descending set of stairs.

He took to them gingerly. Whistling like an accordion.

Inside of this tunnel, it was filled with a rotating light of magma gold, like an old pictographic lantern. When he reached the bottom he flicked a switch that transformed the stairs into a ramp and pulled a large black cannon back up to the main level. After it reached the top, he kicked a floor switch, starting the stairs in an upwards escalation. He rode up and then dragged the heavy medieval cannon back into the shimmering din. He drug it over and pointed it at the large bay of windows and grabbed a chair of his own to sit on behind the fuse. He sat for a moment with a giant box of wood matches, and glared at her poncho of a body beside him. He thought of many old stories that became entertaining much later than when the stories had taken place.

Beneath her matted blonde eyebrows, the sockets had been filled with lincoln's face and a quotation about trusting something. the light from outside gave way to a fictitious shimmer. The entire room became brutal with heavy streams of feedback and wavering distortion. A faint schizophrenia of vocals rained from the ceiling, and their harshness could be felt in the words of the Torah, or rather, reruns of Special Victim's Unit:

"You killed your own child."

"I knew it was the right thing to do, those bastards let my friend die like a forgotten guinea pig!"

“Save yourself, you ignorant children of the dark being, the offspring of hell’s influence!”

and other such tongues, came through the guttural, subwoofer ceiling, and then he turned away from her and struck a match on it’s box, lighting a very tang orange flame. Kuusma brought it down upon the frayed fuse. Seconds later, a shuddering vibration threw their chairs back several inches and a giant blast of glass came and went, leaving a wonderful asymmetrical hole in the window. The ball must have flown 68 meters in a long arc, plummeting into a distant neighbor’s domicile. Through the hole in the window, the little voices from the target, slipped in, pianissimo, on musical measures, wilting and drawn with sad lilac lines.

This proceeded for many days, yet she had to return home and begin saving from the fountain once again.

## *bagnio blood*

the catalyst that sent him on the scared little mission, like a bottle rocket out of his isolated flat, was the leak that had pissed off the man who lived underneath. the building looked like a model but felt like a prison block - always sweating like a kettle, the jive rasping out through the pores of the poorly spackled corridors, neighbors opening doors spout ridiculous, white haired vendetta of a bad gentlemen, large-breasted short, black haired wrapped babies- swearing loudly by and by mexican- everyone's pupils round as the moon, black as a 'very black thing' - there's an attraction between his wretched little self and their dominion of strange vice. why he chose the building to begin with. (seemed inconspicuous and maximally private.)

birds, billions of black ones with purpled eyes. story of serious hailstorm from an overbearing televisual mouth, through the wall. everything was thin.

portraits of strange circumstance stretched firmly over their frames,....and sleep, poison and the mischief of silencio, smack to the clavicle by the good boy plumber, some hours early into the expensive morning. heard a humming.

children smoking cigarettes on the blue bars down behind the ratty gates of the abandoned gallery in the tenderloin. the thai lights lit up like a superbowl stadium all around the grizzled streets, whispering, gurgling, chortling midnight public ghosts.

it was actually 9:48pm, just then realized he was on the opposite side of the day, and had probably been for a while.

Bridge Farfalle went south for a damn long time after the altercation with a complex trooper and all the neighbors, some rapid packing and an awkward lease breaking;;;;

coulda been santa cruz, tijuana, bakersfield, dallas, new mexico anywhere; wherever for more 'down' time. he couldn't fathom another week wrapped up in rubber, and surrounded by temptations of angelcrank.

{the two middle-agers, Marissa and Bali went off to anchorage to meet a lowdown marshall of the sea, retired, contently alone, and surly as they come. Winton had a rule of no more or fewer than 2 guests at a time.

tipped down over his left eye, a brown cap that resembled a heap of burnt yarn.

the girls packed quite light, half of which was wild junk and the other half, inappropriate, tropical garments made out of eco-friendly bamboo. marissa was a chemist and bali, an exotic tea cup collector. the residual part of a shared daddy's money. they never saw each other as sisters. }

as the cards flew in their sporadic directions, Bridge watched the man across from him in the massive, neat living room, mostly furnished with shades of brown. not batting an eye but regularly peering up at the ceiling as if someone was repairing his shingles. the hut was large, but equally cluttered with tables and bean bag chairs as if guests were aplenty and catered to. later he learned of his host's *argila* parties.

slow diving weeks, lethargy moved like a gel throughout his veins.

his host and patron? was a miraculous player of all things. had a knack for the essence of games, and Bridge himself had divined a talent with backgammon very early on. many times playing solo as a child and then later picking it back up in the same fashion. they stuck to it for hours at a time before they'd both pass out in their chairs surrounded by 30 to 50 tan colored butts in a collection of hand carved ashtrays.

before the Hut and excessive game-time, to begin- Bridge was a drop out rodeo clown. Three years of Part-Time, and a surface of skin as marred as the new mexico desert.



in between and after that fell off, there were many off days without movement at all. forgetting about his legs, forgetting about picking up something to eat, the news, weather, the opposite gender, or what any company even felt like. he still dreamt of bullfighters, with the same fascination as Hemingway.

By 26, he'd been out of the job for 7 months, but managed to find numerous buyers for his collection of radical still life paintings, which he kept in the back of his diminutive conversion van. he'd found them in one of his grandfather's rooms when he'd passed, tilted against all four walls where no furniture had ever stood. paintings of things like: corners where mold had crusted over with ice in the winter, or brown beer bottles upside-down on a table covered in hair clippings, or a knife with a black hilt driven into a plain, off-white wall.

he remembered entering the room after a decade without seeing the man, and feeling a slight, almost imperceivable lump in his throat from the old scent of pine that followed his grandfather everywhere. His name had been and still was Curtis. the Will stated that everything in the house belonged to Bridge Farfalle, but not the house itself as it was too tied up in the courts with having been signed over in a long ago investment contract. he didn't know anything about it, nor did he take the time to investigate the situation. The rest of the belongings in the house ended up moving into a storage unit a few miles from the property, which he opened in his cousin's name, luckily having an old passport that he'd found in drawer at the house. He paid for two months and sent a letter to his cousin about the unit, apologizing for the inconvenience, but not truly meaning the apology. his cousin was a quack doctor in the caribbean, who hadn't had any contact with the family in a long time. he took the 30-some-odd paintings alone, with a queer attraction to them. later realizing their value in the art market, and realizing there wasn't any work or money on the horizon for himself, he found a niche that kept him from colliding with the inside of a financial coffin.

---They had tossed his mother over the side, slightly bloated, ...released... the form of hollow repercussions, having only the brief excruciating moment to utter the name of something that no one heard. she died before she hit the water: 'ready for the other side,' she had told the hijackers right after they delivered the baby boy. a few

days later the two adolescent girls and the twig-shaped teenage boy left Bridge before a large, flat-fronted building like a trio of storks. though he couldn't read them as an infant, the colossal letters that hovered above him still made him upset.

## MELVILLE COUNTY ORPHANAGE

--his father, was never located, & never known in the first place. his grandfather, on his mother's side, who'd left him the paintings, ended up being the man who founded the orphanage, although they never had a moment's interaction while Bridge was enrolled there. The fact that it was a smaller town somewhat played into the juggled coincidence of his early life, and the thought that crossed his mind on the day that Bridge Farfalle died was,"irony is more viral than anything else on the planet."

he was a non-prodigal babe.

prone only to consistent accident.

the younger years proved to be scarring, much like the rodeo.

spent mostly under the aid of a surreptitious nurse who stole heaps of prescription pills.

"where does it end you sad little bub?" she'd say to him during his third year of life.

it's amazing to think, that he was on special K, meth, and loads of mushrooms hardly over ten years later. a short stint, but lethal in magnitude. she must have left an impression.

--she would play with him in a bizarre fashion like a sadistic barbie doll owner. black hair draping like an evil portal around the red and white shoulders of her uniform. her knockers, as the courier from the pharmaceutical company would call them, were round and bulbous and created a valley that made him fear darkness for a few years.

he saw her like any secular man would imagine a lady Lucifer, and he was perturbed by the rest of the children at the institute, behaving in a manner one would call purely antisocial.

he was never told of his own origin by anyone, as no one knew except the three that were there stealing his mother's wagoneer. And sadly enough, the only link between he and them was the name that they wrote on the small blue card that the nurse discovered with him in his funky gift-basket. the least they could do was name him something pertinent.

--the hut, somewhere outside of Huntington Beach, began to sustain smoke to an intolerable limit, and Bridge found himself hacking up tender globs. he noticed on a daily basis that he'd ventured too shallow of his goal of San Diego where he would offload the rest of his still life stash and continue couchsurfing, given he found another meager job or a woman who could tolerate his mommy issues and take him under her wet wings, the thought of which still frightened him.

his current host, Donnie Tether, made easy note of his ever-increasing sweats, and told him, politely, to get the fuck out. Bridge took it humbly and with gratitude that he'd overstayed his welcome on the sofa that resembled a large river-washed stone.

while in town, Bridge took a brief stroll through the central plazas, glancing at the innards of his wallet, pulling his hands out of one pocket for the next, imagining something he'd find in there would lead him to the next place he needed to venture. He wore the type of prescription glasses that would tint based on the sunlight, and he kept the rectangular frames close upon his face. the clouds were pale, almost florescent, he felt the world was a gigantic public restroom. large tiles of ruddy grey cobblestone led him around all of the depressing buildings.

as he continued out from the smaller shops on foot, where the narrow streets were populated with a rainbow of sedans, there began the larger lots that contained equipment yards, dealerships, chain restaurants,

highway ramps, and acres of unimpeded flower growth that exploded up and down the medium sized facades of abandoned churches and elementary schools. he realized, in his foundational haze, that he still didn't know what town he was actually in at that point.

patches of sunlight would strike downward in magnificent blades across the tops of the pines and maples which were just beginning to thin as the months became slightly colder. Bridge walked several feet past an ice creamery and then backtracked for a thought, and headed towards the door. Inside he sat, alone beside his satchel bag devouring one of those vanilla cones with the chocolate hard shell. his eyes were glazed, lonely, or maybe still asleep while the rest of his body processed the waking stimuli around him and in his cottony mouth.

he'd left the van back at the hut, around a small bend in the foliage that enveloped it, on a twig bedded trail large enough for one vehicle. he knew Donnie wouldn't mind as Donnie couldn't see it from the hut, and would probably remain hermetic for the next few days.

he finished the cone and deposited his trash, and decided to briskly get back on the road, feeling slightly better after the treat.

trekking back to the hut, his thoughts were still extremely muddled when he happened to espy an el camino under a single oak tree, across the two-lane roadway. In a flash of simple and sudden inspiration he decided to take a closer look. When it was clear, he jolted from the sidewalk and over the blacktop in his clogs. He halted across from the relic inside a wire fence that contained the car, an older house of some kind, the tree, and an overgrown, yellowing yard about two acres deep. It must have been sitting for a decade; the rooftop visibly peeling little shards of flexible paint, the passenger window, which he saw first, had a luscious crack running horizontally, and the tailgate was replaced by a plank of spray-painted particle board.

