

Eschillion Key

Introduction

I know there is nothing I can say to ease your loss. All I can offer you, at this point, is a feeble apology. I have not found your daughter. I have tried. God knows I've tried.

I believe Lisa is alive, wherever she is. As of now, we have no evidence to the contrary.

She and her girlfriend Sara have been spotted throughout the city with two teenage boys. Those boys, too, seem to have disappeared. Maybe they've all fallen in love and run off together, fearful of being separated. In any case, none of them have been seen for over a month.

I'll fax you what we have on the boys. Their parents have been completely cooperative. Everyone is as worried as you, Fred.

I found a few pages of your daughter's diary hidden beneath the dresser of the room she was staying in. Don't care to speculate on why Lisa left those particular entries behind. The greatest clue to Lisa's whereabouts comes to me from the words, "Something happened to me tomorrow."

Hotel staff located a few of Lisa's personal items before I arrived, all of which I'm sending directly to you.

It doesn't look good, Fred. But then, at least, it doesn't exactly look bad, either. I'll keep searching.

Yours until eternity,

Joseph Cooper

Book 1: Killing Clocks

Part 1: Killing Clocks

"It's just a pen Eddie," Ben said. "And if it was a sword, I'd say the same."

Who thinks like that?

I stared at Ben's black Ghost Rider shirt for a second, considering. "It's just a pen," he says. This pen I planned on using to beat down Father Time and rob his house. This pen I planned on using to sneak into Death's lair and rescue my father.

"He wasn't crazy, you know." By the time I said that, I was looking him in the eyes. At least I think I was, through those silk curtains of hair and that dark pair of silver-rimmed sunglasses he always wore.

"Eddie," he said, "Your dad was a magician."

"And?"

"And. Right, you're right. He wasn't crazy."

What more could he say? I nodded.

Ben had come over that night to hear something important. Something private, to be told behind closed doors, beside the bookshelf. Something to be said uninterrupted by video games or my blaring stereo system. This went unsaid, understood by both parties after our telephone conversation.

What reason did he have to accept this time travel shit?

"I realize it all seems pretty far-fetched. Some of it really doesn't even make much sense to me." Like the chapter on Marco's Paradox. To this day, utter chicken scratch.

"I'll admit, that book's pretty crazy," Ben said. "When did your dad give it to you?"

"I got it after... He left it in an uncle's care, and Uncle Timmy passed it on to me."

"Oh. It looks pretty crazy..."

"But Dad was a magician," I said. "A performer. The whole thing's just for show."

It was Ben's turn to nod. He either missed or ignored the venom sarcasm drenching my voice.

I was making him uncomfortable and I knew it. I was trying to use tension and guilt to manipulate him, force him to open up his mind a little. I could be a real bastard sometimes, back then.

Ben wouldn't budge. Short of going back in time and stealing a dinosaur, there was nothing I could have done to convince him. He would have to see to believe, and that was that.

Maybe we would have gone on to talk about school. Maybe we would have cranked up the stereo and played a little *Battle Tanks* on my new Nintendo 64. We could have even gone a little old school with some *Street Fighter Turbo* on

the Sega. Instead, a voice screeched up at us from downstairs.

"Edward! Time to eat! Will your friend be staying for dinner?"

"The Banshee," I muttered. Then: "Yeah, Mom. Set a place for Ben."

I don't like complaining about things. Keep this in mind when I tell you what you should already know: high school's a bitch. A mean, slutty bitch just as likely to fuck you as she is to look at you. She looks often enough, too, only when she does you have to look the other way because you're afraid of the attention. I think maybe I read that somewhere.

You have to go, though. You need the experience. You even enjoy it at times. Some of your best and worst years will occur simultaneously in high school.

Now picture a great big lunchroom with two rows of tables. Picture about eighteen tables, roughly twenty chattering teens to each one. Zoom in a little, until you see my friends and I, isolated somewhere near the middle, a table of five.

Dustin is there, the chubby, vulgar-mouthed white guy with a buzz. John Harris is the skinny, girly-voiced black guy that won't look anybody in the eyes. Ben is the pale six-foot freshman leading the conversation, laughing at us all behind his groovy indoor shades. And Curly is the red head with the dark complexion. The one with the perfect legs and the grin that makes you feel insignificant. The one you've known for over a year and still have trouble talking to, because she makes you nervous. You try, though, because how wonderful it is to be made to feel *nervous*!

Now look over on the far right. There I am. Skinny, pale, black hair. Perfect 20/20 blue eyes, but people see the freckles and hear the voice of a timid intellectual and think, "He's forgotten his glasses today." Sitting at the edge of the group, just like I always did, because I hate feeling obligated to talk. And Curly always used to sit on the edge, too.

We were the '98 crew, I guess. It was different every year, who I would hang with at lunch. This year, the table was particularly barren. Kind of surprising, I thought, since it was the first year I was really hanging with people outside of school.

As you watch us, we talk about politics. We complain and talk about how things should be. You watch for five minutes and realize none of us really has any idea what we're talking about.

"We're going to Chrystal City next month," I say.

Sometimes, people simply don't hear me when I say things. I don't get much attention because I'm not expected to participate too much in conversations. Other times, the shock value inspired by the rarity of my electing to share divine wisdom with peers wins a few ears. At that moment, my voice had simply faded into the cacophonous cafeteria background.

"I'm going to Chrystal City!" I said again. This time, everyone heard, everyone looked at me. All four of them.

"What the hell does that have to do with the Middle East?" asked Dustin.

I ignored Dustin, as did everyone else. Something about the moment had us looking down on him.

"My mom's got some kind of business deal up there," I said.

"All summer?" asked Curly.

"Yeah. We're staying with an uncle."

"Cool. I've never been farther than Pennsylvania," Curly said. Casually flicking back her perfect rose-tipped fingers, she cast a wildfire tendril away from one of her flawless jadestone eyes. I thought I saw something in her expression right then. Maybe... Maybe.

"Ever gotten fucked before?" Dustin asked. He was fidgeting.

"Me neither," I said, shaking my head momentarily to free my eyes from a stare. "I don't think I've even been that far."

The '98 crew in general were losing interest quick. I could tell because I was making even myself a little anxious to finish.

Dustin said, "I like fucking small breasted women because they remind me of chil--"

"Shut the hell up," Ben said. "You've never fucked anybody and you never will because you're one damned ugly idiot. Anyway, I wanna hear more about this glimmering vacation."

Ben's word was law.

"Well..." I stammered. "We're staying in what's supposed to be a pretty shitty part of the city. Free, though. And there's room for a friend, if I can find somebody who'll pay for their own plane ticket."

"I've got a cousin there."

"I don't have any plans this summer."

"I hear the women over there have hairy pits."

"That's France, jackass."

"Fuck you, John."

"I'll bet New York'd kick ass."

"Yeah, any city that gives you the Velvet Underground is alright with me."

"Chrystal's got some big wigs too, man. Remember Andalusian Summoners?"

So went the talk for quite a while. I wasn't even listening. I had better things to think about than John and Dustin bickering. Hell would freeze over before I'd take my old pal Dustin with me, and I really didn't know John very well.

After everyone realized I was daydreaming, I suppose the conversation moved on to less relevant but more entertaining topics. By the time I started listening again, a bell rang and the usual mass evacuation of the cafeteria began.

Tuesday, right after Monday, I got together with Ben, Curly, and this little guy we called Gremlin. We gathered in Ben's back yard to play basketball. Being such horrible athletes all (with the exception of Gremlin), "playing" consisted of smoking pot and clowning around.

I'd only smoked up a couple of times before, always awkward and embarrassing and ... I'd rather not relive that now.

Anyway, this time I was going to get it right.

"Not like that, silly bitch! It's a bong, not a cock. Put your lips inside."

Oh well. At least my pothead newbie status got a few chuckles. And if I ever decide to go gay, at least I'll have a sliver of experience sticking wide objects in my mouth.

We had a blast after that. I just kind of chilled out on the deck with Ben while Curly and Gremlin made with the hook shots.

I started talking about time travel again. Ben just kind of nodded and rubbed his chin. "Yeah," he would say. Then he'd follow it up with something brilliant that I've since forgotten about. But it was always brilliant.

We started talking about politics, I think. Maybe it was the *Smurfs*. Remember that show? Whatever it was, as interesting as it was, it was interrupted by something that can only be described as FABulouuuuus.

"Watch this!" Curly shouted from the padded dirt basketball court. She threw the basketball up into the air and, I kid you not, Gremlin did a forward handspring/ kick thingie, scoring a basket (with the heels of his shoes!) from the three-point line. It was one of the craziest things I had ever seen.

Gremlin was a great guy. This vicious, determined, skinny little pimple-faced white kid. I wish I'd gotten to know Gremlin earlier, before the Shenanigans Incident. And the Summer.

Naturally, we were all astounded by the trick. Ben even took off his shades for a second, to blink over and over again. Me, I couldn't believe my eyes either.

Eventually, shock faded, talk resumed, and we all went back to having a fantastic time.

Later, Curly said, "I gotta see Mike in like half an hour and none of you assholes can drive yet. So Eddie, need a lift? I'm already giving Gremlin a ride anyway."

One of the reasons Ben and I got so tight so fast was because we lived so close. Between our houses, there's just a hop, skip, and a neat little creek. So naturally, I said, "You know my house is like right there, right?"

Curly shook the lava streams flowing hotly from her head, spinning around. "Whatever. We're off then, Gremlin." And so they were.

Ben looked over at me and said, "Can I shine the crystal?"

I started laughing. It was funny how he said it. "Sure," I said.

Most of my first year in high school went pretty slow. The last week shot by like a bullet.

Final Exams... And that was it. Two today, two tomorrow, two Thursday... and Boom! No more school for another three months.

Lots of kids get stressed about those exam things. Long, boring, multiple choice tests. The borderline kids think, "What if this damned test fails me for the year?" The smart kids think, "I've got to waste four hours of my life on these damned tests?" Me, I think, "Because of these damned tests, I only have to waste four hours of my life today! As opposed to the seven hours stolen from me every other school day in the year."

Thursday began with an English exam and ended with a study period. Teachers handed out this form to get signed so that we would be exempt from the study period. I got mine signed. What a way to end the year, huh?

Only, I couldn't get a ride home. Rather than go on to the fucking study period (what idiot schedules a study period at the end of the last day of school?) and waste my time, I met up with Gremlin at lunch. We decided to just sort of loiter in the cafeteria after everyone left. Maybe we'd shuffle around inside the school a bit, if the teachers got hostile.

Things got boring really fast. I mean, we were just sitting there talking. We didn't know each other that well so we really didn't have that much to talk about, and I'm not much of a conversationalist anyway. Gremlin saved the day by coming up with an ingenious plan.

We weren't the only ones stranded in the cafeteria. There were a whole bunch of rednecks chilling out in the far corner.

"See those rednecks over there?" Gremlin said.

"Let's go talk to them," I said. "I'm bored as hell."

"Nah," Gremlin said. "They look like real pricks. I know the skinny guy... An asshole of the highest order."

"Why are we looking at them, then?"

"You're bored, right? I've got an idea. We'll tip toe on over, all conspicuous like. We'll act so sneaky that every one of them will see us. And when we get real close, we'll yell out 'Shenanigans!' and punch the skinny guy in the face."

"Brilliant," I said. "Two little nerds against a bunch of big rednecks. I don't think I want the shit kicked out of me

today, thanks."

"I've thought of that," Gremlin said. "Most of those hicks are fat, and hence also slow. The skinny guy'll be incapacitated, if everything goes according to plan. If we move real fast we can be out the doors, across the parking lot, over the fence, over the train tracks, and hidden in the woods before anybody knows fuck for fuck. I know a path from there that *should* get us to your neighborhood in about forty-five minutes."

I blinked. "You really hate that skinny guy, don't you?"

Gremlin laughed. Maybe you can guess what ended up happening?

Sneaksneaksneak. Hey Eddie, they see us. Shhh. Sneaksneaksneak. What're y'all doin' `round hair?

Bam! Bam! "Shenanigans!"

"Run, Eddie!" "Run, Gremlin!"

The whirlwind took our footfalls on a journey.

Dirty fat people in Rainbow Warrior shirts run surprisingly fast for fat fatty fatty fat fat fatty fat guys. Little pimply-faced athletic guys in Lucy Loves Me shirts and ripped jeans run surprisingly slow for athletes.

Gremlin fell. I looked back. The pricks were all kicking. The skinny guy started swearing and kicking him in the crotch over and over again. I fought back the queasy feeling in my stomach, ignored the "help your friend" voice in my head and ran straight out into the parking lot. No cars coming. I was greased lightning shooting over the fence and into the woods. I was greased lightning shooting through the forest.

I was the Flash, uncatchable. Untouchable. Fuckers could eat my dust. They were probably still inside pounding on Gremlin. I was safe. I was ahead. I had escaped. Pounding on Gremlin...

Shit, I thought, still running. And that was when I fell down the steep little cliff. Tumbletumbletumble. My right leg caught on a rough spot on the way down. I felt a kind of *twist*. Tumbletumbletumble.

"My fucking leg!" I said. "Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!" I said. "I fucking hate you fucking hillbilly cunts! Come on down, fucking prick hicks! I'll drive a fucking switchblade through your shriveled cocks! Agh! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!" I said.

What I didn't see was Mrs. Pilchard in the parking lot, watching four dirty rednecks chasing skinny freckle-faced Eddie with the straight A report card and surely he must have health problems, being so pale and frail. She stopped the brutes chasing me. She would send someone to check on poor Eddie, who was likely to have a heart attack at any moment.

And she did. And I didn't. But my leg hurt like hell.

So I was on crutches all summer long. There was also a slight delay in the trip to the city, postponed to accommodate my stay in the hospital.

Can't say I felt all that sorry for Gremlin, even though he did get off a little worse than me.

Planes are fantastic. Jumbo metal birds shooting through the air like comets. People and statistics say they're safe. Who can know except the pilots? Who anywhere can know for sure?

I love the whole classes thing. Pay a little extra and you're royalty. First Class. Don't pay the extra and you're garbage. Gutter class. Like we were. Always.

"Don't eat the brownies," I said, peeking over a seat to look at the top of an old man's head.

"We aren't being served any brownies," he replied. I sank back into my itchy velvety seat.

Ben was already asleep. We'd been flying for like half an hour, and he was already asleep. It was just me and my popping ears and the Banshee.

I probably shouldn't have nicknamed my mom after a morbid Celtic spirit. She's nice enough, just misguided. She has a shrill, eerie voice, though. And when she yells, it sounds just like a banshee wail. "EEEEIIIeeeiiii..... A raccoon! WAAEEeeeEEiiiiii..... You stayed up *how* late? GAaeiiiIeIIe.... Look at this water bill!"

I didn't talk to my mom any on the plane. Maybe what happened with my dad should have taught me to develop a better relationship with my parents. Maybe I wanted to talk to her and couldn't because I had to study my father's book.

Oh, Chrystal City was going to be fun.

Worked up an appetite for mighty mystery magic on the plane. By the time we landed, I was ready to try some shit out. By the time we were unpacking in Uncle Clay's dingy little flat, no Uncle Clay in sight, I was itching with obsession. Just leave me alone, Ma. Just give me a minute alone...

"I don't want you boys going off alone all the time," the Banshee was saying, vigorously attacking a pile of dishes left by our generous uncle. "We don't know our way around yet and I don't think this neighborhood is safe."

"Right Mom," I said. "We'll hang out inside tomorrow when you're off on your business."

"Just until Clay's here to show you around. He left a note on the refrigerator. He should be here tomorrow afternoon."

We ate peanut butter sandwiches for dinner, nutty buddies for dessert. We talked about the "rules of the house". Mom apologized about accommodations, saying it was necessary but if things went well finances wouldn't be a problem in a few weeks. The unnamed wonder job.

Finally, things settled back. It was me, Ben, two cots, a minilamp on a night table, and a tolerable amount of roaches. I thought, *where the hell am I gonna keep my clothes?* Then, *fuck it. I'm gonna do a magic trick.*

"Hey Ben, lets walk." I said this digging around in my bag for a certain pen. I had already memorized the important parts of the book...

"It's late," he said, taking off his skinny silver-rimmed red shades. "I'll sleep now."

"You slept the whole fucking way over here. Anyway, I brought a little treat." I slipped the pen into my pocket with my left hand. I slipped out a little plastic baggy with my right, flashed it in front of him. His nostrils flared. He smiled.

"How do we get out?" He was putting his glasses back on. Wasn't even curious how I smuggled that one overseas. Don't worry, I didn't have to "suitcase" it.

"The Banshee sleeps deeply, me brother. By now, she's out for the night."
So we walked.

I stumbled through some steamy alley, taptaptapping crutches against wet pavement, smoking my cannabine cigarette, happy as seemed possible. Ben was there with me, escorting a cripple or laughing and chattering with a friend. He didn't know he was also there to believe.

We wandered around the big city, America's city, our city, city of riches and blessings. We wandered. It was very easy for us to find ourselves quite lost.

"We're fucked," I said with a chuckle, looking up at some bar sign, reading *Your Mom's Milk*.

"We're fine," Ben said, sucking on a roach between a penny and a dime. "Everything's fine."

I looked at the bar sign again. There was a flashing picture of what might be breasts spraying what I assumed to be milk. The thing took me by surprise. Had a sort of Clockwork Orange feel to it.

"Let's go there," I said.

"No IDs," Ben said.

"No need," I said. Then I did a magic trick.

My hand sought might in my pocket. The pen, procured, was swung round and round. *Click* as I pressed the button on the back and sprayed ink everywhere. Ink that landed nowhere, absorbed in air. Earth spun long after I stopped. The pen I put away. Magic words flew rhythmically from somewhere, then from my lips.

Ben said, "Wow..."

The city never sleeps, but she snores. There are always noises, little and big, constant, so most of the time you don't notice. We noticed then, because it sounded like a tape playing, slowed down as far as it could be. Ben and I, we could understand each other just fine. Anything else, too slow for us even to tell where it was coming from.

"Let's go inside," I said.

Ben nodded. He didn't know what else to do. He asked, "How much did you pay for that herb? DAMN!"

People were moving, slightly. Too slight to make any difference. A leak in the ceiling dripped water so slowly I could walk back and forth under a droplet without getting hit. A bartender had started sliding a mug across the bar. Took me a minute to figure out the mug was actually moving.

Something was playing on the jukebox that didn't sound like music. It sounded like Bruce Springsteen from outside, before I slowed things down. Even then, it didn't sound like music.

Ben reached out to grab the mug that was sliding. It very suddenly slid past his hand, kept moving, and crashed into the floor. "Sorry," he said to the guy who had started to stick his hand out to grab the mug.

"You bring solid and liquid objects into our time by touch," I said. "Right," Ben said.

"How long do we flash?" Ben asked.

"About another two minutes. Let's get some drinks." I gingerly hopped over the bar and grabbed a few choice bottles. Fun, with crutches. Ben did the same. We were out of there with seconds to spare.

Finding our way home was fun when it meant sneaking in a pissload of liquor. I gave a bottle of vodka to some homeless guy. His name was Sam. We ended up hiding the rest in Ben's clothes bag.

Sleep was peaceful

We met Uncle Clay, next day. We were chilling out in his living room/kitchen, high off our asses, watching the fuzzy picture on the television. I was casually playing with the stuffing from one of the velvety couch's many rips. And in walked Uncle Clay.

"Hey guys!" he said, moist fat lips divinely decorating the side of his face, smiling at us. "Word is y'all get to hang with ol' Clay for a while."

We nodded. Mom hadn't said anything about tender, statuesque beauty..

Clay threw a crinkling plastic grocery bag full of beer and ice cream onto the counter. He whistled as he threw things in the freezer, other things in the fridge.

"Anything on?" Clay asked, looking over his filthy countertop to the television.

"Don't know," Ben said. "Your reception's a bastard."

Clay nodded. "Mostly, when I'm home, I fuck and I listen to music. Not always at the same time. Don't want y'all bringing in any chickies, though." He winked. "You kids're too young for that shit. Anyway, Suzan would slit my throat."

My mom's name is Suzan. Funny I haven't mentioned her by name up to now.

Uncle Clay turned out to be a pretty cool guy. He pulled a Bud from the fridge and slipped a Bach tape into his stereo. We dug into his ice cream with shovels. We turned off the damned television and talked a little bit.

Clay showed us his side of the city, little pieces at a time. Prostitutes and people with spiked shoulder pads and sidewalk guitar players and club bartenders, they all tended to know the guy by name. From what I saw, they respected him.

If you're ever in shining Chrystal City and you see a skinny middle-aged man with wooden shoes, ripped orange pants, and a plain, clean white tee shirt, Highlander ponytail hair, face like a modern Adonis, voice like a Southern gentleman but not *quite* Southern, say hi to Uncle Clay for me. Ask him how's work. He'll say, "Work?" Then he'll laugh at you.

So we found out about all these cool places right around the block. We found out who to talk to for what and when. We saw plenty of sights without ever ascending Lady Liberty. We could get away with almost anything, too, long as we didn't tell the Banshee, and long as I didn't call her the Banshee. Uncle Clay didn't like that.

A week went by before Ben got around to asking me, "What the hell happened at that bar?"

"Your Mom's Milk?" I asked.

"Of course," he said.

"I read my father's book," I said. "It was a magic trick."

"Magic! No, bullshit. What I should have asked... What the hell were we smoking?"

"Same shit we've been smoking," I said. "Same shit we just ran out of. Let's go for a walk."

Ben grabbed his shades. I gathered my crutches under my arms. We walked.

"Pull your rabbit, Eddie," Ben said.

I pulled my pen and spun and spun and sprayed the ink, danced the dance, sang the song. This time, the spell was a step up. Instead of slowing time, I altogether stopped it.

It was raining. You could see the droplets, suspended midair. We passed Marv the sidewalk guitarist. A quarter had landed diagonally in his guitar case. Everything was quiet. A car was stationary over a firecracker explosion of a mud puddle.

Ben said, "Groovy. Let's steal shit."

I said, "Let's not. We already ripped off a bar. From now on, we use our powers for good. And to impress the gals." I was looking at two in particular, trying to figure what to do, calculating out how much time we had...

The spell fizzled.

Bump! "Where the fuck did you come from!?"

Ben bumped into a suit in a hurry. I was safe. I laughed at both of them.

Ben honked the guy's oily nose then walked around him. He was too late for an important meeting (or something) to do anything about it. We both laughed at him.

One of the girls I'd seen, she was leaning on a glass window, head resting on a circular stick-to advertisement, wavy, creamy blond hair wrapping around her thin tanned neck. She and her friend, a pale pretty with short dark hair, was watching us go by, talking, giggling. Ben smiled at the blond.

"Hi." "Hey there." "Let's all get some coffee."

It was still early. Coffee made sense.

"I'm Eddie and that's Ben," I said to the girls, sitting down, dipping my upper lip in whipped cream, letting nostrils flare in waking delight. Ah, the aromas of the cafe. And I said, "We're vacationing here."

Ben was pushing money across a counter, paying for our coffee. Then he was on his way over, sipping nothing himself. Said he wasn't thirsty. He'd suggested coffee and he didn't want any.

"Sara Rose," said the blond. Lazy and weary, her voice. "Lisa," said the brunette.

"I see a stem," said Ben to the blond. "Don't know yet if there's a rose."

The conversation drifted. Ben kept it smooth without saying anything a normal guy would say. Masterful, how he got away with that kind of thing. Half the time, I wonder if he isn't just sticking random words together to sound clever.

I caught a few smiles and some eye contact from the brunette. Pity maybe, for me crutches. Whatever, she seemed smart and she had good eyes. Nice little boobies, too.

They were visiting too. They were from the suburbs too. Oh yes, they were nearby. We should hang out, shouldn't we? Of course! Today? No, we're not doing anything, really. Sure, we could walk. What happened to your leg?

"A minor altercation with a cliff," I said.

"Poor thing," Lisa said. "Fucked mine up in a car accident a while back. Can you do any tricks yet?"

I blinked. "Huh?"

"Let me see your crutches." She tucked them under her shoulders and pushed down. Her booted feet lifted up. She walked around the cafe without touching the ground. She could also jump with the crutches, hop twenty times without once putting her feet down.

I was impressed. So I said, "I'm impressed."

She said, "Strong arms and balance." And she handed me the crutches.

We went for a little walk, the four of us. Not really to anywhere, just down the sidewalk aways, round the block, over the river and through the woods. Took the girls back to their place. Their pad was nicer than ours.

Lisa turned around as we were walking away. She pushed open the door and looked on down the hall. "Come by tonight!" she said. "We'll dance or something." We turned around and nodded and she slipped back inside.

It's nine that night and we're wandering up to the building trying to remember room numbers. Maybe they're out. So we'll find out and maybe go away.

We talk to some people walking out the door. Of course they don't know. We walk inside and find somebody with a computer. I nearly slip on the polished red bricks. Computer man asks, am I okay? I say yes, could he please tell us where a room is?

"I'll need a last name," he said.

I scratched my head. Ben scratched his head. We thought. They had both given different last names, but what were they? Ben remembered first.

"GibsonGibsonGibson... No, sorry sir, no Gibson." Computer man kept tap-tapping behind his waist level wooden wall even after the search had ended.

"Try Shirley then," Ben said.

"Room 718. We are having a bit of trouble with the elevator, so I'm afraid you'll have to take the stairs."

I groaned. I wanted to fucking choke the bastard, even though he probably had nothing to do with the trouble. I wanted to hit something. I didn't want to take the stairs.

Seven fucking flights... How easily I could fall. Seven fucking flights... My arms, damnit, can they take that much? And what if nobody's there? Seven fucking flights... Then back down again. No matter what, back down again.

"Easy Eddie, I'll go." I thanked Ben, over and over again, and waited in the lobby. They had the most comfortable red leather couch. On a round table was a magazine about Hollywood. Ten minutes dragged on longer than they should have, with me trying to sift through that crap. Entertainment my ass.

Ben brought the two pretties. Lisa was wearing this tee with pictures of Garfield all over it, this kind of thin material tee. She had on this cute tight leather skirt and a dirty old pair of boots and, That tee, man.

I asked, "What took so long?"

Ben said, "We talked for a minute. Ten's not that long."

I threw my magazine on the table and pulled myself to a stand. We all walked out to have ourselves a time. Fun we would find aplenty.

Man, me and Ben really should have talked about the Cat in the Bag. My tricks were my tricks, after all. I understood and felt the same way he did and anyway, many kinds of confusion sparked violently and, deep yet beneath the surface, passionately between four bodies.

We were just chilling on the couch listening to some of Clay's crazy tunes.

I had a flash of a vision, myself at rest, a little brown spider crawling towards me, a mirror and my face chanting, "Show me your face, Anansi."

We were sitting on the couch and the music was low so we could talk. Ben said, "A sword mighty enough to rend the binding threads is his, and Eddie's the cloak of invisibility. Perhaps, this moment, he might share these gifts?"

I felt at first like a one trick pony. Then I realized, that's right, the girls haven't seen this trick yet. And after all, it was such an impressive trick...

Fwoosh! My pen so boldly revealed to female eyes. *Splursh!* The ink did rain upon their shirts! It bothered them not, for the ink was to be consumed by the magick of the spell.

The music we noticed first, as peculiar a sound as we had ever heard. And yet parts of the composition seemed to be playing at an almost normal rate... That Uncle Clay was a peculiar bird.

The Banshee was in the kitchen washing dishes. I stood and approached the kitchen, motioned for my friends to follow me, and said calmly, "But don't touch anything."

It took a greater power of concentration than mine to perceive the movement of water sprayed by the Banshee at a soapy spoon.

I felt a faint pulsating creep up the back of my skull, the beginning of the headaches Dad's book warned about. Harmless physically, So he wrote, but increasing in intensity with every further use of the pen until a time when the body becomes as hell, then a time when the pain becomes pleasure, then a time when there is nothing at all.

"Let's go back to the couch," I said in a voice slightly queasy, and so my friends followed me, and there I canceled the spell.

"You all right?" Sara was the first to ask.

I said, "Just tired I guess. The magick is starting to get inside me."

Lisa said, "That was wild, man. I seen some crazy shit, let me tell you. My brother used to sell windowpane... I seen some crazy shit! But that, that was wild!"

All the attention in the room was on me and somehow, even when I closed my eyes, I could feel the tension. That

night was my initiation into the world of the good vibrations. And the vibes, the vibes coming from Lisa were of an unusual intensity. All kinds of impressions and dirty fantasies shot through my head, and Lisa was at the center of it all.

What I didn't realize at the time was, Lisa was hot to trot that night. She got off on all that energy I tapped into with my pen, and I was vibing off that heat, directed after all at my *pen*.

I said, to change the subject, "Did y'all hear it? There's something strange about Uncle Clay's music..."

Ben said, "A finer piece I'd never heard, even before the clocks got their benzos. Oh, but after... Stranger sound waves than ever I've ridden before."

Lisa said, "I bet that music would go good with some windowpane. . ."

Lisa was even more in tune, then, with the good vibrations than I was. Just as I was thinking something rather perverted, inexcusably naughty actually, staring at those perfect legs out the corner of my eye... She turned her head and winked at me. I don't think Ben or Sara ever saw that.

Times are strange.

We were eating dinner with the girls next time I felt the vibrations. We left Clay's house and went out for pizza. Minutes after we sat down, It came, spontaneously.

I could feel what my friends were feeling. I don't have the slightest idea what we were talking about, but... But I was jealous. I remember that.

Ben and Lisa were behaving as if they were the only two people in the room. I don't know what they were talking about because, because... I... I was dazed, transfixed, confused, pinned in, I was...

Why? Such moments plague my past like a recurring rash.

Sara, compassionate, drifty, looked at me and asked, "Is something wrong?"

I shook my head a single time and looked into her eyes. I quickly looked away before answering, saying, "It's the magick of the pen. I can feel my spine tingling." I told a truth without telling *the* truth.

Sara said, "I don't care how powerful that thing is, if it's making you sick, you shouldn't trust or use it again." I got something of a rush, soaking in Sara's compassion. Very real energy, directed into me.

"My Dad gave me this book," I told her. "He gave me Eschillion Key. I don't quite understand the title, something about a golden city... But he said the pen was the key to the city, and the city was the key to everything. All my hopes and dreams, my own Father tells me from beyond the grave, will come true if I use this pen properly, to unlock the golden city."

Sara asked, "Does your father's journal mention anything about being sick?"

I said, "Well it isn't a sickness exactly, but yeah, it does."

Sara asked, "Does it ever go away?"

I smiled and said, "After a spell."

Sara was cute. The moment she had me in those pale blue eyes, I was hooked.

When I got home, much later that night, I was alone. Mom was asleep, I assumed Uncle Clay was asleep since his door was closed, and Ben had volunteered to walk the girls home. I was a little on the pale side all night, and truthfully feeling kind of worn out, so I excused myself from the group a little early.

I reread the first page of my Dad's book:

Dedicated to my son Eddie,

Because we will meet again.

I was looking for a particular passage before my heart froze. It wasn't my first reading of the dedication but it didn't matter. When I read those words, all the clocks in the universe exploded. I couldn't describe to you what happened to me, what still happens to me, when I read those words.

Some would say my Father was talking about heaven. Well, he called heaven Eschillion, and he said the pen was the key to that.

Dad said a lot of things. The passage I was looking for read,

The city is the key to the City. Thou art the City.

There will come a time when the pain will seem so hellish, that any but a perfected will shall bend. Temptations will plague thee, true offers of great power and no responsibility, and an end to the pain. Succumb to temptation so close to success, and yea shall suffer certain death.

Endure, for therein is the key to eternal life.

There was a great deal in that book I couldn't understand. If Dad had found the key to eternal life, how could he have left me alone with Mom? Alone... with Mom.

I worshiped my parents when I was growing up. They were invincible heroes to me. They had this aura about them, they radiated a feeling of security and warmth. Their mere presence was like a blanket to me. When I was very young, I couldn't fall asleep without my blanket.

Time is change, I have heard. Time is friendly and merciless, in that sense.

Ben was walking into a room full of spider webs. He couldn't understand how any single one room could be so

shallow as all that.

I was weaving the web, calling the spiders. Understand, I wasn't doing it intentionally. I was on a spiritual journey-everything forgivable, so long as I kept growing! Every sin erased of all guilt because, *I'm better than I was when I did that, I'm a new me every day.* Hell, every moment. And determined not to stop until, by destroying every aspect of my own consciousness serving to mask or hinder my true self, I might really discover that self!

At least, that was what I tried to explain to Ben. Eventually to Sara too. I could and couldn't make them understand.

I was meditating daily, because instructed to do so by my own Father. Within his journals was outlined a very specific program of meditation, to commence as soon as I started to feel the magick.

And the more I read that book, the less I understood. It was a subtle document with secrets buried behind every line. There were furthermore no safeguards against the dangers I would eventually unleash.

I have no idea how many times I have rewritten this journal.

There are things certain hearts long for. A heart big as the sun drums within my chest, expanding in hopes of magnetically attracting another star.

The first star I ever saw I shed a tear. Hers was a beauty unlike any other, and I will take it with me to the grave.

I know that I am young. It is a sign of my own weakness that my longing, even now, becomes too heavy a burden for these fragile shoulders to carry. I have the Goddess in my sights and know that I am not worthy, and for that reason she will pass me by.

Yet how, retaining the slightest shred of humility, how could I possibly imagine myself beside Her? Sara Rose, the Rose in the Cross, the Rose God in Heaven wept for on the day of His Great Loss.

It happened in an instant, and in that instant everything less than that instant became meaningless.

When I was very, very young, I heard a gorgeous little girl sing a hilarious little song about country life. The humor was entirely lost to me, so beautiful was her voice it conveyed to me naught but the essence of *Her*.

That was my first glimpse of the Goddess.

"As above, so below," a wise man once told me. But although I know the Goddess lived first within me, I cannot acknowledge the reality of this statement when in Her presence.

Sara Rose has me and I'll do anything she tells me...

Ben was the leader of the pack. Up front with Lisa at his side. Even when his head was down it was up, and therein was his magnetism.

By default, Sara walked beside me. That was always the way of it.

We four found ourselves in a place where the sidewalk deteriorated with every step forward, until there was naught ahead but a pile of rubble. Vagrants lived like animals in cardboard cages lining two alleys, alleys dim despite the sun's high throne.

We were near the end of Bobble Street. Clay had warned us about that part of town.

"Ain't never been," said Clay, "without a gun. And all the guns in the world wouldn't give me the courage to walk that street again. You kids keep off of Bobble Street."

When a crazy bastard like Uncle Clay tells you something serious as all that, it is best to pay attention. But we crazy kids and our adventures.

It was stupid of us, immature and pointless. We wanted nothing more than to satisfy some idle curiosity concerning the Forbidden. I think, also, Ben wanted to impress Lisa, scare Lisa, and cause Lisa to cling to his person for security... or something. That all being said, I've sworn off the temptation to regret a moment of it.

"A bad turn," Ben had said earlier. "Excitement in excess."

Said Lisa in reply, "That sounds perfect." And she clung to his arm.

Sara smiled at me and I smiled timidly back at her. And we four walked the deadliest path.

I've never seen a street like Bobble Street. The street itself, the buildings, and even the inhabitants, seem to suffer from some decaying disease, all the more pronounced the further one walks.

Well, the filthy primate junkies were stirring in the alleys, mumbling low and garbled threats, and gathering fast. When they had us surrounded, Sara clung to me. I don't know whether the explosion in my chest, bringing me to my knees, forcing shivers up and down my skin and through even to the tips of the hair on my head, was a response to the encroaching danger, or a shockwave caused by the proximity of the goddess.

In any event, as my crutches clattered against the pavement, skinny Sara held me, and saved me from the harshest kind of crash. She pulled me to a stand and she whispered, "The pen, Eddie."

I retrieved the pen, sprayed ink high and wild so a black circle surrounded us, falling. I chanted to the drumming of mine heart.

I could hear glass breaking somewhere. My perspective of time became as the perspective of a man trying to slice the thinnest slice of a cucumber, and every layer was its own reality, both united and separate from the rest.

My perception was beyond that of Lisa or Sara or Ben. I cannot describe the what of it. We four all had an edge of course, we four being well beyond the primates from the trashcans. We must have seemed to them a blurry river of color,

now here, now gone.

My arms became so heavy... I came stumbling out of the blur well after my companions, much to their surprise. My eyes flashed like unto the sun, and some foreign force held me aloof and walking, crutches momentarily forgotten. And when I remembered it was too late, for it had been established firmly that I needed the crutches not at all!

A power like unto divinity. And I was the focus. The Pen was Wand, a focus for my Will.

I felt invincible! And I had to kiss her. I was driven by an impulse. The magick sizzled out my lips and paralyzed her muscles, and she collapsed into my arms.

It was the pen. What I didn't realize was what I was really tapping into. Even now, if I fully realized That, I would be beyond pen and paper.

It was an agreement with the Goddess, and a consent to participate in the Great Illusion.

My Father made reference in his Eschillion Key to the works of other illuminating writers. In particular, I found the scriblings of ancient Hindu sages an invaluable, inexhaustible resource. I found a name, Kundalini, for the constant tingling in my spine.

Certain Tantric Adepts worship a goddess known as Kali, and she is everything feminine in the Is, from the destructive and the severe to the merciful and nourishing. I took to vibrating her names on a daily basis. I took to worshipping Kali, as a symbol and a manifestation for my deepest desire, the only desire I have ever had which outweighed my desire for attainment.

Such was the illusion I had chosen, to keep me in this particular game.

Kali came to me in dreams and offered me one boon in return for my ever-growing faith in Her.

Kali Kalaratrisvarupini, the True Form of the Night of Time.

I requested a night of Tantric ecstasy with Sara Rose, the Lady of Love, the lotus opening in my heart.

The Goddess, by whatever name, granted my request.

There are often times in our lives when we wonder what would have happened, if only we had acted *thusly*.

But after all that. Coming out of the blur... I had to kiss her... And she collapsed into my arms.

Sara came to and said, "You're walking again."

"Without crutches," said I, smiling, a glimmer to my eye catching her eye.

Sara stood her ground. Sara stood up straight.

Sara kissed me.

Time like a river drifting by. Time like a stream slowly trickling in the distance.

We were smoldering within white fire. I don't know if Ben or Lisa could see the flames because I was unaware of them, or of the rest of the world. It was more sexual than any kiss before or after, because it was Unity.

Meanwhile, for whatever reason, Ben was falling genuinely in love with Lisa... And Lisa melted every time she looked into his eyes.

A voice, faint and fading, *Because we will meet again*.

We walked back to Uncle Clay's place for a late lunch prepared by Mom.

Sara made me wait another 14 hours for the pussy.

Ben and Lisa were moving along... somewhat quicker.

I think the sex acted like a trigger.

"My FUCKING GOD! MY FUCKING GOD!!!"

My spine felt like an antenna picking up strange frequencies. I walked around in a bit of a daze the next morning.

It was a nice day, air crisp with the aroma of toxicity, wind breezing through the summer heat, waves crashing somewhere miles away. Anxiety tickled my chest as I walked and breathed, breathed deeply, and eventually chased the anxiety away.

I sensed a peculiar danger. I don't know how to explain the sensation.

I had to find Sara. I wanted to go to the beach.

I needed a fucking cigarette. I'd never smoked in my life but I needed a fucking cigarette.

Colors were not colors, matter was never still. I learned through meditation to unlock a constant hum drum within the system.

As if erased from the system...

"Thou art deleted from thine system!"

Staring into glazed black screen, purple buzzing letters.

I found Sara, Ben and Lisa in the same spot. They were next to the soda machine talking about Mr. Pib.

"Let's go to the beach," I said.

We all went to the beach. Such was the growing power of domination attaching itself to my voice. Or so it bemuses me to record.

Chrystal City comes with its share of litter. The sands are beautiful, warm, orange like a mild blaze. Paper bags and plastic wrappers drift along in the wind, eventually sucked into the endless sea.

I held Sara's hand because there was something of me within her, and something of her within me, and any physical manifestation of that connection brought much comfort. When we were together an ecstasy born of a place near to the center of my chest filled me, inside and out, so that I was prone to outbursts of laughter at the slightest provocation.

Lisa asked me, "Are you high?" I almost didn't think the question was fair because Love, my affliction, peaked out from behind her eyes as well... The only ingredient missing was the energy, and that's something I can't quite explain...

Because it was real. I could not have seen it then, but what Ben and Lisa had was more real than anything I've yet to experience. I'd have laughed or spat on you, back then, if you told me that.

"No, Lisa," I said. "At least, I'm not on drugs. But we should get some weed. It's been a few days."

"We both know who to talk to," said Ben.

I said, "I know Clay could get us some good shit, if we asked him nicely. But I have a better idea."

Basically, the idea was to find the most disgusting, evil-looking pot dealer in town, and steal his weed. It was a damned idiotic and superficial little plan, looking *back*, but it won the group's consent.

And boy did we get fucked up.

I saw a halo above Lisa's head.

I said I said, "There is a statue in the Prince's Palace. The statue is priceless, but if we stole it, we could finance the rest of our lives, together."

"Fucking groovy," said Lisa.

So we came upon the place as wind against rocks, ready to spread a wave of destruction and anguish, and we knew it not.

There were guardians at the gate. I used the pen on us four. We slithered and we climbed, and all four felt the vibes of the palace as we invaded. None so strongly as I.

I was the last to enter the door as it opened.

I was hit by the light. A hammer to my head. A fucking brick smashing my skull into pieces.

And a yellow tentacle tickled my nose, the terror of the CRAWLING CHAOS!

This palace was guarded well against intrusion.

It took me a long time to piece these things together, after that.

Part 2: Escape From Paradise

Chapter 1: Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

He was born under the knife. Painful for his mother, an easy slicing for the doctors.

He wouldn't cry on his own. They slapped him twice before the tears came.

He was born without a fatherly witness. A brother was there. There had been a brother just old enough to drive his mother to the hospital. His brother's name was Peter.

He was born during a storm. The people who knew him when he was older, had they known him then, would have called the storm a sign. The people who knew him never could get around to understanding him.

He wasn't me. Not the me in existence now. Still, I don't pretend to have been an idle observer here. I was inside, at the bottom. Even then, I was waiting to rise up. This story, then, is about my ascendancy.

Simon Sade was born in Oakland, Oklahoma in a year I will not reveal. His mother was a good middle-class Protestant woman, as far as being a Protestant meant going to church, occasionally saying a prayer, occasionally proclaiming thankfulness for the boundless grace of Him in heaven, and occasionally committing a sin to be forgiven at a later date. His brother was a Protestant in a similar sense.

Simon Sade was born of a well-respected, hard-working father who happened to be one of the last evil men in America. Marcus Sade was a secret drunkard, a secret spousal abuser, a secret lustful male, and foremost a secret sinner. For this, Simon despised his father. For this, Simon would eventually come to admire his father.

It was the fifth grade. Simon wasn't performing to the expectations projected for him by the federal school system. He had tested high in some areas. He had refused to concentrate on some of those areas in which he had tested high.

It was the fifth grade. At the completion of a quiz, when everyone finishing early was expected to sit quietly or begin on homework, Simon was caught reading an old children's book. Not against the rules, Simon having caused no disruption, but it was irregular. Simon's teacher, Mrs. Peach, deemed the book and books like it a possible source of Simon's ineffectual study habits. Parents were informed, as school policy demanded.

"Reading is all fine and good if the time and the material is right," Mary was saying later that day. "Books are bastards," Marcus was saying at the same time, from the couch. "Magazines are bastards, television's a bastard, the material's all a fucking bastard."

Mary's hand trembled slightly. She sat in a chair, next to the couch. She said, "Reading is fine and good. Learning is good. Just, learn from the right material, Simon. Learn what the school is teaching you. Think of your future. You will never grow up to be a lawyer if you don't learn to learn the right way." Early tests had revealed that Simon would be performing to the best of his abilities if he became a lawyer.

Marcus said, "Dear God. My damned wife's an idiot. It's no wonder she birthed a damned ass of a son. It's all crap, Simon. Avoid the flow and you'll end up in a bloody gutter."

Mary said nothing. Her glossy lips trembled then, too. Why had she still bothered to wear lipstick, at that point?

Simon agreed to nod his head to everything he heard and then to retreat into his room. In the morrow, he would politely request Mrs. Peach return to him his favorite book. His request would be politely denied.

How had he discovered Lizard Music? Oh, it had fallen out of the heavens, into the vintage collection of literature kept in his brother's room. Peter liked keeping books around. Peter had read many of them.

It was the seventh grade. Simon started and finished a fight with an older child. The older child had called Simon an outsider. From some arrogant, accusing mouths, the truth is wrong. Correcting an accurate wrongness got Simon into a special school.

It was nearing the end of the seventh grade in special school. Simon had a supervisor. The supervisor wrote of Simon:

- *Simon is an extremely gifted child. That his performance in a classroom environment does not reflect this fact is unfortunate. That our educators have failed Simon up to this point is unfortunate. It would be a terrible loss for America were this child to slip through the cracks. I am optimistic about our facility's influence on this child's future.*
- *Today, Simon flatly refused to complete a vocabulary quiz. When politely asked by his teacher, "What is the problem, dear?" Simon utilized one of the vocabulary words for his reply, saying, "My problem is apathy. I can't care." He then balled up his quiz and flung it into the waste paper basket.*
- *Simon requires serious psychiatric help. On-campus instructors are not sufficiently equipped to deal with the many-faceted problems of this problem child.*
- *The other students are drawn to Simon's natural, passive charisma. He begins to adopt a leadership position to fulfill an inner need to belong, a need likely unfulfilled at home, and certainly a need unfulfilled with all Simon's previous schools.*
- *Simon's influence on the other children has begun to hinder their progress. Classmates seek to flatter Simon with imitation. Work ethic is falling. Cindy Hooper, Harry Giger and Thomas Charnel were discovered drinking vodka with Simon in the bathroom. Since disciplinary actions have been taken, word of the incident has spread throughout the school. It seems other students are beginning to drink. No idea where the bottle of vodka originated. Simon will say nothing, and the other students are too magnetized by Simon to betray the secret.*

It was the tenth grade. Simon was attending a standard public high school. His grades were less than optimal, but passing. Teachers and a mother that cared harassed him for performing below the best of his ability. This was already a recurring criticism.

It was the eleventh grade. Simon rejected a girl he was shocked to discover was attracted to him. Simon thought the girl was very pretty. He was not sure why he rejected her. He told himself it was because the girl had not been very smart.

It was the summer after the eleventh grade. Simon had his first serious run-in with the law. He drove his car through a convenience store and repeatedly honked his horn, shouting through the window, "I want some damned cigarettes and I don't want to wait in line!" Cigarettes, incidentally, were not carried in any American convenience stores at that time. Society frowned on smoking, so the majority of the American populace didn't smoke. It had long been established, after all, that smoking is not only unhealthy but also disgusting.

Of course, a variety of small-scale riots erupted when grocery and convenience stores quit selling tobacco products.

It was the end of the twelfth grade, the time for Simon to graduate from high school. To the ridiculous shock and disgust of all, including his mother, rather than go to the graduation ceremony, he went to an outdoor concert. The only funk band within one hundred miles, Chest of Rainbows, was playing. About fifty spectators attended the concert.

Simon was twenty years old when he graduated from high school. Immediately after, he got it into his head that he was to be a hobo. He left the home of his parents with a sack of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, the clothes covering his skin, and a bottle of vodka stolen from his father. He traveled.

Tramp Abroad

Trains at that time were far too fast to support the traditionally observed state of hoboism. Rail riding had died out in decades past. As well, other factors came into play.

Simon tried to get his first job in Georgia as a knocker. It is the knocker's job, Simon had learned through his readings, to strike the cow a killing blow upon the head. It sounded like the sort of job that would not require a great deal of previous experience. It would have been perfect work for our hero.

The problem was, the job no longer existed. Killing of cows, so the cow farmer informed Simon, was a job for the machine. The machine was much more efficient at killing and processing than could have been any human. "And anyway," said the farmer in parting, "you're dirty. Who wants a dirty employee? And why the hell would you *want* to kill anything, boy?"

"Who wants a dirty employee?" thought Simon. In the months to come, he found out. Nobody. While there were plenty of people willing to get Simon on his feet, to clean him up, provide him with a home and a starting income, there weren't any people willing to hire him as-is. Nobody was looking for a temporary manual laborer.

Onward Simon tramped, fishing through back-alley trashcans, scrawling pleading messages, messages like, "Give me money and I'll give you a sloppy kiss," on cardboard, and drinking from polluted streams. He didn't run into many other tramps. This was probably due to the ease with which one could have obtained a job at that time. If you were willing to just settle down a bit, just clean yourself up a bit, you would be cared for.

Simon Sade could not be made to settle down. For years, he traveled. For years, his health dwindled. For years, suffering from malnutrition and minor dehydration and stink, he was happy. Then the coughing started.

Simon was a seal ejaculating a mating call. With the call came blood and swords to pierce his throat. He could feel his brain *thumpthumpthumping* inside his head like a heart. The ache in his stomach was more prominent than usual. He waited three weeks to check himself into a hospital.

Hospital

American citizens were guaranteed efficient attention for any treatable medical conditions, should they so desire the attention. When Simon decided he desired the attention, he got it.

A nurse shoved Simon into a warm hospital shower. When he came out, clean, glossy white sack of bones, coughing, the nurse forced a green gown into his arms. She left the room without showing a bit of the disgust she felt for the patient's condition.

After Simon got his gown on and kicked up his feet on the hospital bed, then stained red the chest of his new gown with his coughing, the doctor walked in.

"I am Dr. Bob," said Dr. Bob.

Simon and Bob talked. Bob walked Simon to a room full of moving metal. Once Simon was inside, Bob shut the door from outside. Bob walked off to see his next patient.

Dials alighted, flashes flashed. Cold metal probed Simon's cold flesh, slipped under his gown in places. Beams shined into his eyes. Something pricked one of his fingers. He heard the *drip* onto glass. Finally a voice, mechanical as everything, said, "Wait here please." The voice came from a suddenly illuminated door.

Simon opened the door. Simon coughed. He walked into a small white room with a bed. Another waiting room. He rested upon the bed. The door closed.

Was there another door? By the time he thought to look it was too dark to see.

Time passed. Lights ignited. A human voice said, "Wake up."

The first thing Simon saw when he opened his eyes was Dr. Bob standing at the foot of the bed. The second thing, after he blinked, was Dr. Bob standing at the foot of the bed. Simon pushed down, sitting up. He coughed warmth and mucous into his hand, wiped it off on his sheet.

Dr. Bob yawned lazily. He said, "You're to take one of these every six to eight hours. You're to put these on, after you've slipped off your hospital gown. You're also to get some rest. An attendant will wheel you to a taxi, which will drive you to your new home."

"My legs are fine," Simon was saying as he was being pushed down into the seat of a wheelchair. He also wanted to inquire more deeply into the matter of his "new home" but was sent wheeling through the bright white halls too swiftly to formulate the inquiry. He could have asked the attendant, who wouldn't have known. He also could have asked the cab driver.

Simon's house wasn't luxury. There was a freezer, a kitchen, a bed, a fully equipped bathroom. It was a house.

He was to live in a house. His shoulders slumped at the thought. He coughed. He popped a pill. He rested above the covers upon the bed.

Working Girl

A woman carrying a briefcase was, to the best of Simon's knowledge, the first person to use his doorbell.

Three days had passed since Simon had gone to the hospital. The coughing had ceased. His prescription had run out. He had found a Bible somewhere in the house, a recent translation, and he had begun leafing through it for the first

time. He was reading when the doorbell rang.

The woman could be observed through the front door window.

Simon shouted, "I don't want any, damn it! Unless you're a prostitute."

The woman knocked on the glass through which Simon had observed her. She waited. She rang the doorbell again. She knocked on the window again.

Simon tossed the Holy Bible to the floor. He walked the few paces separating his bed from the front door and began undoing, *slink, slitch, crysh*, all of the locks. When he opened the door, he said, "So you're a whore, then."

The woman's ring drew blood as it slid swiftly, with a palm, across Simon's face. She said, "No, but I am here to fuck you." She stepped past Simon and into his kitchen.

Simon closed the door and redid all the locks. He turned around, leaned into the splintery frame of the door, slipped his hands into his pockets, and crossed his ankles.

"I am Mrs. Brown. You will address me as Mrs. Brown. You will listen when I speak. You will do as I instruct. I am authorized to exert a great deal of pressure should you feel the need to dance with me."

Simon said, "So you're a whore, then."

Mrs. Brown dug her fingernails into her palms. She said, "The Poverty Act of 2013 authorizes the use of certain forces in case of individuals refusing personal care to the point of the severe degeneration of their own health. Said individuals, if refusing to comply with instructions from a federally appointed overseer, may be detained by the designated local facility.

"I am your overseer, Simon Sade. Here, 'designated local facility' amounts to the Hanover County Human Utilization Center. Unless you wish to spend the rest of your days within the confines of a quite luxurious labor camp, and many men in your position find this option preferable, you will do as I say. You've insisted on being a drain on your country long enough."

"In point of fact," said Simon, holding up something thrown to him by Dr. Bob, "the contents of this empty pill bottle is the only thing I have ever taken from my country."

"You were born here," said Ms. Brown. "Nobody forced you to stay in America, in the country that birthed you. You have lived off the land all these years, perhaps? American land. You owe a debt to your country. More importantly, you owe a debt to yourself.

"Do you have the slightest sense of self-worth, Simon Sade? You have been living in this house for three days. Have you changed your clothes since you left the hospital? You smell."

"Well yeah," said Simon. "I'm a tramp by trade."

"Not anymore. You've been tramping over American values long enough. I have here a list of possible jobs..." Mrs. Brown placed a briefcase upon the kitchen counter. She clicked it open. She sifted through the many yellow, the many white, the many blue papers. She pulled a white page and handed it to Simon.

Simon trailed his finger down the soft paper list. He looked up, over it, to Mrs. Brown, and said, "Rocks make excellent pets."

"Yes," Mrs. Brown said. "Those are in high demand right now. Sale of the old rock albums has spiked considerably in recent years."

Simon balled up the list and looked around for a trashcan. Where had he been throwing all the vanilla cheese wrappers? Ah! He had slid the trashcan beside the bed.

"I wish you hadn't thrown that away," Mrs. Brown said. "Unless you've decided what you want to do, you're going to have to dig the list out of the trashcan."

"I want to make music and voting cool again."

Mrs. Brown shook her head. She crossed her arms and looked cross. "You're certainly sarcastic enough to be a rock star. Do you want an application, then?"

"Fuck you. I'll be a cookie factory button pusher. It'll be more fulfilling."

Mrs. Brown said, "More sarcasm, Simon Sade?"

Simon said, "No, Mrs. Brown."

"Very well." Mrs. Brown again went digging through her briefcase. She handed Simon a yellow sheet labeled *Kirby Cookie Conveyor Processor*. She pulled from her breast pocket a blue pen.

Mrs. Brown gazed down at Simon as he filled out the application. She smiled when he was finished. She snatched the application from his hands. She said, "You will be contacted via phone about starting. Expect the call tomorrow afternoon."

Simon said, "Why did I have to fill out the application?"

Mrs. Brown said, "For the Kirby Company records. A formality, really. A machine could be a button pusher. The position only exists as an opportunity for unemployed slobs such as yourself."

Mrs. Brown packed up her briefcase and left the building. She had a nice ass. And Simon never saw her again.

The Technological Society

Simon started working in a factory. He stood beside a leather conveyor belt and hit a button to make cookies move

further down the conveyor belt. Inside, the factory smelled like rubber. It was an easy job.

He didn't have to interact with anybody in the factory. He was the only button pusher. He punched in and started pushing the button. Before he punched in, the conveyor belt was fully automated. After he punched out, the conveyor belt became again fully automated.

Simon wondered once if his position at all hindered production speed with the Kirby Cookie Company cookies. Without him, the cookies would never have to stop at some random spot and be pushed on.

One day, arriving early, Simon followed the conveyor belt before punching in. The belt went in a circle. Another day, Simon decided it would be fun to count the cookies. He marked one of the cookies by placing a small yellow bead atop it. He counted cookies until the one with the yellow bead circled back around, then stopped. There were only one hundred cookies.

He wondered if working was supposed to grant the worker a sense of pride.

Simon began showering regularly. There weren't any other button pushers, or people at all that he had seen, at the factory, but Simon had found the local public library. They weren't letting stinky people check out books. Also, what with being employed and all, he was receiving great paychecks. He had found a decent enough local bookstore. The bookstores had the same policy regarding filth as the libraries.

Simon would have liked to buy a chip player. He had the money for it. The only problem was, there wasn't any good music in any of the local stores. The best he'd been able to dig up was some dusty remastered oldies chip of Will Smith. Will Smith was almost as good a singer as Tommy Totem. On the other hand, nobody could beat Tommy's witty lyricism:

I'm Totem,
Tommy Totem!
Having a hard time busting
A fresh rhyme
So I'll address and assess
Jiggidy B.
I'm Tommy,
Totem comma Tomma-e!
Got me a motto
That I sometimes follow
When pigs,
I HATE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS yeah!
DEFIANCE yeah!
Don't step on my toe,
Ouch!
Guns in school ain't cool
But we gonna trust the cops to puts a stops to at?
Don't be fools yo, They drool!
It's hip hop that's gonna rule
We gots, What?
Bitches and hoes! Bitches and hoes!
Listen to this fission of words and my genius
I got a girlfriend and people, they have seen us
They get horny
Who wouldn't?
She's hot they're not
Bitches and hoes! Bitches and hoes!
Oh, I'm Totem!
Tommy Totem!
Yeah, Totem!
Tommy Totem!

So Simon refrained from buying a chip player.

A computer would have been nice. You could do everything on computers. Screw up other peoples' computers, look at dirty pictures, start lucrative internet businesses, type crappy anarchistic novels, download games, download music, download movies, download, download. Everybody had a computer.

Simon saved. He decided, *Yeah, I'll get a computer*. He didn't have much else to spend the money on anyway.

Simon got a computer. He thought again of all the things he could do with a computer... And he just looked up porn. He was becoming a model citizen.

This lasted for all of three years. For three years, Simon drifted to a greater extent than he had when he was a hobo. Mrs. Brown was quite proud, she informed him over the phone. Simon had heat and nothing to burn. He was burning himself.

All of three years. Three years was enough.

Rebel Without A Cause

Some people need to fight things. Some people need to be hurt just so their hate has a target. The concept here being defined can't be defined, and hasn't been properly. You can't focus in on it. You can only experience it. By trying to define an indefinable I am only misleading you, which is fine.

There's a race of men that can't fit in, A race that can't stay still;
So they break the hearts of kith and kin, And they roam the world at
will. They range the field and they rove the flood, And they climb the
mountain's crest; Theirs is the curse of the gypsy blood, And they
don't know how to rest.

- Robert W. Service, from *The Men That Don't Fit In*

When totally lost, smash shit. Simon bought a baseball bat and did just that. Store windows, car windows, the windows on the neighbor's house, the windows on Simon's house, windows. If he would have started with the stores, he could have saved himself the trouble of smashing all the others. His baseball bat was taken from him soon after he got to Hank's Hamburgers.

The Stranger

"Simon Sade, do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?"

"No."

...

"Dr. Eloisa, please answer the question," said the honorable Judge Turner.

"I am not sure," said Dr. Eloisa.

"In your professional opinion as a psychiatrist, Dr. Eloisa--"

"Objection, Your Honor," said Prosecuting Attorney Herx. "Dr. Eloisa has already expressed ambiguity of opinion."

"Question withdrawn," said the Defense. "No more questions."

....

"I have here the public records of--"

....

"It seems to me that--"

...

"...a most difficult decision..."

...

"We the jury... guilty."

Cool Hand Luke

"I said what're you in for." Mike. A big hairy white guy with glossy teeth. He was chewing on a piece of fried chicken while he was talking.

"Smashing," said Simon.

The other nine people sitting at Simon's table laughed. "Real hardcore," Mike said.

Simon shrugged.

"What had you so pissed off?" Mike asked. Mike was doing all the talking, even though Mike was a few seats separated from Simon.

Simon shrugged.

"You don't talk much," Mike said. "The strong, silent type. Well, that's fine when you're trying to bullshit little pricks into thinking you're tough. It doesn't work with me, boy."

Simon chewed on his fried chicken. It was delicious.

"I might make you my new bitch. Skinny soft-skin little thing like you. And that long hair... Don't ever cut your hair, boy."

Simon went on chewing his yummy chicken. He sipped his milk.

My prison, Simon's prison, came equipped with a rec room. He had a clean cell with comfortable mattresses and an

actual walk-in bathroom in the corner. The prison food was quite good. Showers, however, were done pretty much the same as always.

Simon's prison, playtime in the rec room. Simon sat at the card table. Mike didn't like cards, but he sat at the card table, too. After Simon. The dealer was chatty, until Mike sat down.

The dealer dealt. His name was Harry. So Simon, Mike, Sam and Harry played poker. They wore poker faces. They were all pretty good.

The stakes were high. They were playing for meatloaf. Meatloaf like you wouldn't believe, unless you've tried it yourself. Sunday meatloaf. Three Sunday's worth.

Sam folded. It was Mike, Simon, and Harry. Mike stared at Harry. Harry folded.

Mike looked at his cards. He had three ladies. Pretty, pretty ladies. When he'd gone for four, he'd gotten nothing. Still, three pretty, pretty ladies.

Simon put down his hand. Mike put down his hand. Simon had a royal flush. Simon grinned.

Mike was the sort of tall muscle man to pop veins out of his neck when he got really angry. He was also the sort of person to shout profanities and accusations and stand up, bang his fists down on the table, shout more profanities and accusations.

Simon sat quietly and waited. When Mike grabbed his shirt collar, Simon stood. The little round wooden poker table went flying. There was more shouting and accusing. Simon's foot made contact with Mike's throat. The confrontation ended there.

Scarface

You'd think, being a thinker, psychology as a science would advance with the years. Yeah, thinkers think.

Simon let two gorilla-men hold his arms and walk him down a hallway. It was a Friday. It felt like a Friday. Man, it felt like a Friday!

The two men released Simon's arms when they had come to a door. The letters on the glass said *Dr. Angles*. A speaker above the glass said, "Come on in, Simon."

Simon opened the door. The gorillas stared at places on the wall to either side of the door. Their knuckles dragged when they didn't have anything to hold. Simon wondered if his knuckles would ever drag.

Now it wasn't a speaker that said, "Come on in, Simon."

Simon walked on in. Right on in. He had a seat without being invited to. The couch was nice. Leather. The door closed behind him automatically.

"Are we on a first name basis, Dr. Angles?"

Dr. Angles said, "Would you rather I called you Mr. Sade?"

Simon smiled. He didn't show any teeth, though. He said, "I'm impartial."

Dr. Angles nodded. He asked, "Is that common, Simon?"

Simon shrugged. Dr. Angles, being a psychiatrist, took the shrug as a confirmation. How else could he take an impartial answer?

"What are we going to talk about today, Simon?"

Simon asked, "Why is it so dark in here, Dr. Angles? I think I would've tripped if I hadn't made it to the couch before the door closed."

Dr. Angles said, "I am not a very attractive man. It is best patients aren't shocked by my appearance."

"And," Simon said, "mystery is power."

"Do you think I wish to control you, Simon?" asked Dr. Angles.

"I don't think you wish anything," Simon said.

"Now I'm the one that's impartial, aye? In my profession, Simon, we have a word for what you just did... Nonetheless, in the interest of trust, I give you light. Lights, level 3, gradual rise."

The room began to brighten. Dr. Angles was indeed grotesquely disfigured. Some of his face looked like it had been burned, and his cheeks were scarred from deep cuts of some kind. The thing that repulsed Simon the most, though, was the striped green suit and yellow tie.

"That is one ugly suit," Simon said.

Dr. Angles laughed. "Yes, well, we don't all get to wear orange prison clothes. Do you know why we pulled you out of your cell, Simon?"

"Yeah," he said. He said, "I committed a murder. Also, you're not sure yet if I'm sane or crazed. Now that I've committed a murder, I have to be charged again, and this time Uncle Sam needs to know in advance whether I'm gonna be caged with bars or blue padding."

"You confess to murder then, Simon?"

Simon said, "I confess to killing where killing wasn't necessary."