-the owner was a 56 year old woman, who had recently sold her primary car, hoarded maps and blueprints all over the house in milk crates, and lived off of a meal delivery service that her son paid for. the woman, Ms. Breoleassas, only left the house in a town car provided by her caretaker, Gora, once a month to scour for her coveted collectables. She would sit inside her house for most of the month, ruminating over the

lines and two-dimensional constructions made by very astute men years ago. Bridge approached the house realizing it's rather delicate condition on the exterior, and not knowing exactly what type of person would be answering the door, or if there was anyone at all inside the small blue cottage.

Bridge continued glancing back at the el camino with a strange new ethereality as he made way across the uprooted gravel path to the front door. His right leg began throbbing, as to his disbelief he hadn't gotten even this much exercise in ages, squeezed into too many types of seats and chairs over the past several months.

The front patio, had a single rocking chair and two identical square-frame windows with the shutter doors pulled back against the outer wall. The mat in front of the door had also seen better days, although he could still make out the large shapes of blossomed flowers beneath the dust. He took a light rap on the door and breathed heavy for a moment.

Ms. Breolessas answered the door almost exactly on the third knock. The door opened 90 degrees revealing her aged and shrunken self wearing a faded peach colored night gown with the top portion pulled down leaving her barebreasted. Her eyes were in neat slits underneath a green visor that wrapped around her head and short, sandy gray hair. She was the absolute vision of horror to Bridge, but for whatever reason he treated her outright with a level of magnanimity that he'd never felt in himself before. It was mostly out of pure shock. She hadn't had visitors in the 2 years since her son moved to Salt Lake City.

"Hello ma'am, I was strollin' through the neighborhood when I spotted that classic beauty back there by the road," he said pointing over his left shoulder with his right hand index finger, not taking an eye off of those thin incisions that were her eyes. She wasn't glaring at him with her eyes; It was more of a stern curiosity, although the untamed, geriatric tits looked slightly unsafe and displeased.

"...and I was curious if you were thinking, or had thought of..." he trailed off as she turned around and went back deeper into her own house, leaving the door ajar. Bridge's posture was at a slant, and he was staring at what remained behind where she had been standing, which happened to be a statue of a man cast in bronze.

The man was wearing a spectacle and had a thick face and neck. Ms. Breolemmas returned quickly, lifting her arm in a Lurch-like manner and extending a set of two old silver keys on a split ring.

“Have it gone by nightfall.”

(The girls weren't having the times of their lives, but their expressions really hadn't changed in years, and it was peachy enough being out on the water. The captain was below deck making mojitos and contemplating a new song for his sitar. The wind was brutal against the crisp, white sails above them. Marissa was at the helm with massive orange-rimmed sunglasses. She had her hair in a ponytail, looking almost bald and the sun glaring off the top of her head. Her tiny frame was planted firmly behind the massive wheel. Bali was gazing deep into the pelvic region of Winton as he concocted his morning beverage. From a certain angle, she resembled a type of poisonous fish. The schooner was headed south through the gulf under a bleary sky.)

Within the few remaining hours of daylight, Bridge had managed to use the public library to post his van online at an insanely low price, due to his great fortune with the purplish el camino, which still ran somewhat charmingly, after a jump, new oil and full tank. The van sold sometime when the moon was at its twelve position, imploring the sun to get the fuck on. Some fatheaded store clerk wanted the van for her oldest boy back at the mobile home park.

At about 7:40, Bridge bought a tarp at the local hardware store, brought it back to the car and tied it to the four corners of the bed, covering his paintings, a coffeepot, a medium sized chest with large brass-toned brackets (filled with dingy encrusted blazers, a one-button grey suit, 10 nonconsecutive volumes of an encyclopedia britannica, a large silver thermos, and his own backgammon set, which hadn't been used in a long number of years), a gas can and some jumpers. He was on the FIVE NORTH by 11-something in the evening.

as the dawn extended blue ink from the distant east, over the little humps of brown earth beyond the valley farmlands, Bridge was driving about 94mph, beginning to merge with the civilized traffic near Stockton. He had already spent most of his second wind, and smoked 3 quarters of a pack of Reds, the ashtray in the el camino getting its first use in a long time. Hours back he had a bad feeling about the tailgate and stopped off two different times to check on its integrity. He wasn't surprised at the amazing gas mileage!!!!!!

Somewhere between the drugged out morning sensation of sunrise and Sacramento, he picked off a motel 6 and got a single room to rest his enervated mind and muscles. Inside there was a television with bunny-ears, and a jacuzzi tub with little jets that barely worked. The bed was layered with five different types of blankets and sheets, all of which he tussled and destroyed before finding the ultimate position and beginning a 5 hour drool exerting sleep spell.

(He dreamt of a cadillac convertible that had three passengers that was driving insanely fast, and there were many plastic birds chasing from behind. there were stoplights that dotted the road exactly 100 yards from each other and an infinite circuitry of water slides that exploded from the sandy earth to either side of the single lane highway. He could only watch this from above, except one part of a first person view of a cracked windshield that was seen from behind very sepia toned frames. there was a hand on this arm)

and the sound of a train woke him in a rootlike formation under one layer of coarse sheets, laying with his head at the foot of the bed. The pillows and other blankets had all been kicked or flailed off onto the black and orange geometry of the carpet.

after checking out around eight, Bridge demonically leapt back into the driver seat and lit a red, cranked the ignition, and bombed out of the parking lot blaring an old ted Nugent cassette tape.

the afternoon was definitely warm, and he discovered the AC wasn't working. Bridge had set his sights on the place he never thought he'd have the courage to return to. He'd never made the drive from this direction

before and he was highly alert for most of the drive, sitting rigidly in bucket seat, drinking in alternation from a can of energy soda, and a larger can of a honey green tea. the floorboard of the passenger seat had already become a lair of hand-crushed aluminum, and the entire cab seemed to have a consistent rustling sound coming from some small hidden place, in synchronization with a hurricane of small ash-dust particles.

Seattle was probably another day's worth of driving. The sun was just beginning to beat on the right side of his face as he crossed over the first state line of Oregon. He'd run out of cassettes to listen to and the radio didn't work for shit, especially with a crooked antenna which he'd neglected to fix on any of the pit stops, looking at it as a mark of character, like any of his scars had become for him, especially the few that reside on his face or neck.

(Bali had finally made it up from the cabin, to the deck, topless and her shorter hair curled, tangled and absent of style. She stared off at the distant shoreline through a moderate mist, her arms akimbo. Winton was at the wheel with a calculating look on his glistening, rust colored face. They moved at a very casual pace, although each of them was beginning to develop a mild hunger for something different than the leftovers they brought. Marissa was also beginning to feel the weight of the situation they had embarked upon, knowing that she had foreseen an obligation long ago, and creating a compendium of outcomes in her mind. Bali could read it on her face, as she approached her on the bow, sitting in a chaise with her legs rigidly crossed.

Winton had no feeling at all about the subject, only that it made sense for him to be there, despite his usual aversion to dwelling on the past. The three of them hadn't changed, rather, just settled down with the years that fell off their innate calendar. The truth stood on their shoulders in an awkward pose for long enough.

Bali came over to Marissa and straddled her on the long chair, pleading for a reaction, a pulse, or something to assuage her nymphomania just enough, knowing their time left on the boat was limited.

"love on me some, you look bored," she insisted, stroking the thighs that ran underneath her.

Marissa reached out and squeezed the left orb of flesh in a playful way, and then grinned for a split second, only



to turn her head back into a deeper line of thought. Bali took care of herself instead, right there in her sister's lap.)

Bridge had crossed all of Oregon, feeling quite accomplished at his velocity. He'd begun to listen to nasty college rock'n'roll stations, the songs sounding even more grungy with the bad reception of signal. he was making up his own words, and chain-smoking a little more with the anticipation. He was still pleased with his purchase of the el camino, completely, and loved seeing the sleek, though definitely aged hood out in front of him, hustling over the faded asphalt.

The semi-anonymous letter had been dug out hours ago and laid open on the neighboring seat, bent in thirds, and neatly undisturbed by any of the accumulating garbage. He had found the letter back in the South Bay where he had a P.O. box, among a heap of other mass mailings, junk, and collection notices. He'd called the number and spoken to the timid female voice during one of the stagnant days at Donnie's.

Seattle was rainy. He laughed at the whole city as it opened up largely before him. When he smoked his face inevitably moistened from the outside air, but he would keep the window rolled all the way down. His eyes were getting weary from the pace.

after getting deeper into downtown and getting off at a random exit, he grabbed up the letter again and reread the handwritten name of the rendezvous point. the car would have been hazmat to most at this point, just from the scent and overall feel from the past two days of cigarette smoke overload and the shake up of old car malfunction.

Bridge knew he was early, and knew that it was unusual for him to be early. At least by a whole day.

Also written on the letter was mention of a car wash, a coffee joint, a marina, and a particular park in the area where they'd be meeting. He found another motel, something quaint; a basket of nerves became his entire body, which seemed to want to hug the outside of the el camino in agony as he tried to part from it on foot.

The room was smaller than the last but had infinitely more character; the wallpaper was atrocious, tan and brown curvaceous designs overlapping. There was no television here, just an old rollup desk with a guest book of some kind, a large bible, and various other little cards and pamphlets.

He collapsed upon one of the two twin beds, and dreamt of lions with humongous manes that could walk from earth straight into the sea and swim like oceanic mammals. He saw an older man, he saw himself wandering, and there were pills that rained from the sky.

the girls and Winton had finally arrived at the marina and tied up. he was the only out of the three not dressed in heavier layers, wearing only a thinned out v-neck shirt, that same hat that looked like yarn, and somewhat slimming dockers that had black ink stains, and pink splotches from cutting up meat and seafood in a careless fashion.

Bali and Marissa, both with the surname Tyler, had dug up some old threads from various other mistresses' leavings on the schooner, to protect from the cold and then the rain. They led in front as they headed for the spot where Bridge was meeting them. Luckily for them, it was a monday and there seemed to be a very light flow of pedestrian and motor traffic altogether. Both of their eyes had a mysterious glow to them as if they were nearing the completion of a spiritual rite, or maybe just from taking an extra xanax and sharing a bottle of rum that had been hidden in a cabinet.

they walked several blocks and found the building, the one with the old signage clinging to it and the blue tile; they slipped into the dark of the lobby, and up to the rooftop which was considerably lower than some of the closest adjacent buildings. He was waiting for them beside the ledge glaring out through the cut of the soggy avenue down towards the northern horizon. Bridge had woken up, feeling stripped down, and continued on that way, leaving the el camino at the motel, and walking 23 blocks that morning, to see this riley, older bunch that was now approaching him. there where large puddles all around them that had collected where the

roofing had sunken in. Winton hung behind the girls and lit a thin cigar, which instantly created massive clouds that ballooned in front of his face.

“are you bridge?” Bali spoke up with a meager smile and an anxious stance, head arms dangling from her neck, as if she were doing crunches.

Marissa was looking at him loosely, somewhat paternally, with her own hands dug into her pockets and most of her scraggly hair damp and ratty, let down.

They stood in their spaces for a brief and quiet introduction, staring back at each other like domesticated animals, and then decided to catch a bite to eat after the angst had had it's run.

Despite the touching story of his inception, their role in the whole scenario, the reasoning and the apologies, what none of them could have known was that, aside from Winton, who was just a simple renegade, the girls and Bridge shared the same orphan bearing mother.

After finishing the plates of bacon, the saucers full of ham grits, 14 out of 15 pancakes, and 10 refills of coffee, divided unequally between them, they left and took a stroll back to their temporary dwellings, where they'd all get drunk, separately and wait for the next morning to heave-ho back to other climates.