Dr. Angles crossed one leg over the other and leaned back in his chair. He made a triangle, or a pyramid, in front of his face with his fingers. He raised an eyebrow. He looked quite intelligent. He said, "I saw the videotape. Michael Mullatti was a very powerful man. He was clearly threatening you. Judging by the videotape alone, it would seem justifiable to call

your reaction to the situation self-defense."

Simon said, "Mike was strong but I'm quick. I think clearer, too. I could've disabled him without killing him. I also could've stalled until the guards came around."

Dr. Angles said, "Indeed? Have you considered the possibility that a guilty conscience is running away with you?"

Simon said, "I feel no guilt. I acted."

Dr. Angles said, "Yes. Well, we're done for now. Lights, out." Dr. Angles pushed a button on the top of his desk. He said, "You may see yourself out as soon as the guards arrive."

Simon asked, "How is that seeing myself out?"

Dr. Angles said, "Yes." At that moment, rectangular light streamed into the room. The guards had been prompt. The door had opened.

Simon dutifully stood and walked out to the guards.

The Great Escape

It happened after a session with Dr. Angles.

Prison psychiatrist's office, Simon's final session. Dr. Angles said, "Do you know how rare people like you are, Simon?"

Simon said, "What sort of person am I, Dr. Angles? And are you complimenting or insulting me?"

Dr. Angles said, "Well, consider the number of prisoners in this country, for starters. Do you have any idea how low that number is, Simon? And you aren't even a regular prisoner."

Simon said, "The number can't be that low, if all the prisons are as stuffed as this one."

Dr. Angles said, "Simon, this is the *only* prison."

Dr. Angles wanted Simon to chew on this new bit of information for a while. He tapped a button and said, "Lights, out."

Simon knew Dr. Angles' office well enough to navigate it before his eyes adjusted.

Simon came upon Dr. Angles from behind, and wrapped the chain on his handcuffs around the good doctor's neck.

There was a camera mounted on the wall above both their heads. When the door opened and light flooded the room, a laser would strike Simon between the shoulder blades. He would fall.

Simon bit into the wires on the camera and jerked his head back. By this time, Dr. Angles was standing. He said, "Simon, what are you doing?"

Simon said, "Taking a hostage, Dr. Angles. Oh hey man, don't you have a key to these things?"

And so Simon navigated his way out of the prison. There was some shouting, there were some *tight spots*, but he got out. The National Justice Institute had his image on file, would release that image to all major industry computers with instructions for further distribution, and there would be nowhere in America he could go without alerting local law enforcement. Nobody was terribly concerned when Simon escaped.

Once outside, Simon threw Dr. Angles to the asphalt ground.

There was a forest nearby. Simon could hide in the woods. Yes, the woods. Only everyone would look there. But Simon would be quicker, smarter. Faster, stronger. Always.

Simon had nothing to lose, in that world.

Simon was in the woods. The sun had fallen some time ago. He could already hear the searchers with their dogs. Well, he was no fox.

Simon ran and ran. He couldn't find a creak. He found a road buzzing and roaring with cars. On the other side was a field, then more trees. He ran.

I think at least one of the dogs got hit by a car chasing Simon. Stupid handlers, I suppose. Neither of us turned around and went back to find out for certain.

That was how close they were. We could hear them behind us. We could hear whimpering.

Simon ran down a leafy hill in the forest. He saw another road in the distance, with houses. Houses and cars.

Not enormous, those houses, but they were new. Pretty brick dealios. No picket fences. Mostly brown paint. Most of the lights out. A nice little subdivision, all in all.

Simon opened one of the car doors. It was a cheap old Honda, circa 2008, when they made those things right. No keys. *If only I were a car thief*, Simon thought.

Ding-dong. Diiing-dong.

Footsteps thumped down stairs from inside. A man in a pink robe, opening his door a crack, said, "Yeah, who the hell wants anything at this hour?"

Simon could hear the barking dogs in the distance. He slammed his shoulder into the door. The man in the pink robe screamed as his bottom thumped down against the fluffy white-carpeted floor within.

"I think you broke--"

"I need you car keys."

The man held the floor with one hand and pushed. After slamming the door, Simon grabbed his other hand and helped him up. Once to his feet, the man said, "Ugh."

Simon said, "Close your robe. Where are your keys?"

Dogs scratched viciously at the door. Simon shook the pink-robed one. Simon said again, louder now, "Your keys!"

"Yeah... In the kitchen, I think. On the counter."

Simon deadbolted the door. He said, "Show me." He walked with the homeowner into the kitchen. Together, they found the keys.

"So you're... You're a real convict? A real killer, in my house?"

Simon said, "What makes you think I'm a killer?" He was planning his escape from the house. Agents were probably circling around the back...

"They're all killers, these days. Killers and a few rapists. You're... You're not a rapist, are you?"

Simon said, "I'm a killer."

Simon said, "Do you have a back door?"

The man said, "No."

There was a window over the kitchen sink. Simon heaved a chair through it, then leaped, tucked, rolled... The grass was a little wet.

Simon raced the dogs to the car. He won. They clawed at the door as he started `er up. They looked mean and determined as he backed out of the driveway. They went on looking mean and determined as he accelerated too quickly for them to follow.

And that was that. Simon was out of town before anyone knew to set up roadblocks.

Paradise Lost

Simon pushed a button to make all the windows on his new Honda come down. He liked the way the wind made his hair feel. His hair, messy, pulled back across his seat's headrest. Little curls of his dark beard tugging against his face. Coldness stinging his eyes, making them watery.

Simon had seen an old movie once with fat southern sheriffs all wearing mirror shades. He had also read about something similar in bad science fiction books. He would have liked to have had a pair, right then.

Simon had to get away from Uncle Sam. That old bearded stars-and-stripes bastard.

Uncle Sam. He was a man who became a god, too. We've talked. He forgives me for thinking he's a bastard. Doesn't mean he isn't one.

Am I a man become a god, or am I a god, having sacrificed a man to exist?

Anyway, Simon had to get out of the country. He had heard stories while he was in prison. Stories about an island city. Chrystal City, way way off the west coast. It was a floating city, built by some drug dealer or rich megalomaniac or the Russians or something. Supposed to have been first spotted back in the early twenty-twenties by a sailor. People went there now, sometimes, to get away.

Chrystal City was a country, technically speaking. It was the world's largest floating island, and it looked like the real deal. Beautiful red sandy beaches littered with glass and tin and burger wrappers. It stayed just out of international waters. It was supposed to stay in one general area. It was supposed to be a pa-hur-et-ty wild place.

Simon would drive to California and steal a boat. On the way, he would stop to steal gas and a map. It was easier to steal when nobody did it anymore. If he was caught? He was willing to risk a compounded life sentence, having himself doubts about reincarnation.

Everything went according to plan. Simon walked into a California gas station and snatched up a map that included Chrystal City's general location. Chrystal City was a hot topic in California, even though nobody really knew much about the place. People heard t'ings. Simon also snatched a few bags of chips and pocketed two or three Butterfingers. The little Butterfingers. You couldn't get the really long ones anymore.

Simon stole a boat. He untied some ropes and jumped aboard. I don't remember much about the boat, except that it was long and slender and white, and it had a pretty red stripe on each side. And it was full of gas. Simon made sure of that.

Simon knew all he knew about driving boats because he had watched movies. Getting the outboard motor to fall into the water, getting that same motor started, navigating... He had a good time. He had a direction in mind, if nothing else. A general direction. And hey, it had been smooth sailin' so far.

Chips and little candy bars. It was a bad idea to drive a little motor boat straight out into the ocean looking for an island with a general direction in mind. It was a worse idea, by far, to bring for food chips and candy bars.

Them was some salty chips, by the dammit!

Simon took to the wheel, leaned back into the leathery white seat, and relaxed. He liked the salty sea smells. He thought again about mirror shades.

Stranger in a Strange Land

Simon is really lucky to have had divinity inside him. Divinity's hot breath may have burned him in the end, I don't know. I do know it kept him alive when he charged Poseidon. I do know he never would have drifted into the shores of Chrystal City without a little help.

But drift he did, and shores he did reach. Oh yes. He went right past the island, then turned, then drifted, drifted.

Finally, out of chips and terribly terribly thirsty and just a little short on stored fat, he arrived. The sight of those beaches I told you about, beaches unclean!, took his breath away.

It was late. There were a few boozers on the beach. Hamburger wrappers glided by their feet. One of them, a woman with a dirty striped green tee, sucked at a thin brown cigarette. Another, a man with sweet brown sugar bristles coating his cheeks, was singing a song:

Ah knew a bull named Billy, I knew a bull named Bob,
But bestest of the bullies was Jon-Jon-Johnny the slob.

The song appealed to Simon because it ended there, and because the singer was so obviously inebriated. Once off of the boat, Simon outstretched his arms and ran to the man, shouting, "Father!" The drunkard outstretched his arms and shouted, "Son!" The both of them embraced and had a good laugh. Then Simon walked away to a walkway leading off the beach.

Simon walked between rows of little white houses, brown in places with dirt, colorful in other places with graffiti. A few windows were broken.

Some fellow streetwalkers decided to walk with Simon. They, seeing Simon's clean clothes, had no idea it was a veteran tramp they were walking beside.

A man, or a boy with old skin, kept to Simon's left. He stared up at Simon's face, being somewhat short. He asked, "Do you believe in magic, guvvie?"

Simon said, "Magic is an illusion."

The man-boy went on staring for a moment. Then he looked away, ahead, and said, "Yea, but do you believe in it?"

Simon said, "As much as in anything."

"I'm Jim," said the man-boy. "Guvvies call me what they like."

"Simon," said Simon. "Are these fellows friends of Jim?"

Jim said, "Fellows? Scavengers, thieves, trash. Scat, fellows!" He ran circles around Simon, waving his arms, screaming at the other streetwalkers. They all ran. Jim then again took to calmly walking by Simon's side.

The houses were getting taller and closer together. They didn't look any nicer, though, truth to tell. Same broken glass and graffiti and strange smells. The greatest mark of class, in Simon's mind, was the sidewalk. The sidewalk was clean and white and only cracked in a few places.

There were two converged cars on the other side of the road, next to that other sidewalk that Simon and Jim weren't then walking. The wreck struck Simon as a work of art far surpassing most modern sculpture. The cars were of a similar small model, unidentifiable in their current condition. One was hot red and the other was muddy brown. They fit together like puzzle pieces. Through the dusty broken glass in one of the windows, Simon could see a bit of blood. Not enough to have killed the driver, though maybe he had died anyhow.

Simon said, "Can a guvvie find a job around here?"

Jim said, "Sure, sure. I know couple of right nice fellows down a turn and twist ahead, if you don't mind the walking. But why would you want work here, guvvie? We can do better, for sure."

Simon said, "Until sure comes, I'd rather settle in around here. What sort of work do your right nice fellows have waiting for me?"

"Oh, fine work, those fellows," said Jim. He was using the word "fellows" like a new flavor of ice cream, for the taste. Jim knew the word. He had never heard it said quite like Simon said it.

Simon asked, "And if I don't want to work, you can find me a place?"

"Place?" asked Jim. "Yea, guvvie. Guvvie gets what guvvie wants, as always. Now with Jim. Jim and Simon. Tell me your need, guvvie. Blood and sweat I'll pay to get it."

Noticing Jim's big curious blue eyes, crusted eyes deep underneath, traveled eyes, expectant eyes, Simon nodded.

"Right then," said Jim. "Fellows I told you about, take a left ahead. They're in the candy bar."

Simon took a left at an intersection. He stayed on his side of the road. When a parking lot and a string of shops cut off the sidewalk, Simon walked into Mike's Candy Bar. He thought about Mike.

There were shelves and shelves of Milky Ways, barrels filled with M & Ms and Skittles, buckets of gooey taffy! When a fat man stepped up to the counter and smiled, flashing green and yellow teeth with a few free spaces on the gums, Simon knew. He has been pretty sure before, but it was then that he knew. This was a real candy store, damn it.

"Welcome! Welcome to Mike's!" said the fat man. He dragged his meaty palm down a white tee as dirty and ragged as the palm, then outstretched it.

Simon grabbed fingered glob of fat in both his hands, leaned forward and said, "It's good to be welcome, me brother. Where might I find Mike?" He then released the fat man's hand and took a step back.

"You be speaking to him, guvvie. Mike and Mike. The other Mike's in the back, but don't pay him no mind. I'm the cheese here. How may I serve?"

Jim stepped up to the counter. He rested his elbows upon the dusty surface and held his hands together beneath his chin. He said, "Simon's my charge, he is, so I do the dealy. It's a job he's after. We've come to the right place, fellow, have

we?"

Mike said, "Of course, friend Jim! You know Mike's is the busiest busy around here. Why, you'd have to go center city to find better candy than what we have. And good luck you'll have finding another place paying the guvvie's deserve."

Jim asked, "How do you number that deserve, Mike?"

Negotiations...

Simon got a job, a little room within a little house occupied by two others, and a free jumbo size Snickers bar. His favorite get was the Snickers bar.

Killer Klowns From Outer Space

Simon awoke upon a bumpy white floor mattress. As he sat up, a thin brown sheet slid across cold nipples, then down his stomach. He stood, naked and shivering. He turned slowly to survey surroundings he hadn't before seen lit by the sun. He smiled wide.

Simon walked across the hardwood floor to a window. He dragged his finger over the frame, playing in the dust. He traced the cracks spreading like veins from the small hole in the glass, playing in the dust. He watched some of the people in the streets.

There was a lady walking her dog. Two teens chattered away as they crossed the road. Every half minute or so, a car would whiz by. Down the street, a horde of kids was sitting on the edge of the sidewalk, chilling, listening to some hard gangsta rhymes. Not Simon's bag, but better butter than what they were spreading back in the states.

Simon pulled on an orange shirt and an orange pair of pants. He considered whether it was time to purchase new clothes. He was beginning to smell. A shower, deodorant, and clean civvies. Could be nice. Could be necessary. What if there were pretty ladies around just waiting for a smell-good male to come and sweep them off their feet? He'd have to say something to Jim.

Where was Tim, anyway? Had Mike hooked him up with his own room? Tim deserved a room.

The candy store! What time had Simon said he would start? Were there any clocks about? He hadn't seen any watches. Had he named a time?

He walked to the door. He slowly turned the knob. He pulled and peeked. His housemates were still on the floor, sleeping. There were two of them. And their room wasn't much bigger than his. He would move carefully.

Simon found in the room a kitchen. In the kitchen he found a refrigerator with a warm interior, a cabinet stocked with bread and a few crackers, and the sink. He twisted the handle for **hot**. *Squeeeak*. No water came out.

A voice from the floor said, "Damn it, man. Agh... Doesn't work... Leave quick and quiet, we're sleeping. Were sleeping... Agh, damn it." The source of the voice then covered his head with a pillow.

Simon walked to a door, an exit. He slipped outside as quietly as possible. There was nothing to do but go to the candy store.

Strolling leisurely down the sidewalk, Simon came across a juggler of butcher knives. The man had the biggest reddest honkable clown nose. Suspenders stretched down across his striped yellow and green shirt, holding up a pair of rainbow pants. The pants matched the man's hair. Resting near his feet was an upturned bowler hat overflowing with coins.

Simon stopped to watch the clown for a moment. A little moment. Half a minute, maybe. After, he walked on by.

As Simon passed, the clown said, "Forgetting something, aye, guvvie?"

"No money," said Simon, glancing over his shoulder, then falling to the sidewalk, kicking back at the clown's feet as a knife flew by overhead and went *clang* against the ground.

The clown fell. The knives, those he hadn't gotten around to throwing, rained down harmlessly around him. He was angry.

Simon was quicker to and with his feet. More than half a minute passed before he stopped kicking that damned clown. Then he walked on to Mike's Candy Bar.

There are many odd gangs in Chrystal City.

Dark City

"And what have you been about all this morning, friend Simon?" asked Mike as Simon walked through the door. "We've been busy, busy today, it being the Friday before Jzearuth's birthday."

"Sorry," said Simon. "Where am I needed?"

"No need for apologies here, guvvie. Glad to have you, I am, whatever time you come around. See Mike in the back for need fulfilling," said Mike.

Simon walked through the wooden door behind the glass counter. He inhaled cardboard as he entered the backroom. Simon found Mike sitting on a box, propping a clipboard up on his knees, dragging the back of his pen down a white paper.

Mike looked a great deal like Mike, only skinny. They both had the same teeth, the same greasy brown hair, the same facial stubble. His nose hairs were jutting out. He had a Hitler mustache made entirely of nose hairs.

Mike said, "I've seen the taffy. The taffy is good. Bad, bad for the teeth, but oh so good."

Simon said, "Yeah."

Mike said, "Start unloading those boxes over there." He pointed to a cluster of fat boxes in the corner. "Count packs Juju Goobers, individual Butterfingers, bagged Green Envy Gummies. Mark here, here, and here." Mike pointed to blanks on the sheet of paper attached to his clipboard. He handed Simon the clipboard.

Simon said, "Alright."

Opening boxes and sorting candies, Simon said, "Where's Jim, Mike?"

Mike said, "You don't know? My first guess would be sleeping. I can't say where Jim's kind sleeps, I'm afraid."

Simon counted everything in the boxes. He marked what he counted on the inventory. He was directed toward more boxes. He counted everything again. Again, he marked what he counted. And that was all he had to do at work that day.

When Simon left the candy bar, he was munching on a Butterfinger. He really liked the Butterfingers. He thought, "Wouldn't it be fun to tour my part of the city while munching on a Butterfinger?"

He walked back alleys. That's where the fun is at, anyway. Shadows and oozes and turtles with ninja swords strapped to their backs rising up from the sewers. And prostitutes and drug dealers and drunken bums sitting in vomit. Then dead babies with missing pieces of skull and skeletons with flaming heads riding motorcycles.

Simon never found any drug dealers. In Chrystal City, you'd best have uptown money if you want good drugs (literally magical drugs that usually augmented psychic ability). The only thing you can do cheap is get drunk or cancer (or marijuana psychedelics pain killers or stimulants). He might have seen the turtles. He wouldn't see any prostitutes until later. The bum didn't ask for change. When he got to the dead baby, he paused.

He paused and stared. Little dry red trickles stemming from the little dry red circle surrounding the back of the head. A smell.

Simon walked on. He might have seen a woman wetting her stiff dry rags with tears.

Sadness wants tears. As does joy.

AAHHH!

Simon walked on. He touched brown breaking bricks. The end of an alley. He traced words written in pink spray paint. They said, *Troy was a Mighty Trojan Soldier*. Beneath, there was a fairly detailed picture of a dog.

An hour Simon spent walking the mystic halls. He found that way more streetwalkers. They no longer crowded him as they once had. They merely nodded politely, or acknowledged his presence not at all. They were not ready.

Somehow, Tim found Simon.

"Tut! Tut! Tut! What you been after all this time, guvvie? I been up and down some pavement, finding your elusive arse. Fellows at Mike's were all but helpful in finding you." Some of these things, Tim said running, before he caught up with Simon.

"When I am needed," Simon said, "I will answer. I didn't know I was needed."

"Oh nay, you've done plenty. Tim needs naught from you. Its Tim that's needed, guvvie. It's I that knows these streets best."

Simon said, "You smell, Tim."

Tim said, "You ain't roses y'self, guvvie."

Simon said, "Do roses grow here?"

Tim said, "That one's an expression, guvvie. It's getting dark."

It wasn't getting dark. It didn't get dark for another two hours.

Nothing else significant happened that day.

Heat

Simon awoke covered in sweat, buried under his sheet, terribly uncomfortable. He threw off the sheet, got to his feet, strapped on his clothes. He wandered outside.

The clowns were waiting for him.

The clowns had a bat and knives and pistols. Simon was fucked. "You're fucked!" they said.

Simon hopped back inside. As he slammed the door, two bullets and a knife slammed into the door. One of the bullets got through.

One of the guys on the floor said, "The hell...? Agh, damn it."

The other guy on the floor said, "What the fuck did you do, Simon?"

Both the guys on the floor started dressing. They stayed low. They knew to stay low.

A few bullets made it through the wooden door. Simon said, "I couldn't pay a clown. They're trying to bring me down. Any weapons around?"

"No!" said both guys. They were scooting into the kitchen. One had blue jeans and a plain white tee. Muscles showed through. Curly black hair covered his head and probably his chest. The other wobbled across the floor on chubby legs and hands. His blond hair was so long it got dragged through the dust in the floor.

Simon, with his back to the wall, sidestepped away from the door. He would wait. The door wasn't locked. The bad guys could come in any time. He would wait.

There were four of them out there. Two had guns. One of the guns was really ripping through the door. It made a sound like *poofpoofpoof!* Wood would shatter after.

Simon shouted, "Elephants are entertaining as well as fat!"

When the door became pretty much transparent, a clown with knives, the clown Simon had insulted and beaten down, stepped up to the door. He didn't walk inside. Two clowns, both with really floppy red feet, ran past him. One pointed a small black gun left, right at Simon. The other pointed right, right at nothing.

Simon dashed forward while snatching up the little pistol pointed at his head. He slammed the butt into the clown's temple. He spun the gun in his hand, then watched the clown with the big gun spin. Simon hopped back ducking down, and fired off three shots. Two pierced the clown's naked neck.

Flop! went the clown feet as the pair of gunmen fell to the floor. *Flop!* Big red feet sticking straight up.

A knife flew ineffectually by Simon's shoulder. Out on the sidewalk, a baseball bat clattered against the ground. The midget clown that had been holding the baseball bat ran off with midget legs.

Simon shot the knife thrower in the left leg, left hand, right hand, and right kneecap. He would have done more, but the gun went *clickclick*. So he took one of the clown's knives and stabbed it in the chest. He left the hilt sticking up.

Simon threw the two dead bodies out onto the sidewalk. He woke up the clown he had knocked out. He said, "I like your nose." That particular clown had no red honker on its nose. The nose was just really big and painted red.

The clown said, "...". Then it went outside and ran away.

A voice said, "Agh, damn it."

Introductions were called for. Simon's roomies were George and Bill. George was the fatty, Bill the manly-chested man's man.

George said, "Why the hell did you have to go and screw with the DJs? You're not worth this shit, whoever you are."

Simon said, "'DJs?'"

George said, "Discord's Jesters. A crazy bunch of kids. They own a little piece of the city, like so many others. We happen to live in their territory."

Bill said, "Hell."

"Sorry," said Simon. "They're gone now, anyway."

"No," said Bill. "No. No, no, no. Are you dense, man?"

"They'll be back," said George. "There'll be more. There'll be explosions. Big ones, if those kids can get their hands on the right goodies. Christ, Simon. You killed two of them."

"Me and Bill, we know a place. We'll be safe. Still, we were happy. Found us a nice little niche. And I already owe Friday a favor."

Bill said, "My girlfriend was gonna stop by later today. We were gonna go to the celebration together. She has a car. Wheels, man! What do I tell her happened to the door, Simon? Agh..."

Simon said, "Celebration?"

George said, "Are you really that guvvie? Should have seen it in your eyes, I guess. Usually, guvvies can't kill as coldly as what I seen from you just now."

Bill said, "Today's Jzearuth's birthday, guvvie."

As soon as he had the chance, Simon would ask Tim the meaning of that word.

This is how it really happened

Simon had to walk, after the attack. He walked to the Candy Bar and waited for some candy to come in from the man with the candy because candy is good yes? Yes ! WEll, the three of us, we hjeaded on over to Mike's and had ahselves a blast. Totally, yeah.

Jungle jumpers leaper leaped merrily through hoops organized in descending order to attract chickens and antelope and giant salademanders for rushes through traffic with frogs. We were all having a ball before he came into town.

Him, you know him. Sits on a throne, watches the people pass b. He wants you, guvvie. He wants your money and your blessing and your eyes on him. He wants your soul, as you've probably guessed, but you know what? The master's here, Master Wood, he'll put some splinters through that dirty cat. Dress up real nice then dance circles around juju football playing crazy quarter's back has a bird with nice legs.

I eat the squirrels til the song is over parner you have just gotta wait your turn. We all have turn this one's on me. A toss, a spin, a swirling whirl through breezy hot air and reserved space. Upon occupied sidewalk, it lands.

RUn! Hide! He's comin ta getcha and you know from wince from where from there, yeah, that's the place, keep your eye on the ball...

And what the bloody hell us at?

After the clown attack, Simon decided he'd need to get hisself some good heat. He'd talk to Mike and Mike. He'd talk to Tim. Somebody was bound to know a guy.

Town like Chrystal, maybe Simon could get himself a custom job. None of that skull spitting bullets crap he'd seen in old movies. Something functional.

He'd need a beatin' stick, too. He planned on doing a little beatin'.

Lizard Music

People don't really have one brain they have three the lowest of the three brains feeds on fear and is the lizard brain inherited from lizard ancestors its strange ness how things like this occur as a result of evolution so now when youre afraid your lizard brain will be fed and when youre really afraid your lizard brain will get so much food it sees the need to take over and direct even memory energy to it fighting coldly for survival until youre free again from the elements or whatever. What do people who live mostly in the lizard brain as instead of the other two think about when thoughts enter their head and what do they do if they happen to be creative or want to be creative and what sort of thing do they respond to or does it even matter so long as there is something to respond to?

Simon walked through the front door to Mike's Candy Bar. He found an empty store. A white piece of paper flapped across the front of the counter as the door closed. The sign, in deep red ink, said, "No looting today on account of the Birthday."

Simon walked outside. He followed the streams of folk. There were an awful lot of folk on the sidewalks that day. Simon had a long walk ahead of him.

I want to fuck with your head.

Center city, a celebration was occurring. One thing about that Jzearuth fellow, or at least the people in charge of his birthday, party. It was one of those parties you hear things about after the fact, things that couldn't possibly be true. You know? You go to Regular Joe's house, kick back and drink a few, have an okay time with all the guys and gals, then go home when it gets late. Somebody calls you up in the morning and says, "Dude! You won't believe what happened after you left last night..."

Nobody left Jzearuth's party early. Some people, lots of people, dropped from exhaustion or dehydration or whatever, right in the middle of the street or sidewalk or hotel balcony or whatever. Some people got knocked out and a few people got stabbed and lots of people ran around naked.

Simon was sweating and smelling everyone else's sweat. People were pushing against each other, screaming, cheering, basking.

Jzearuth made short speeches on a big stage with big, circling lights, between sets performed by a heavy instrumental band that didn't know how to play their instruments. Nobody could hear the band anyway, over the roar of the crowd. The crowd was everywhere. They only even quieted briefly for Jzearuth, which is probably why his speeches were so short.

Jzearuth, he had on a dirty pair of black boots, a red cowboy hat, and a pair of silver six shooters straight out of the Wild West. He wore super tight black jeans and a small red vest. He had a nice chest. No body hair, Bruce Lee muscles - only slightly skinnier.

Jzearuth, he was a pale fleshed one.

Jzearuth said, "I love America. America gave us Dirty Harry and Tiger Woods and Stan "the Man" Lee. What are we gonna give back?"

The crowd shouted, "Liberty and freedom and Peacemaker for President!"

Simon said nothing. A young thing sexy prostitute with alcohol breath leaned into him and put moist full lips up to his ear. She said, "When you grok what went on here today, you will grok Chrystal City."

A few minutes later, the slut vanished, absorbed within the depths of the crowd.

"Simon! HEY, guvvie! Tim's here! What business have you back here so far?" said Tim.

Simon shouted up, for he could not yet trace the voice to the source. He said, "The crowd is thick, Jim. How am I to get through all these bodies?"

Jim said, "Worry not, for blood I said I'd give, and blood I would, were it needed. Like Moses did for his master, I'll part this sea in your name, guvvie."

A sound like fifty cats being stabbed came from somewhere ahead. A hand smeared dirt across Simon's shirt collar as it grabbed it. Everyone backed up a bit to see what had made the sound. Jim screamed again. People fell back holding their ears. By this method, Jim dragged Simon nearly to the foot of the stage.

Once at the foot of the stage, Simon too held his ears, for he could hear the terrible incoherent noise sputtering from the speakers. The noise was too incoherent even to dress itself up as chaotic.

Simon said, "What does 'guvvie' mean?"

Jim said, "What?"

Simon said, "What!?"

They both gave up. They watched the band perform. The guitar player was really moving, shaking his hips and banging his head like he was actually playing something. The guy on piano was just trying to look cool and happy behind his dark shades.

White Light/

The sun shot twisted beams through Simon's broken window. The beams animated shadows from one side of the room to the other. Simon rolled over. The shadows would continue moving. Simon wouldn't see them moving.

It was late when he awoke. It was late when anybody woke up, Sunday. Sunday was a day of rest.

It was time to shower. He was determined. It always feels good showering when you've been covered in slime for a while.

George and Bill had already moved out. The house was empty. No point in hanging out in an empty house.

Simon went to the candy bar. There, he found fat Mike sitting behind the register.

Mike tossed Simon a toothy smile and said, "How goes it, friend?"

Simon said, "Sorry if I'm late. Am I late? Send back Tim, if he comes by."

Mike nodded.

Simon walked into the back room. He sorted and counted candy.

Mike sent back Tim, later. Tim said, "A fine day to you, Simon."

Simon said, "I want to shower, Tim. I want new clothes."

Tim said, "Yea, yea. Today's the day for it, I suppose. Tim too could use a bit of a cleansing. When you're through here, we'll go together, merrily on our way. I'll check with Mike for wages." And off Tim went to talk with Mike. The fat one.

So when Simon finished boxing and deboxing goods, a task easily accomplished over the passing of a few hours, he stood and exited the candy bar with faithful Tim. Tim had obtained six gems from Mike, which was more than fair. In addition, the companions left with a piece of taffy each.

Simon and Tim came upon a large white circular building lacking in graffiti. Two men with rifles stood to either side of the building's only entrance. Each man had on a black leather jacket and shining black leather pants and polished black leather boots. They were casually leaning back against the wall and casually holding their rifles. Big sparkling chains coiled around their belts, on the right side.

Jim stepped up to one of the soldiers. He pulled two gems out of his pocket and held them out. The soldier snatched them up and said, "Seven minutes each. Be prompt."

Jim said, "Yea, gov'nar, surely."

Jim and Simon entered the building. The sound of running water echoed over echoes inside. The floor was moist and slippery and lined with small circular drains. Men and women alike were busy washing away all sorts of dirt. It must have been fifty showers in all, circling around side by side.

While Simon was derobing center room, hanging his stinking orange clothes upon a rack there, he caught sight of a pretty lady. Would it be hard, being a pretty lady and taking public showers? Would it be harder, being an ugly lady and taking public showers? He did not consider it difficult, as an ugly man, to take a public shower.

It was glorious, in fact. Heaven, as always. Layer after layer of nasty peeled away until emerged a new creature. And oh, the shampoo on his fingers, pushed through his hair, lathered to bubbles, cleaning, cleaning! And the soap! How nice of Chrystal City, providing the soap too.

Simon, the new creature, seriously considered shaving his beard. He never followed through with the consideration.

It was on the way out of the showers, he saw her. The Her, absolutely. The One. He might not have known when he saw her. He certainly knew when he talked to her.

She was walking down the sidewalk. Simon jogged a few yards, settled to a walk beside her. He said, "Hullo."

She pulled long black hairs away from her face, cast them over her shoulders. Without looking at him, she said, "Hey." Her clothes smelled bloody awful, and looked a sort of bloody awful too, but she was beautiful for all that.

Simon didn't give poor Jim, walking all alone several yards back, alone and with Simon's money, even a passing thought.

Simon said, "I'm guvvie, whatever that means, and terribly terribly lost. Show a fellow around?" It seemed a damned stupid thing to say.

Electricity flowing through, from head to toe. Electricity shock-shock-shocking you.

She said, "I'm Lisa, whatever that means, and not altogether sure of my surroundings myself. Do you have a proper name?" It was funny, how Lisa said "proper name".

Simon said, "Simon Sade. Properly acquainted as we are now, we needn't treat each other as strangers."

Lisa said, "I'm inclined to trust strangers more than most acquaintances. Perhaps you are strange enough, with or without a name." That might have been when it happened, the leaping of Simon's heart.

Simon said, "Where to, then?"

Lisa said, "I've a stereo."