## *Riddle Conceiver*

Marianne watched blankly as he induced the unmonitored electricity, turning the black dial in his palm, still cautiously, out in front of himself. the silver clasps, which resembled the toothy ones used for suspenders, were pinched into the flesh where his love-handles would be. she hadn't noticed how emaciated and sickly his appearance had become from the ongoing experiments and the extension of time they'd been without proper vitamins.

thin cables ran from the clasps, through the dial mechanism, and then to the large, diabolical switchboard contraption to the right of his rigid purple armchair, the back of which had been somewhat deepened in color from sweat and soil. Pierce had his eyes blindfolded by a silk bandanna, the navy one that Marianne had lent to him when they first met. Across from him in the hot-seat, she recently finished pleasuring herself, w/ spread eagle legs, atop the defunct laundry washer, which was partially hidden under a linen cloth. her ass felt the slight irritation from the coarseness of the fabric, which had a stained, dirty ecru color. her skin had slowly developed certain mild blemishes.

only during the doldrums of the day would they sleep, cutely beside one another, smiling intermittently like amused dinosaurs, all the while their bodies seemed to disintegrate.

the wind pushed and rustled at the corners of their tent as the amber lights buzzed awake on the switchboard. the moon was at it's cusp as the depth of blue was nearing full saturation, and the mountains, which the two strange lovers couldn't see from inside the tent anyway, had dissolved all of their majestic earth tones, yet the pale pink & tan cougars began their races at the foothills, preying. If the contraption had not created such frantic popping and fizzling rhythms, they might have heard the growling and moaning of all the beastly elements that went on through the night. Pierce was adamant, though, and neither of them would let up until it got the best of their bodies, and the majority of their minds as well.

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some of Marianne's friends had begun to foresee bad weather, flash floods, certain satanic movement of the wild animals nearest, and they were less resilient to the lack of vitamins. these were the women of the cult that Marianne had been quite endearing with and had kept closest to on the earlier parts of their expedition, until she and Pierce became intertwined in the majesty of their silent visual lust. the others also couldn't stand the cactus water from this region, as it had a tart flavor, which they thought belonged to the list of arguably poisonous omens that they sensed. along with the single minister, Ingle Tubrisi, who conjoined the group originally, the women would dance their way farther out upon the playa-valley-lands to the east of the Guerrilla Circus. Here they would perform a collection of grueling and sober seances under the amazing violet of the sky, same as they had in each of the previously visited lands.

Shortly after all of the wayfarers arrived together, dispersing to variegated tents or shelters on the grounds of the circus, Pierce Montgomery Gunner Smithson IV found a very curious and tantalizing memoir, written by hand, in a Germanic style which he could discern quite well. he became intrigued by the erratic nature of the words of Dolph Moench. Those around him thought nothing more of it than that he was just deeply moved and was weary of traveling without any mental stimulation, as they all were to some degree.

After the ninth day without putting it down, except to eat the broth, they became concerned and talkative amongst each other. The headmasters, who were more of less navigators of the expedition, would try to influence Marianne, who was earlier less involved, yet still deeply interested and moved by Pierce's passionate demeanor, and rustic appeal. Like a dying lumberjack she saw him physically; hulking, sexual, driven, and sweet, whilst having a raven of a mind as well.

On one particular night, she approached his tent, which would continue to be his, and then their's together, until after the experiments started. She saw again the strange mechanisms that had been inside, as well as in others' tents around the grounds. Massive immovable sculptures with mostly foreign functionality, most of which were powerless. Pierce was, as expected, devolved into a solitary reader, prone to only as many breaks from the text as were necessary to keep him alive. She advanced around him slowly, keeping her distance, all

the while knowing that as he read, there was another part of him that was aware of her, a strong consciousness that roiled still in a separate part of his mind, reserved for defense or survival. He was no vegetable, nor was he disturbed, she came to realize, but instead transfixed, as if by magic, to the information that was provided in this journal of his. He did not break his concentration to look at her, and remained curled over the book, sitting on the edge of a pitiful, armless wooden chair. She began to watch over him, with a daily ritual, beginning with coffee, and then tea, which he seemed to prefer, and then a multitude of other compliments.

This continued for some time, while piece by part, the rest of the expedition broke down and decided, each at their own rate and motive, to venture away from the circus, which by that time, had evoked and divulged several other strange ideals upon the band of spiritual men and women. Marianne, who could still do so much and continue to receive so little of his attention, was nonetheless, in love. His had become an addiction too perverse for her words or indications to overcome.

though it seemed not to effect his overall stature, which was poor to begin with, he developed at a crawling speed, varying symptoms of scurvy, and would have small, almost unseen fits of chronic fever, along with unregulated sniffles, though he continued reading. The weather had sustained a brisk and biting quality, encapsulating the entire valley, seeming to also create an hallucinogenic eye above the mythical & abandoned playground where they unintentionally found 'home.'

Marianne wondered how many times he had reread it by that point; Having only seen him sleep for 2 to 3 hours a night or every other night, it must have been dozens of times. She wasn't far off, actually; when his eyes finally shifted from the pages and his posture seemed to quirk for a moment, Marianne noticed that he closed the memoir completely, but still keeping it between his flattened hands on the long planked table in front of him; Pierce had read through every last character 36 times, since a month and a half ago when he commenced. The eventuality of it was, he would never open the book, nor act concerned of its whereabouts again, and left it to the dust or whatever might next approach it.

Then he slept for 5 straight days, which allowed for the redness that encircled his eyes to fade, all the while mumbling, whispering tongued, broken sentences.

During this utmost sensational break from the deleterious norm, Marianne went into a flurry of renovations, cleaning in spotted areas in and out of the tent, around Pierce himself who hadn't moved far, and was actually asleep atop the planked table, under a bright, garish and somewhat child-oriented quilt. Marianne had also fashioned a kind of soft pallet which she forced underneath his body. It was made of a combination of sand, scraps of material from torn tents, and loose, dead brush that happened to collect around the octagonal perimeter of the circus.

it hadn't occurred to her, until the middle of his period of dormancy, to peer into the substance of his entrancement. The book still remained in their shared domicile, on a smaller table beside a broken, sideways lamp decorated with mosaic pieces. After organizing their belongings, what little food rations were left, and cleaning herself from head to toe in a warped hut that had bath salts, other ablutionary materials, and about 10 plain bathtubs in no particular formation, she came back, still dripping and topless, with the innocent intent of skimming. The evening began to pour throughout the valley and the first zephyrs began to weave throughout the network of multicolored cones.

The notebook was bound with a flat, old leather which was like jerky to the touch. The cover was black and had no printed words, though on the front side there was an etching of the planet Saturn, which had all but completely blended and faded into the roughness of the hyde. she sat with it on her own cot, her back against the edge of a machine she had tugged from another corner to act as a headboard. The book gave off no magnetic, angelic, or illusive sensibility as she held it, but she did notice for a split-second the importance of turning to the first page, which was only another planetary image, one she didn't recognize, the name of the author, and the precise times of day when the text was initiated and when it was desisted. As she turned past this and the following blank page, a warmth and vibrancy, as well as a powerful realm of storming head-weather, gradually increased within the smallest of particles in her mind, her thought, and whatever it was that took in

and put out mental energy; She had been overtaken by the instantaneous legibility of the memoir's content, delving her being as deep or deeper than Pierce MGS IV. On those pages, beyond the scratched symbols, strange hypotheses, and realistic, though unheard proclamations, were also depictions of circles, semi-circles, incomplete and partial circles, in various sequences that formed vast & obscure codes.

-She continued perusing with a greater vitality than her soon to be soulmate.

In a week's time, as Marianne continued down the winding path of her own obliqueness and unfathomable rotation of inquisition and introversion, so began the subsequent descent of the condition of her general health. Pierce had awoken, enlivened and began his industrious work, after feeding on the rations she'd divvied out for him. He moved with a ferocity like a dragonfly. By the time that she had repeated the same cycle as he, and slept off the sickness, he had arranged everything to his meager satisfaction, as was ready for the complete series of experiments. He adapted to her without a flinch of his conviction, as did she with him, and they each played an integral part for one another under the spell of the memoir's instructions.

their bodies would never rot, their skeletons would never be discovered. the whipping wind was their eager musician.



Oh! benevolent man, a swinger inside. the extreme numbers in all corners. fahrenheit. something bad, doing this??

tommy,- he gained a fat sense of denim compression, fibers in his brain erect. “you are hard” was that a question?

I am here, again.

the goat came in wearing a tool-belt and glowing gels, mellow man flamboyant and true to himself. tommy was content to watch.

the sofas were a deep velour texture of black. very firm cushions kept upright lovers, across the room a couple under the hypnosis of give and take. he had much grey in his hair, and she had a lonely face that only lit up like a mask.

a white table off to the right, was glowing, and smeared with a flat amalgamation of greases. one could possibly spot a rise of smoke plumes against the loving gore of the walls, vases and paisley & glue of thousands. his eyes fluttered, it had been a week of many matters, important and ineffectual.

tommy sat back with the martini upright like the filigreed hilt of a sword, nearly breaking the glass.he thought he could sense sweat dripping from his earlobes. Tommy had a paranoia about blood, that eventually grew to be more than paranoia. if he saw someone bleeding, even on the television, he himself would begin to bleed from his nose, her ears, or even sometimes just the little crevices between his teeth where he may have brushed too hard that morning.

he drank swiftly as if the night was turning in on itself, but it was still early. he’d gone between several half-erections and had finally settled down and was able to watch casually for a while in the Divine Room.

he left home 2 hours ago, strolled up to Hillside, caught a cab which took 15 minutes through the golden tunnel, and then popped off for a tense cigarette on the slant of the surface street.

his recognition was getting out of hand. every face that passed him seemed to be a dream character, who immediately gave a perplexed or aggravated return of expression.

as a once heavy dreamer, also quite liberal with outward pretenses, he knew full well that he wasn't a total miscreant; More than anything, just a bit reckless. he purposefully got married to upkeep other pretenses, yet luckily reserving the most eager of sperm, and getting a free pass on the first of few occasions where he and his wife, who was humbly attractive, actually fucked. He would call it 'making love' but he knew and felt otherwise about it, for generally every occurrence in his history.

the club to which he belonged would only accept such as his kind. slightly broken, falsely interesting mega-men who were alive, solemn, and attuned to only that of their own will, and no other. his wife, Anna-Lorraine, was reserved enough to maintain a healthy balance with his checkbook and a house full of appropriate furnishings and clutter. her spirit had become slightly more subdued, although she did have her friends and her nieces and nephews that would keep her company when Tommy was away, or just not coming home until the latest of hours.

Óskar began writing his thesis based on a vague facet of subculture. he saw large, daunting parameters. He was 22, he was afraid of losing his hair at an early age, and had a knack for studying people and things that had no interest to anyone he might call a friend, thus he had very few. after maybe 6 weeks, he had forgotten about using discretion for his late evening reconnaissance. his ability to tail another human being had become much better, not perfect, but enough to follow the average Joe. he'd covered much ground as well, the Pink District, the Howls, blending in with the brick, one might have said, and he began to dispel all of the mumbles from the most vile, encrusted types like a professional.

everything still remained magnified & bizarre, as if the city was just a large kitchen sink, teeming with glass and porcelain that hadn't been washed in years, now crawling with black and green mold, ants and roaches, slugs and leeches, rodents and ravens.

Óskar had a circuit that he relied on. A safe enough one, consisting of 8 different bars and cafes that would stay open 24 hours. No one noticed the sound of the motorized bicycle among the other rattles of street-life. The Booth, Sam Potter's Bar, lots of cappuccino and napkin notations, almost 7 nights a week. Tommy was just the tip of the iceberg, when it came to his strange subjects, fascinations, 'but it's all just ice anyway'

thursday evening in january--- wind was mighty and discouraging.

Óskar,

raced back from the campus to the little basement apartment he'd lived out of for the past 4 years. bird eyes; all his neighbors were mute with him. he wouldn't have had the time anyway, to talk about their banal and unfulfilled dreams, and besides, he could pick up on all that in their disproportionate eyes.

it was the only night that week he'd have a later, less prepared start, like every other week. thursdays for 4 hours of elective credits. His paper had actually become something of a pastime rather than a responsibility- he let it mutate organically.

Tommy had already made it to the party, his eyes glazed over, sensing like a tarantula, so much stimulating ecstasy of human touch. he handled six double bourbons throughout the evening, but could still strut and stand and see straight ahead the whole time. There was less burden on Tommy that night. he thought he heard Elvis Costello several different times on the barely audible house sound system; he was always a fan. And someone offered him a line of molly, which he accepted with a playful reluctance. his demeanor seemed to comfort others around him as well. Simple gestures and looks, casual and approving, unlike his typical brooding and slightly nervous reservation.

at one point, he had floated away with a fragile beauty. black door, black dress, crystal clear light from the chandelier hovering dangerously high above the big square cushion-top in the center of the room. she locked the door behind them and then broke into tommy's aura with her hands, pulling off his jacket, nearly strangling him with his matte burgundy tie, and launching him serenely onto the pillowy platform where she leapt after him flowing like a ghoul through the calm, unmoving air; they had become animals during their occupation of the private room; it smelled as if pinot grigio and te tree oil had been spilt around the room, as well as many balms and lotions and body fluids. he had a notion that he was in an auto shop, being repaired- and in reality, the lady before him, was tuning and adjusting him with the wrenches of her hands, tight, with thin fingers, in a shape that reminded him more of how you'd hold a sandwich; her face disappearing and reappearing, and he became more blurry in the abandon-

he had lost the stupid, usual struggle against gratification that evening. it could have been the booze, but either way he was relaxed. a line of black hair fell before his vision and she returned to eye level in the same second. her earrings, which had emeralds in them, glimmered in the soft white light and he, for a brief moment, forgot her name, and then reaffirmed it as his vision focused. Her name was Amra, and her long, stilted legs could have challenged that of a giraffe or a flamingo. He couldn't remember anything else about her, except that she had been there before, probably on every other night he had been. both of them gearing up towards this one, single exploitation of their immature temptations and naked courtesies. the coupling of their bones and still decently toned, adult skins. they were taken care of, uniquely with their opposing styles of wealth and comfortable capitalist connections, or so he assumed.

they both remained, quietly reeling in the accumulation of their sweat, in the musky and expensive room. the chandelier was dimmed and the swirls of deep, black & burgundy paint on the walls and ceiling seemed to be alive with the fantasy of his heated, sexual intoxication. In those moments he was in a state of bliss while his dick hung with the same flaccidity as the rest of his body on the edge of the cushioned platform. he thought he might fall asleep had he not been awakened by his current mistress.

Tommy would occasionally find his nerves clenched, imagining the difficulty he would have trying to explain both the expenditures attached to his evening loyalty to the club and the scent that it sent him home with. Out of mostly luck, he found that there was never a whisper or a flex of curiosity in his midst. In a way, it made him feel somewhat meek, at the same time quite debonair and competent, capable of ruling his existence like a prince. He found these internal arguments quite regularly on the plate of his thoughts, which would eventually drive him to a very anachronistic habit of smoking marijuana.

the walls were thick. beyond that, the building had no windows. All that Óskar could really surmise was, ‘what the fuck else would he be doing - politicians only cared about their national and public causes during the daylight hours, when the majorities were actually watching’

He had followed Thomas Everin, the great- Man of Michegan, for several weeks- he’d forgotten exactly how long, but had still exacted a sense of his habits to a close certitude. in his perspective, Óskar saw a normal, humdrum gent with a faulty jet engine up his ass, and the effectuation of a benign, subtle and respectful way of life on the surface.

in the cafe that was on the corner, 2 blocks down Henson Ave. from the castle-like building, Óskar could barely discern the jukebox lyrics:

-take your baby by the wrist,  
.....and in her mouth an amethyst-

the tip of his pencil was getting dull as he motioned it across a cream plain, withering further into the night with curiosity. It came upon 2AM when he had a shaken urge, a second wind, and about 3 espressos on top of a buttered croissant and then another cappuccino, with cinnamon.

his writing itself had become very dreary and political. he was a young bachelor with a lot of great theory and a decent respect between himself and his professors, his boredom would have inevitably lead him to that cafe or a different path, possibly hallucinogenic drugs, or something involving great tracts of natural land, maybe like the Mojave.

As the waitress was returning to his table with the expectation of another continuation of Óskar's order, her little pad already out in her hands and the shift of her thicker hips and buttocks becoming slightly less dynamic. She came around into his line of sight and began posing the question just as Tommy emerged outside, in front of the castle or whatever it began to look like, a fortress, an asylum and a plant.

Everin had his blazer draped over his shoulder, grasping it with a full hand, looking post-sex disheveled and generally tired. He also had a crisp-looking brown briefcase at his side, set down on the sidewalk by his left shoe. Óskar had little time to react, in his renewed sense of wan and energetic, blank interest, he asked for the total and check, and left a heap of tangled greenback on the checkered table, watching all the while as the taxi cab pulled up to the castle.

~The moped wasn't terribly loud overall, but in an instance where tailing was involved, it was a 'fucking volcanic eruption and the muffler apparently didn't exist' -

small ripples played through Óskar's short haircut, as he sped along at a modest pace behind what he thought was still the right taxi.

the blocks grew obnoxiously circuitous, and the traffic grew thinner and thinner in the direction he was still tailing. the taxi ahead of him seemed to have a pretty fervent and direct itinerary. the night air was warm enough rustling through Óskar's open green and white leather jacket; the kind you'd expect a motorcyclist to don.

finally, 'oh finally,' the little yellow and white taxi cab reached a stopping point, in a district that was surprisingly bland for being so private and posh, wealthy looking during the day he was sure, Óskar dismounted several blocks back from the taxi where the little mopeds engine could be positively unheard. it was here that he

would wait as thomas everin would set his briefcase down on the sidewalk, pay the driver and enter his home at the address of 231 North Post Avenue, (which wasn't ascertained until the following morning).

Óskar slept in an alleyway for a maximum of six hours. He wasn't sure he wouldn't be disturbed, but he knew it'd only be by someone of a lower echelon, like a street cleaner or a trashman, or someone doing his duty to the city, while all the police activity was back in the district he'd left earlier that morning.

His skin seeped and weeped as he adjusted to the air and wakefulness. Dawn had passed yet it still seemed vacant and much like a Sabbath morning. he checked on his moped, locked up nearby and collected the belongings that passed out with him in the nook of the alley. his notebook was still stashed comfortably inside his jacket pocket, with the pen in the spiral binding.

the street's sourness was completely lost from him, but his thoughts were perfect, and as if he were clairvoyant, he smelled bacon and the weak air-freshener attempt at lavender. He walked with a zombie automation towards a tall green and cream colored town home. He could hear a distant helicopter, sputtering above town, taking in the light traffic conditions and general weather with largely exoteric levity for radio broadcast. Óskar adjusted his short, thin brown hair, patting it and combing with his fingertips and swiping at the creases in his baby blue checkered button-down, which was rolled up and pushed beyond his elbows as if he were primed to fight. he'd left his favorite jacket with the hog, which made him slightly ill at ease, subconsciously.

the door he had anticipated and was now advancing upon hovered up ahead and above him, at the top of the brick laid stoop and stairs, which were occupied by several leaves and a yellow bag containing a thick twist of newspaper: one that would undoubtedly be thrown out before read by anyone. he ascended looking over his shoulders and down the rows of other homes to either side. still very few citizens were out and only a handful of cars had driven by, most of them probably giving rides to plush animals and their wild, infantile masters, and their masters, appropriately leading the way to the steeple.

Óskar rapped on the door with a hinged fist. Turned to the right, facing the sun's slow rise in the east, he grappled the stiletto from out his back waistband. he could see her unbloused in his mind's eye, terrible fixation = watering plants? No. he saw wrong; He recognized the latter while the former was his premature imagination. something possessed him to insert the blade when the weary and curious politician answered the door, obviously still torn from the previous evening's escapade,..

what came next was the pillow talk of subordination, while a colored fountain trickled down towards the moist front lawn.

the young man was later apprehended in a state of bliss and distant disconnection.



the **24HOUR** diner is cold and aromatic of **curdled milk** and the wafting scent of burnt, off-brand “coffee.” the windows that view a small, fissured and half vacant parking lot are surrounded by a peeling wallpaper that is made up of a collage of old, sepia-tone celebrity portraits like marilyn **monroe** and buddy holly. the bottom window ledge and the floor beneath is cluttered with strange periodicals, flyers, ID cards, and more. **All of which are dusted and defunct, ignored by god. Below this** media, the checkered tile, which is heavily scuffed (like in a high school cafeteria), begins and stretches over underneath the tennis-**shoed feet of several low class, pallid and dehydrated-looking patrons, leaving a broad** open space in between. Beneath the stools at the fat-lacquered, wooden bar are Himalayan mounds of smoldering cigarette butts and brown dust where silverfish and yellow-dotted millipedes burrow as fast as bolts of lightning.

.....

there are five total men, women, and children who have been served a blubbery, vermillion hunk onto their chipped porcelain dishware. adjacent to this is a semi-translucent, cheap plastic brown glass, half-full with a red liquid. One of these delectable helpings has been **left stagnant and unattended by its aged, african-american owner. this geezer, dressed in a three piece suit, similar in color to that of the glasses, has journeyed to the vintage jukebox to the rear of his station** at the bar, beside the criminal youth in patent leather. This old black man; with his gray-banded fedora tilted further back on his balding cranium and one swollen thumb tapping on the yellow neon tubing; as giant gnats flock to his body, he selects a scratchy R&B song. His insides begin to tighten and the song ignites a dancing fire like the eyes of his dead wife once did, which is only a delusion. something stirs inside his rotten ribcage, rebuilding and renewing as the day gears on.

.....

**In a booth on the opposite side of the diner, a disgruntled/country obese woman is squished in facing her two pussy offspring. they’re all on** the verge of cleaning their china bone dry. the kids are dirty monsters,

almost what you'd imagine a clean-shaven two-headed troll to look like, with **bits of wet food** mashed and stuck in the strawberry blonde mop **that** grows out of their dandruff cracked scalp.

the few men and women **behind the counter, on the kitchen side, are on a non-stop hustle like mustachioed lab rats to and from** saucepans, cutting boards, and coffeepots that are either covered in or oozing over with a sewage-like consistency. Each of these perfectly underweight service-industry mongrels are wielding **oversized** mallets that have the **opposite end** converted into a two-foot rusted machete. Also, carried in a sheath at the front of their typical black aprons is a partly melted spatula, encrusted with tan colored remnants. Their hair, what's left of it, stands on end in patches, except for a **young thing with pig-tails stiff and fried, falling close to her ears. these ears, and other miscellaneous parts of her** body, are gnarled and look ravaged as if by a mad dog, though still pierced with mostly plain, silver jewelry. all of their eyes are sunken, less than you'd imagine, but about **as much as their cheeks tuck in when they** whistle the regular dirge for the newly deceased on the grillers.