Off they went, god and goddess surely, to drink grand music together. And what grand music it was! Patti Smith on cassette, for this stereo was old even to the aged. They swished in the assault, back and forth within the madness, the

sadness, the subtle soothing drifting grabbing running sometimes vicious vocals. Angels and devils played their instruments behind her, that marvelous, fabulous, ingenious artist Patti.

Lisa had a room in a house somewhat like Simon's, only smaller. The house offered electricity to power a stereo and a mattress to sit upon, if nothing else.

Lisa closed her eyes and grabbed firmly the side edge of the mattress in both her hands, rough, small, powerful hands. Hands to hold destinies and smash them. Hands of an earthly beauty, as if it were Gaia sitting there, adorned in her dirt.

Lisa said, "I have visions. Whenever anything moves me, I see wonderful things."

Simon asked, "What do you see right now?"

Lisa said, "I see a man running naked through the flames, skin popping into bubbles, shriveling, peeling back, ripped away to reveal falling bones and something more something powerful and free gracefully flying... Turn up the speakers, Simon."

And suddenly, Patti was really hollering and Lisa saw things maybe Patti saw maybe only Lisa ever saw, marvelous things, horrible things, glass houses that deflected hurled stones and dragons with flower eyes and hordes of gold shining bright enough to blind birds and... uh... oh! ...

Late that night, after many visions, few words, and much joy within Simon's breast, Simon said, less meekly than he felt, "It's late. I should head home."

Lisa said, "Yeah." She walked Simon to the door. Simon walked home in the dark.

White Heat

It burns. It spreads. Hairs stand straight.

When Simon awoke, he went to work as usual. On his way to work, walking into work, putting things in boxes, leaving work, looking for Tim, Simon wrote and rewrote and reworked and forgot and worked again a letter. He had the feelings. He needed to open up, let a little of it all out. He needed to reach for something.

Tim got Simon a heavy ink pen and a little white pad of paper dirtied only a little. He spent a single gem only. Earlier, he had spent another on food for Simon and for himself. Energy bars, the food was called.

Simon accepted the food. It was good to get something besides candy and bread and crackers and dirty water from work into his stomach. It was as if, up to that moment, he had only ever eaten at work. How had Tim, meanwhile, survived? Oh yes, Simon knew.

Simon accepted the food and retreated into a wide, bright but dimming, pleasant alley. A fallen garbage tin served as his seat. He wrote. Furiously calm, he wrote:

There is a sweet and innocent girl. She has stolen away my heart. I am sure of this, for there is an empty place inside that used to pulsate with life. How could I have let this thing happen?

Damn me for locking the door so long, then opening up so suddenly. Now my good and bad flows out, and the good and bad of the world rushes in. Did I build emotional walls, or did I build floodgates?

How can I tell her my heart is gone? She is innocent. It jumped quietly from my chest to her pocket. The fair thing would be to sit back and do nothing, as always. But then away tiptoes my heart.

Am I, finally, feeling as I feel, to break from habit and elevate a person above myself? No, I do what is natural: I place myself below a person.

What do I want? I know something of what I want. I want to understand people as people understand people, so I can join that thing called humanity. I want life. I want to write brilliant novels, then page after page of divinely moving poetry. I want to walk on water. I want to dance funkily to a funky beat, suddenly developing a sense of rhythm. But right now, all I want is to listen to her describe the visions in her head as we listen to music together.

I wonder now about the reaction these musings would elicit were I to put them in her hands.

Love letters are out of fashion.

(In dedication to Christine D.)

Simon never wrote *Dear Lisa*. He never, anywhere, signed his name. He clicked the button on his pen to cause the sharp metal tip to withdraw, and he stared at the notepad. It got dark and he went home.

To this day, no paper has been ripped from the notepad. I still have it.

Killing Clocks: A Digression

"It's just a pen Eddie," Ben said. "And if it was a sword, I'd say the same."

It took me a moment to realize just what the hell Ben was talking about. My pen, of course. But what does that have to do with swords?

"The pen is mightier than the sword." Click. Ben was trivializing my pen, under the expectations I had for it, *despite* its might. Who thinks like that?

I stared at his black Ghost Rider tee shirt for a second, considering. "It's just a pen," he says. This pen I planned on

using to beat down Father Time and rob his house. This pen I planned on using to sneak into Death's lair and rescue my father.

"He wasn't crazy, you know." By the time I said that, I was looking him in the eyes. At least I think I was, through those silk curtains of hair and that dark pair of silver-rimmed sunglasses he always wore.

Two boys, Ben and Eddie, went to a city one fine summer for a three-week vacation.

Eddie had a magic pen. With his magic pen, he could manipulate time.

The boys met two girls, Sara and Lisa, in the city. The girls were vacationing, too. Ben and Lisa really hit it off. Eddie and Sara held hands when they walked.

The four tight friends caused much mischief in the city, slowing time, stopping time, pulling back against time. They managed to go back in time, minutes at a time, without much trouble. Mischief accumulated, though, as the friends stole things and played pranks and invaded buildings and spent far too much time playing with time.

Robots from the future came. Robots came to the city to seal gaps in the time stream and cease abuse of the time stream. Robots chased Ben and Eddie and *Lisa* and Sara, and Eddie used his pen to manipulate further the time stream to escape the robots.

"Look out, fellows, we're going for a ride!"

"Hurry!"

Robots from the future proved persistent. Eventually, in an effort to right mistakes and prevent the excessive manipulations from leading to robot attacks, Eddie used his pen to pull back into time too far and he sent everyone back two years to where everyone was two years ago. Really, it became two years ago, age subtracted two years, memories subtracted two years, experiences subtracted two years, so all the same things would happen again. Only streams do not circle, so the pen sent back Ben as-is, memories and age and all.

"They... They change so quickly."

Ben's parents thought their son's growth spurt fairly odd. They checked Ben into a doctor's office. Various scans reported that Ben was a perfectly healthy growing child. The matter was attributed to the mysteries of puberty and dropped. Ben spoke not a word about time travel.

A year later, Ben met Eddie in school. Ben and Eddie became fast friends, as fate dictated. Ben spoke not a word about time travel.

A year later, Ben and Eddie vacationed in Chrystal City. Eddie had a magic pen. The boys met two girls.

When Ben and Eddie and Lisa and Sara met, Ben spilled his guts. Ben cautioned Eddie not to toy too much with the magic of time travel. Ben professed his undying love to Lisa, who he had loved for two years separated, who he would go back or forward another two years or two centuries or an infinity just to be close to. Ben talked on robots.

"Scary quick gliding things, they are, with teeth that move! For what purpose were they given teeth that move?"

Eddie promised to be careful, but Eddie had to play with time. Eddie had a magic pen. What else had Eddie ever had?

Ben talked away days with Lisa on the subject of love. They decided, the two of them, no matter what happened, to meet again in a bar neither had ever heard of. The bar was called Mallory's Bar. Neither had ever heard of it, but both knew what it was called.

"We shall find one another on the other side."

Robots, vicious robots, persistent robots, came again. In the future, robots know time and how precious and holy and fragile it is and that it must be protected!

Eddie used his pen to evade the robots. Looking for a loophole.

Eddie drew upon the power of his pen. Everything went black for a moment.

Oh, I'm stiff. How late was I up? Was I the one killed the sheep? What the hell? My head... I feel all...

I'm pushing against the grass I fell asleep on, standing up. My hands and chest and legs feel damp and cold, like the grass. And I'm itchy, from the grass.

I see everyone, all the guys and gals, my buddies from the party, out on the beach already. What the hell time is it? The sun is... Climbing fast.

I walk out to the beach, stumble a little, hold my side. Man, I'm stiff. I'll feel better soon. The sand feels goood. So much better, sand is, than grass. I drag my feet through the sand, soak in heat, head for the water.

Couple of guys and some gal, what's her name?, they're playing in the water. Splashing each other. They're calling me over. "Hey, Fred! You know what time it is, man? You've been out all day! Fred!"

I don't feel like splashing through the water right now. I feel like swimming.

I needed that party. The way things have been at work lately, hell, always, I needed that party. It's good to see old friends, too.

Ahhh... The water. I'm in it, under it, swimming like a frog. Further, further, I have to keep going. I'm swimming for the sun, coming up for air only when my lungs burn. The salt stings my bloodshot eyes and I love it.

Why I have to swim, why I'm swimming so far, I can't say. I've never gone this far before. So here I am, the end of the water. Edge of the world. What happens if I keep going, now that I'm at the end? Does the blackness consume me or do I hit a wall?

I reach my hand out past the water. I don't feel consumed. I don't feel a wall. I just don't feel.

I turn around and swim for shore. I shake my hair as I walk across the beach and the grass and into the beach house. I don't towel myself off because I want to take a shower.

I take a shower.

I towel myself off and get dressed in my best suit. I wear my best suit pants and my best suit coat and my best suit tie. I exit the house and go for a walk, away from the beach and the grass. I walk on hot black road not very busy with cars.

I don't know where I'm walking. Maybe to the end of the island. Never had any reason to go to the end of the island before.

I walk into Mallory's Bar. There's music and sweaty bodies and dirty mugs and musk inside. The music's coming from a stage.

I walk to the bar and order a beer. I drink my beer out of my dirty mug, happy as ever. I turn in my stool to watch the stage. The band up there right now, they have this kind of crunchy bluesy classic rock sound. I can't put my finger on it exactly. I mean, I don't listen to much music. This music tickles my spine a little.

Minutes pass and already everybody's getting off the stage. A red curtain drops. It's a pretty filthy red curtain. Still, I'm impressed.

This short balding fat guy slips through the curtain, grabs a microphone, and says, "Ladies and gentlemen, our house band, Andalusian Summoners!"

One guy somewhere in the room claps. The curtain lifts, the fat announcer hops down. Beats harmonize over the magical shuffling sound of an electric lute. My spine tingles a little more than before. A girl steps up to the microphone and spits her song at me and everyone. My spine quakes.

Caught the all-chill chillin'

While doin' me a killin'

The place where people pick pockets

Rockets sound outta town when round comes

Food and beer and prostitutes

What a hoot in the City, big city, my city

Loot the city, me pretty

Steal me some dresses to match my raven tresses God blesses the weak when we're humble Bow down your head before dawns your objection, rejection

Stick with it

Stick with us FussFussFuss in the morning but for now just play it cool follow my lead follow His rule

Maybe substance comes with the Dawnin'

Maybe the Son

Maybe sunlight is solid

I sit here and watch and listen and drink my beer. It's not so much the words that suck me in. Maybe I'd be sucked in no matter what, just because she's hot. I think it's her voice, familiar, repulsive, rough, magnetic, all at the same time. And the way she plays her swift, complicated, shuffling lute music over everything, caressing the bass line, kissing the kettledrums.

I sit here watching, taking my time knocking back the beers.

They're doing their last song now, I think. It has kind of an end-song feel to it. Not exactly winding down, but... I don't know. It's like watching a great big volcano for ten minutes, waiting for the thing to explode. Then you see the thing explode.

They're packing up now. The curtain's about to fall. I'm on my fourth beer. Might not drink any more, I don't know. I really don't feel like drinking. I just... kinda... I am.

She's sitting next to me, ordering a scotch. I turn in my stool, lean toward her a little, say, "Hey."

She says, "Hey." She doesn't look at me. She drinks her scotch.

I say, "Wanna go for a walk?"

She blinks. She turns to face me. She blinks again. Her cute little rounded chin scrunches up. She says, "Alright."

We walk out of Mallory's and as we walk out, we know who we are.

"We gotta find Eddie and Sara," Lisa says.

We climb into a car, together. The car's Lisa's. So she drives down that lone road straight back and forth, looking off to the side, and I look at the gauges. "You need some gas," I say.

Lisa pulls into a gas station. She pulls up next to a pump and a pumper and says to the pumper, "Fill `er up."
 The pumper pumps gas for us. He finishes, retracts and replaces the pump, twists plastic over a hole, and holds out his hand. And as Lisa gives him the money, she knows.
 "Get in, Eddie," Lisa says.
 Sam rubs his greasy hands on his greasy red uniform. He grabs the nametag attached to the uniform. He makes sure Lisa sees the nametag. I peek over her shoulder.
 Lisa says, "Get in, Eddie."
 Eddie says, "Alright." When he sits down in the back seat, he knows who he is. We all know who we are. Even before you know, you know. Like one of those voids inside, eating away at you.
 Lisa drives. We all stare straight. I stare at the road, Eddie at the peeling leather back of my seat, Lisa at the road. There aren't any lines. There's just pavement.
 Lisa drives to the end of the road. Two guards are standing to either side of a fence's gate. Behind the fence is a long pointed strip of sand, the island's point. We all get out of the car.
 The look on the faces of the uniformed officers says, "The road ends here." We know this already.
 I say, "Why is this area blocked?"
 One of the officers, a female, says, "Blocked?" She unlatches the gate and slides it open. And we all know who she is.
 We three walk on. Eddie glances back, over his shoulder. Lisa and I reach the point and dig. Frantically, we dig. What we're digging for we don't know exactly. But still, we know. Some things aren't exact.
 Eddie stands behind us, watching. I stop digging for a minute to look back at him.
 "You know where these holes lead, Eddie?"
 "Yeah," Eddie says. "Yeah. Good luck, Lisa, Ben. Sorry for everything. And you're welcome, for everything."
 I say, "You should come. You belong with us." I know I'm a liar. I start digging again while Eddie answers me.
 Eddie pulls a pen out of the pocket of his greasy red pants. "No," he says. "Those holes are home. Home is here for Sara. If home is anywhere else, it's through those holes. I know. I can't go home.
 "Home isn't home, for me. Onward Christian soldier. Heh. I'm alone, Ben. Lisa, I'm alone. I love you guys, but... I need poetry and myth and legend. Or I need to search. I search."
 Eddie pauses. He watches our holes fill with water.
 "Besides," Eddie says, "I have the pen. Adventure be the name of this pen. You'll write a story about me, the time traveler. I'll never read it. I'll be too busy flying with faeries and the wind. I'll be too busy smashing robots. I'll be too busy slipping the eternity carpet out from everyone's feet. Ha! I'll be fine, Lisa, Ben, Ha! I'll be fine."
 Lisa and I hold hands. Everything went black for a moment.

Love and War

Love is an emotion powerful enough to explode within a person many times, if repressed. No matter how much it twists, heats, cools, explodes, kills a person, it is an energy source never dead. It can be channeled, as can any other energy source. However harnessed or directed, it is an eternal gasoline for a temporary engine.

War is an altar upon which to sacrifice people for the better good of people. Sacrifices were never really made to appease the gods. That was a tolerated pretension. Sacrifices were made to appease the people.

Sacrifices appease the gods.

Simon could feel two things cooking *within*. I am an able cook. He awoke and dressed and forgot all about purchasing new clothes. The idiot should have done that before he went through the trouble of showering. He thought not about work, nor troubles of any kind. He was determined. What he was determined to do he thought not about.

He stepped outside. He walked. Everything was so bright. Glowing, in fact. Rolling tin cans looked like nothing because he could not be distracted by tin cans.

He stepped into an alley. He walked. Everything was so clear and fresh. He kneeled down. His hand grasped tightly a lead pipe. He walked farther.

He walked.

There were two of them guarding the door. Them, the clowns, the DJs. They saw what he had in his hands and they shouted at him. They began pointing guns at him. He was too quick, had appeared too suddenly from around the corner. They fell almost at the same time, so fast were their heads struck.

Simon did not steal the guns. He went inside.

It was a bar. There were seven of them. Four playing pool at one table, a midget tending the bar, two drinking and talking at the bar. Everyone was fully dressed and most had potential weapons at hand. The midget had a rifle back there, somewhere, Simon knew, somehow. The other men at the bar had pistols holstered in their belts.

Simon said, "I challenge Lord Orandor."

Lord Orandor stood and said, "And who is this? Who can this lovely be, entering so suddenly?"

A familiar face, full of bruises wrought not by Simon's hands, said, "That one popped us, Lord and Master. Killed

Fred and Barney, he did. Did me a turn too, as you know, Lord."

"Aye," said Orandor. "Aye, aye. Indeed I do. And who was it told this peasant my name?"

The bruised man, leaning down on his pool stick, looking to the floor for lack of a better place to look, said, "T'was not I, Lord. There was another, as you know."

"Aye," said Orandor, paying the bartender a glance. "What say you, Marcus? How is it my name was got?"

Simon was still all this time. His body shook a bit. His hand, holding for all to see the lead pipe, shook a bit.

Marcus the midget did not answer the question, for he knew not how. He said instead, "My Liege, I submit to your judgment, as always, knowing it fair. I say only this, Lord, in my defense: Many hereabouts know thy name."

In truth, I plucked the name for Simon. Straight from Orandor's head. I knew him. He would have become what Simon became, were it not for his weak mind.

Lord Orandor said, "All is well, then. Jack," and here he looked at the bruised man by the pool table, "Insult not mine squire further. Not ever.

"Very well then," Orandor continued, standing and stepping toward Simon and setting his glass upon the bar top along the way. "I've no choice, sire, nor a voice but to accept thine challenge."

Lord Orandor's firm eyes burned inside. His face was painted black and purple, with not a spot of skin showing. A thin black leather belt supported many weapons of ambiguous nature. The belt supported, too, his drooping yellow-striped pants.

The clowns circled round, like wolves. Marcus stood atop the bar. None drew weapons.

Simon stepped forward, holding high his pipe. On both sides, eyes narrowed super tensely and intimidating and dramatic as in the Wild West. The clown circle clap, clap, clapped hands and stomp-stomped feet. The room shook.

Lord Orandor leaned forward, reached into his belt, plunged forward, swung wide. A short metal pole extended from his grip in thinner and thinner links, then locked at eighteen inches. The pole went *clang!* against Simon's pipe. The pipe shook. Simon shook a little.

Orandor said, "Arrr!" He kicked down at Simon's ankle and took another swing. Simon hopped back, dodged both attacks and jumped forward. He swung his lead pipe into Orandor's shoulder. Bone cracked.

Orandor dropped his pole and staggered. With his left hand, he reached for three balls dangling within a sack attached to his belt. He continued walking backwards as he hurled the ball sack at Simon.

Simon crouched as low as he could, then dashed forward. He could feel the sack brushing against his back before it impacted with the ground behind him. An explosion caused a rain of wooden splinters and chunks. Simon slammed his lead pipe into Orandor's kneecap. *Crunch.* "Argh!"

Orandor fell. Simon hit him again, in the throat. Orandor died.

The Metamorphosis

AHAHA! AHA! AH! Ah! Ah! Oh. . . Oh. . . Oh. . . ! OH!

Noises tell secrets.

Simon overtook the DJs. He never wore a clown suit. He did get new clothes. He bathed regularly because so few people did... He used the DJs.

Gangs collided. On several occasions, due in no small part to Simon's leadership, the DJs triumphed. Simon recruited acquaintances and strangers. DJ territory expanded and expanded like a bubble.

Pop!

People aren't bubbles.

After a while, Jzearuth was the only man in Chrystal with more power than Simon. Jzearuth had much more power. Jzearuth had gadgets and drugs and popularity. Of course, Jzearuth wouldn't resist competition directly.

Months went by. Within months, things occurred.

In January

"They're fighting us, Simon. We haven't the people to take on the Mad Hatters. Even if we did... The fuckers are crazy! Took Fredrico's organ clean off, they did. Did you bloody see the body?"

Simon said, "I saw. We should have beaten those idiots by now.

"There's a building down in Beachside. Big brown building, two doors with peeling green paint, five windows on the side facing the road. Can't miss it. Take Sarah and Christi and Tom. Secure that building, Marcus."

Marcus said, "Weapons, Lord?"

Simon said, "Simon."

Marcus said, "Weapons, Simon?"

Simon said, "Take the sniper. No more than two rifles. You can have as many pistols as you want."

Marcus said, "The sniper, Simon?"

Simon said, "Yeah."

"Whut am I to do, fellow? Guns spread wide and most aimed at us. There's no place safe for Tim, gov'nar."

Simon said, "Sweat and blood, Jim. Sweat and blood."

Tim said, "Yea, right, aye, fine." He sighed. He was always by Simon's side, lately. He was Simon's one and only bodyguard.

Tim turned off the safety on his pistol. He wondered if pistols without silver bullets could possibly kill monsters. He turned the safety back on.

DO YOU UNDERSTAND!?!GRAGHSTKFSHTT!!!

"Simon, this is shit. How long you gonna keep stretchin'? How long you think you can keep this shit up? How long you think Jzearuth's gonna stand for this?"

Simon said, "Worry not, me brother Bill. Worry solves no problems. Worry is itself a problem."

Bill said, "Hell. Where you want me, man?"

Simon said, "You're with me and Tim. Tonight we fight in Beachside. Tonight we conquer. You carry a few of the heavy grenades and enough ammo to keep your girl Betty spitting bullets. You can wear a vest, if you want."

Bill said, "Tim wearing a vest?"

Simon said, "Always."

Bill said, "You gonna wear a vest?"

Simon said, "No."

Bill said, "Agh... Hell."

Ground zero. Midnight. January 24.

Simon and Tim and Bill were waiting in an alley behind a big stinking green trashcan. A red light touched Simon's forehead. Tim pointed to the source, the roof of a large brown building. Simon waved at the roof. He made a fist and punched his palm. After, he hurriedly pulled a dull gray pistol from the thin leather belt holding up his baggy ripped blue jeans.

There were two men standing guard outside a convenience store. From Simon, they were separated by two sidewalks, a wide road, a dark alley, and of course a trashcan. They had on mirror shades. The one on the right side of the entrance caught a bullet through the right side of his mirror shades. The other man got popped once in the shoulder then three times in the chest. Both men fell.

Nobody was walking out of the convenience store to investigate. Maybe nobody was inside. Maybe the shots were too quiet for those inside to hear.

Bill said, "What the hell're we doing just standing here, man? These streets are crawling with Mad Hatters."

Simon said, "My guys have been watching these streets for over a week. We know who's where. How good's your aim with a grenade?"

Bill smiled. He pulled a grenade off his chest strap and said, "Hell."

Simon said, "Cars. Do you hear that?"

Bill said, "Where am I gonna throw this thing, man?"

Simon said, "Throw it at the convenience store. Try to get it to land near the middle. Throw it now. Now, before the cars get too close. Now, Bill. Bill!"

Bill threw the grenade. It hit the sidewalk, bounced once, surprisingly high, then landed in a groove in the bottom of the building, between the wide rectangular convenience store window and the sidewalk. Glass and brick sprinkled onto the sidewalk. The explosion made jump pieces of a corpse.

Three cars came screaming to a stop in front of the big brown building. Two of the cars came from the left, one from the right. One of the cars was plated with receding armor.

Simon said, "You hear that, Tim?"

Tim said, voice low, "Yea, gov'nar. More cars stopping in other places. Near the intersection down aways, most likely. Scoundrels sneaking and keeping locked in ourselves?"

Simon said, "Not that. Something mechanical."

Bill said, "They find us, we're..."

Simon said, "They'll find us. Meanwhile, prepare another grenade."

Bill did so.

Something mechanical rose majestically from within the armored car. A computerized turret, spinning, stopping, shooting. Somewhere, wood shattered. The turret spun again, aimed higher, fired at the brown building's roof. Little chunks of cement fell to the ground. The turret kept firing. How many bullets did it have?

Simon said, "Throw that other grenade, Bill. Time it so it blows as it gets close to the turret."

Bill said, "Uh..."

Simon said, "Right, you're only human. Aim for the two trashy Chevis. Peek over the corner of the trashcan real quick. They'll know where we are once you throw the grenade anyway."

Bill peeked. Bill threw. His aim wasn't bad.

Jim said, "How much protection you fancy this trashcan will provide us?"

As the cars out on the road shook with the impact of an explosion, Simon said, "More protection than unarmored cars. How do you suppose they got the armored car, anyhow?"

I knew the answer. The Mad Hatters were big-time small-town. They did well enough to get good drugs. They didn't share, of course. Too expensive to sell to regular Joe. You didn't get good drugs, in fact, unless you did at least a little dealing with Jzearuth's boys.

The turret suddenly focused on the trashcan. Long pointy bullets shot right through the thing. Jim and Bill fell to the ground. Simon stared at the circle shot into the trashcan, still being shot into the trashcan, near the center of the trashcan.

Simon said, "Why do you suppose they don't spread their fire a bit?" He watched as the circle began expanding, then joined his companions on the ground.

Bill said, "Man, how we gonna take out an armored car with a turret?"

Jim said, "We've done for now, fellows. This cover won't serve rightly for long. Maker, I pray, make Jim another day." With that, Jim looked to the heavens.

Simon said, "No people. Machines. They'll be aiming low shortly."

Jim said, "An awful plan, this was. Damned bloody awful."

Simon said, "Indeed." And it was a damned bloody awful plan.

Just then, the gun stopped shooting. Simon said, "Do you suppose they're out of bullets?"

Technical difficulties, actually. Machines are easy to break because everyone wants them to break, secretly. Secrets are a kind of food, an energy to be channeled. Like rage. And love. Love is strongest. Secrets taste best.

Gunshots were being fired. Short ejaculations of bullets. Also, two of Simon's people in the brown building were shooting pistols. The turret had taken out a door. The first grenade thrown by Bill had taken out part of a wall. Neither turret nor that first grenade succeeded in actually killing anyone.

The second grenade, that killed people.

Simon said, "Tell me we have more grenades, Bill."

Bill said, "Uh, one."

Simon said, "You only brought three?"

Bill said, "Well, we only had five."

Simon said, "Hand me Betty."

Bill removed from his back his long, slender, black, polished pulse-fire 36eg tender girl-with-barrel-legs short-handle, button trigger baby. He kissed her cool metal barrel. He reverently presented her to Simon.

Simon handed Bill a pistol. Simon said, "I'm a better shot. This you know."

Bill said, "Yeah."

Simon said, "Let's move. Surround the car. Jim, take front. Stay on the sidewalk. Bill, you circle around the left. Keep the car between you and the convenience store."

Bill said, "They're blastin' each other out there like mad! We're just gonna run right into it?"

Simon said, quickly, "We've a guy on the roof, people inside firing out of windows and a doorway. They have a building without a wall. Move now!"

Bill said, "Just the same..."

Simon went running around the trashcan. He fired off a few pulses as he ran. They fizzled against the surface of the car. Jim ran after Simon.

Bill hesitated. Then he ran after Simon and Jim.

What does a car with sectioned metal armor and a built-in turret come equipped with? Much electrical gadgetry. I had already taken care of all that. There was only one guy inside the car.

Simon fired a pulse into a car door window. It sizzled against the glass. Pulses sizzle and fizzle. They're blue.

Simon shouted, "Bill! Take out a grenade. Get ready to toss it under the car."

Bill pulled the last grenade off his chest strap. He held it out for the mechanic inside the mechanical car to see. He waited.

Simon said, "Put your teeth on the plug."

The short bursts of bullets coming from the convenience store halted. Simon's men ceased fire, too.

Bill put the grenade up to his mouth. He put his teeth on the plug.

The car's driver's side door quickly slid open. A little pale white guy with nose rings and spiked black hair stepped out of the car, saying, "Now now, HA! There's no need for that. No need at all for that."

Simon fired a pulse into the little guy's chest. It fizzled through a black shirt and chest hairs. It sizzled around inside. The guy fell to the ground, limp but breathing. The pulses wouldn't kill, not at what Simon had Betty set at.

Simon said, "Jim with me. Bill, give me my pistol back and hide out in our building." Simon tossed Bill Betty. Bill tossed Simon a pistol.

Simon and Tim ran across the street. They investigated the convenience store. A little red laser shined over rubble and glass and bodies into the store, scanning back and forth and all around. The laser was reassuring.

Simon took the door. Tim took the gap. They thoroughly checked the store. Lots of blood, no breathing.

Brown building. Bottom floor. A damp, musky room. Cement felt cool against Simon's naked feet. Everybody was huddled around, talking.

"No wounded," Simon said.

"What are we to do with this one, gov'nar?" asked Jim of the little mechanic being guarded by a woman, Christi. The mechanic had his arms wrapped around his knees, his knees curled up to his chest, his chin resting between his knees.

Simon said, "We need him to drive us out of here. We're taking that car."

Bill said, "The Hatters are gonna attack any second now. We gotta get out quick if we're gonna get out at all. Man."

Marcus the midget said, "Right lucky it is they haven't attacked already."

Simon said, "They're getting explosives. They've seen what we did to them. They aren't going to risk an all-out siege while we're all stuck in one building. But that's okay. We're leaving now."

The mechanic looked up from his corner to say, "Car won't work, anyway. It broke. Don't know what happened. Torture me if you want, won't get me to fix the thing. Don't know how to fix it."

Simon said, "The car will work."

Christi said, "Enough room in that git car for all of us, is there?"

Simon said, "Bill and Tim and I rode into town upon glorious snorting hogs. We'll be riding out of town upon the same. I'm sure five and a midget can squeeze in, provided you keep the turret raised. We all meet again in Bob's Pub."

Marcus said, "Not making a swift away, Simon? We've struck, haven't we?"

Simon said, "We've struck the first blow. We aren't leaving Hatter territory until there is no Hatter territory. Now somebody go get Tom off the roof. We have to hurry."

Bob's Pub. A notorious Mad Hatters hangout. The place the gang went whenever they wanted to just kick back, play some pool, and have a good time. Most Chrystal City gangs had a place like that.

Simon and Tim and Bill pulled their roaring motorcycles into the parking lot minutes before the rest of Simon's people. They looked inside for bad guys. None. Simon said, "Go on in ahead of us, Tim. Have a drink or two, if you desire and have the currency. I need to talk to Bill."

Tim said, "Yea, yea, gov'nar."

Simon said, "You shouldn't have pledged yourself to me if you weren't going to listen to me."

Simon and Bill were standing on the sidewalk right outside the pub. People could look out the window and see them standing there, talking. There were a few drunks inside that could have looked out.

Bill said, "Yeah, man, you've been good to me and I'm sorry I hesitated back th--" Then Bill started screaming.

Simon had pulled his lead pipe from out of his belt and I was hitting Bill with the thing over and over again and I didn't stop until long after Bill couldn't scream anymore. Simon then slipped the pipe back into his belt. He picked up Betty before walking into Bob's Pub.

Simon went through a mug of beer before the lovely, pretty, marvelous metal car with the vicious, terrible, tyrannous rotating turret drove into the parking lot. When that happened, the bartender excused himself to the bathroom. The bartender would use the payphone next to the bathroom to call bad guys to come. Simon knew this, and was okay with it.

There was a fan. It rotated slowly enough to draw stares. You could watch the spinning blades, listen to the spinning blades, feel the air being pushed... The stuffy, heavy air being pushed.

"Y'see, fellows," Simon was saying when everyone gathered in a comfortable booth by the window with ripping red leather seats, "They can't blow up Bob's Pub. Bob's Pub is their place. To explode their own place would be nearly as much of a defeat as an actual defeat."

Sarah said, "That's stupid."

Simon said, "Yes. The Hatters have many stupid rules and codes. Maybe Jzearuth supports the Hatters because they are too self-binding ever to become a threat."

So our heroes waited in Bob's Pub. Further action occurred, and the day was won for our heroes. The day was won for Simon. For Simon.

In October

Simon walked outside early one morning. All his cronies were asleep. The sun was slowly climbing the horizon.

Simon walked to the beach. It wasn't a long walk. He lived close to the beach, sometimes.

Simon walked along the shore kicking a can through the cool, damp sand. Waves tickled his feet. It was like the waves wanted to wrap around him and pull him under, but couldn't quite reach, couldn't quite find the strength.

Simon saw a monk a few yards ahead. The monk had on heavy brown robes. Simon knew the man was a monk because he had the monk hairstyle. Short, straight blond hair surrounded a bald center.

Simon ceased can kicking to quicken his stride. He wanted to catch up to the monk. He did.

Simon said, "I am Simon."

The monk said, "I am a saint."

Simon said, "Why are you a saint?"

The monk said, "I gave to the needy. I was offered great power and refused to pay the low low price. I have been persecuted and live on. I guide those whom need guidance. I love all. I have sinned and by grace am forgiven. I am humble."

Simon said, "Is it humble to claim all that? Is it humble to claim to be humble?"

"It is honest," said the monk. "I am honest. I am a saint."

Simon said, "Have you died?"

The monk said, "Yes." Then he vanished. Simon never saw him again and neither did I.

In November

Nothing of significance happened that November.