.....

words pass seldom. like ghetto-gunfire during the daytime. but here, overt conversation at any hour is an adrenaline trigger that turns irises red like the bull and re-institutes a greater, impeccable silence **once the slaughter has ceased. the mutilated minds of the delightful regulars are weakened from the prisoning of worldly bullshit. a barrier built from within, locks their jaws in between** perfunctory grunts of gratitude. low spoken "thanks" and "sure" are about the maximum, unless the vampiric bastard-children of the fat woman demand another breast or wing.

there is no regularity to feeding time. a miniature thanksgiving that blossoms spontaneously. death and the logistics of bone.

the harvesting of these composed and wicked creatures, is a controlled mayhem.

.....

as of **the current moment, the wound-up slacker, Winter, is exhaling green** gusts into the perennial cloud of smoke in the diner. he sits amongst the erratic paint job of the immortals, with his coccyx barely glued to the edge of a barstool. his white mug stained at different heights on the inside of the rim indicating long periods of cold neglect; the savoring of his ration until the next unfortunate soul decides to refill it with his caffeinated lifeblood. he behaves like a perfect mute, **with an occasional thought relating to a feature film, “i’ll festoon my bedposts with his guts.”** he tries to pin these words to images in his mind. **the impulsive, daily belch he makes around 4:15PM is almost the only outward expression he’s ever made, which usually follows the old crow sitting down from his long play on the juke. a seemingly** endless sprawl of ancient funk, that has no real effect on even himself; it’s only natural. both of their batteries on a permanent low, blinky slowly, skulls full of mystery, sometimes lighting two cigarettes at once.

.....

along **with the commonplace equipment of the** linecooks, there are elaborately designed torture devices of diminutive, yet working proportions; such as the iron maiden fit for an infant (which is seldom used), or the **short series of copper guillotines**, filigreed with an egg-like film and a dried blood stain the color of burnt motor oil, each with its own extending panel upon which the misfortunate subject lays before his or her **decapitation. and the spinning mechanism built for blood samples, providing its born service beside the large churning dispenser of pale, milky “lemonade.”**

the largest of the men behind the counter, his name tag reading “Bludworth,” stands in place for a moment sampling a marinade off of his finger, letting his other hand hang, still rigidly gripping the **hybrid tool, at his side. his eyes ever-bright and fully open with no real direction. as he finishes, there is a finely tuned grin that slants across his face., and he** wipes the finger on the black nylon of his apron, where copious sprays of red have landed over the decades. **Bludworth returns to his duties** arranging the sauces and spices. his muscular chest creating a ripple through his shirt, and his arms sinewy like roots and tattooed like a jungle.

the crazed, overweight **barbarian mother-figure** reaches over now and again to swat at one of her mutant twins, for whatever reason, and then resumes her porcine feast of syrup'd "hashbrowns" and Skinjacks / along side the main course of human steak / swilling deep and lustfully on **something sweetened** to the taste of Mr. Pibb, but pulpy like orange juice.

.....

no glances are exchanged **between the patrons, only from the staff to any new guests.** almost warm for a moment, an exchange so grave and conniving, yet hospitable and under the radar, it goes unnoticed.

.....

this spot in the universe, where hell magnetizes the lost to be finished off: a bullet in the head after a violent interrogation. a different kind of purgatory for the fire; static and anonymous like so many places we've been to find out that we're abysmally alone.

-you can see Winter's tight jeans and studded jacket in a dark swirl of wet strokes, his visage clear and prickly, against the depth of a shadowy, smoke stained and sepia-tone restaurant.

its honesty pierces the soul, dragging them down into it, with a fatal undertow of curiosity.

.....

**there has been a drought, so to speak. a slump in foot-traffic. more than anything, the immortals are weak for the action over the intake of "nutrients."** the days roll by with less and less to cook up and **swallow down.** and during these periods, there are other allotted tasks to help fill the terrible stretch of time. the short pigtailed girl with her emaciated cheeks pierced with ruby-red studs, which appear to be acne rather **than adornment,** passes over into the seating area and approaches the streaked windows, starting by the entryway and working towards the far corner of the dining room with an unlabeled spray bottle and a dingy rag already dripping with the suds of something else, possibly **something dead.** **her leather-soled flats catch on the tile every few steps creating an uneven rhythm of squeaks.** as she pulls the rag across the glass, the elongated handprints and smudges of collateral grease, almost embedded into the portrait of the outside world,

seem to peel up like ghosts. she works her magic as high as possible leaving a portion of the glass closest to the ceiling **still coated with the grime.**

**as she finishes the third pane, an even shorter, bloodied man-beast strolls out from the back room behind black rubber batwing doors with tinted goggles on. as he nears the old fashioned, taupe-colored cash register, which is empty besides a few crusty singles and razor blades, he pulls the goggles onto his forehead and glances hard at the young miss on the other side of the room, her tiny frame giving off a faint recognition of a thing called lust, then puts his eyes on the floor again. he hadn't had a hard on in several weeks, since the nubile brunette came in with some late night munchies, and a tall ugly boyfriend type in tow. terribly appetizing couple.** that particular guest had worn a halterneck shirt and low rise jeans revealing large portions of precious skin to be coveted. it was a combination of female parts and his unrefined pubescence that drove him wild for the little framed females, sometimes without relenting. he had torn her to shreds with a chainsaw, as best he could, in the heat of the moment, leaving the dumb bastard she'd come in with for the pigeons, so to speak.

.....

and then there was Wretch, the oldest male employee. it was he who commanded the cannibalistic battalion upon the stupid outsiders.

.....

they would come in **preoccupied** with their mouths running about mundane chatter, barely noticing **the conditions of the place or that the door automatically locked behind them, and** scope out a place to sit. sometimes it would take closer to half an hour before anything really revved up, depending on their leader's mood or how hungry his people were, but more often than not, there was an immediate riot. a blunt object struck to the skull, or the occasional crossbow arrow through the chest. and seeing as few people came in alone, there was always **the scream. which never helped. the cooks would mount the bar launching projectiles, the regulars brandishing silverware, and the two ginger brats biting ankles or throwing a stool against their**

kneecaps. the riot never lasted long and never did anyone come around the same time to notice it from outside in the parking lot. it seemed some form a titan protected the diner from irregularity. \

kill, eat, stay forever.

Wretch would beckon the carnage with a chime. **a small gong located higher than his head, facing outwards. and all their crimson eyes would** blaze like werewolves. instinctively putting ruin upon the alien bodies.

.....

there had once been another member who couldn't accept his fate as a regular. he was there in the hazy beginning, like an undetectable, genetic tumor.

a middle-aged **man who** went by Hertz. who wore a red necktie with a crooked knot and a faded baseball cap, blue jeans and white loafers. he was obscene in every manner, and before his expiration date had came, there was a slightly heavier roar of noise within the diner, due to an aberration that grew within him, a stark contrast against the mechanical, monastic atmosphere. he wouldn't stay put for long, changing seats frequently, uneasily wandering about as **if he was blind. he would have outbursts of inquiry, such as the idea of "escape," to which the others would innately reject and usually ignore. after some time, his eccentricity became** childish and brash, urinating publicly on the floor and slapping Carton, the black geezer, on his hunched back at random. no one had ever really responded to **anything he did**, because there was little knowledge about their consequences, or if there would be any at all. his speaking **was unpleasant** and almost seemed to blur the line between predator and prey to the others. he was a weak member of their group and eventually he only partook in the aftermath of their collective murdering, the feed.

after several "months" of this, it was totally unbearable, so they openly petitioned for his beheading. which was carried out swiftly despite his flailing and protest. once the decision was made, **the black&blonde punker kicked his stool out angrily, which skidded and fell against an aluminum garbage pail making a substitute clang for initiation. Winter then grabbed Hertz by the collar and waist of his denim jeans, and threw him across the room, while the big mother watched almost shrieking with joy.** his body lay still for a moment,

until Wretch picked him up, when he regained his senses and began throwing wild punches into the gut of the undertaker. He was pulled through the pivoting gate of the kitchen, and straight to the guillotine, where he was made history. they decided not to eat the poor bastard out of respect for his origin, so they strung him up in a broom closet to rot for eternity. never understanding his place amongst them. the next day he was forgotten, and their love of **silence** was **redressed**.

.....

## *reptile Motel*

Ellis woke from the turbulent undertaking of a nightmare. peeling off the sweaty cloth, like a layer of chrysalis, smearing the moisture about his forehead as the blinds shifted fractals of light across his torso. something creaked through the ceiling and he could hear distant muffled conversation through the walls from someone in the corridor. his left arm ached from several hours sleeping in a mutilated coil of contortion. as he woke further into consciousness, he heard dull thuds and angry conversation, someone getting thrown from one side of a room to the other, above him. the building, always favored violence in the daytime.

remembering all at once the dream of another exact memory, played out like an 8mm home-movie. simulcast over this recapitulation, he could feel the sensation of dark comedy and slight apprehension, which was typical in the mornings.

some bird of an unknown variety chirped diligently in the elm trees a couple stories below his room. from sunrise until whenever left the building, it all seemed comical. he removed himself from the cyclonic disaster of his sleeping place and trudged high-Diligence to the closet. he could see himself in the long mirror as he went: the look of a man time-warped and unethical, naked aside from his boxer briefs, and tattooed with elegant shapes and designs: strange depictions of ghosts and machinery.

This particular dawn, he couldn't get the thought out of his head, of the FIVE DAGGER SYNDICATE and Marco's idiotically perishing face: a gray, old-hat cartoon popping in and out on the palette of his cluttered psyche. he'd thrown him lightly over the side of the S.S. Reinhardt last week, and he tumbled down the paneled siding to a flat collision with the still water below. Marco, the poor little smuggler, had left his pistol up in the cabin when Ellis had surprised him on the deck in the light of the orange moon.



--Ellis must have gotten extremely polluted last night, memories were coming in from bad radio channels. his whole mind and body, reeling in the sounds of the abusive neighbors, and shivering like a shitzu in Greenland.

he took the morning leak, which smelled like a thousand green plants ripped from the ground and left to rot in the toilet. Bulging mirror, radiation- he looked deeply as his skull began to shine underneath his skin, and his eyes began to roll like slot machine wheels, from red to violet and back again. his teeth were chipped, and the muscles from his shoulders up trembled and pulsed as he tried to grasp the wall on either side of the medicine cabinet.

this was his home, & it bathed in him as he bathed in it. Ellis was working down the list of bastards who killed his partner, Colton, and in 5 years the garbage and refuse of a grandiose search and destroy had built up into biohazard hills throughout his absurdly petite apartment den.

typical tilted paintings of bare-chested beauties distorted and crowned with bone. behind the couch there was a pyramid of books and magazines, some of them slightly burnt, which would shift and adjust itself as a new one hit the top. about 4 in the morning is when he'd usually return home from the boardwalk or the gentry bars, picking fights with men in bowties and slinging champagne after they'd manhandled him out the doors. he was somewhat of a true drunk, but more than anything, it was a facade to keep them off his trail. he realized, though, that one of these days they'd think it was best to just do him off anyway, bellyman or not.

the FIVE DAGGERS... they only moved through certain districts, occasionally breaking off a sub-member to move information about some drug shipment or assassination, and that's how Ellis would manage to slowly crack down on his enemy. he was idealistic.

he got dressed, pulling on the magenta sweater over a crushed and deformed button-down french cuff shirt, with no links, rolled up to his elbows like a child. his hair greased back and cowlicked, eyes still slightly bloodshot and the five-o'clock shadow dense, blending in with the haggard skin of his neck and face.

at all hours, heroic blasts of vulgar violins and flutes were laced with a classical score of pornographic chants and roaring. some of which came from his own stereo or tube, and some from his neighbors, who apparently had a similar taste in living soundtracks.

Ellis left the apartment and caught a cab outside, under the yoke and bruised sky of this sour september, shot the bellhop a finger, as he boarded, and told the driver- “hey, thirty-third and where the newsstand’s,... Roary’s.” he belched a little at his own excessive movement and the overheated and diluted coffee he made.

pigeons were striking up like autumn leaves all around the pedestrians and the cars, like a black and white explosion. the park was entertained with bumfights right across from his building, which he watched in admiration and hungover clairvoyance as the taxi blasted and lurched upon the road, trying to zag over a few lanes to make the first left onto Wrathren Rd.

he cracked the back window and flicked his ash, while scratching his genitals with his other hand and quickly eyeballing the driver with the bunchy taboggan hat and the loop earring, who glared back at him in the rear view, saying nothing.

they passed under Martin Ave., into the Bluejay Bridge Tunnel, the echoes of a thousand and two rapes and murders smacked against the doors of the taxi cab, and the reflections of blood speckled graffiti tags and abstractions seeped into the glass of his eyeballs. Ellis took a swig from his leather bound flask, the material peeling over his hand as he drank deep from the little spout, sucking at first and then letting it drop openly into his throat, some of which escaped down the sides of his cheeks and onto the magenta sweater.

“i’m sick, but healthier than you, Cunt-” he had told the pro. she looked at him square; self-pity and the urge to punch him, mixed into the expression on her face. she still fucked him for 40pesos. when she left, he vomited like a silky waterfall all over the bathroom. he had gotten exactly what he needed though. whores collected unimaginable things in their purses, some of which counted as good evidence. while she was in the post-thrash of intercourse and rigorous foreplay that he laid on her, internally disgusted and with the last

remaining strength he had that day, Ellis dug through her mammoth purse until a little baggie trembled it's way into his fingers. his teeth begged for a little taste, which they were granted and he threw the shit back into her bag and nudged her awake. that was last tuesday- last lay for a while he imagined. he apologized to the lizard at some point after the girl had vanished.

vigilantism wasn't easy to ingest. all the drugs those days, at least in the box of the city, were made to react in the blood. speak up like beacons to the traffickers, all for the cause of monopoly.... all that Ellis needed was to know that the consistency was out there, and to be on the grid himself, at which point he could kick off the big search, following the next dealer that approached him, back to the source. once you tasted it, they knew where to find you. somewhere in the back of his disgruntled, though effective mind, he thought 'at least the shit's good nowadays.'

the cab stopped and was lightly sprayed with bullets on the back end, shattering one of the rear taillights. Ellis checked the meter and paid him 2 dollars over, slipped out onto the roadside, adjusting the pistol at the back of his waist.

Municipal Guardian HQ towered over him again; third time this week, yet he was still phased by the height of the fucking building. Silvery blue like an ungodly dagger dug into the city turf. The cab peeled away behind him, and Ellis leaped over the hood of an oncoming sports-car, almost tagging the windshield. the square out front of the building was riddled from left to right with bounty hunters, skinheads, academy flunks, CI's, serpents, raccoons, jaguars, .... the rain had trumped all over the marble walkways leading up to the 30 revolving doors, the whole place looked like a spilt coffee accident as well. brown and diarrheal. mostly men and extremely low women, women with missing eyes and deep scars across their scalps, long swords strapped to their backs, bad teeth and noses, and stockings that miraculously still held together. Vix and Deutor, the couple that worked together, oddly functional, were occasionally worth having a word with. They seemed to

create a better, dual mind, one you could rely on for accurate information, which usually didn't cost too much, as they liked Ellis. There were few who did. Vix was sitting on a bench reading over a long scroll with various images and control panels while deutor was off getting a sharpening and a pack of cigarillos, and an almost forgotten black coffee.

thunder blasted above them.

"been here all morning?" Ellis came up to her while her face was all crunched up and then sullen. he stretched as he looked at her for a moment and then back around him at all the crowding souls.

"hi Ellis. D will be back in a minute if you want to speak to us, i'm trying to finish up this last part about the coastal authorities. Down by the water, you know, they've uncovered about 35 tankers and submarines combined that have been immigrating into children..." she trailed off continuing to peruse the scroll held up by her right hand, as she inhaled deeply from the nicotine stick in her left; she realized fishing was useless.

"anyhow, you look decent Ellis," she lied.

"thanks, i'll be back, maybe you'll still be here," Ellis strolled away towards the door banks, a plume of her smoke following behind him.

the elevators took him to the top;

waltzing around the gargantuan office with a glass of commandeered scotch: a good brand called Rebellion, he hadn't tried yet. Ellis smiled for a moment while his insides were beginning to succumb to the liquid medicine and the quietude of the room, before Dr. Telmark returned from his meeting or bathroom break or wherever he was that his ignorant and scrambled secretary couldn't remember.

"You are an ugly disappointment to all MG. Who said you could drink my scotch you pisshead? take a seat or i'll murder you with that glass." Telmark seemed to glide on his own words.

his highness spoke with the guttural indigestion of an established man who was getting larded. the type of 'gentleman' who'd married a young woman, and lost all concern for his appearance, beyond that of those pompous double-breasted suits that looked like tailored carpets.

he stormed in and around Ellis, eyes focused on nothing, the storm cracking jagged whips outside in the view of the gray eternity.

"- I send you on jobs. one's that you never finish," he squatted into his throne and settled his arms upon the long glass table. "and then i get to hear from human resources, and the micro-management offices as well, about you pulling in or dusting off a half-dozen nobodies. That weren't even close to your list, maybe some other guardian." Dr. Telmark got back up and stomped across the room like an action figure, as he continued his tirade, and went back behind his desk to finish...

"and you know what this does, mr. Havehler, it fucking puts people we're searching for in the shadows for god knows how long, because they're all affiliated!" the doctor had poured himself something, which looked like dark absinthe. "i'm not sure why you look so proud and have the gall to flaunt around my office."

Ellis finished twirling around and walked over to the opposite side of the desk from Telmark, downing the rest of the scotch, his hand still twitching at his side.

"i'm hearing you."

Dr. Telmark, smirked, and they looked each other in the eye for a moment, seemingly understanding their mutual displeasure of sharing company.

"either money, er, access to the arsenal. Or something. what is it Havehler?" he said this last inquiry in a lower tone and with a dry, weak formality in great contrast to his usual passion of disdain.

"who says i don't enjoy visiting my favorite boss..?" Ellis moved in closer to the desk, and focused on the bottle of alluring liquor.

for a moment, the direction of his gaze had broken to the right and an element of seriousness entered the room like an actual guest, a series of clouds seemed to maul each other in the view behind Telmark, and Ellis could sense a stern expression which was that of diminishing patience.

Ellis proceeded seriously - "I need a D.G. letter and another weapon. No partner, no scandal prints, no mock prints, no advanced clearance, not the usual stuff i ask for..."

Telmark cut him off, "you and i are talking here,.. we both know that a D.G. incorporates all of that, and more," he resumed having the irritated and contemplative look upon his round face, and grabbed up the cigar that'd been left since the day before in the glass ashtray beside the accrued liter bottles, tumblers, red and manila folders, and the gray rotary phone. He lit it and continued, " you're asking for the free agency to fuck around this city even more than you do now. You may as well have the damn DualGuard already..."

"Go home, actually, i'm not going to humor this prank of a conversation any longer than i have to. And i'm not going to give you the next best thing, which i'm sure is what you're looking to lure out of this 'liaison'," he tapped the ash off with his index finger. Dr. Telmark was a man of many faces, which probably came from being a guardian himself for so many years before he became an obese overseer with too much money that he wasn't spending on new suits or a better cologne, but he wasn't blind, a fool, or ignorant either. He leaned back in his little creaking ergonomic throne, and feigned his last indignant grin, just as Ellis' hand quit shaking.

"Atkin- i'm not asking. I know that i've been a hardcase and my record is slackening, but i don't give two fucks today, I've got a lead and i'm following it. this is one thing i haven't had before, the opportunity to pull out all the stops, all the little uncomfortable elements of this gag. I need the weapon, which i don't even have to ask you for. And I need the letter for 2 days. This is the only thing i'm still capable of doing, and instead of sitting on the damn thing until we all get squashed and all the criminal shit out there finds a more covert method of getting around our individual greed, i want you to fork it over so i can do my fucking job." he couldn't tell him the truth. it was on the brink.

his blood pressure had risen; just as well, Telmark's had risen at the mention of his first name. His expression went to one of sympathy, or pity, or something else that led Ellis to continue being steady.

“ok then.-take your badge and trade it to V. Carbi down on the 14th floor, you've met him i'm sure. i'll make the call. i'm telling you this once, don't ever show up in my office again, don't even knock on the door. don't come to this floor even. Win or lose, this is the last favor you'll be getting through me Havehler.”

the momentum of his stride and the vibrato within his chest was greater than when he arrived. his two cronies, Vix and Deutor, had already left from the courtyard, to whatever mission it was that she had mentioned, which had further inspired his nebular supposition. the tankers, the DAGGERS, the veil over the whole Pattern, which he had been hunting and slowly weeding out, seemed to shift into the light for a moment and reveal the outline of what was hidden behind it.

he passed through the damp marble courtyard admiring from that vantage, that of the goofy looking city skyline, like a line of plants in an orchard, but instead staked down into the misty ocean. if he could wipe every soul clean off the map of this his home, he would be much more content. Thought to himself he may be reminded of venice, or that of what he'd seen in the magazines and cinema. a bit more glossy and contemporary.

it was just past lunch, and the street was booming with foot traffic and few available cabs. he stared up and down Appler Rd., which hosted the Guardian HQ among many other colossal monoliths and megastores, broken up by alleyways where he'd probably tossed a bullet or two. His thoughts were a bit muddled, on and off, knowing that this Pattern, was more than likely a large take on for even someone as cavalier as himself. it made his feet cramp inside his boots.

he had his new badge resting within his blazer pocket, against his rigid, semi-muscular torso; on the opposite, he had his second acquisition of the day, the Whip- the stunning firearm, which drew a look of confusion whenever he spoke to V. Carbi at the Control Office, and then Jeffers down at the arsenal, who hadn't seen Ellis in enough time to make him wonder if he actually recognized him at all. Ellis Havehler was the type of

traditional man, who usually preferred his own weapon; and he'd had the little Ruger, with the custom wooden hilt, for quite a time. He still had it tucked in along with the backside of his shirt.

the moisture in the air gripped at his bare skin. Ellis continued down Appler, and over further from home down Levi St. where the people began to hover listlessly on the stoops, and more regularly, windows were smashed in, and if you were lucky the faint scent of smoke would indicate a burning module on the sidewalk.

his first stop would be the corner shop he'd been three weeks before, where the little boy, Ralif, had told the clerk about his mother not coming home recently. Ellis hung around the back of the store, listening after the boy had left and the clerk fessed up to his coworker that he thought it might have had something to do with the boys uncle, Leone. He couldn't be sure, but Ellis thought he had heard that name mentioned among his peers at the Guardian. Someone of a local, yet coveted, head, with a fair enough bounty rising on the sheets.