In December

They celebrated Christmas in Chrystal City. Jzearuth threw a fabulous Christmas party. And, as you can imagine, a marvelous New Year's Eve ball dropping.

On Christmas Eve Tim asked Simon, "Will we be busy doing the messy tonight?"

Simon said, "No killing tonight. I am not ready. I will wait for the bigger party."

Tim said, "We have but days to prepare."

Simon said, "Time enough."

Tim said, "Yea, gov'nar, time enough."

Simon took Christi to the Christmas party. All Chrystal City citizens were expected to attend, after all. Simon had become quite a well-known citizen. His absence would have been noticed.

Do you know wh...

Christi had her long curly black hair tied behind her head with rough twine. She walked through glass and on water with polished red cowboy boots. She liked cowboy boots as much as Jzearuth. She didn't like Jzearuth. Jzearuth who had captured a piece of what is called greatness, Jzearuth who could move suffering masses with flowery words backed by honest emotion. Jzearuth the poet, the musician, the weaver of webs. Christi hated Jzearuth.

Why did Christi hate Jzearuth? Because Simon's piece was bigger.

Simon parted the sea of celebrants merely by being. He didn't even have Jim by his side. Just Christi, whose clean, shaved, slender, graceful, dark, silky, rippling, naked legs walking attracted much attention. Everybody could tell Christi was high society. Nobody minded because she was sexy high society.

Back to Simon. The hero, through and through. You must have sympathy for Simon. You must love Simon. Simon was glorious.

Simon pulled back his frizzly waste-length brown hair, cast it over his shoulders like a cape, and everybody saw. Through the deep thicket beard and the mirror shades concealing eyes that had seen, they saw. Most of them couldn't hold on to what they saw. All of them knew this fellow here was Simon Sade. And Simon pushed his arm through Christi's and together they walked, towards the stage.

Simon and Christi stopped directly in front of the stage. The crowd crowded round again and they were lost within the hot-cold mass of bodies swaying in the breeze to noise spat from a stage. Not really lost. Simon and Christi were a pair to be noticed. Jzearuth, from his seat on stage, noticed. Jzearuth saw and he held what he saw.

When the "band" stopped playing, Jzearuth stepped up to a speaker center stage and said, furiously cheerful, "Ladies and gentlemen we have her tonight with us the privilege of a powerful powerful presence! Do you feel the presence, ladies and gentlemen?"

One and all, the crowd, the faceless, stinking robots, said, "We feel the presence!"

"Do you fee-yal the presence ladies and gentlemen!?"

"We feel the presence!"

Jzearuth said, "There stands before me a great and pow-a-ful man, ladies and gentlemen. A wonderful man. A scary man. In his honor and for your entertainment, one and all, brothas and sistas, I'm gonna give ya-- I say I'm gonna give ya a special performance tonight! Are you with me, ladies and gentlemen, brothas and sistas, are you with me? Let me hear a roar! I say, let me hear you roar!"

The crowd became suddenly furiously cheerful as well, absorbed, and they roared a roar heard clear across North and South America and most of the seven seas.

"I'm gonna sing and I'm gonna play. Never before seen in public." And boy, if Jzearuth didn't have a guitar in his hands. As he struck the first note, throttling his loving people, he said, "I said I'm gonna play!"

The music was liquid, violent, thrashing liquid, with tidal waves and whirlpools pulling at sailboats and fighting sharks and drowning everyone. Vocal cords tugged, vocal cords ripped heartstrings.

Well, it wasn't so much the quality of the music really. Not the poetry of the lyrics, the genius of the singer, Jzearuth's skill with the guitar. It was this violent connection between player and played, performer and audience. It was

seeing something about self reflected in the artist's creation.

Jzearuth let the mike drop, let the guitar drop, bowed and said, "Thank you." Jzearuth walked away.

Simon had drowned and been resurrected. He kissed Christi for the taste of her spit and because she was there.

New Year's Eve. Can you guess what happened? Simon and Christi cut through the crowd as before. Simon had also brought Betty. He had cranked that girl up so she was buzzing and people were watching and waiting for the explosion that came so suddenly, impacting against a naked chest and burning through and causing a body to flop down dead on the stage. Jzearuth hadn't even tried to get away.

People were angry. Will you try, please, to imagine how angry the people were? Simon had taken from them a leader! But it wasn't Simon's doing, Jzearuth's death. Jzearuth's death was a sacrifice. And when Simon died again that night, ripped apart by the cold M, the mass, the mob, the machine, he couldn't be resurrected. He had already been resurrected. His place needed to be taken by another.

And that is the story of Simon Sade.

Remember, back in the eighties, when a guy with a patch on his eye and a nickname Snake was more badest asser than the mad Mad Max?

Joe Regular

A woman or a girl named Lisa moaned in expression of pleasure-pain sexual dreams, dreams vivid in both respects. Her stomach lifted into the air, arching, then dropping, her back. She opened cuts in her cheeks with dirty fingernails. She pressed her teeth against her lower lip.

A man or a boy named Ben grabbed Lisa's shoulders with strong hands, then shook her. He shook and shook and said, "Hey, wake up," and Lisa did. She rolled away, onto her stomach.

Ben said, "It's alright, it's alright."

Lisa said, "Do you hear him? He's outside right now, making those damned sounds."

Ben dropped onto his back. He said, "Yeah, I hear him. Go back to sleep anyhow. You need sleep."

Lisa said, "I saw him again the other night. When the moon was full again, the other night."

Ben said, "He isn't hairy with sharp white teeth and glinting yellow eyes, is he?"

Lisa said, "You know what he is. You're mine."

Ben said, "Yeah. So go to sleep, will you?"

Lisa tightly sealed her eyelids. A little water leaked out.

Tim found a weapon's dealer willing to sell magical weapons.

Tim found Ben and Lisa, one night cold with luck. The three decided then-current situation required external aid.

Joe Regular was a child of the island city, Chrystal City. His father was a car wreck and his mother was smog. His grandfather was Anarchy, who raped his grandmother, Fascism. His uncle was a black asphalt snake and his aunt was a cracked old snake-hugging sidewalk.

Joe Regular was an only child.

Some folk don't have to be gods to fight with the gods. Arrogant wretches. Joe, he was a kind of Hercules. His mommy wanted him dead, his daddy was too scared to protect him. And he did many great things.

People in Chrystal knew Joe, or of Joe. He was there, always. There was something about him...

Joe walked into a pub one day. Joe walked up to the bar and said, "I'll have a beer." He sat and sipped and listened.

A lady named Sara was sitting, chubby legs crossed, back braced against the bar, and talking to a gentleman named Dick. Sara said, "Do you think a snowball really could make it in hell?"

Dick said, "It snows, doesn't it?"

Joe laughed, finished his beer, slid the bartender a green jewel, and got up to go out. He pushed through the double-door pub exit to find himself immersed in winter chill. He buttoned his slippery gray raincoat and slid shaking fingers into the side pockets. His hood had been ripped off long ago, or he would have pulled it over his head. Not that it was raining.

A car whizzed by as Joe began crossing the street. One foot over the other... Well, there weren't any more cars. Crossing the street was simple.

It was dark out. It had been getting dark out early, lately. Happened sometimes in Chrystal.

Ice cracked, slowly at first, then furiously, beneath Joe's black boot. Muddy water seeped through, swallowing the rubbery bottom of the boot. Driplets splashed against the edge of the sidewalk as Joe stepped up, walked on.

Was it late? Hell no. Couldn't be late. Had to be, eight maybe? Earlier?

Joe walked through a swinging door. Lights, greens and reds and purples, flickered and probed all around. Dark, sporadic, pulsating music invaded chests and possessed chaos-riding dancers on psychedelics. Eyes meet yours, lips part

Astonished

Joe waved to her. She saw. She waved back. She got sucked along through the crowd. She's a pretty good distance ahead.

"Hey! Regular!"

"Hey, Mike," Joe said, loud enough.

Mike pulled Joe through bodies on the right, traveling an angular, then rounding, path through the sweaty sick degenerates with their religious mind-body-spirit orgies to a beat. Mike opened a door, pulled Joe into a room, shut the door. The room pulsed, less intensely.

Read carefully between the lines. Don't read the lines. Just read the things not there.

"So, I've got the stuff, Joe. You got the currency?"

Joe said, "Yeah. How much?"

Mike flipped a switch. A hanging light bulb flickered, flickered, dimly lit the room. Mike was digging through a drawer of socks and other things.

Joe sat on a cot. He looked at the blankets on the floor and said, "You live here, Mike?"

Mike said, slamming the dresser drawer, "Mostly."

Joe briefly surveyed the sexy nudie posters partially ripped, hanging from all the walls. He looked up. There was a poster on the ceiling. The best poster was on the ceiling. So Mike could better picture himself getting fucked by some long-leg brunette bimbo while he was stretched out on the cot jacking off.

Mike threw the stuff on the bed. Mike said, "Currency, Joe."

Joe checked all his raincoat pockets until he found enough jewels. He dropped them, sparkling green and red and purple, into Mike's sweaty filthy greedy waiting hands. Joe kept all the jewels in different pockets in case he got robbed.

Joe said, "You sure there's magic here?" Joe lifted the baggie, studied the contents of the baggie through the clear plastic.

Mike said, "Oh, there's magic there, alright. Oh, yeah, definitely."

Joe said, "How the hell did you get some of Saint Jzearuth's ashes?"

Mike said, "You own a club like the Aphro-Distra-Penac, you meet all kinds. I'm connected, man. Told you, didn't I? You can pay, I can deliver. Whatever you need."

Mike looked at the ceiling, then down at the jewels in his hands, then up at the ceiling. He said, "Yeah, you've got what you wanted, you should get going."

Joe said, "Alright."

A man, Fred, was sitting on a bench, waiting for what he knew not. Death tapped Fred on the shoulder. Fred wasn't afraid; it was too late to be afraid.

A man, Joe, was sitting on a bench in the park... Joe was studying the birds, the birds were landing in the grass, the grass was swaying seven inches high. People and insects were resting in the grass. It was pretty early. A sun cut through dense cold air to make a few warm spots, melt a little ice. The sun was still on the rise. It wouldn't be all that cold of a day.

Do you see the rabbit climbing the horizon? Jumping clouds, eating carrots?

Joe looked up from the grass. He said, "Hey."

A lady named Lisa sat down on the bench. She said, "Hey. Ben should be here soon." She grasped the edge of the green wood bench and leaned back. Her boot heels dug into the dirt, pointy red boot toes stuck up.

Joe said, "The beast?"

Lisa said, "Only comes out at night. Only confronts me during a full moon. Tim got a silver bullet and a magic gun. Next moon, you will slay the beast."

Joe said, "Any idea why it's hunting you?"

Lisa sighed. She leaned forward, looked up, said, "Ben!"

Ben walked up swinging a golden pocket watch on a golden chain. He adjusted his dense red shades with his right hand. He stood there, in front of the bench.

Joe said, "Hey, Ben."

Ben said, "So. We're killing a god."

Joe said, "Looks that way, Ben. And a monster."

Lisa said, "I think the... The werewolf is connected, somehow, with the god. I have this feeling..."

"Well of course they're connected."

Lisa said, "Yeah. I have this feeling, though."

Joe said, "Why is the beast chasing you?"

Lisa shrugged. She looked at Ben. She said, "Hey, Ben, remember Sam?"

Ben said, "Sam... Sam can't be involved in this."

"Certainly not. No, he certainly can't be. Sam..." Lisa said.

"Yeah," Ben said. "Sam."

Joe said, "Anything you two know, I need to know. I realize my assistance isn't coming cheap. You don't tell me everything, however, you're wasting your money."

Ben said, "Jim knows more than us."

Joe said, "We'll need Tim when we cross the river"

Ben said, "He'll be at the tunnel entrance waiting for us."

There was only one way to cross the Styx River.

It was a tin can tunnel. Kicked around to entertain the homeless, it landed dented in a gutter. When the gutter flooded with the Styx River, the tin can tunnel caught the edge of the sidewalk and held firm. Gutter fluid and gutter smells would leak in occasionally, but it was a safe river crossing.

Joe flipped back the metal lid on his lighter and ignited four torches. The torches burned brightly in the dark.

Tim said, "Dangerous business this is fellows."

Someone said, "Aye."

Feet flopped through the two to twenty inches of goop on the floor. Gopy things floated in the goop. Everyone had high boots, so it was okay. The goop crunched in places where it was a little frozen or where there were crunchy insects.

Joe handed his torch to Tim.

A dark thing crawled along the top of the tunnel. Joe Regular leaped, wrapped his arm around the creature's hard, dry, horny neck, came splashing down into goop with the thing. A pained, frantic screech sounded, long claws kicked beneath and above the water, long white spikes, poking through flesh-holes, rotated, withdrew, extended, rotated. Joe Regular firmly held the beast and punch-punch-punched into thin throat skin. When the screeching finally died, when spikes ceased their rotating, Joe Regular released the creature to the goop.

Joe said, "Strange things live here."

Someone said, "Aye." The party of four moved on.

The tunnel's end came. Four torches extinguished within the goop. The party of four moved on out.

Joe said, "Where does the god live, Tim?"

Jim said, "Oh, gov'nar, hereabouts, thereabouts. Busybusy everywhere and always, he is, gov'nar."

Joe said, "He runs things?"

Jim said, "Yea, gov'nar. Everything in Chrystal."

Joe said, "He is a wicked ruler?"

Tim said, "Yea, gov'nar. A vile usurper."

Joe said, "I know everywhere. We're on the right path. Stay close, fellows."

"Aye, fellows," Jim echoed. "Fellows, close."

Small metal towers with wooden branches reached up and side to side on all sides. Miniature windows opened and closed and lighted in places with an unnecessary yellow. Tom Thumbs and fairy girls stood on little balconies, watching four giants. Some of the Toms had wings, all of the girls had wings. Nobody wanted to fly.

Joe spread wide his fingers, held up his hand. Everyone stopped. Joe made a fist, then held one finger erect, pointed. "There," he said, indicating a distant hovering patch of purple mist.

Joe walked on. Some individuals well just kinda sorta seem to you know in that way

I kinda sorta you know in that way, Bye

The purple mist crackled with purple power. Fizzles fizzled through and through, sizzles sizzled out and out, reaching. Joe walked on, into the mist. Tim followed. The mist parted. Ben and Lisa parted. The mist dissipated completely.

There was a tall throne. Something was sitting, blurry, then clear, then blurry, always clear, never visible, always there to see, never seen, on the throne, arms grasping golden lion's head armrests, feet propped up on fluffy silk cushions. Laughter, definitely sinister, came from all around and from a mouth.

Joe reached into the pocket of his raincoat and said, "You have no definition."

Someone said, "Aye."

Joe pulled a plastic baggie from his raincoat and said, "Do you know what these are?"

Someone said, "Aye." The laughter all around intensified. The mist returned, slowly, encroaching.

Joe Regular said, "Fuck! Fuck! Hold onto me, everyone!"

Everyone grabbed Joe, Joe's shoulders, Joe's waist, as the mist gathered, thick, electric, poison, choking, shocking, changing... Pulling, pulling, extending into a tunnel, sending, sending, ejaculating four heroes out onto an empty street.

Joe sighed. He said, "No point in crossing the Styx River again. Everyone, meet me at the park again tomorrow night. I need to rest."

Everyone said, "Alright." Everyone left.

I saw a lady play her hair like a harp, Lighting the dark with the glow from those golden threads and shattering lonely silence with those golden...

Joe stepped into the Aphro-Distra a little early, around seven. The crowd was already expanding out towards the walls. Joe weaved through the crowd, finding the her from the night before, from all nights before. He couldn't, though.

What the hell?

Fingers, cold, shaky, pale, fragile, yanked on Joe's rubbery raincoat shoulder. He turned, startled.

"Regular!" she said.

"Muse!" he said. The two of them exchanged much spit and if the standards of decency weren't so gawd-awful high in Chrystal City clubs like the Aphro-Distra-Penac, they might have exchanged other fluids as well. Teeth gnashed playfully against lips, tongues slithered, breast pressed against breast, hands and arms and legs explored.

Won't you won't you won't you be, Won't you won't you won't you be...

Swallow swallow, spit-spit-spit, Swallow swallow, spit-spit-spit...

Muse and Regular left the club together.

Muse had a place.

Those sirens by the sea, they never knew this kind of...

"Stop looking out the window, Lisa. If there's something there, you don't want it to see you."

"He doesn't need to see me, Ben. He feels me. A piece of his heart pulsates inside my chest."

"There's a piece of my heart in there too, Lisa."

"I know, Ben."

"Lisa..."

"Alright, Ben, let's fuck into oblivion."

Something outside was scratching at the sidewalk.

Joe was sitting on a bench, sucking on a cannabine cigarette, supporting his elbows on the green back of the bench. Joe said, "So what can you tell me, Tim?"

Tim was sitting in the park grass looking down, turning over the silver gun sitting in his lap. Tim said, "A right nice fellow, he was, before the changes."

Joe said, "The changes?"

Tim said, "It's Simon we're dealing with now. The beast, that one's Simon. The god, and that one's from inside Simon. Buried, he was, deep down, climbing, climbing. Well, gov'nars, he's risen."

Joe said, "Anything else?"

Tim said, "Nay, gov'nar."

Joe looked up. He sucked on his cigarette, paused for a moment, talked with smoke, saying, "Alright. I'll tell you what I know. This thing that's gripping the city, slowly gripping tighter, not squeezing tight enough yet to choke, not squeezing tight enough even for most of us to feel it, I know this thing and what he's doing. This is my city, damn it, I feel what's going on.

"I was walking to the park to meet you guys and two cars passed me. Honked *their* horns at *me*, like I was in the way crossing the damned street. That doesn't happen, folks. And these clubs... It's not natural how much money these greasy dance clubs are raking in. Greasy... They're greasy now, you understand.

"Christ. Did you see that thing last night? None of you, not even you Tim, could have grasped that thing. It's a will to power... It's honestly subtly deceptive. It's a tree, rooted deep in our soil, sucking hard on our nutrients. But that's not accurate.

"What I know is I'm gonna kill this thing. What I know is I'm gonna hate killing this thing. I'm an epic hero without the betrayal.

"Your beast, Lisa, is a shadow, a shadow like the other thing, the god, used to be. Digging for water, maybe. You know why Simon's spirit's chasing you. You know, maybe Ben knows, the hell if I know. And God, only He knows why it's gonna take a silver bullet to bring down the beast."

Tim said, "Tim knows."

Joe said, "Maybe." Joe squeezed the cherry on his cigarette and stuffed the thing in one of the plastic baggies in one of his raincoat pockets.

Lisa held Ben's hand. Lisa and Ben were sitting in the high grass with Jim.

Ben said, "Where're we off to?"

Joe said, "You know, people are always slipping through each other's minds, or through their own minds, so that even identity gets mismatched with the socks. There's really not much I can do tonight. Won't be much I can do for a few nights now. I'm going to go get my lover stoned and fuck her brains out."

Ben and Lisa turned, hands locked, and smiled slightly. They wore mirror expressions, mirroring each other's expressions, though Lisa couldn't see behind Ben's super cool yet hot-hot red shades.

Jim said, "Yea, yea, there'll be much lovie-dovie tonight." Then he got up and walked off.

Where the hell does that boy go? No place warm, me brother.

Cadillac cars you watch from

Afar as the knights and their conquests

And the queens and their conquests

Mount or

Dismount those

How many horses?

A golden Cadillac with rims and a pumpin' system pulled up to Muse's place, the system pumping out bass-heavy old Stray Cats tunes. It was what was on Chrystal's new and only radio station.

A pimp, certainly, adorned in furs, holding the lion's head of a metal cane, parting fat blue lips to reveal a mineral mine of teeth, a mine that looked a little over-mined already, popped out of the car. He tipped his white top hat to the side, swung closed the car door, and danced on up to Muse's doorstep. He pressed the dead doorbell, then knocked on the particle board door.

Joe dipped his head out the hole in a broken front window and shouted, "Go away!"

The pimp said, "Hey, man, listen. Your lady's in a lot of trouble. She done some stupid things, man. Sorry to have to pull up here while you're in the middle of something, but... Listen, she in a lot of trouble."

Joe said, "Come back later." He withdrew his head and climbed back into the floor mattress.

Muse groaned in annoyance, rolling her face out of her pillow. She stared straight up. She said, "Shit."

The pimp gave the door a pretty good shove and it swung right open. He started talking, swinging his arms and his cane around for emphasis. "Whore!" he said. "Man, I'm trying to be polite to your boy here, and he thinks he can mouth off to me. You think I gotta take this shit, Muse? You think that? You think I like coming around here?"

Joe was standing up. Muse said, "Harry, sorry. Sorry I scratched your damned car leaving Mike's Candy Bar. Hurt my ears, if it's any consolation, dragging my nails across the side..." Joe was laughing.

Harry said, "You think this is funny? You know who I am, man? Tell your boy who he's dealing with, Muse."

Muse said, "Joe, meet Harry, Lord of the Whores." Muse sounded just a little bit sarcastic.

"Give me a little more lip and see what happens. You're paying for my car, ho. I'll take it out of your sweet ass if you can't pay in jewels." Harry was still waving his cane.

Muse said, "Like you did with my friend Sara? Get out of here, Harry. I'll do worse than fuck up your car if you don't get out of here."

"She knows her place in the world, M," said Harry. "She belong to me now. You belong to me too, you don't watch out. Nobody disrespects me around here. Not in my own neighborhood."

Joe said, "Your neighborhood, Harry? This is my city. Get out of here."

Harry said, "Nobody owns this city, now that Jzearuth's dead. Who you think you are, saying shit like that to me? You ain't nothing." Harry lightly touched Joe's throat with his cane. "Nothing. You hear me? Nothing."

Joe grabbed the tip of the cane with his left hand, the middle with his right. He jerked back, then forward, slamming the lion's head into Harry's nose.

Harry was backing out the door when he said, "Fuck, man! My guys'll kill you! They'll fucking kill you!"

Joe let the cane fall and roll across dusty wooden floorboards. He climbed back into the mattress. He said, "What was that about?"

Muse said, "Guy thinks he's the local boss man, big time pimp and big time dealer. He's got a little group of followers... His 'guys'. My friend Sara got mixed up with him, got mistreated pretty bad, so I fucked up his car."

Joe said, "An angry pimp and a *petty* dealer... In my city. Shit."

Muse pressed her breasts against Joe's breasts and the two porked slowly, then went to sleep.

There's that moment when you're listening and suddenly it hits you. Your insides start to squish and decompress and implode and expand and squeeze out water. You feel smacked, then like you're being beaten with a lead pipe, then like you're being pulled towards the sky. You want to be strangled. Your life leaks, the dead parts, replaced with freshness.

I'm here, inside the shadow scratching fresh holes into the cracked sidewalk. I feel a pulse, pulses... Two pulses. I'm not the beast, oh no. Not any of them. I'm the third, no, fourth heart, the new heart of the city.

Now confess: What are you?

What are you!?

Hear me, the pulse? Rising up? Ascending again? Further, further, always higher. How far you gonna take this, son?

You can see, hear, feel this. I'm sending the signal through blind hands typing.

You can't put your finger on *me*, man, don't even try. Just know I'm bad. Corporate, even. (ha!)

If you're not carefully, your kiddies'll turn out exactly like you want them to.

Joe stepped up to the plate, pulled back the bat, took a try hitting harder than all the other swingers. The ball exploded against the bat.

Joe went walking down familiar alleys to see unfamiliar things. He walked Simon's walk, repeated Simon's walk to learn, didn't know he was repeating Simon's walk. Something smelled kind of funny. There were no ninjas, there was no baby, there were plenty of whores, damn it, and drug dealers.

Joe liked some of the dealers. Most of them were assholes. And the whores weren't as dependent as they used to be. And things were getting...

Joe walked up to this brunette with a really nice ass, a corner streetwalker. He said, "Hey babe. How much for a hand job, right here?"

"Right here?" she said. "That's... Indecent!"

Fucking ridiculous. Joe walked off.

Joe found a group of street performers. The group was taking a break, sitting on the edge of a sidewalk talking, holding black bowler hats full of various little jewels between their legs, guarding treasure. They were talking about whores. Joe stood behind them.

"Y-see, if we'd just register all the prostitutes, we could force them to test regularly for diseases. It'd be safer, then. The prostitutes would all be more careful, too, not wanting to lose their license. "

"To register anybody, we'd need some governing body."

"That's what I'm getting at! We need something kind of strict, at first, if this is gonna work at all. We'll ease up as we go, of course."

"Of course. It'd never work, here. It's just not what this town's about, man."

"Well what were we, before the event? We were a dictatorship, right? Can't get much stricter than that. Whatever we come up with, it'll be better than a dictatorship."

"You've got a point there."

"No he doesn't. Look, it's like this..."

"...I'm saying is..."

"...enough of us ask... help... the States..."

"Shit, Mike, listen to yourself!"

Joe Regular walked away grim-faced and unnoticed. He reached into the air, reached through the air, kneeled down and touched the sidewalk. He ran across the street.

Tim sat up and stood up. Where the hell was he? Don't know, you couldn't know. He looked to the stars for the answers, as he walked. He pulled a piece of the great fortune he had inherited out of his pocket. It was a black crystal, good for nearly any purchasable item. He tossed it up and watched it fall. He snatched it off the ground.

Tim was a good guy. Nobody could say anything really bad about Jim. Of course, nobody knows what's going on with Him, inside. He was headed on over to the Beast Beatin', that night.

Tim pushed his way through the swinging steel door. He moved slowly once inside, waiting for his eyes to adjust to the dimness. Once he passed through a short hallway, scattered hanging red lights made for fairly clear visibility.

People were banging on the sides of the big dome cage, screaming. The battle had not yet begun.

Tim said, "I'll have the dog, gov'nar." He pushed the black crystal into a shaky hand.

"Too too much," said the man behind the hand. But the hand tightened around the coveted object.

Tim wove his way through bodies to reach the cage. He grabbed metal links in each hand, stared at the hay-filled floor within, and waited. He knew what would happen.

Two doors opened simultaneously. An angry pink poodle out for blood ran at a hissing snake. The snake jumped, the snake ripped, the snake got the blood. People gasped in delighted horror. They watched the limp little pink thing and some of them laughed.

Tim walked out of the Beast Beatin' to get hisself a drink, man.

Don' fi it jis qui it.

Cum goes best bubbling up from the underbelly of the task was to cum, so they did. Jim held Lisa's hand held Ben's hand held Jim's hand, and Joe sat in the center of the circle. The sun had fallen, burning all the fields and trees and melting all the glass houses in the far lands, and the whole moon was on the rise.

A wise couple of fellows were up to naught excepting the exceptional
no good in the hood neighbors would wooden dolls too tall to tell any secrets

Joe wasn't going to fight the beast until the moon tipped the sky. Skies look empty without balls. Joe wasn't going to bathe in the blood of the beast until the moon began sinking. The sun is falling, the moon is rising, the moon is falling, the sun is rising. He had everyone gathered together to become a focus. Rather, he made obvious the truth that he was a focus.

Tim and Joe and Lisa and Ben talked on art and poetry and volcanoes. Jim was particularly interested in volcanoes because he had only once seen pictures, ferocious pictures, of a volcanic eruption. He wondered if Chrystal City might possibly be situated upon a volcanic island. This was of course not the case. Lisa and Ben occasionally slipped unconsciously into private conversations rudely excluding surrounding parties to make a point of confusing the purpose of the group previously already ambiguous and somewhat logy toward the night's end. Finalization of thoroughly tweaked contrivances led not to heightened sensations of fulfillment due to lack of surety and specific purpose. Still, vigilant remained they, all.

When the midnight arrived, silk fell upon the gathering of four. Hands holding other hands tightened around those other hands. Joe Regular's hands reached for the heavens in a pleading gesture. Joe Regular's expression, through the curtain, a curtain suddenly thinning and dissipating in the wind, did not appear pleading.

A scratching sounded against park bench wood, wood soggy with acidic rain water. Eyes, all eight eyes, shut tightly. The chanting began. Lisa says on a night like this...

The shadow of the alpha omega stretched, extending beginning claws, slicing skin and clothes, pulling away clothes. Lisa, naked, back bloodied, held firmer the hands of her companions, forced tighter the covers of her eyes. Eyelids, also skin. There was a howling.

Joe Regular stood and raised his cracked-knuckle fist and shouted, "Wind, earth, fire, water, heart! With our might conjoined we call, Captain Planet!" But there were four. Where did the extra, heart, come from? In any case, the beast howled again.

Joe Regular screamed, the beast screamed. Joe Regular howled, the beast howled. Joe Regular screeched, the beast screeched. Joe Regular shed tears, the beast shed red through empty eye sockets. A beating sounded within the silken breast of the beast, a rapid, intense, wondrous thump-thump-thump. Tim stood up, gun in hand, and fired off several silver bullets. Blood had returned, freely flowing, flowing everywhere, spouting up and oozing out and the beast was choking! Joe Regular laughed maniacally then fell to his knees, exhausted.

Hands released hands. Lisa held her breasts close, covering her nipples with her arms. Shaking, with Ben's help, she stood.

Joe walked into Mike's Candy Bar to pickup a pick up. He picked Butterfinger, paid in little white crystals, then walked out. He found blood on the sidewalk in the form of squashed insects and dry caterpillars. He thought it strange, only a little strange, so many insects would meet their omega on the same sidewalk square. Many of the minicorpses squished under his rubber boot heels.

Joe strayed far from Mike's Candy Bar, strayed like a cat.

Guys were around a corner ahead, waiting to get the ol' jump on dearest Joe. They had been following Joe for quite a while. Joe was, after all, an easy guy to find who was never around. Guys didn't peek, though. Not now that Joe was on his way over. They were as close to professional as you get in Chrystal and lately, that was saying something!

Joe stopped, looked up at the sun, lit a cigarette. He sucked on the cancer stick and waited. He exhaled, then said, in a voice soft but rising, "Milk is sucked from the naked tit of the swaggering banshee's priestess and I know about you guys so come on out of there."

Joe turned around and quick-pace walked away. Guys followed with knives and chains and guns and other metal deadlies. Joe stepped into Al's Salmon Burgers to order a Pepsi. Guys waited for Joe on the other side of a glass door only almost too dirty to be transparent. Al's Salmon Burgers only had coke. Joe walked outside.

A guy said, "We gonna mess you up good boy."

Joe viciously attacked testicles with teeth and feet and summoned magical powers to anomalously succumb to personal victory. Joe beat up on guys like he always did, bloodying testicles as much for the taste as for the adrenaline-fueled other pleasure. He touched not the penises, however.

The average person has 0.96 testicles. Joe was making regular his attackers.

That one was quite a day.

Accuracy is the key. I mean, if you're going to shoot the moon, maybe you *think* you've got a big target. Thinkers think alright. Eve with a target big as the moon, how many tries did it take the astronauts? Do you even believe we ever landed on the moon? Hmm...? There was this special on Fox I saw one time that disproved the moon landings. Fox is the world's most reliable source of information. The point I'm making is, aim, aim accurately. Accuracy takes practice. Even with practice, you're bound to miss occasionally. Even Robin Hood probably misses the mark sometimes. It happens when we're not looking, you understand, like the tree that fell in the forest. Doesn't mean it didn't happen, just means Robin Hood is craftier than the rest of us. Also, Robin Hood lived in the forest with his merry men, so he probably *did* hear the tree fall.

Trash to toss into the away someway tuesday. Most trash is white trash, proving white ain't clean and pure, after all. Maybe the problem some people have with gray is gray ain't necessary. The solution isn't clear because clarity is reflection is hit by a rock. Hit any clear reflection with a rock, sure enough, it's gone. Distorted, anyway, so the clarity's gone. Pebbles roll as well as wheels and rocks, rock music, rocking in a chair, rocks with a salty taste.

Accuracy is the key. Keep your eye on the ball, man. Taoism, man. Don't even worry about the ball. Let the ball flow, let your bat flow... Bam! You got that sucker, yeah! Is Kurt Russel a Taoist? I wonder and ponder and my head starts to hurt and I censor the blurt on the screen that hid the inappropriate blurbs. Let your words prick nerves like needles. Don't type with a shotgun, type with a sniper rifle and take your time following your target with the scope. Distance doesn't matter. You think distance is important? You're a writer, damn it, ha! You're brilliant, man. When you're dead, they'll translate you into German.

Egomaniacal string-pullers pull too hard, breaking the strings, losing the puppets.

Joe stepped into Muse's place. The two flung garments aside and porked slowly upon the floor mattress. Beetles watched with perverted interest.

Days slipped away, moon falling, sun rising, sun falling, moon rising, moon falling, as had always happened. Tim and Lisa and Ben gathered regularly at Sal's Super Salad Paradise to plan carefully future scenarios of rebellion against supernatural forces. Nothing ever came of these plans. Too many of the variables weren't visible, and too many of the visible variables piled up.

Jim sat alone at a table eating his salad, waiting for friends to prepare their meals and grab their seats. Friends grabbed their seats and everyone ate companionably.

"It appears as if we'll be fighting the last battle alone," Ben said between chews on a crunchy orange lettuce leaf. "If we can't find our damned hired help, that is."

Lisa said, "You're being an ass, Ben."

Swallowing the last of the lettuce leaf, "You're right," Ben said.

"We'll not search for that one, fellows," Tim said. "That one knows better, he does, the when and the how of striking. We don't want to off and do the deadly without our deadly, do we? Nay, of course not. Fellows, listen: Where he's needed, that's where you'll find the Joe."

Lisa and Ben nodded with reverent insincerity.

Two weeks more slipped away. Joe was waiting in a phoneless booth for somebody to call him out. He was just standing there in his booth, glass shattered, long cord hanging limp, metal dented and twisted, tapping his foot. He could hear Stray Cats tunes coming in from somewhere. From the shining golden Cadillac pulling up beside the sidewalk.

Mike screamed, saying, "I'm in love with a flooze named Muse! Hey man, what you doin' in there? Thought you could mess up my guys and hide out here, huh? What you doing in there, huh? Come on out or I plug you from here."

Joe said, "That's a nice, big piece you got there, baby. Unfortunately, I can't answer to you at the moment. I'm waiting for a phone call."

Mike scratched his chin with his long-barrel golden gun. He said, "You crazy, man. Have to be to do what you done and what you doing now. Crazy isn't no defense, though, for what you done to me and mine. I'm plugging your ass." Mike aligned the laser scope of his pistol with Joe's forehead.

Joe said, "I'm the arrow, I'm the arrow, how are you gonna shoot the arrow?" He stood perfectly still as the bullet impacted with his forehead. He fell to his knees inside the booth, then fell forward, knocking open the door to the booth. A golden gun hit the sidewalk. A Cadillac drove off full speed, screeching tires and peeling rubber and all.

There was a ringing somewhere.

Two days more slipped away. Everything, it seemed, was slipping away. So little time, so little time. We're running out of time. Do you suppose we'll be worse off, when we're left with no time? What has time ever done for any of us? Ben knows all about that, as did Eddie.

After the two days slipped, Joe walked into Jade Jaguar Jungle, Jungle-Boogie fun, a dance club. He was blinded and deafened via subtle tortures. He struggled through the dancing zombies to find Jim. He grabbed Jim's shoulder and said, "The park, tonight, everyone!"

Tim nodded. Tim stepped forward, burying himself in the lively dead. Tim slipped away from company in the form of Joe.

The park, that night.

Ben was there, and Lisa and Jim too, and Joe with a cannabine cigarette and a fresh perspective.

Lisa gently slid her middle finger across Joe's filthy forehead. She said, "Is that a cut, Joe? What a strange cut."

Skin pulled apart like opening lids, revealing briefly the third eye. Joe said, "I've been teasing him that you know. We couldn't possibly have fought him or he'd have won. As things stand, we are victorious. He is ready to fight us. How victorious remains to be seen. Everyone is with me, yes?"

There were three nods.

Joe said, "This is the deal, Tim, everyone. The sky will shake and winged monkeys will rip free of our assholes. Lightning will strike every man separately and uniquely. Lives not our own will flash before our eyes. Mountains will form merely to be moved by the power of our faith in. When you all abandon me and the monster gags me with a twelve foot wooden stake, when my eye showers gold upon the land and the sky, we will have won and I will have earned my pay."

Jim said, "That one's Joe Regular, fellows. Pat that one on the back."

Joe said, "Everyone grab my raincoat. Hold tightly." Everyone did. It was raining, suddenly. Pouring down. Nobody got wet. There was a kind of clear globe surrounding the four. Clouds muddied the dark skies, concealed the moon and buried the stars. The wind snatched up leaves and tin cans and paper bags and glass bottles. Lightning sprung from the ground, reaching for the clouds. Lightning sprung from the clouds, reaching for the ground. Lightning lashed about as a horde of purple snakes.

Joe opened his eyes and stared into the heavens. He extended his arms. He said, "Release me and run."

-Tim released and ran, ran so that his chest burned. His legs cramped and he tumbled. He wasn't in the park anymore. Joy leaked from his eyes, lost in the droplets of rain splashing against his face. He crawled forward a little and it hit him, the lightning, fizzling and sizzling in and out and he fell down dead.

-Lisa released, then grabbed Ben's wrist, then ran. She dragged Ben along for a while. Wind separated them, impacting their chests like battering rams, pushing, pushing. Lisa ran with the wind. There was nothing else. She was the wind, a breeze blowing across the grass. You couldn't see her but you knew she was there. Then the lightning struck and she fell paralyzed.

-Ben stumble-ran against the wind, confused, separated, isolated. He held his brown leather jacket around himself as tightly as he could. Running against the wind, the jacket pushed him backwards. The jacket pulled him like a parachute, and away he went. Six or seven feet later, he fell on the ground and the lightning struck and he kicked his legs and bit his tongue and kicked his legs a little more.

Joe ran into the sky, rushing the clouds. He caught electric snakes by the necks and dragged them along. He sliced into cloud with snake-whip tails. He cut off a piece of a cloud so he could ride on a flying pillow. He released the lightning bolts and rode upon a flying pillow. He shot up into the heavens with his flying pillow.

Joe became just another star helping to light the sky. Then the hand reached out. Reached out and snatched up that star, flying pillow and all. And Joe Regular beat upon the furious fist, himself furious with quite a bit more cause. Joe Regular escaped meaty enormous clutches and danced upon the attached naked wrist, screaming holy condemning words, dancing upon glass with rubber boots.

Now Joe Regular was a current running against another current, a current stronger than, a wind fighting back the storm, a wind rushing into another wind, a spinning, spinning in the sky. And as grass detached from roots and ground, and as lampposts detached from sidewalks, and as cars detached from pavement, and as cows detached from fields, two titans battled inside the tornado.

Gray lines curve and intersect into and out of patterns, hinting at meaning while blatantly revealing the intersection of despairing anger and panic.

Joe Regular struck and was struck a blow, then more blows occurred, the land trembled, all were afraid, none knew what of. A twelve-foot stake fell as if pulled, fell like lightning, down the center of the tornado and into the mouth of our regular Joe. The tip of the stake pierced his ass and he died slowly.

Gold showered the land. The storm ended and they all lived happily ever after.

No more! No more!

Post-Past-Pre-Before and After: Gone Fishing

"Gone fishing," said the stop sign on the side of the road. It sprouted legs and ran off.

Me and Jim, we jumped out of the car and threw our hands in the air. What was a pair of fellows to do? No direction, no direction. All the signs were running! There were horns honking behind and ahead. Blame it on fishing, man.

"What now?" I asked Jim.

"Foot it from the now on," he said.

"Where to?" I asked Jim.

"Bohemia," he said.

So off we walked between the cars, headed for the border, then another border, ready to cross all the borders. I had twenty-six dollars in my hand, prepared to pay the riverboat man. He'd take us for a ride. We'd have to find him first, of course.

Oh, explosions were sounding and resounding everywhere. Quite an experience, quite a sight, the firecrackers. We had some crackers in Jim's pocket to snack on. Decided it would be best to save them until we got to the river. Salty crackers, no water. The river would be safe to drink from. Purifying.

The directionless wandered out of their cars, unfunctional completely without their signs. What was worse, the traffic lights had run off too! No red light green light stop-go-stop-go until arriving at a semipermanent stop then going again. We picked up a few hitchhikers, said we were heading for Bohemia.

"What's in Bohemia?" lady in a frock coat asked.

"Not signs," I said. "There's no fishing in Bohemia."

"Oh!" shouted a little man. Why was he such a little man? "I can't leave my car," he said. "Too expensive." And off he ran.

Into the jungle wandered we, crossing oceans and lakes and ponds and countries and states and cities and now finally density. We had a man had a hatched, went chop-chop through thickness with a lady with a machete.

The jungle people was playin' our song. We all embraced in the circle and swapped electric hugs, electric kisses, this was love. We'd found each other we were complete, all of us. Onward marched us all.

Lady in a frock coat said, "Thorns bloody my legs and my feet are sleepy." Jim carried that lady.

Deadly snakes live in the jungle ready to pounce. Them snakes only gots one head, sometimes two, we had six, we out-pounced them and all the jungle beasts.

Tarzan, he found us and was much befuddled by our talk of signs. His signs weren't written in ink or paint. Tarzan offered to be our guide. We accepted the company, we didn't need a guide.

Picture if you will a forest burning down because the bears think Smokey's a tree-hugger hippie sissy. Then imagine fields of green green grass smelling so wondrous until the grass revolts against nostrils of the world to exude terrible deadly fumes we all breathe in we all drop dead. Oh, the races are rioting against the racial classifications, as united races. The blue birds are singing because they've got nothing better to do and who does really? We saw these things together we did and other things unspeakable, in visions and in the flesh.

We all had crosses to carry, we carried them all together, and when we came to the swamp and Tarzan left us, we were none too disappointed man. Too much kicks ahead to mourn the kicks behind, as it always should be.

Slime and frogs and gas and mud and goop and more snakes afraid of us because they'd heard from their jungle brothers. We walked on the slime, kicked aside the frogs, got high on the gas, scorned the mud, pocketed the goop like biscuits from the food bar of life. We killed the reaper because he asked us to.

We found the river. Jim said, "River ahead. Everyone ready to cross? We all cross together." We all held hands and that was our answer.

Joe said, "I wonder if there's beef in Bohemia."

The lady in the frock coat said, "I wonder if there's chowder in Bohemia."

I said, "I wonder if there's ice cream in Bohemia." Mine was stupid. Of course there's ice cream. Friends and life partners were nice enough not to judge or laugh and we all approached the riverboat man together.

The riverboat man said, "Where's my twenty-six dollars, bitch?"

We handed over my twenty-six dollars and everyone was happy it was a joyous occasion who wouldn't be pleased? We all got on the damned boat promptly, as asked.

We shouldn't have, but we did much sweating about our approach. Destination what's-it? Hell, man, you know Bohemia! Anyways, darnit, regretted to this and all days, we forgot about crackers. And we crossed the river and there was a sign up that said, "Welcome to Chrystal City."

Part 3: Killing Clocks

It was *not* random, whatever they said. It was quite good actually. It was the type of shit you could tap your foot to. Why did they think random?

Random thoughts, that's why.

The strange land had come in from the other side. It was making strange demands. The repercussions sounded like clanging bells.

Tickings tocked away the clock tower. It was a phallic symbol demanding tribute from the time stream. Everybody saw and listened in awe.

Little George glanced at the watch attached to his skinny wrist. He teased the band with his thumb. He thought, "Late for work... Late for work..."

Little George took off running hard. He had the endurance for quite a dash. He probably could have made it as a professional athlete. He at least could have become one. But it seemed such a silly profession to him.

Work, his work seemed silly too. Digging ditches, shoveling shit, hauling crud... By being late he was missing out on some of the good shit.

Everybody at work thought it was funny how skinny George was. George, looking around, thought it was funny too. Fortunately, everybody got along.

Nothing would have been too great a call if only if only, No calling them back, all ready sent out, no turning back.

Work was shit. It was a legitimate cash flow. Really, George made the most green selling rugs. His wife made them up for him while he was at work. You wanted rugs, you could come to George, he had quite a diversity. It was a funny business because all the rugs looked like shit, pieces of this and that thrown together artistically rather than practically, and yet they fetched great prices.

George couldn't even tell you when he got started if you asked him. All he remembered was rugs were originally his wife's suggestion.

So the family, George and Ginger, they got the bulk of their income from the rugs. Mostly, it was Ginger's business, since most of the time it was her that was home. Ginger was the bread constructor.

And George was working every day. It changed his fucking life.

"You gotta have a job."

"Why?"

"You just gotta," said Big John. "I know a good company," said Big John.

"Deep in the heart of the jungle beast?" asked Bob.

"Deep as Gingerbread's throat," said Big John.

"What's the business?" asked Bob.

"Sugarcane," said Big John. "They're importing sugarcane."

"Henry! What's happening?" Ginger watched Henry walk inside.

Said Henry, "Shit. Stinkier shit than usual."

"Well you certainly look like shit," said Ginger. "And you smell like a wet dog."

"I've been through hell," said Henry. "Seriously, Ginger, I was racing through hell a moment ago."

"That explains the sweat dripping down your chain," said Ginger. "Are you here to make a purchase?" asked

Ginger.

"Do you even have to ask?" asked Henry.

"Maybe you should take it easy..." said Ginger.

Henry said, "Show me some glisten, show me some luci-lue. Show me some skittles, too!"

"Alright," said Ginger. "You're a big boy, after all..."

Henry stepped outside and

Says old the (from the barstool) Old Man bob was his name this day, "Blithely am I crossing the Jordan." And the Jordan swayed and she hissed. It was an ecstatic Saturday morning ride.

Hodge Hogs are a hog is pink-in-color(ation) not noxiously applied. This happens every one in a blue Sunday or the kind you eat. Earwigs wriggle the right directional signals.

It's a story about a corpse. His name is Henry.

Henry isgoing to the dentist. Says the dentist, "Your teeth smell you dumb bastard out of my office." It went down like a juke box song of antiquity. The mad cap gun didn't cap too many bust-a-cap in that cap gun. It whistled, the whistle did blow. Oh, twist.

Nourishment will be a sustenance will be applied like a smooth oil oil framed oil paintings burn easily. The flame will lick a path through grapefruit juice all the way to the oil painting of such great importance, this house fire will be. All the old world treasures sink into the doesn't-matter-mu ch.

Don't play the keys too hard you newb dube shweeee. This is an angular motion.

Henry steps into an office supply store to pick up a box of bracelets for arm braces. The bracelets cling to walls and prevent terrible falls. It'd terrible mishap be, the forgetting of the bracelets, which is why such mishap no-how occurs. A cure! For what ails the dinosaurs, extinct as they be.

Bouncing across the steps, a tail-dragger takes a step in stink. Instinct take over," says Henry. The jungle becomes familiar territory. It's like he's been here before. (pause for flashing lights)

The truck comes as a terrible surprise. It's squishing skunks with ease but fails to reach any worthy destinations.

Destinations. We have very important destinations in mind.

"I'll have a taste of the sugarcane, please." We. Henry and I.

I, Clayburn the Hyway.

Take it fast or not at all you puss-suckingpffftttt.....

The bishop is sliding gracefully across the board. Strategically positioned, our king will have his people shooting your people with laser pistols that don't whiplash.

Hieronymus anonymously unmasked the unanimous artificial moose poler who had attempted a brack of the snappapap. Having said my piece, depart young dove.

Henry didn't want to ride the fairy boat. It was chaos.

Henry has never tasted the clouds before. It was a damp, bitter taste. A taste like that resembles some kinds of tea.

"The tea plant you've extracted from has developed various important uses such as that of being the roller." His hips swayed. Swayin' like taibowgun.

Henry was riding the rails for a few days. The rails couldn't handle Henry too long. I saidisaIDH e saidSHe said. It was too much for the trucker. Says the trucker right now, "I'm done with these foolish incidents!" And it was said, And there were no more incidents. For the trucker. Boredom killed.

KILLED. KA!

Don't.

Answer the phone right now.

Don't.

Do it, quick, hurry up!

"Hello," says Henry.

There is a shrill scream that pierces the night for miles.

The refrigerator door swings wide open. The foodstuff beckons. Answer the call, various rewards shall present themselves. If it's loose you want it's loose you'd better have.

A donkey squirts out a moosehead. It is no ordinary Moorhead. Morlocks are waiting to jump from the sewers in a hasty fashion. Tasted success on his lips and he went for it.

The keys was in Henry's hand. They pierced as if attacking a vagina, and they turned. Henry's car, her name was

Suzie, she purred. The pedal touched land, land being the floor. Vroom. Like a motorcycle. Acceleration is. We're headed for the target...

The bad guy went SMACK against a shed door. It was a horrible site. Sightless, however. The car was a little messy.

Heartburn boiled the cauldron suspended overtop. The Bop Gun went blasting.

Henry got fried.

Henry fell.

Henry lifted self from grave!

Henry calmly stepped into local supermarket to pick up some Butterfingers.

And was never heard from again.

"You'll never believe what some guy just traded me for sugarcane," Bob said to his dog Tramp. "I'll take twelve and you take four..."

Bob had a dream and Bob woke up.

Bob tossed and turned.

The man in the tan drainpipe wiping snot burbles from another pipe, he held up his hand and said, "Here's the plan man. No steamships to steam shovel the rovers through the rabid robber bob stopper. Keep it, keep it coming man. Come back to us in a few.

Skip-sattled skidaddle da. Harummmm... I see you're coming out of it?"

"What... What are you saying!" Bob screamed good gracious gobble stoppers ho boy! Smacked his thighs and said, "I'm awake now, motherfuckers!"

Jones Hail said, "When the horizon line is raided by gray skinned tall ones, beat upon the drum the signal for war."

"I wish that I could remember the reasons," Bob whispered.

"Well, fuck you," said a horsefly.

The Gabriel lingered over the worshipful symbioticoid and kicked, WACK!

It was a statue to bow to. Nay, I say! KABLOI!!!

Bob said, "I'm ready to go outside now."

Bob put his foot to the door. The man in the yellow raincoat shouted, "Hey wait man!"

Bob rushed the door--and the light struck. It blew him backwards by twisters. He fell and rolled and boinkered the poinker thoinkshtinkiiniiii.... He fell and the door slammed shut and all was dim again.

The man in the yellow raincoat stepped forward. "I tried to tell you," he said. "You just aren't ready," he said.

The wolf growled and charged and ran into a hole. He came out laughing and he said, "Come on, come on, motherfucker, Gonna rush that door!" The wolf chewed the man in the yellow raincoat and snapped on him and stomped on the dust...

Nobody in Bob's head ever saw the man in the yellow raincoat again.

The shinks to that taboinkerspiddle. So meddled and poison man. There was a whispering going on by the doorstep. "Fandom of the Pope Ra....."

Bob charged once more the door. Confident, he screamed and slashed and dashed on through the flames. Hellfire piercing the white wall of light.

Bound found himself standing at the foot of a staircase. He saw the wolf hovering, sitting up ahead.

Sonnets sang the thistleberry wolf. Songs such as, *Ode to Cleo*

Oh Cleo, Oh Cleo, give me a hug

Oh Cleo, Oh Cleo, give me a tug

Whisper into my ear,

Peer through my loins,

Conjoin all the threads

Oh Cleo, Oh Cleo, take me to bed.

Bob gazed at the thistleberry wolf and wondered, "What would it be like to wander into yonder glade?" The horizon sprung from the wolf's shoulder beckoned with platinum glitter.

Bob ran into the unknown on his own. He knew to summon the wolf he had but to howl.

Bob kissed Luna Good-bye for a while. The blue ball was quick on the sliding fall.

There was a city in the distance. The city of Eschilion.

Bob was climbing stairs through the strangeland. He saw strange faces, faces being sucked, faces being stretched, faces in strange places. He saw, too, the birds fighting gravity.

Bob, nearing the top of the stairs, reached for the glitter. His hand came within inches of the platinum. Quivering fingers stretched and yearned. His eyes strained and blood vessels popped. He shook convulsively as the wind hit.

Bob could get no higher so he lifted his arms like one of the birds and he took a jump backwards. And he glided. And he fell.

Bob sipped away at black coffee. A big day of work ahead of him, he had.

Little Tim, some kid living out of a little house with his dad, leeching, job-dodging, didn't know about the sugarcane or Ginger's rugs. Little Tim just liked to smoke grass on occasion and drop acid when he could get it. Little Tim comes into the story stepping into a steamy pile of shit.

He was headed for the apartments behind a local Food Lion. Just when he got to the entrance, he smelled it. "Aw, shit," Tim said.

Little Tim knocked on his friend Steve's door. "Steve, open your fucking door!"

"First take off your fucking shoes," said Steve. "I can smell that shit from here."

Little Tim kicked his shoes to the curb. He was a little afraid of local hooligans since it was a brand new pair of boots he was leaving unattended. The poop, he figured, would serve as a deterrent against theft.

Steve raised thrice and Tim twice the glass gravity bong in Steve's room. Steve shoved the VU Velvet Underground album into the stereo and Tim attacked Steve's keyboard. Steve was feeling pretty good. It was some fucking great hash they were smoking.

"You type fast," said Steve.

"I've had a little practice," said Tim.

"What are you doing on the net?" asked Steve.

"I'm playing a game," said Tim. "It's some free form role play shit... You probably wouldn't be interested."

"Yeah, I'm not fucking interested," said Steve. Steve chilled on his bed soaking in Velvet Underground goodness.

Tim soaked in the same typing himself into a fight.

Chat Transcript:

Malzorgata arches her smooth, naked alabaster back and flashes a confident, toothy smile. A series of loud cracks ascend from her ankles to her neck. Light dimly flickers around her body as the shadows play. I suggest you leave my ho alone.

AngryFather's purple robes spread like wings and expand from wall to wall, ceiling to floor. The veins in his trunk neck seem as ready to pop as the vessels of his protruding red eyes. Thin electric currents snake through his fingers. I'm going to have to back Mal on this one, kid.

TimothyWolf: All I want to hear right now is the dragon's roar. His grip on the harlot's neck tightens.

JadeHo faintly yelps.

TimothyWolf: Come any closer and the bitch is dead. All it takes is a good, strong jerk...

RageorRok: The smell of sulfur. Air combusting. The barroom quivers slightly. Outside, the sound of wings beating, then a heavy thump against hard dirt. The barroom shakes again when... The dragon roars.

TimothyWolf drops Jade and walks outside. I'm ready this time, bitch.

"Why do you always come to my place to chill, then spend like two hours on the Internet?" asked Steve.

"It's happened once before," said Little Tim. "I don't have the Net. Besides, I just smoked your ass up, didn't I?"

Fight Transcript:

Long time ago, the dragon was running free from the chest of the chess man. The chess man was flipping sprinkles. The sprinkles rained all over everybody's parade.

It was some sick shit, man. A shower of blood and flesh and organs falling behind the dragon. Then we all heard that howling.

What, a wolf with wings? A wolf to challenge the dragon?

It's a little like in the video games.

Wings splurshed through black energy, beating beating beating...

The chess man was laughing.

The howling getting louder, louder... Lycans in the woods!

Check out those fangs.

A whole pack of them? A fucking pack? A pack concealed amidst the shadows?

The dragon roars and breathes that fire and heaves and has such a time. He's a fucking dragon.

Flesh rips free of chins. Bones crack and crumble. The good shit in.

Not much of a fight, really. It isn't fair. But... What the fuck is that sound? Dragons flying up so high in the green apple pie sky? Really now, a pack against that shit?

But one of our wolves has wings and the dark tides are surging and purple ripples expand around his feet and his nostrils flare and he can take a hit, Don't you see?

Claws shred through fingers in anticipation of ripping the enemy. The dragons see this and they snort. And they

laugh.

The chess man is laughing still.

Those jaws clench through scales and steal squeals. It's funny the things seen.

Black smoke and chokes and tokes and good blokes waiting to get theirs.

A growl,

A jaw snaps,

the end.

"Well that was fun," said Tim.

"Let's get a little higher then play some Street Fighter," said Steve.

Meanwhile ago in Richmond...

A tiger resting in the grass. A Lasso hassled a K-Mart employee into delivering to doorstep free fries. The grass ahead rustled. The prey emerged, and the fries were glutinously gobbled.

It is the elusively urban jungle. Did you hear the drums beating behind the engines in the distance? Entranced, listeners stared as the racing cars shot by. A man tied to a damn had planned on intervening. Now, rather than, more muscles should have been summoned.

The Tai Bo master upgraded the hassle into disaster. As the bullets flew past her, she Tai Bo kicked down into Lasso's big toe. Lasso didn't know there was going to be a street brawl. He crawled beneath the nearest parked car.

Tai Bo showed her big guns and ran blazing down the blood trails. She was covered in crimson, covered in crime. Yes, covered from her crime.

Tai Bo wouldn't have made this show unless her immunity could be guaranteed. To succeed in this, she fished through many pharmaceuticals. Hard as she tried to change courses, she always wound up winding up in the fast lane.

The cars were pulling to their stops. The race was ended. The blue car won it again. Why always the blue car? The blue car was just a piece of shit box-on-wheels. I wonder what it feels like to excite a box-on-wheels with the Nos. Probably quite boss, until you're flipped and tossed. Jostled into a bundle.

The prize was presented. The present was a Tai Bo master. Both having demonstrated their prowess, racer and master-savant retired together into the other realm.

The blue car pulled into parking. Engines slowly settled, then the body slumped. Driver fell back and unbuckled. He tussled with the keys and the door and exited the vehicle. Away he wiped the trickling sweat. He headed into the local Sheetz.

Food and fuel he desired. The car was running on magic. For munchies, he picked off a line a loaf and a fine wine. Still searching the same line, he found a blind woman vainly finger-feeling, digit-dragging, rag-tag palm pressing, pushing through the unseen, apparent-by-projectionly hoping for bananas. He avoided that bitch, recognized at a barely subconscious level, like a disease. Monkeypoxers grabbing again for the pleasure denied, trying as they've tried before to pull down more to their level.

Driver lastly activated the Red Fuel fountain and paid for all his resources. He headed out to the car and started her. He had plenty of money but one last run to make that night.

It's the suicide run, the Southside Sprawl, the race against race with blue neutrality shooting through the middle.

He'd shot up plenty in preparation for this shoot. He's the bullet piercing the veil between.

And so swiftly, it was over.

Following the snow job, Tai Bo gave Driver a blowjob.

The mob handles the mob. Different mobs struggling.

Box-on-wheels excited civil and liberal rights in stealing the lightning and achieving frightening fetes et fetis. Ay, de bogus nogis noggin homigus genis of genius of transport.

The Lasso emerged from the rubble heaps. A sweeping gaze sought to freeze the eyes of mark next. Mark actually did appear and said, "Hi, my name's Mark. Let me buy you a beer."

"No thanks pal," said Lasso. "I'm good," said Lasso, sipping emphatically away at the whiskey bounty provided by the friendly barkeeper.

Tender tenderly treats frequent customers. Particularly customers of frequent cash exchange.

In the end, Lasso had Mark wrapped within the guilt net. That one was bought during drunken discourse.

Mark accompanied Lasso to the hog farm. It's hog-eat-hog there, or hog-eat-dog, or whatever else is/was available. That day, a drunk was partially consumed then trapped for transport within a blue trunk.

Grim of disposition, Driver drove. The body dropped, still wriggling, still alive. Desert dirt broke a fall. Blood close to boiling.

What became of Mark? Why, Mark's...

Mark's a city mark.

Bob said, "I want to buy something important today." Bob went out to the store and, by george, he picked up something important. It was an ancient scroll the seller called *the Chtokin Mythology*. This is what it said, very roughly translated:

Kalith touched his pen to parchment and he thought not. His act was fueled by something deeper.

The spontaneous sketches were all sticky, icky spider webs. Everybody wanted to climb. It was too difficult for most of them, learning which threads to trust. All of them craved the center.

The center was honey. The center was the sweetest thing. The best supply. The greatest cash flow. It was the spider's favorite spot.

Kalith knew of other threads, invisible and more spurious, explosive everywhere. He knew how to climb safely, for the most part. The threads were a part of him. He was one of the weavers.

Kalith was a small spider only. His own creation sated his appetite. His contribution to the webs was a contribution to the greatest of the spiders, the currents themselves. So many before came so far upstream only to be swept away. So many bodies smashed against the deep rocks.

A deep voice shouted to them all, "The rock is the key! The rock is the key!" It was truth. Who could have known?

One of the things Kalith had learned to do that the others couldn't even attempt was a mental process whereby he could look in whilst looking out.

The Great Spider saw all of this. A jealousy grew within her bosom and festered. It was a great pain and a heavy burden. She decided, "This one only will I take for a husband. Only this one is worthy. And if he will not accept my offer, I will devour him."

The Great Spider came to Kalith in dreams as a beautiful bimbo. She made him presents and she sang sweet songs and she took his eyes in hers, wide and hypnotic. She wore a mask composed of a mostly-true past, a mostly-true present, and mostly-true expectations for the future. But she was the Great Spider, so she could not help but show off on occasion her deep wisdom and her deep power.

Kalith saw the mask. He could not penetrate it. He confronted the queen with what little he knew. In dreams, she denied everything. In dreams, she shed real tears over the accusations.

Gradually, the Great Spider faded. Poor, pathetic Kalith had only garnered a glimpse of what all she offered! Well, Kalith's desire for her was real. In time the desire would fester like the jealousy the Great Spider carried inside. She would return to him and he would fall blindly into her arms.

Alas, Kalith's vision of love was one of equality, so in the end he was eaten.

Alas, Bob could not translate the language.

Well, such was/is not so bad, for after all this stuff went down, Great Spider read over this little mythology and thought to eucharist self, "Hmmm... Puts me in an awful ugly light, that does. Ah, well. It's entertainment."

Ginger was out grocery shopping. She also wanted tp not carried at that grocery store. That grocery store was Wal-Mart. She also tried Ginger's Hot Spot. None of those places stocked extra tp specials.

A girl approaches a boy and says, "Hello." "Hello," says the boy. "My, that dandruff/pimple-dimple! And you have dry skin."

"The cold doesn't bother you? Here, have a cigarette."

"No," says the girl. "When it's really cold, I don't get cold, but when it's just a little cold, I freeze my ass off!"

"I have trouble, like when I'm at the supermarket, you know? trying to understand the talkoffs when people go really fast."

"You listen to a lot of fast music," says the boy.

"Yeah, but can't understand what they're saying. I have to look up lyrics on the Internet."

"I love my brothers!" "Yeah, mine are pretty cool too."

"Let's talk about the rabbits. My! That was a fine book."

"Oh, hey, guy."

Dear girl,

I think you're really swell. I can't sleep right now because I have schizoaffective disorder and find insomnia stimulating! So my thoughts are racing so I'm writing you this letter.

I'm a crazy bastard! ←don't trust this man! All I've told you is lies because nothing is true and everything is too! But not usually simultaneously unless on a Tuesday.

The part of me that is anima (in a Jungian sense) is clinging and jealously pushing and it isn't even maternal anymore. I'm starting to wonder...

Anyways, You're my favorite person. Fuck everybody else. I know I don't know you very well(well I do study psychology) but you're my favorite person.

Half of me suspects you, and it has its reasons. What, am I supposed to just automatically trust you? You shouldn't trust me, either. Like you yourself said, you don't know me well enough. "I don't understand you boy."

Will you be my banshee? I wrote you a neat poem.

Hey Girl, [I'll do anything for you and if you want me to I'll fade away...

-boy

(*Insertion* by the writer, 1:11 AM, April 3, 2005: Having had to fade away, then disappear, the writer no longer disguised as Timmy reflects and wonders... Informed she thought I was making fun of her!!! Now that she isn't mad and we can be friends again, I want to ask just to settle my curiosity as to What Actually Happened ~as I'm hoping at least 1 reader will wonder~~ But the problem is, even though I intended to write a love letter, falling always either in total love and lust and worship, in lust, or into totally neutral friendship, there being only these things ~for me~... Even though I intended to write a love letter, and the BANSHEE was my then-symbol for GODDESS and the form my goddess took, some things implied but not stated, if memory serves, within the context of the letter were genuinely *hurtful misconceptions* on my part, and if those misconceptions were not received by Person Girl, they never should be by further discussions of the letter. Unless perchance she happens to read this... As she told me the other day, "The past is in the past.")

((Furthermore, I've been watching television, and my COMPUTER informs me it's Daylight Savings Time: 3:03 AM.))