The FIVE DAGGERS had always been more of folklore than anything else to the rest of MG, though there were hard facts about several terminated bounties who claimed to have alliance. Ellis himself had no doubts which, as per usual, pinned a mark of fanaticism, and he was ergo hallowed as unmanageable and an hack of a guardian. He had knowingly plugged one, though, and been face to face with the whole lot of them based on his earlier hunches.

-that was what led him to this the imminent malodor of fried fish, and this surreptitious corner of the city which glowed somewhat purple or pink at his peripherals.-He had been gliding up until that point where the depth of horror and contempt seemed to birth a faint music, something that, with the smell, was almost a full-fledged bad trip of epic proportions. He glanced upwards at the colorful, yet menacing whorls that graced the tops of the buildings, along with the decorative minarets, and the sky beyond it, simply gray and motionless as the birds had come to rest in the dusk.

It was less of a hunch now than ever. his gut spoke volumes.



a previous night on the calendar had taught him of the precise location.

Ellis had walked out of the shabbiness, totally blood-drenched and sardonic. brutal it had been to hurt the flesh of such a hot number.

Autopsy Martin, the dangerous woman, and definitely a banshee to kill. Her last words were out of spite, giving up the coordinates, which he prised so effortfully.

Ellis was now sneaking through the rear alley entrance....near where the orientals and the nasty apprentices converged and congregated, spoke of cigarettes, outside the parlour office. The sun rarely struck down beyond the minarets and lightning rods that jumbled some 70 stories or more above, all of which had long ago been overrun by a crossbreed of hawks and ravens. The buildings themselves, inhabited by a separate species of uncouth addicts who would perform sexual favors of any variety for a hit or so, provided they were visited where they made their dwellings, cluttered of twisting telephone cords, old calendars, pinnable cubical walls and immense, unfair views of the dysphoria that flourished throughout the city around them.

this was the most major part of the MR district, this grouping of abandoned skyscrapers and the sordid network of ground-level clubs and soupkitchens.

The MR was called such based on several different associations, but most people thought it trendy to see it as the money-rag, where a very small portion of filthy wealth tended to their fetishes. Squeezing and trickling. something lower.

Many good bounties were landed here as well, and for whatever reason it didn't change the frequency of it's inherent criminality and sinisterness.

The drug was the key. Taking it from the pros purse, he imagined his current scenario almost perfectly. It was beautifully frightening. Without it, he'd be dead several steps past the threshold. Continuing through a vibratory pantheon of glowing corridors, Ellis Havehler could see a burning, and feel the shattering of crystalline

chandeliers ahead of him in some form of vacant vestibule. not a soul moved throughout this part of the building. metallic wind-chimes shimmied and danced in his mind, a hurricane of psychopathy, which he was only able to tolerate with the substance still faint in his veins. he could feel a dynamic thudding in the soles of his feet. there was a blood fountain sputtering before him in the center of the rounded, conjoining room where other corridors evidently led upon as well. kaleidoscopic pain continued to enter him through the lobes of his brain and at his temples, fractals against the walls, and only for a moment, a nausea visited his stomach, which he attributed to the quick snack he had picked up in the projects. beyond this centralized area, Ellis could espy a small bay of elevators with their doors wide open and shadowy on the interior.

the thudding continued beneath him as he searched for the best method to confront his day's destiny.

inside the elevator the light did not flicker, but instead it purred down upon him in some form of electric aberration that made his brain tingle while his body made the strongest effort to find the Basement level button among the thirty to forty other miscellaneous numbers, some of which had been pried from their sockets. he descended at a normal pace to this level in a matter of stagnant moments.

beyond the split door, which had yet to open automatically, he could feel the thudding reaching out to him, now being felt by the whole front of his slanted, body. the stun gun and his primary pistol seemed to shiver in his palms and his clothes seem to shrink upon him and he reached for the other button in the metallic farm on the wall.

Ellis tended not to wound his bounties, or victims rather. though much of the Municipal Guardian 'execs' preferred them returned living, it wasn't mandatory, and usually he would find it simpler, in most cases, to fire first. He wasn't proud of this, yet he also had lost the will to have contempt for anything that was involved in his life: all was part of the terrible and natural virtue which was provided.

He entered the pulsating room with a stride irregular. It was dark but his eyes needed no adjustment and he could discern many black-laden gentlemen around this clandestine cavern, only glancing upon him in a sense of lazy disruption and inquisition, drunken and unprepared for his discovering them. he approached with a familiarity, a man that he had recognized from a prior altercation, one of the few. a bar off to his left seemed to be populated by both these men in grey suits and women who wore nothing but a distinctive cap on their head; underneath it was a great flowing of blonde hair from all of them.

he could sense this but did not turn to see, and continued staring down his target while lifting both of his weapons with the a quiet and still casual demeanor, knowing this scenario could end only 1 of 2 ways. he stunned the man before him with his weaker left index compressing the trigger, while readying himself to dodge the body that would tumble forth, tucking the small gun back into its holster and then, all of this at once, plugging every other moving thing in the room with a bullet from his trusty. he may have missed only several times before he could hear only the near-deafening music and see only the movement of sage-colored domes attached to the ceiling.

in a moment of hilarious stillness, he stood cradling himself within his doom-scape -he had actually taken a small wound. he realized as his mind began to relax from the explosion of quick gunfire, that his hip had been touched, and that he was bleeding only slightly down his right leg.

he retreated slowly back through the same route he came, which was only slightly less intense, and finally back out into the glowing night with his paralytic prize, where no cabs were waiting and with a fortunateness that no one was out to notice the luggage that he hauled, one step at a time across many blocks. he did have a badge, though, after all.

Ellis had watched as Telmark exited the freight elevator, his eyes dusted with pharisaic languor. the doctor moved across the slate pavement and through the florescence of the underground parking lot, nearly limping, and over to his charcoal coloured street shredder. he had probably stuffed himself with quarts of liquor, the flesh of a minor, and some form of opiate that he'd appropriated with his status, before deciding to leave at his regular hour of pre-daybreak morning.

This garage was the only afterhours entry-point, where the higher-ups would end their day at the HQ and take the subterranean passage back to their little domiciles, under the waterway which separated most of the wealthy in their massive village, from the rest of the commercial buildings, the poverty, the middle, the everything else.

Telmark's machine vacated its space and the garage and left no one else to expect. Ellis caught the elevator in time, at this point dragging the body of the DAGGERS man behind him at a surprising velocity. He took this elevator to one level, another one to another level and finally reached the floor of his desire, where he resigned from his position once and for all, leaving his living letter crashed upon Telmark's desk among the fountain pens and bounty photographs, bound only by the wrists.

*(i.e. caramel)*

playfully unzipping down the side, seeing her ribs and tightest skin, the lights low, all the elements causing a flutter-

Of course a dream!

a lady cobra without the wicked,,

but i wouldn't ever have her in that state of mind.

Though so gorgeous and lacking discernible age, her attic was full of chairs; butt-cheek dust traces.

picking hibiscus every 4 days to keep the vase happy, from an empty market with the sun on all four sides of the earth. too much color enhanced the whimsy of never dying or being relied upon. robotic arms and lug nut elbows steady amongst the flora, and a powerful acceptance emanated between the tattered tents... the untempered wind played its only song through the passages of metallic joints, and across the microscopic field of salmon colored hair that grew on her forearms. the tattoo of bartholomeu diaz unfettered, with his ulcer-ridden-face recently chewed on by a spider.

once in a past life, her grandmother's cottage had imploded, termites were suspected, and without a sitter that day, she became the canvas to a design of now gelatinous-looking scar tissue: art deco from waist to calf.

Accosted by glance-work, a plausible conspiracy of toads. bitter red something was speaking, the unventilated room clouding more and the emaciated junk on side stage strummed on a wide hollow-body which hung like and by a scrotum.

-odd thing about this little joint; - the bar only takes francs; a useless and clever maneuver. lonely she pulls out her brilliant stash every night. "if you had the gall, you'd have the access." says the Bardo beside her, the man with the bad accent and a thousand freckles on his shoulders.

gin & tonic, 9f. pisco, 7francs... .

this code of currency didn't suppose a crowd of actual french costumers; the patrons ranged from snob to grime. The spiral staircase with barely finished maple steps coils up and creaks without weight, and from the grinding flower of the bar that reached out into the foyer, one could view the unnerving series of faces nailed to the darkness beyond the upstairs banister ===== regal bullish types with ties, and volume in their beehives. They could have been wax. end of the world and they still conglomerate with such ill-proportioned disdain, or some outward emanation of emotion that resembled it.

i speak of her loosely as an outside humanitarian, or a plain voyeur. Someone she never loved. or even noticed. but i was there, coincidentally when she was. spending the remnants of my father's extensive collection, which came to me, when he burned down our old house in a fit of lifeless rage. i never blamed him for that, because i couldn't remember if that had actually happened, or if i ever actually had a father. I had delved into the unkempt mind of everyone there at one point or another, much like an employee stealing from the petty cash drawer. \_\_\_\_\_

i made believe that her and I made love in the Jacks, like all my other memories, she was between me and the wall. this place,.. it sucks you in, and i think she's a hired woman, but I could be mistaken, but that's from the fiction i've found out in the desert docks bookhouse.

friday nights. there's a bloke that comes in and i can tell by her expression, the man smells o' fresh pressed tobacco leaf, which she breaths deep and passionately. his one eyeball lolling ever so, like a soft mutant he was.

tonight i took a break, not from myself or anything but the square footage of the joint.

The Liver Pub. but tomorrow, I'll be in with a stout gut to refill.

"in the end, I was the mean girl..." i thought i saw that on her lips one evening, but I had a considerable tally, and I was married to the roulette wheel for distraction. nothing of that matters, she stared

straight ahead through and beyond the bottles, like a narcoleptic, and if it had been any harder, there would have been incendiary gifts all around.

reading from the labels the way she did, and I reading the label of her skull-mask, once, I could sense, there was also a man who made some creaking with her in the past, and he must have been there quite often in their queen's bed, the one that probably stood alone in the muted room of garlic nostalgia, or that is now occupied by shouters or squaters, or a fat one with a lot of pizzabox art. where she went otherwise, we never knew a pinch, assuming I wasn't the only one left with a living johnson.

.....outside the electricity rapped into the oxygenic choke of the stratosphere, and what a beautiful dead town happened to absorb this bright hint of luck. sometimes in the night, she's standing there out on the broken deck in the country wilderness of axes left stuck in the joshuas, pavement uptorn from the accident of how the time ran out, and nothing left to recycle. another story, but she felt within it the way of many tragic prior days where excess was even so deserving. pelting hail of malignant spitballs from the mouth of metaphysical unknown.

muchas tormentas.

outward, not inward or upward.

always looking for a dangerous animal lurking on the rim of infinite volcanos gone dead. shooting cans sometimes with another relic of a family that was scarce. BB's off into the weird, and possible edge of big magma cherry. she had notions that the earth or whatever it had become was now flat. Mmmm to thoughts of a meal she'd one day enjoy made from the food that no one ever ingested except the elegant drosophila. food that had long spoiled anyway. a childlike dream of Tastebuds that had unevolved.