The following day, Girl reports to Person A Juice Bottle the lack of any desire to speak with person Boy ever again. Person A Juice Bottle passes this information on onto the trivial troubles of person Boy. butyou still have to be my favorotperson. ;)

Lisa said, "I'm Lisa."

"Lisa?" I asked.

"Yeah, you know," said Lisa, "the robot goddess."

"Well, my shadow is largely composed of Terminator Arnold and Escape from Snake. I guess it makes sense my anima might be a robot."

"Don't forget the banshee," said Lisa.

"Don't forget the banshee"

Boy walked into drug store and picked up some toilet paper. It wasn't to wipe his own ass with. He was shopping for a local family of Koreans. He had also to buy some butterfingers.

There was so much great candy to be had. Boy made sure to pick up some skittles in case he got hungry later.

Boy said These skittles, "Think about these skittles. Okay, so maybe it's bad for you and not as sweet as... Still, if a guy's in a tight spot..."

Boy enjoyed exploring his normal surroundings from a diversity of perspectives. He also enjoyed shopping for Korean families.

Boy picked up the last item on the list. Six bottles of Mountain Dew. Delicious.

"Thanks, boy," said some Korean lady. Boy never bothered to learn any names. All they ever called him was "boy" anyway.

"Boy" was actually Our Boy Tim, Little Tim. Little Tim was crawling through some strange cracks.

George walked into his house. "Hi Ginger," said George. "How's about a few hours in the sack?" asked George.

Now, what the neighbors were never able to explain was the strange light source radiating brilliant colors through an open window. It was a breezy day, certainly. Certainly, the winds carried long, twisted howls and growls and purrs and shines.

Once out of the ol' sack, Ginger and George feasted on sweet, sweet pumpkin pie.

Sex that great begets no affairs.

"Whelp, I got some more of that sugarcane coming on in," said Bob to his cat Lion. "If anybody tries to stick their noses in the stash, scratch their fucking eyes out. Especially those shadow-sneakers."

Lion said, "Meow."

"That's right killer," said crazy Bob. Crazy Bob kicked his boots up on the kitchen table, leaned back in his chair, and flipped up the volume on the stereo on the washing machine.

Patti Smith was center stage again.

Bob kept coming back to Patti Smith. He was in love with the whole show.

Little John said, "Hey, motherfucker! You can't go back there!"

Jimmy the Worm stopped, turned around, and looked Little John right in the eyes. Quick as a Texan gunslinger, Jimmy had a pistol concentrated on Little John's forehead.

"Ah, what the fuck do I care," said Little John.

"On your knees bitch," said Jimmy the Worm.

"I don't like where this is going!" said Little John, momentarily dazed by an acid prison flashback.

Jimmy the Worm pistol-whipped Little John unconscious and walked on.

Jimmy was headed for the heart of the factory. He could smell the somethings circling and he could feel the tension closing. Dogs zeroing in on his position.

Jimmy closed in on the hot spot. The Boss's chair. He said to the back of the Boss's chair, "You killed my wife cocksucker!"

Four shots fired. Then the fifth shot got the back of Jimmy's head. Two bodies to be cleaned up.

"How the fuck did he get past our guys? How'd he even get past Little John?"

"Oh, I don't know. Listen, Henry, I'm going to need you to handle things at the factory for a little while."

"This is Edd, Harvey."

"Oh, right, well hey, Edd, I think I'm going to need you to take care of things down at the factory for a little while."

"You're kidding, right? I just signed on."

"I know, it's just I'm going out of town! Hey, Bud, I'm sure you'll do great!"

"It's Edd."

"I was saying 'Bud' like 'pal' or, 'get me a beer bitch!' But seriously, at least for the time being, the factory is in your hands."

"You hardly know me."

"I hardly knew Henry."

"I'm bad with responsibility!"

"Just shut up and get me a beer, bitch."

George licked some sugar off the kitchen table. He looked across the table to his wife and he said, "Gingerbread, things is going crazy down at the factory. Those boys don't know what the fuck is going on."

"That doesn't have anything to do with us, honey," said Ginger.

"But the Black Fungus is crawling along the walls!" said George.

"Those incompetent bastards!" said Ginger. "Don't they know the forces they're unlocking?"

"Dark forces," said George.

"It'll be all right," said Ginger. "We've got our shit together," said Ginger. "We're ready for whatever's coming."

George made sure to close all the windows.

Little Tim was out shopping again. He was, rather than shopping for foreigners, shopping from them. He was buying his very first three hits of acid.

Little Tim looked around El Ol' Shop O. He found on high a dusty shelf lined with dead, dried critters. On the back wall, six inches from the floor, he found an oak shelf perfectly polished. What he wanted was some Windowpane. "Where do you keep that stuff?" he asked El Ol' Shop O-kay Owner-nay.

"Behind the black fungus cupcakes," said Little John.

Timmy picked up three tabs of South Park, purchased, and left the man behind the counter a top secret little tip. "Don't jiggle your penis at large mouthed frogs," he said. "Who said that?" asked a horsefly, and the horsefly was smacked majestically into a whiplash flying formation. Other horseflies arrived to join the party. Lots crazy shit happening.

Timmy went into an opium den and filled up on opium for the hell of it and because he didn't wander into opium dens very often and lots of cool people were hanging out!

Timmy's pocket watch flipped open to reveal a ticking face. It shouted, "You bastard, stare at me!" Timmy hated the watch as a symbol for time. "Your time has come, Timmy!" "SHut UP!!"

Timmy heard talk of streams and kept a keen wait for/of such. He substance having did. He had to smoke a Newport.

Or a Marlboro lihjilati linjinjin jinni nihil nihila Nihalbrahlal! Timmy was brawling out in the streets! He was a Star God. Little Timmy ignited a path through the rubble. So much black rock rained down from the sky.

The hailstorm caused quite a commotion in the morning. Apparently, only Center Stage storm riders saw anything at all. Regardless, the evidence was everywhere.

People were up in arms.

Timmy participated in the riots. He was smashing store windows like a pro.

Timmy made off with quite a bit of goods/cash flow. He decided to take part in the rituals out by the seashore. He knew better than to kiss dead fish.

Timmy made off with a land title. A voodoo-looking drunken Brit bartered off the land title for an expensive new VCR! The title was to a plot on Crrystil Beach. Crrystil Beach was a Chrystal City summer hot spot. All good action on the Crrystil plot seemed to come in the summer. So Timmy started spending his summers in the floating island city.

Chrystal City had eaten its fair share of visitors in the past. And Timmy would never forget that first summer in the city...

Lobster. The lobster Timmy held responsible for all the vomiting. The high vomit nights were always Lobster Dinner nights. A delivery went through always, always more than bargained for.

Timmy met a ghost in Chrystal City. He chased her everywhere.

Timmy met many interesting people in the Chrystal City. Some local folk actually considered themselves endowed with "unnatural power"! Such delusions persisted under a rampant veil of drugs and superstition. Almost everybody in Chrystal suspected the existence of otherworldly denizens, and the average joe took occult hocus-pocus seriously. Worst of all, there were never any cattle mutilations.

Bob leaned back in his cocking chair and cocked his shotgun. He rocked her a few times.

Tramp was barking through the fog.

Territorial canines made circles in the dirt and pissed a lot.

There were never any doubts as to the existence and importance of the neon rainbow flag of esoteric pride. The importance had been emphasized pages before these pages, as in ages spanning mere bursts of words. The draw was inane, the appeal unmununudane.

Well, it could happen, care and pressure applied, gone straight through, the mixture proper.

Something being heard words such birds, like doves flying, beyond the of in itself, onto, beyond that, twice in thrice fornit furniture in wormsweep torn between. Tunlap disfigured in temporal realities charged with water rigidity. Shattering images cacophony the pool surface.

A ride into town, boils popping. Camels spit mud. Destitute derailers recertify the amplitude of the cook's plantation. Cannot pay the petitioner, he rejects thine claim.

Navy Seals unload in Portugal to beat up on some Portuguese for easy ass kicking practice. The citizenry chosen as victims were all carefully selected bar flies. The bloody bar fights caused very little stir. Then somebody added honey.

Voices whispering, *getoffthecokebob*
Bob..... Bob... *GET OFF THE COKE BOB...* ssss... hey, bob... *What are you doing with that gun, Bob? Bob.....*
We love you, *b o b O what are you doing with that gun,*
BOB!!!

It wasn't to be not understudied. Tit busn't ton been done afore.

Too chessed to chisel the whizzle through to be lame to tame or name or be the same or bow to the dame.

"Explode!" somebody shouted.

The nazi ripped off his facemask and shouted, "I'm going to fucking kill you!" The reds were coming from underground.

Saint Jzearuth slipped on his sneakers and popped out from behind the shadows. "BOO! Wait and see what I can do!"

Mark's walking down 34th Street smoking a Newport. Cadillac car pulls up and out pops a man in a yellow raincoat. The man in the yellow raincoat wants a Newport. "Sure," says Mark.

"Listen, man," says Yellow Raincoat. "I'm going to change your fucking socks! If you're willing to wear black socks for a little while, I'll set you in a pedestal. Free rides straight into heaven. It's funny to atch an itch."

"Don't you know why we're here?" asks John Johnny John.

"Just drive, Johnny," says Yellow Raincoat.

"I don't know, I'm kind of inclined to talking," says Johnny. "I think I deserve that much, at least."

Says man in the yellow raincoat, "You have a point there John Johnny John. The point may be preparing to launch into eyeball. Look into your rear view mirror. See them apples?"

"Lips officially sealed," says John.

Mark asks, with keen enthusiasm, in a deep-throat tone of voice, "Why me big guy?"

"Because, Mark," says Yellow Raincoat. "You'll be good for my organization. You seem to have things pretty darned organized. Besides, I've seen what you can do under a lot of stress."

Mark keeps his head high. He says, "I know what I'm getting into. Motherfucker. What do you want?"

"Yearning for the coffin?" asks the man in the yellow raincoat. "It isn't what we have in mind. We've seen what you can do--alone. We want to see what you can do with a pack."

The man in the yellow raincoat lights an enormous blunt.

When the blunt is passed, Mark thinks to himself, "The blunt has been passed." Mark inhales the blunt.

"This is a damned good blunt," says Mark.

"We don't fuck around," says Yellow Raincoat.

"I faste PCP?" says Mark.

"You want some PPCccccccccccinbdiof ewcpn ; FXC

ds c

m,x/zjopaNMQW 'JM pdn;

DNKSD , "DMLWD D 'dj; ?m;IM md';m., l;DN/LD

, Asked the man in the yellow raincoat.

"I like free drugs," says Mark.

"You're perfect!" exclaims the man in the yellow raincoat. "You're hired!"

"Oh boy!" Mark claps his hands.

Timmy was walking the streets smoking a Turkish Royal hanging with some scampering beavers. The beavers were feeling the terrible chatters. They weren't very noisy beavers. Just big brown balls of fur.

Timmy held the neck of an empty bottle of absinthe in his hand and he waved it in the air and he shouted at the city, "You're all a bunch of fucking drunks!"

The city shouted back, "Suck my cokg!"

The barbs always stabbed Timmy too hard when he was drinking. He had to turn to other things. It was a matter of survival and maximum function.

Because Timmy was a dancer. He'd dance a little jig straight on into the fight.

Timmy was a cat. He needed fast legs to run from the big dogs. This is Little Timmy we're connecting here previous happenings upon. Of course somewhat deranged. "It's like tripping your entire life," Timmy would say. "That's how I would explain my disorder. Milder than that, perhaps."

"You don't sound crazy," said Michael T Knife. "Maybe you crazy," said Michael T Knife. "Let's see what you got."

Timmy danced back and forth across the damp alley shaking his wrists. He cracked his neck a bit. Six feet tall, somewhat muscular, high as a kite, Timmy figured a street brawl couldn't be too bad of an idea.

Timmy flipped open his pocketknife. He firmly gripped the cheap plastic handle. He moved like a wall of waves. The strategy was one of slow impressions.

Michael T Knife bitchslapped Timmy.

Timmy landed in a puddle next to a dumpster.

Michael T Knife turned his back on Timmy and walking away, he muttered over his shoulder, "Motherfucker."

Timmy sat in the puddle for a bit. He began thinking of Briton. Quite a whimsical place, rather. Fine under the sun. Great nightlife. Deep in the heart of it.

Timmy rubbed his pocket watch and spun it in the air and summoned forth an aura of temporal distortion. The golden vibes bent back fibers and spat Timmy upon cobblestone streets.

Timmy ran naked through a field. The deer were in a bundle fleeing the hungry tiger. Dragons cast dark shadows from high above. There was the faintest smell of brimstone.

Timmy saw a bar. Bob's Bar. The place looked pretty thug. When he had stood there watching the door for a few minutes, Timmy came to the realization there would always be a slowly trickling stream of drunks coming in or stumbling out.

Timmy shoved his way through the doors. Sure enough, a crowded establishment. A lot of thick necks hanging around. A few confident skinny people, a few not so confident skinny people. Timmy wasn't skinny but this place made him feel pretty small.

A glitter of acoustically armed bards seemed sprinkled throughout the room. The instruments they played with lightning fingers. The songs they sang with tears and growls of experience.

It was such nice toil, the processes distorted. It was twice as nice as the thrice browned onion bagels. Shut your fucking tight ass. Sluuuuuuuuurp.

Saint Jzearuth wandered through a hazy recollection of yesterday. The people were the same but the faces were warped. It was a collision scope into falling rubble.

Saint Jzearuth quickly sidestepped the heavy rain.

Jzearuth wandered into the bar Timmy was attending to drinks within. Jzearuth stumbled into a stool and slumped down low with his head sprawled across the bar top. He shouted, "Bartender, fetch me a fucking drink!"

Bob said, "Sure thing boss!" Bob fetched the usual. Fairy Spirits.

The room was moving at warp speed. It wasn't spinning exactly. The colors were rushing up and down in lines.

Timmy was two drinks beyond the grove. He was keeping to himself. He knew enough about circles to know the proper application of direction and navigation to move through bodies in a cloak of ambiguity and obscurity.

An infestation of the colonies twice in thrice manifestation in mine peril to bewail the tales told be if unto for fair weather only.

Wheels on aces, queens, kings, duce, the cards spinning. The axles will break. The wheels keep spinning on into other stratospheres, new roads, new paths.

Plutonium in the platinum suits hiding from spies. Gurgles milked through sharp teeth. Heightened state of mind. A kangaroo frolicking by the soda machine. Headed our way, a glorious bounty.

It all started with Timmy when he had this plan to get his hands on 60 hits of acid. That kind of deal wasn't easy for a suburban kid like Timmy to come into. See, he had this friend that didn't like him anymore... The friend chose to interpret an email message as riddled with threats. This friend was Timmy's first acid connection. This friend had recently become a very good acid connection.

Timmy had no choice. He would be forced to navigate indirect channels into the disrupted connection.

Timmy connected with a price. \$500, he was told.

Timmy was shocked. Why so expensive for him, yet so cheap for everyone else?

Timmy got a job at McDonalds. He had a goal and the roots of a plan.

Despite outstanding debts, it didn't take long for Timmy to save enough for the acid.

It was the day Timmy's fucking life changed. That kind of thing happened to Timmy every now and then. But perhaps he should tell you.

"It all started," Timmy says, "when I came up with this idea to trip on 60 hits of acid. For a suburban kid like me, it isn't so easy getting a grip on that much LSD. Still, I was willing to focus all my attention upon the task."

Timmy doesn't feel at liberty to divulge more at this time.

Bob walked into a bar. He had a hazy recollection of a time when his place was on the other side of the bar. It was a part of some journey he had made.

Bob ordered a Mad Dog.

He wanted to be sure and finish strong. So he started heavy. Same old story.

Bob lit up a Red Marlboro.

Bob looked across the bar at the twitching psychedelic tattoos of busy muscles. He mused in his place on the places he'd been. He wanted another drink.

Bob had a few more drinks and walked out of the bar.

Henry, shoveling shit, looked over at his friend shit shoveling Shawn and asked, "What have you heard about this shit storm, man?"

"Shit going down in the factory?" asked Shawn. "I've heard some things," said Shawn.

"Anything about this guy Edd guy?" asked Henry.

Shawn slammed his shovel into dark dirt. He said, "Shrug. The guy's a little confused but the assembly line crew seems to like him. Things are real loose under Edd."

"Loose enough for sinking, maybe. It would be a shame to lose such a great resource."

Shawn shrugged his shoulders.

Antagonism aside, the heat really was too much. This went beyond anger and outlash. He was burning up inside!

Jzearuth raised a pale fist and shook vigorously. He shouted above the roar of the bar, "I'll fucking kill you all!"

Now, quite a few heads turned.

Then, mostly everybody wanted a piece of the action.

A saint was to be devoured by a mob!

As matter of a fact, Jzearuth wasn't looking a bit concerned.

Jzearuth pulled low the white hood of his robe. He stood and spun and caught the edge of the bar with the palm of his hand. He took a cheerful survey of the enclosing sharks.

Timmy edged away from the action. He planned a safe course through the violence simmering to boil into evaporation. This was no easy mental maneuver. The most difficulty came from physical execution.

It was a quick crawl under tables and between legs and through showers of glass. Timmy sighed relief upon pushing through the exit.

There was a great explosion. The bar erupted into flames. Chaos suddenly ignited within and slowly trickled out.

Flaming men went running down the streets

to see what they could eat.

A favorite dessert served thick and slushy,

An ice cream sundae to beat back the flames.

Jzearuth stepped outside. He spat clean saliva onto the sidewalk. Glass crunched under his boots as he walked.

Jzearuth bumped into Timmy whilst igniting an unfiltered cigarette. Timmy bummed from Jzearuth a cigarette.

Jzearuth asked, "What age be your coin in the muffin basket?"

Timmy said, "I haven't the faintest, gov'nar."

Jzearuth said, "I'll be busy with the attendance slip machine production performance authorization modification facility safety regulation society thing tonight then. A shame you haven't the faintest of your coin." Jzearuth's white robe caught the wind as he slipped through an accelerated forward and backwards motion converted into a spinning forward wheel kick.

Timmy blinked on his way falling so far down.

Timmy never lost consciousness but when he regained consciousness, he had a thin silver pen in his left hand.

Bob walked into a cottage. The woodcutters whispered, "The winds, my boy." The winds whispered better things by far. It happened only in those dark woods the woodcutters wouldn't ever touch. Their religion required selective cutting based on output of spiritual energy.

The woodcutters were of the Hyr Tribes. The Hyr Tribes had many powerful spirits behind and beneath and above them. Rarely right in front of them, so obscure seemed the spirits! Yet on those nights when the mushroom clouds rose from the east...

Bob spent much time in this region. He lingered here, in fact, absorbed in the grand custom. He took notes on his pad concerning the beliefs, the faith of this people. The faith, thought Bob, would unlock the history of this tribe. And so it did, in such and such exaggerated fashion, with so many firecracker explosions and so much pixie dust. Also it unlocked so much more! More! MORE!!!" shouted

Lisa into the thick veins of the enormous tube glowering so strangely. "And more you shall have!" Bob assured her.

The jist of the flavor of the moment's savory passion was so wondrously apple-blooming good a lifting occurred into higher occurrences inside and out.

Bob had left his research for this woman. Could he even recall the location of the so-important notepad? Oh, but it had sure been worth it!

By goodness, my goodness, gosh golly gee whizzzzz..... Asleep again...
And awake in the forest of the Hyr.

Funny, Bob never remembered falling asleep. He was just having all these slow driftings from one state of mind to another world.

A world of tents and mud huts and clean rainfall onto the surface of shining golden-brown leaves. A world of spirits, too. The spirits, Bob quickly realized, were very real manifestations of some part of these tribal people's psyche.

Bob found his notepad holstered safely within his snakeskin belt.

Bob jumbled down messages about buildings and things upon the arrival of waking life. It hit him like a shot of amplification. Everything so clear and bright Ahh!!! Nice, wonderful.

Ed was smoking a fat honey-delicious tobacco laced blunt whilst leaning back upon a soda machine admiring the efficiency of his charge, his factory. So many products sneaking down the line.

Ed heaved his big fat Ed chest in exhalation of exquisite cancerous vapors. He was a good leader. What marvelous minutes-notice work he was doing for these people.

The process was irreversible. It couldn't reversed be. The process was called perma absorption. Pan was the man for the job.

That is why Ed assigned Pan the task. Ed knew the who's and whats of assignation.

There was a list written in red ink.

So much for Ed to remember. It was such a surprise he such as this and that.

Buttons to be pushed, buttons on machines and in people. Had to be done, the leader's task. Ah, there were perils involved in being factory king.

What if there were crescent waves running through the brink of the hill? What if the dirt sprinkled down like black rain? What if a pure stream across clean rocks quenched all their thirsts? What did any of this have to do with the business at hand?

Ed slammed his fist upon the soda machine. "Damn it," he said, "I'll have the answers soon."

Timmy squeezed the shining pen. A warm sensation shot up his arm. He quickly stood and had to get a move on. Such a sense of urgency so suddenly struck him. He was moving within blurs. He was learning to trick the clocks a little.

If the birds came running, the fields would still blaze. So much smoke shooting up into the air. It was such a smelly sight.

SONB wobbl bite trig flippi ipip tiboggan. Gone north of the foreign approach.

Timmy shook his head a little it jangled a little. So much flickerings thanks to so many bickering on the as such boched in plush rushing through the floor out the door out the...

Old Time Chrystal. What was this place? Something screwy was going on.

A fantasy drug-induced sensory paradise projection, perhaps, of the online gaming experience he so enjoyed. It wouldn't be prudent to let the leeches not for naught deign upon. Things was silly shaking up.

He could see the lines of text so quickly rising.
Only momentarily. One of those seven minute inhalation experiences.
Timmy went sliding down the sidewalk. He hopped into a cobblestone ditch. The slippery, damp, hilly streets carried him downwards. A thin jet of water trailed his black rubber boot heels.
Timmy jumped into a hurried walking pace. He danced within moonbeams.

Girl walks by.

"Hey, what's up?" says Timmy.

"What's goin' on?" says girl walking by.

"Waiting for Matt," says boy Timmy.

"Terrific," says girl walking away.

"Hey Trademeister, what's up?" asks Boy Timmy entering vehicle.

"Look it's girl!" says the Trademeister. "Honk the horn," requests the Trademeister.

Honkhonk.

Girl approaches.

"What's going on?" girl asks.

"Just seeing what you're up to," says the Trademeister.

"I'm just going around the corner so I can smoke a cigarette," says girl.

"Are you still mad at me?"

"Yeah."

"Wow, he has it rough," says driver. "I don't know details or anything," says the driver.

"Well he shouldn't have been a dumb fuck," says girl.

"What'd he do?" "Long story, Haas."

Driver drives on. "I'll just drop you off with your crew," says the driver.

Timmy exits vehicle and wanders into other vehicle with a fine exhibition of rugs.

Some drinking ends the night with a tripper hanging around. The tripped seems quite skilled at beer bong.

And it is the,

Timmy looked behind his shoulder.

Bob glared at the shaking teakettle. "Shut up!" Bob shouted. "Shut the fuck up!"

Henry leaned into his hammer.

George and Ginger had explosives rigged all around the perimeter. They'd be something to explain to the neighborhood if they ever went off.

Of late, Ginger refused to wear anything other than her glossy black raincoat. She wore the hood low. It was how she traipsed about the house.

George was considering quitting his job.

Too many threads in the web too sticky.

George looked at Ginger and said, "Hey, you know how we've always talked about moving? Since things have been kind of iffy lately, why not move now?"

Said Ginger, "I'm going to answer the ringing doorbell. We can continue this discussion in a little while."

Ginger opened the door. It was a Girl Scout selling cookies.

"I like your raincoat," said the Girl Scout.

"Thanks but we don't want any cookies," said Ginger. Ginger slammed the door.

"Now, about moving," said George. "I realize you have relatives in Florida, honey, but I was thinking of California..."

Heaht'aans!

"Ok," said Ginger. "Let's start packing," said Ginger.

"Not now," said George. "I want to wait until things get a little more interesting before we actually move."

"Aren't we moving because things aren't interesting?" asked Ginger.

"Too interesting," said George.

"There is no such thing, my good man!" proclaimed Ginger.

"Too interesting is the albino being devoured by the predator," said George.

"That isn't interesting at all," said Ginger.

"Let's move anyway," said George.

"Okay, whatever," said Ginger. "We'll pack our bags in three weeks."

The date was March 5.

not recall anything up until a point in the dream during which he thought to himself, "I need to recall some of this shit." It was then that he began watching the dream while participating in it.

There was an old house on a hill. Complicated relationships within the house, small children involved, so many people involved, a massive party going on, soon so few people, the winged demon is attacking! An ugly monster swift of flight, ugly leathery wings beating.

There is a drive somewhere. Perhaps guests in the house seek escape from the flying destroyer. No, the dream takes an odd turn. There is a ghetto neighborhood in the middle of the woods, nestled on both sides of the road at the bottom of the hill. Things are rough. Violence, whores, and too much crack. The people driving down the hill from the old house on the hill pull into a driveway with a basketball net. They run into this cute little black kid from a broken home. They want to baby-sit the little guy...

Timmy is starting to remember the early parts of the dream! How his fear of Satan was getting out of control. His old religion was full of demons. His fear had been that abandoning his old religion might open himself up to those very demons. Because he feared it, it started to happen. That must have been part of the reason he created the demon in the first place. Much time was spent fleeing or fighting the monster until finally the monster was defeated and became a beautiful woman, a powerful alliance forged.

Perhaps, at first, to manifest one entity, powerful certainly, but limited enough to be fought off. Then somehow his anima seemed to be absorbed into the demon (or was the demon) and the dream degenerated into strange pornography. The dream ended in a constant fucking of beautiful women.

There were so many transitions in the dream! How could he possibly keep track of it all?

Magic: the Gathering cards had played a decisive role. There was to be a duel. The duel was interrupted by attacks from the demon queen. It was then that Timmy found his shotgun. His partner wanted a shotgun, too. Timmy handed over thin air. "Mine's not real either," Timmy said. "Oh, I see what you mean," said Timmy's partner. The rifle in Timmy's hands vanished, then reappeared within the capable grasp of Timmy's partner. Two shells missed the demon. One hit, and it hit wide. The bitch retreated, at least for a little while.

Cannons fired from castle balconies. That was the moment decisive of achieving the alliance.

So Mark's pimping, guns blazing, skipping through the fields, twirping flirple snappers into schnapps delight. Pudding to lick away and My goodness gracious good golly miss molly. My that was some hot zebra switch maneuvering flinging the flim from them flams.

It wasn't until the hypertext vortex struck the clock's synchronizing upon magical guitar swipes. That was how Mark ended up in the shimmering, medieval paradise where the water walls did post guard. Not so inviting as once upon a time but wait a minute!

Mark hammers away at the guitar. The darts whiz past his head. He keeps on blazing those key trails. Because of the morning after. If such-and-such good would could should not on how to be maybe not quite so early. The routine was kicking in.

You know, you get the swing of that routine to spinning around in manipulation of the currents. Angry faces of the nagry leftovers/AAHH!!! Craaaaaaaazzy in the head you understand.

It is something to deal with. Doing the job superbly on a Monday. It was quite an event in deed.

A tavern, lots of drugs, rowdy crowd, they're never know, hehehe... `ey'll not to be oned in the one. Under fanStan? Which wear to wipe surface withall? Without which tool? Stretched or skimmed? Sizzled, yeah say? Say? Aye, all right, fair bargain.

Handshake. Yes, Marvelous. Fantastic. Goodness gracious! It'll be fun cleaning up anyways...

At post haste! Congrats comrades, finished. No ex nay nay to too truly do the done did it already. Not so fortunate as to be skipped such a position.

Not even without underpants. HaHaHaHA! Funny stuff, I'm serious.

Bob faced a dark hall ending in a granite hall. He had but a candle to light the way. It was neither night nor day here. The place was beneath the concepts.

Somewhere, there was a sun shining. Elsewhere, a moon aglow. Bob was neither here nor there. Bob was beneath the concepts.

Bob stepped towards the wall.

Bob probed the wall with the light of his candle. Solid granite.

Bob turned his back on the wall and he sat down. With his candle shining from the dusty floor before him, Bob meditated with the problem.

I don't know what happened to Bob because that was when I lost contact.

Jzearuth peered out from beneath the heavy hood of his raincoat. He struggled through the blur of the swiftly falling raindrops, and the blinding lightning flashes. Jzearuth suspected the gods must be angry.

It was a good night for a dance. A real fucking dancing in the rain.

Jzearuth basked in the glow of it all. Glow soaked into him.

Jzearuth threw back his hood, took a merry leap forward, outstretched his arms and said, "Hello Timmy my boy! Splendid weather we're having!"

Timmy spun upon a rubber boot heel and greeted with a grinning nod the man behind him.

Timmy scratched the bushy upper corner of his left eyebrow.

"Nice hair," said Timmy to the pretty shoulder-length flat white strands.

"Thanks," said Jzearuth. "Unfortunately," Jzearuth said also, "it isn't a coat. It just grew to this length and never grew again."

"Crucislrbbbbnnmmmm, ..."

"Who said that?" asked somebody.

"Who said that?" asked Timmy.

"Who indeed," said Jzearuth.

Timmy scratched itchy chin stubble. He thought on things. He considered the variables ambickerously for threespan moments. That is, he took an infinite length but limited quantity of time in contemplating his then-present predicament. Finally Timmy says to him, "It wasn't you, unless you're an excellent impressionist. Somebody farted however, so the real perpetrator of the most victimizing crime should now be detected without any attention diverted to the task of locating silly voice makers."

"Inddd-d-dubitably my good sir," said Jzearuth.

"I must confess," said Jzearuth. "The vile deed was mine committed, now my sin to carry, along with those vaporous, clinging clouds for the world to smell upon mine passing. For you see my good boy, I farted long ago and it never went away. It was one of them cursed farts you get when you fart in certain spiritualistic tribal burial grounds."

"I suspect you, sir," said Timmy, "*must* be the silly voice maker."

"You suspect correctly," said Jzearuth. "I am certainly not none other than that silly voice maker!"

Timmy sat cross-legged upon the cobblestones. Jzearuth did the same.

Timmy and Jzearuth meditated upon the concept of identity.

Timmy began suddenly to levitate. His skin was aglow with the intoxication of his aura.

Jzearuth came at Timmy as a white lightning bolt surging through flesh and chest hairs. The bolt expanded into infinity and all was bright white light. A silly voice made this silly proclamation: "Thou art God's egg. Thou art Godly!"

All came to solid, gloriously void, heavy black. A train was calling from the nearby tracks. "Come on," said they. "Hop on board," said they. It was the ghost train drifting through the drifting city.

A theme sticks out a thumb to bum a ride. The ride erks him around and off behind a portable toilet. The toilet outstretches its legs and runs away. Everybody sees the theme's thimble!

Timmy disagreed entirely with the present account because he was behind it. That is, he has passed through doors into having had done, or him had to have such-and-such done for a purpose or be cool. Crazy, don't easily fuck gloriously heavenly Ipsonian Jargonsonian kind love moochi-nuki operational pootangpussypusshMEINToit questionably radically sexual towards undesirable vagabonds w/Xphylis, yesteryear zebracakes young zipper. So Timmy now wasn't despite our present presence of reception of his affairs. HE not only wasn't, he quite simultaneously really was. That is because we are beyond when it happened.

Jzearuth attempted to teach Timmy to decipher such things. Our Boy Timmy was slow to jump the gun. The gun was a tad too slow to jump him. It was a summit even standoff. Something smelled fishy about the whole affair. Fish breath had eaten too much tuna with his dinner.

The quew were blue with envy. Too much syrup with their paintakes. Who had when off in thought?

"You smell like tuna," said Timmy.

"You know, fish are an important subconscious symbol!" said Jzearuth.

"Of what?" asked Timmy.

"My guess is swimming," said JZearuth. "I've always been swimming like a fish through dark waters. It isn't, however, for your deciding to determine now because I've determined for you."

"You did?" said Timmy.

"I am," said Jzearuth.

Not to be interrupting, but my butt is showing. I can't have that! I wouldn't want people seeing my butt! Oh, I shouldn't have told you... You're looking right now, aren't you? You dirty little fucker.

Haha HA!

You didn't expect to see such lipper twisting, did you?