"...i believe so much, you know, *that* is what dictates the behavior of second people; we're too easily ready for another one of the leftover microwave meals. nothing more but Old Regular. I have seen the

past with my own eyes, i had lived something much worse than this. now we have each other and peace, yet the human nature to peek outside and search for higher joy, well that's something that'll never leave us."

some old hapless flunky to her charms, crammed 'imself in an armchair out on a flat part of the plains, spouting and handicapped under a large umbrella that churned in the gravel; dusk was profane with gray slices behind the bugger and little tungsten torches still yet burning in a semicircle several hundred meters out. rituals on peyote. she was probably a darling to his ignorant philosophy. watery eyes out past him, accepting the words. i could perceive her kindness, buried beneath her regret and deadness. the man in the circle of bulbs out in the playa looked at her, focusing hard on the swoosh and billow of her platinum colored dress. his speaking made sense, but all was a gigantic puddle of muddy water anyhow. she would walk beyond him to the piano beyond the dune, just behind the wagon trailer that was plunged in the sand. she had it standing and poorly tuned, and I could see her playing into the deepest of the blue sunset.

typical was the longing. oil in water, islands we all see inside ourselves. that's the life she found in the square of hell, and then there was the joint, where it resumed some historic sense of her "mother's" faded pictures and the singular story that remained on the tip of all our corpses' imaginary tongues. hands over each other, and no explosions.

bland and cryogenic, everything was mechanical and sensible and regular. everything was the essence of perfection that could be written like Marxism.

help it grow,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,

each time she'd hit a key, there's a beautiful assuagement in her chest to the lack of so many years.

I, honestly, rarely left the pub. because she, i knew, had more than any of us, more weight and for whatever reason kept returning to her stool like a moth with differently painted wings every day, or every night. a quiet



and beleaguering vision. eye-colors like a bad snake on it's own juice. they'd shift, blue to green and back.  
something that always struck me interesting. oh and a reddish brown.

Artemis was a barbiturate in her own right. her persona was like a dull magnet dipped in a scented batch of hot silver. and still soft, with the bosom of a million unknown mothers prior who passed away and on, invested before her gammerstang.

when she struck up a glass, there was the rattling of ice in everyone's eardrum.

once in the market, she had found a dead tulip mixed in with the hibiscus; the remaining blue of it's petals, like the androids' flesh, shivered in the hyperventilation of the southern oasis. she could always view her home from there, but it wasn't ever hers, and it wasn't there anyway. the thinnest sheen crossed over her vision, which she kept there endearingly, until the sand would dry it back into another sadness of the atmosphere that they all shared. north was south and west was north. no one considered the east as the sun was permanently so far from it.

self-sustaining stomachs. maniacs with little to rant of, and somehow all the bums of the world coexisting under her snout, she secretly loved, as any more silence and solitude would turn her to stone.

at least as far as I could tell, or would hope for, she granted me into her recognition.

I was a beloved once // i'm sure it's mutual.

I knew her as a child, she would say to me when I dreamed.

As the only one left with that power: that illustrious conundrum, whatever it may be. to boil up insane thoughts that blend the rightful desires of your mind with the abstract, unconscious and subconscious wills of the wandering spirit, which in the end is still just the mind on a religious trip.

she would also tell me of better cities, with something easy called hate and something fierce like depression.

The Liver Pub smelled of rank old mice, who'd been eating spoiled fish guts for every meal, but only when the door would open and let in the scent of the garbage that huddled around the neighboring shacks. no, the smell was more like powdered donuts filled with whale blubber and set adrift in the warmest part of the ocean.

it would seem appropriate, she thought, that they existed so close to the regular smell of beach. maybe she had dreams as well, of something real that had happened stranding them there with little love or life to recall, but then again that seemed like a false flash of fiction. the only real thing that they actually shared was the ability to create moisture upon each other. a viscous moisture that adhered and someone had read about it being good for the skin, almost like an anecdote.

her hair was combed quite harshly across the left side of her scalp. loose and a bit wet looking at all hours of the night.

Relish, the bartender was always on his best while she was in, but his manners were still a bit unfortified. He once popped a bottle of champagne directly towards her, allowing a torrent of the fizz all over her face and torso, yet she sat quite motionless and closed her eyes as if in the ecstasy of a good romping's finale. it excited several of the others at the bar, embarrassed Relish, and dumbfounded me how magnificent she still was in the face of such an accident. and i couldn't lie, then or now, that her breasts reached out from their perfect shallowness into my eyes like cannonballs covered in honey.

it had been 7630 days since i'd discovered the pub on the outer square of the city. facing in towards the burning amber prisms of pitiful commerce that drifted around like an unhappy mirage, it drew in everyone from the city at different times. Artemis couldn't be found within the squares, but she would still be there on most every night of the indefinite weeks.

Pawl Retro, the city's figurehead, would be motoring around with a grim squiggle of a face, leaning out of his mule driven stage coach. He did nothing but this and continue teaching the children about irrigation techniques that made sense to only the letters themselves typed out in his heavy books.

Hookers were quite rampant and free, but quiet as had been assumed through some generalized sense of historical feel. It was more of an unspoken series of commutes from place to place, hedonistically passing the time and sporting their fit reddened bodies with the ignorance of consequence.

A part of me considered that she had once been in that line of work, feeding off of it as a youngster until the feel of it was eventually tantamount to enjoying the music at the pub. but that consideration was a thin one....

never free, never me!!!- --- the singer was belting out from the micro stage in the orange corner. some kind of metallic wall sculpture reached out from behind him to the stage right, behaving like a gargoyle.

tonight, a glistening collapse of soul music gently spoke via mist throughout the pub. It felt much larger. the reach of the exterior penetrated the walls, and even the gibbies above the bar who would occasionally shimmy down and dance in their mysterious way like penguins,... they were civil amongst it all.

ribbons hung from the corners, some kind of celebration I wasn't aware of. ...or maybe they'd always been there.

the sun sat pecked behind the western hills, always ready and gorgeous to descend no more.

people drinking tan whiskey at the bar, tonight she wasn't there. or was in a different quadrant than usual, and I was distracted by some variant of headchange. she may have well found company in the upstairs crowd, which for all i knew went on for miles from a black hole at the top of the staircase.

not so different on this hour. and a long white-haired youth slashed around the little stage as if he had an evil purpose, his solo work more than amusing.

a point during said hour and I had to take a leak; decided to go outside, hook around the alley and over the loose trash that made a perimeter.

cables hung silly and distressed, lighting and powering the little joint. behind where the useless overflowing dumpster stood like a fat oaf. there were invisible rainbows of oil & grease lazy in the puddles. an immaculate Camaro parked like a glazed monument under a tattering tent, attached to the neighboring shack.

bent oxidized copper rods and fractured tumblers by the cedar wood panels of the closest mangled shack. running upright and splintered, holes and gaps, evaporated shingles. the early moon drips holy ghosts throughout the wasteland, i thought, and realized i had just read that as an inscription in the alley. it would be another of many beautiful hours out there, far from the city, and of the city. it was all coaxial anyhow, and no matter, we would always be in the same spot, having the same privilege of vistas.

I sat down again with my back pressed to the angelic wall, by a banister that led up to a room full of oddly hysterical portraits. People went up there to blow each other, I suppose, and I'm more of a music aficionado nowadays. she never went up there, as far as I knew, and I wasn't jealous either way. 'thoughts are just as provocative as actions when it comes to possession and envy.' so i read one time in a book of essays. so nice.

junkie beard closest to the piano- eyes closed, pallid eyelids, translucent. and another man, grunted over his lager, exclamatory inserts like a hippopotamus. very parisian and familiar this one, its hard to remember other hours at all. the two of them seemed to be on the same trajectory out the door with a goal to get moaned and day-gone to the lovely good girls of the innermost square. the brick buildings there must have quaked quite raucously, but i hardly got in that far.

those two - lay down, sidewalk speed-hump. body tragically breasted, big straight bean.

NO NO NO - down the road they left, wearing a cardboard fedora and hemp sandals. schmucks laced up on a binge, walking back to home nowhere at the blank opacity of morning fringe.

then i noticed her. after the gents let the wings flap, and somehow they'd been hiding her. she must have been tucked behind the shadows, admiring this set of keys.

oh pretty being. she coulda been entranced by the cobwebbed marimba as well. the little blonde kid, would pound on it viciously, and with great rhythm over a strum of his lousy guitar.

and as volume increased. a chandelier came crashing down in slow motion with something like a shoe, the culprit and the noose bullet, flung past and landing beyond it's target. a fight had broken out, somewhere in one of the various ramshackle mezzanines above.

thunderous voices rolled over the patched ceiling and down the foyer. "you crimson faced brutesack, flat be the hand upon a lass!" "just the once, and you've murdered, you've murdered more than I!!" it always begins with a little talk, how else, and then a small circling of heavier steps, and then explosive crunching and wresting sounds that ended in the chandelier almost at my feet. i could see the others from the opposite mezzanine, standing with glazed eyes, apathetic and disassociated altogether with anything besides their numbed passageways of mind. the fight calmed in seconds, and undoubtably with little condolences to the either.

an emaciated gentlemen with a red silk shirt and black blazer, black bowtie and black grease swept back with an open hand or a broken comb through his meek pompidour, stood oddly cross-armed, staring down at me- quite peculiar, and as if he was somewhat less immobilized than his comrades. he looked quizzically down, but still like a hallucination to me, with the face of a mannequin you thought for a moment was a real person. a dark almost black scar or streak ran down just below his ear onto his neck, like the run of mascara from a crying woman's eye. a loose and trembling arm ran across his shoulder, from a woman who nearly resembled a sister

type to him, she whispered to him and continued staring on out into voids of her own contraption, behind his head.

his left arm rested gently on the chipped handrail, which made me notice how various living and nonliving apparatuses seemed to be curling around him naturally, as i glared up out of my own dark corner booth, below the portrait of some antique heathen, fingering and cranking the tumbler on the table, feeling it's perspiration cool the heat of my hands.

i forced myself to follow her once again, my slighting inamorata of the bartop. i was too shy. but all things ceased as the hammer came down upon my hand and then my face. a larger mallet, soft enough to bring no gore. i was blackened with no dreams then.

Mr. Risk sat beside me untangled in play shackles, he must've known i like theatricality. he looked at me throughout all of my hazy awakening and then looked away. his distance was real. i knew we were about to see some fantasy of his making. Artemis was left in the hindered moments of my past. i saw that instantaneously. i knew the beautiful icon was to be drowned in something besides a world where i could accomplish nothing. I will miss her, but he spoke to me then like a god in his red shirt, i knew he was coming and would have much wisdom to pour like peppered water on my bruised eye-sockets. after calling me by an ancient name, he only said, "take hardy to the grave, and know the same illusion if you will, when the sun reaches the point of where you always lived."

i thought of dreams, and realized how different they were from this. Artemis might be proud, but she may have never been there to begin with.

Mr. Risk looked at me once more and grabbed me by the shoulders.