Ewww...

Ahhh...

Produce.

"How did I get here?" asked Timmy.

"Only you can answer that question," said Jzearuth. "Well, I could too if vanishing time wasn't so swiftly

approaching. Goodbye!"

Jzearuth vanished in a toxic pink puff of smoke. Timmy coughed a bit.

Old dreams drifted down golden river currents and mingled with new dreams. The dream girl floated in and out of it and attention could not help but be sucked from his bones.

Pearls of wisdom beckoned from the glimmering jaws of forbidden clams.

So much went into the accusations. So much nonsense! AHA!

And what was true was not true and the only thing for certain was that they certainly weren't holding onto certainty. They were for shox cocked snf ready. Red-eye for a kill.

It's all whys and whats and proofs ad stuff. Ad velum verbatim done too.

"Hi Bob," said Shirley the Shit. Shirley the shit had just recently taken a sit and everybody at the bar was still recovering. Said Shirley, "Shoot me up with some vodka, Bob."

Bob was really racking up the cash flow sources. He was a smashed success! If only the kettle pot could come over and shake and spit. That would be wondiferous.

Rather, the key was in the dank. The rank dankiness of the danktastic McGlorioso. Smoking a cig by my computer. How marvelous. The flavor is so subtle the smoke enters as a shadow coiled around mine lungs. Camels, I think, is a cigarette company run by smokers.

That was truly a treat, ladies and gentlemen.

The thing most exiting about the affair was the freedom afforded tenders of this region's bars. Any night in the city, particularly nights spent amongst the barflies, was bound to be whimsical.

Musical, too. That Shirley came with a stink and a voice. A residential bard was kind enough to lick keys for the muse.

She sang,

Mine and yours

And all of ours,

Hours fading in the sands,

Bands snapping across wrists,

Wishes are granted for fishes swimming through clear waters

I piss upon the graves of the living

And shit upon the dead

I miss the bells tolling by the bank

I miss the mists parting for high sails

I miss my ship's sunken rails

I piss into the holy water

And shit on your head.

Watch always for the falling brown snowflakes,

Watch always for them.

Always for them

The song was just ending as Jzearuth and his Timothy timid student strutted high-shouldered through the frontal double-door entrance. They had smiles on their faces. The good moods was in.

"Ouch! Ouch! Fuck! Shit! WhorecuntFuck! FuckFUCKFUCK! SHIT! AHHH!!!"

SammyDavis5 came running out the men's room bleeding through his naked asshole.

"Somebody get this glass out of my ass!" shouted Sammy.

"Henry, there's a hole in the bucket," said Sugar Queen Sahara Snow. "Deal," she said.

Henry inquired cordially, "With what might I repair the hole?"

"I don't know, shithead," said Sahara Sara. "Maybe the supercool is coming into fashion again. Stay away from the supercool!"

"That has nothing to do with buckets," said Henry.

"It has everything to do with rain," said Sara.

"The ceiling is leaky, you know," said Bob from across the bar.

"Bartender," said Henry, "pull me a bottle of your finest cheap shit!"

"I'll drink to that!" proclaimed gleefully Miss Shitty Shirley.

"I drink to the gods," said Jzearuth, lifting his shot glass.

"What's that cut across your forehead?" asked Bob.

Jzearuth shrugged his shoulders. "I woke up with it one fine morning. I cannot remember the events leading into dreaming."

Bob lifted a green bottle from the dustiest of eight shelves and blew a brown cloud from the glossy bottle surface. "Absinthe at the special shit discount of 85% off," said Bob. "You have Shirley's blessings," said Bob.

Henry made a jovial lifting of a mighty goblet etched with green faery magic. He suckled energy from the teats of heavenly goddess-sluts. The nymphs danced seductively through veils crossed like waters. Pan's pipe sang pleasant notes across the airwaves.

Back at George's place, "You smell like that slut Henry," said George to wife Ginger.

Wife Ginger quickly swallowed cum breath with minty goodness and asserted, "Henry is dead George."

George grabbed wife Ginger by the collar and said, "You smell like that fucking slut Henry!"

Ginger said, "Henry is dead George."

George released loyal wife Ginger and said, "Ah, that's right, he is."

Maniacal laughter invaded the room from all and no directions.

Timmy said, "Give me a round of that shit discount special, Bob."

"Right on, man," said Bob.

Jzearuth looked over his shoulder, down the bar line, and he said, "Timmy my boy, learn as many valuable lessons as you can. I can't be sticking around to mentor and whatnot... I've got important shit to take care of. But here, these will be valuable some day." Jzearuth tossed Timmy a sack of red and green gems.

Jzearuth was quick as greased lightning out the door.

Later-day Chrystal City historians/conspiracy theorists spun strange yarns concerning Jzearuth and vampires.

Timmy was pale. There wasn't a mark on him. He was just kind of a sickly kid, anyways. He had these baggy, sleepy fucking eyes.

We all want to play our favorite characters from such-and-such. Our characters should become from such-and-such. Most of the right people will know what I'm talking about.

This entire book is in honor of people from the Green Dragon Inn, the House Tempest, Haldor, Chrystal City, and the Stone Altar. This entire book is in celebration not only of "free form", but also of freedom.

"You want harsh?" Wild Bill questionably questionable asks. He draws the words from the harshest sailor's ass crack. The secret stash.

It's 7 tons of train shit shooting down the train tracks. Rumbling, calling my name. "Hey man, we're waiting for you." Well damnit, what the damnit? ManIsosxaoRed. He horkled another burple@blendingtree.com. Eschillion... Eschillion...

Rolls off the tongue like buttered apple pie within the grasp of maple syrup honey wood.

Who cares what chicken he's choking?

Not to tink about anshkjlylting/. Has ssarg eht no. Sgardere. More rugs rolling out Ginger's door. The patterns were getting crazier and crazier, the knitting more and more precise. Nothing anywhere was sold to equal Ginger's rugs. She got the best shit, always.

ecaf a etsat ot or face a felony. orrections. Rushed to press. Blah... blah blah.

Defeshitestbeit. Always, son. don' run no shit plays. Stick with what's hot.

's mood officially stabilized, Timmy wandered into the Deflowering Suzie Tea and Booze. He was early. Still 8:30 am, according to his handy-dandy pocket watch. Another thirty minutes until the meeting.

Timmy sat at the bar and ordered a few shoots of whiskey. Weren't many flies to converse with. One particularly interesting fruit fly landed on the bar's surface.

Fruit Fly said to Timmy, "I know why you're here, you know."

Timmy said, "You don't know a thing about it."

Fruit Fly said, "Drat! I thought I could trick you into telling me."

Timmy said, "That sort of shenaniganry will get you nowhere with me."

Fruit Fly paused to eat a bit of sugar that hadn't been wiped off the bar's surface. Then he said, "Hey man, do you have any magic on hand?"

Timmy said, "No capital magic for you. What's a fruit fly doing in this sort of place anyway? Where are all the bar

flies?"

"They're on vacation," said the fruit fly.

Ed and SammyDavis5 sitting down together in the meeting room.

Ed saying, "Now Sammy, what's this I here about complaints against the Factory?"

SammyDavis5 saying, "I had to go to the hospital because of your emergency toilet paper!!!"

Ed saying, "Now Sammy my boy, were we out of toilet paper? Somebody checks every four hours. I think you were just eager to test out new Factory policy..."

Sammy saying, "That's beside the point, man! I was bleeding out the asshole!"

Ed saying, "If you had just followed policy and protocol, none of this would have happened. You were to break the glass only in case of emergency. There was no emergency. I'm afraid you're the one at fault, Sammy."

SammyDavis5 saying, "This is bullshit, man! I'm taking my business elsewhere."

Ed saying, "Now you know we frown on stupidity here at the Factory, so, to be quite frank, we think that's a very good idea."

The Deflowering Suzie Tea and Booze front door shot open. Timmy glanced over his shoulder, then looked to the fruit fly. He said, "I'm through talking to you, my man. My why of here just entered."

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The music is playing and the dog is barking, the time of day matters not to Timmy or his broken pocket watch. He hadn't winded, he had let the clock stop, how dare he? But he was always alert, always in the moment, so he was hardly loosing seconds. He just didn't worry about any linear position on a seemingly endless stream. Crazy, crazy assertions were moving along long lines of open discourse, concerning especially the espionage. Eyespies everywhere. What was this moving in?

Why, a torrential rain! And poopi too! Is these shroomies muoooooosies? Lets sees.

I cease thee coldly within mine plan's grasp! HaHA! Halt, young moonchild. Thy language be too plain," spake Jzearuth from the far, dark corner of the room. The shadows grayed his white robe and hair. "Iszz lizzies ceased to be, mine Sprakishloche? Glock that biyA...!!!!"

"What will you be having?" information requested a curious questioner of a tender.

"WHISKEY!" shouted the shouters to the ears of the server serving liquorr...

"All right Son, I'm gonna give it to you straight up," spake thusly Jzearuth. "I'm kinda evil sometimes, man. You see, there's this shadow side to my psyche my mystic Order teaches mine to worship... And mine's gotten quite out of hand! But I don't think I have anything to be guilty for, kid. I'm saying, there's things to feel sorrow for, but ain't nothing in this world worth guilt."

"So what do you mean by evil?" asked Timmy tthe kid.

Jzearuth scratched his chin upon verbally revealing such as (paraphrased), "Some of the pettier things them call evil... And some not so petty. I've thieved property to survive, I've killed to survive, I've enjoyed killing to survive, I've killed to... I've done a wee bit of killing. Listen, ah... sizzling circuitry."

Timmy did indeed hear sizzling circuitry. Oddly enough, so did the quite oddly himself bartender. Iggles and giggles. Iggles and giggles away!

But halt, sir, tis not sire's time to prim. Slim it down naaAAaaww.

Royalty's got not an interest butting thine in, or mine, The prim, here tonight ladiest andst gentitititries ma'am. Wham bam, thank you so. Oh noble woblemun. What a brilliant cause yea've `affud.

"Nayow listun h'yar boyZsss..." spake the barroom drunk, (every barroom should have at least one), before downing another shot of whiskey.

And so dodst creest upiinstance thine iidle tide?

"Who's this fellow h'yar?" asked the fellow in question (by himself).

"I don't know," said friendly resident bartender. "Who are you?"

"I'm Pit," said Pit. "What's your name?"

The bartender maintained complete silence.

"I expect a fucking answer when I ask a person a question!" said Pit. "WHAT THE FUCK IS YOUR MOTHER FUCKING NAME, COCK SUCKER?!!!"

Cock Sucker answered thusly, "It sure as hell isn't 'cock sucker'."

"Cock sucker?" asked Jzearuth. "I've got these cheeseburgers, boys..."

Pit said then, "Get your ass on the fucking floor, bitch!" He presented the presence of a broadsword. His eyes glowered red. allHis teeth extended into sharp points. The broadsword rested threateningly upon the bar's surface.

Tender's eyes tended to linger upon the sword, questing the merit of attempting a snatching. After all, there was a sign on the front door clearly demanding "No Weapons!" This guy Pit looked to be damned tall, probably inhuman! And he looked strong as all hell. *Ah, well*, thought the tender. *I'm a pretty tough cookie. If push comes to shove...*

Push has already come to shove, you mother-fucking beer monkey! shouted Pit straight into Tender's stream of

thought. *I don't like you. You're going to fucking die now.*

A steady current of telekinetic energy forced the motion of expendable tender's skull inwards, causing his brain to exude then explode.

Jzearuth stood in outrage, held up his fist clenched tightly, then relaxed the fist to caress chin thoughtfully with thumb and forefinger. He eased back down into his dark corner of the room. If Timmy was to be threatened, perhaps he would interfere.

You didn't hear that, you stupid bastard, thought Jzearuth to himself only.

A kill temporarily satiating the eternally manifesting hunger for death and destruction within, Pit eased back into a comfortable position. His dry-knuckled right fist relaxed across the hilt of his broadsword.

"You frequent this joint often?" asked Timmy of Pit.

"No," said Pit, "but I sure could use a joint. Wait a minute, what's this I've hidden in my boot heels? Ah, yes, a little something to ease the tension..." And darn if Pit doesn't procure the fattest el fatty Mac Fat Fat, cannabine object of high-potency smokability, Yes.

And damn if everybody didn't have an all right time for the rest of the night.

"So hey man, what brings you down town?" asked Timmy of Pit.

"I've been doing a lot of traveling lately," said Pit. "I'm looking for one of my kids. Malkaadi... Malkaadi Sturge. Crazy bastard's actually proud of his bloodline, wears the family name. Anyway, you seen anybody approaching my size and cuteness, younger, long red hair?"

"That would be a question for the bartender," said Timmy.

Jzearuth, Timmy, and Pit burst out laughing.

"He's the tip of the tetrahedron," said Pit.

"Whatever man," said Timmy. "This is some good shit, man," said Timmy. "I ain't got shit this good since the day before I traveled back in time... A day quite distant from now, so I guess I'll have better before it happened again."

"I was thinking about initiating you into the Order," said Jzearuth. Jzearuth was in a stool now, up close and personal with the bar.

"Say," said Pit, "Where the bitches at? I mean, the Deflowering Suzie Tea and Booze should come equipped with its own whores."

"They're all out being cured by the local Healer," said Jzearuth.

Somewhere near to the intensely beating medieval heart of Chrystal City, in a cobblestone ditch filling with rainwater, a fellow name Eddie holds up a glowing silver pen, looks at it, and thinks, "What the fuck was I thinking?" You see all of this vividly in your mind's eye and you wonder to yourself, "Do I know this person...?" Indeed you do, I swear *it!*

"Damn," said Pit. "I don't mind me some dirty pussy. I'll lick it like I can get it. Had that dirty shit before."

"Truly disgusting," said Jzearuth.

"I'm clean, man!" said Pit. "I could fuck the filthiest slut slit this side of the planet and come out clean."

"Still, man..." said Jzearuth.

"Still nothing," said Pit. "Pussy is pussy."

"Well," said Jzearuth, "I need a drink. It's a good thing we're at such a fine establishment. Bartender, ..."

Pit chuckled. He was the only one.

Well, I'm up out this piece," said Pit. "I'll see y'all right nice fellows later on."

"I gotta go too," said Jzearuth. "I've lotus blossoms upon which to meditate. See you later, Timmy."

So Eddie stands, wipes some mud off his thighs, and starts walking down the street. He looks to the heavens as he talks and walks, saying, "Goddess Kali, I know not why this pen be mine. I pray, more than you have done, you carry me in your divine arms and nurture me on the pure milk of your blessed breast."

Eddie had been through a lot back in the future. He had been through more than just the time stream. He'd given up friends for this adventure. He'd evaded what enemies he could. He was finished with all of that. A weak spirit fully intent on boldly facing this vicious city.

Many cords snap and Eddie can hear the cutting of the wind. Eddie fears not, for in one brief insane endless less-than-moment Eddie saw the infinity of the cords binding the world together. A similar moment came when the illusory nature of all of that became known to him, but he had forgotten about that. Too much weed and peyote. Or something.

A few days go by and Today finally arrives.

Timmy was walking down Silver Street contemplatively inhaling a substance he often substituted for tobacco when in the mood to inhale cigarettes. A skinny midget sprawled across the cobblestone street stared up at Timmy through a hangover haze and said, "Let me hit that shit stick man."

Timmy passed that fatty and the midget rolled over.

Fat chapped white lips sucked on white paper, the glowing cherry pulled back three inches. The midget held up his hand for Timmy to grab what was left of the joint and Timmy did snatch the thing.

The midget started coughing and Timmy said, "Daaaaaaamn man, that's the good hash too."

That midget was still coughing when Timmy turned the corner.

Timmy was on a mission to find the Temple of Individuation. Jzearuth hadn't given very good directions so this simple task was becoming quite an adventure.

Trot trot trot went the horse hooves pulling some rich fuck's fancy carriage. Grapeless stems go flying out the window. Timmy said, "Some grapes sure would be good right now."

Ah, well. Timmy kept walking.

Tossing a roach, turning another corner, Timmy inadvertently bumped into a muscular 6' 4" black dude. Dude said, "Where you going, you little biatch? This my corner, this my street. Ain't no little white bitches supposed to be coming around here unless they got a nice pussy."

The muscles didn't intimidate Timmy as much as the dude's holstered bastard sword. That thing was big and probably sharp and Timmy was unarmed, higher than his creator. First thing he thought to say was, "What's your street's policy on big black bitches with little dicks?"

"I'd cut your fucking throat if you weren't wearing that robe," said the dude. "Ain't got no respect for you people but kill one and you got fifty gunning for you."

Timmy was wearing a pure white robe much like Jzearuth's. Jzearuth had given him the thing and said, "Have this on when you meet me tomorrow in the Temple." Jzearuth vanished on the spot. Whether he was invisible or had outright teleported, Our Little Tim couldn't say.

"Have a nice day then," said Timmy. And Timmy walked away.

Tim wanted to ask for directions but since he was wearing the robe of an Individuate he figured it'd look right stupid.

Timmy tried to think. Which direction was Jzearuth always headed when he exited the Deflowering Suzie? Come to think to think and he thought to himself, *Ain't no one direction... Jzearuth seems to always be headed for a different somewhere.*

Well that didn't help. All that told Tim was Jzearuth had business everywhere, or else he frequented places he had no business.

Time ripens and dissolves all beings in the great self, but he who knows into what time itself dissolves is the knower of the veda. - Maitrayana Brahmana Upanishad

Eddie holds out his hands and looks at his palm. He sees a particular frequency of vibration.

Eddie isn't tripping. It's his eyes.

Eddie is sleepy. Eddie has no coinage. Where to sleep? Where to sleep...

Even in these dark ages, there is much trash. Chrystal City is quite advanced for its time, as far as waste disposal. Still, so many people just don't care... Litter all over Just as well. Eddie fashions a smelly but comfortable bed and rests upon the garbage pile.

The great goddess Kali comes to him in the form of Chrystal City's patron angel Ariel, a glowering ball of light, laughing, a source of terror he senses, the terror of the long, scary, vivid, powerful dream And he receives information leading later to initiation of a sort but at the time he understands not And seeks after his body like a terrified snake running into the hole to escape the cat And he awakens and the garbage slithers across his body as if it were alive And he suspects external treachery! A time comes when he reads the names and interprets the data and fathoms something of the secrets and looks to the heavens and shouts, "Thank you, Great Goddess Bhayanaka, Attahasayuta, Padmaragopashobhita Karabhayaprada, Muktakeshi, Sarvalakshanalakshita, Sarvasarvabhishthaphalaprada, Ariel, Anima Mundi, Kali Kali Kali!, for answering my prayers! May it please you to continue nurturing and uplifting me in my cause! Amen."

Ben Ezra bona-

fide detail of the goings-on within the seat of séance in France, italian if you like, don't look there! Hehehe... Tricksi, is s/he? Well, revise, revile, revolt, revolver, it's quite good, all good brother.

Move on down the gun line, gum that line up, have a pup to sup upon and be nice to bovine friends even if they' s tricksi like the rest, to do will not on the switch tracks don't will well, Hell not on the freit not off, snooze.... Ah@!Ha. Ifn' you c'n guess my name I'll give you a free cigar with every future meal, yup, no lie

Well that would be hard but you could imagine puffing so anyways, Ahem...

Egoi trip in thy arms Ego haunting y9our dmmoor to move on MOOOOOOOOO on over to see something at the window see something at the window see something at the window see the something at the window and go on outside and say to yourself,

what's the arm? HArM? Take it from me brother it's not your place to rest these things down...

TESTESTEST! AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!!!
BY THE ANGELS BE YEA SAFE!
Ta ta.

-Tricksi Ricksi

Eddie das tto triiiiiiiiiiiiiiii...

Timmy found the temple!!!

It was the smashing success he'd been looking for! All his prayers answered! So beautiful, brimming with gold, glowering white, shining, lovely in the sky... Quite an marvelous proposition indeed.

Timmy walked inside and crossed the threshold and beheld much splendor. Mighty were the guardians of the temple.

Never before had such mighty currents of golden-silver light electrically glowered protectively around his form. It was and was to be quite an affair,

Big boobis and all of that!

But not every nook and cranny was reserved for such spicker-spockety-plunk.

Not every flock was for the booking.

Only much terrain had been revealed.

Merely upon entering the temple.

Jzearuth stood uncannily loose in his assertions, wavering back and forth before the assembled friends of the temple. His speech was both robust and confusing, and some would say a product of internal strife. There were always those with such-and-such accusations.

Timmy came into the speech at, "Dick pierced the rose and pronounced the deed holy thereby and holy, too, the Christi you carried with you through the snow falling in September. I was wondering, 'What is Goddess?' and I told me, 'There walks she in the yonder glade of golden sheepskin pavement,' and although these words were Godly in character I comprehended not.

"You see, friends, the Temple arrives at the proper time. When it is time for the Temple to be perceived, So it shall be, because It cannot be other than what It Is... They say, the ancient sheepskin traders, everything is as it has been and as it will always be and everything this instant is *every other instant* because really you heard what I am standing here offering, and have yet to offer, ten minutes ago.

"I'm not one to shoot the shit without a reason unless my fancy reasons not. Seeing clearly is seeing All and what's the point of that, for what Identity could All have, and what is worth paying the price of Identity? Why seek Cosmic Unity? Becoming everything amounts to nothing and something and is beyond the ponderings of the level of attainment even of the golden sheep skin traders.

"Those traders were onto something. My friend Paul told me the barter system is best, And sometimes I'll buy into that notion, and other times I'm stuck on some outrageous anarchist self-degenerating economy, and other times the notion strikes me, as 'That government is governed best which governs least' (or not at all), so must That economy be best which exists not.

"Friends of this temple, know yea the golden sheepskin pavement carried streams of bullshit chariots across rising floodwaters of chaotic organomical dryden jihads? But the golden sheepskins served a higher purpose, and that was the provision of free clothing to the common inhabitants of Eschillion."

Timmy was rushed out the door and violently pushed into bruising cobblestone streets by a tall black man with big boobis. Before the temple's front door slammed shut, Timmy heard the chanting... *Eschillion... Eschillion... Eschillion!... Eschillion!...*

Eddie said, "Hullo... there. You've the smell of cannabis about thee. Might I inhale the intoxicating Green Goddess breath with thee as we ponderously shoot the shit, walking side be side, seeking ever greater enlightenment?"

Timmy stood up, brushed off his pants legs, gave Eddie a long, hard look, and said gently, "WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU?"

Eddie said, "Eddie's the name. Smoke me up and I'll tell you about this magick pen..."

Ed gets a phone call. "Hello?" he asks the earpiece.

"Indeed," says some dude proficient in making people answer phones by dialing numbers.

"I recognize that voice!" said Ed.

"Yes, Ed," said the Big Boss Man proficient in making people have sex for dried out banana peels.

"So anyways," Ed says to him, "What's shakin'?"

"We're very proud of the job you're doing, yesss..."

"Oh, thanks," said Ed. "G whiz, that makes me feel like a million bucks."

"I just thought you should know," said the Pants in the Family. And He hung up.

Ed hung up the phone and scratched his head. He picked the phone back up. He dialed a particular employee number.

"Hello?" answered some whore-for-coke.

"Come suck my dick, bitch," said Ed. And Ed hung up the phone.

So, anyways, as one might possibly imagine on one's own, Eddie had quite a something of an adventure to unravel. And yet, for all that, certain of the yarn remained twined `round his balls. He had not the testicular fortitude to reveal certain of his more outrageous intuitive suspicions, upon hearing the first name of his new friend and upon hearing a certain voice, young true but the accent so familiar And those eyes...

High as a kite, strange things spinning up Eddie's spine and through his head. He felt quite a throbbing inside and would certainly have danced, were there available the music.

Timmy had questions. "Time travel? How so? Whom gavest thou such a trinket? Trade it over for a cup of roaches?"

"I must politely decline all further questioning," said Eddie.

"Then let's just smoke more weed," said Timmy.

And They Did.

"Oh, G whiz," said Ed. "Oh, gosh, golly, OH! G Whiz! G WHIZ! POSITIVELY G WHILIKERS!!!"

coke whore, "Slurplempppplmmmprrdddgthhtjjsluuurpghffft?"

And right at a right decisive moment rings the phone.

Ed answers and says, "I'm sleepy. Call back later."

Pants in the Family answers back, "Congratulations! You've earned yourself a raise!" He then hangs up the phone.

Timmy was seated within the temple walls. Jzearuth lecturing again.

Saying, "Chrystal City belongs to us. Chrystal City will always be ours.

"The Individuates are the true guardians of the city. In another sense, we are the city. A certain level of attainment in the Church of Individuation results merely from a full comprehension of these two notions.

"The ceremonies are a humorless joke. I have a question for my esteemed audience."

Jzearuth paced back and forth several times before continuing.

"If I am telling truths through riddles, the majority of the time, what is my esteemed audience to do on those rare instances when the nonsense really is just nonsense?"

Jzearuth paced back and forth several moments before continuing.

"Some questions that have no answers are, regardless (possibly), questions worthiest of the asking. I hope I haven't frightened anyone with my little hypothetical scenario. Audience members needn't operate under the illusion I might possibly say something without any meaning.

"I live to teach the Church. True, this authority was granted me by the untimely death of our only 8th degree Individuate Master, and as I am merely a 5th degree Individuate this authority comes with no small amount of controversy. But that is a testament more to the recent decline of this Order, rather than any defects of my character.

"Why are there no more 8th, 7th, even 6th degree Individuates? It is because we have become an assortment of scoundrels, of lazy fucking bastards, and I'm little better than the rest of you. Why, great accomplishment that it is, my capabilities permit that had I focused my energies fully towards the goal of attainment I would be an initiated Master by now.

"I got caught up in my mastery of the art of Hedonism, instead. I have more than proven myself sexually, as the majority of my esteemed audience can attest to personally... And as there is nothing in the cosmos more pleasurable than perfect sex, I count myself a Master Hedonist. That is the authority by which I rule this Order."

Jzearuth tapped the flat bottom of buli, Kalith Alur's pine walking stick, thrice against the floor.

"Only thing I've yet to pleasure," said JZearuth, "is everything. That is why I have decided to focus my energies fully towards the goal of attainment. I encourage the same amongst all members of this Church, and expect even better.

"I've nothing left to lecture on today."

Two days later, Jzearuth initiated himself into the 6th degree.

Traditionally, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th degree Individuates are initiated by an Individuator. 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th degree Individuates are their own Individuator.

Three days after that, Tim was initiated into the Order. Even then, he had yet to attain to so much as the 1st degree. In truth, the ridiculousness of the ceremony caused Tim to doubt whether it was any kind of initiation at all.

Mark went medieval on their silly arses and it felt good. The only problem was, he was stuck with an electric guitar and no electricity. True, he could fly a kite during a thunderstorm, but the complexities of the operation Mark desired was beyond his abilities.

Also, where was Yellow Raincoat? Yellow Raincoat had delivered the song. Mark took one glance at the pages and he was gone. He couldn't even remember blazing those key trails. But, well, perhaps that had something to do with the rugs...

Mark carried upon his back a sack filled with rugs. Hundreds of thousands of dollars in assorted rugs. Oh the pretty colors he would see, utilizing those rugs!

They came straight from Ginger, Yellow Raincoat had said. Yellow Raincoat had said, "As payment for the great things you're about to do." Yellow Raincoat had said, too, "Your contact has the stuff. He'll find you. Rest easy when you get there."

Mark hadn't realized "there" would mean "here", nor did he realize how such could would or should.

"Meet Eddie," said Timmy to Jzearuth.

The three were dining on hog meat at the ol' Deflowering Suzie. Passing gingerly, were they, a most appetizing papyrus-rap spliff.

"What symbolism necessitates the wearing of those white robes?" asked Eddie of his companions.

"Little that can be told," said Jzearuth sagely.

"What is your goal?" asked Eddie of Timmy.

Timmy was about to say something but Jzearuth interrupted. "He'll know it when he's attained it," said Jzearuth sagely.

"Why interrupt my question?" asked Eddie of Jzearuth.

"I sometimes forget my manners when really stoned," said Jzearuth sagely.

Eddie looked long and hard at Timmy, then asked, "Is this your time?"

Timmy simply shook his head. No questions surprised him anymore.

Eddie said, "As I thought. You're like me."

Jzearuth passed a wink, beneath a spill of white hair, that only Eddie could see. Jzearuth said, "How 'like' do you mean?"

Eddie was getting a really intense vibe from Jzearuth, and that concerned him a little. Eddie was getting this really intense vibe from Jzearuth but yet, he couldn't read the guy at all.

Eddie said, "I suppose I'll know when the time is right."

Jzearuth said, "Eddie, I can't believe you of all people would use time as an excuse."

Once upon a time Bob got his product line from the Factory shelves. There was no need to sell or barter the product because the product suited Bob's needs. Food for the vices. A feeling of superiority.

The strangest thing happened to Bob when he was bartending some recent night. He could always find the wildest most insane places of residence for his Bar needs. It would have been better if the bars weren't always so eager to have a chat.

Bob would be just sitting there, and the bar would be like, "Hey Bob, I would like to have a chat." And of course, the first few times, Bob gave them bars their chats, eager as he was to experience a new kind of chatter. But it wasn't chatter at all.

Bars don't talk, you see, unless you've ingested large quantities of hallucinogenic mushrooms in the interests of having a Tantric Experience. Bob after work occasionally liked to indulge in Tantric Experiences.

It was a drifty life, the life of Bob. The booze strongly stung the honeysuckle goodness of certain moments beneath exquisitely clockwork beehives, An Experiment In Psychology.

Certain centers of the brain stimulated from

AUM.....

Heavens to Betsy!

Bob didn't understand either, some of these customers.

Tonight, Bob was feasting on lobsters. Whatever it was he was looking for he couldn't decide on taking it quite at that present moment, if he had even found it at all.

No more meth for Bob. Bob had successfully ingested a purified morsel of the Elixir of Gold. Bob was on the path now. Straight and narrow and all that light.

Oh, but such a ways there was to go!

Tonight Bob the Bartender felt himself momentarily drifting into a golden Eschillion night club. What an experience. Dancing, and the honey did flow, and Bob making bread from the drinks.

He had mind for one particular girl. She didn't realize it was the poet made him feel that way. His heart really was in her pocket.

The Golden Form had been adopted for this particular purpose. Golden-sprinkled grains of nutmeg. Built like Achilles, but without those tragic eyes. When his imagination was up to the task, Bob perfected the appearance of his Astral Form, and in so doing, his physical form gradually perfected itself.

Beauty better with which to seduce. And he had his lucky sheepskin kerchief in his pocket.

Bob used his kerchief to blow his nose. He then stared Cute Honey in the eyeballs and he asked her, he said, "What's a sweet drop of honey dew like you doing in a stale joint like this?"

She said, "Why that's the most romantic thing anybody has ever asked me!"

Bob said, "I'm the bartender, so I wouldn't normally be putting down my source of income like that... But everything looks stale in comparison to you."

She said, "My GOD, you're like some kind of modern day Shakespeare in Fabio's body! Fuck me now Bob, you hot steamy hunk of hard knocks reality, heavy steady measured thrusts, the infinity of positions of the creative mind, YOU INCREDIBLE FUCKING GREEK GOD MY GOD!... Is that a Vienna Sausage?"

Bob indeed was ill-equipped with naught but a Vienna Sausage for a wand.

The Lady's apprehensions lasted but a moment, however, for Bob was a capable Captain of his humble Vessel, and so once more, potential babies spilled upon the bartop.

The one thing she asked him, though, between *UmphS* and *AUMs*, she said, "Is the nutmeg on your breath from the fabled Spice Islands?"

DiIIIIIIing-DONG.

"Who is it?" asked Ginger.

"The voice from the other side of the door," said that voice.

Ginger peeped a peep through the hole.

Ginger unlocked one thousand locks to open the door. She held wide her rubber raincoat arms and shouted, "Henry! Come inside quickly. We only have four hours before my husband gets home."

"My those nipples sure are terrific," said Henry as Ginger released the clasp on her raincoat.

And as Henry pulled down his silk boxer shorts, "That's one dandy penis," commented Ginger.

Ginger took to the bed, rolled over, and said, "See if you can cure me of my constipation, Henry."

any which whatever way the pages continued turning the text churning

Factory Ed was overseeing the unloading of various highly addictive and delicious products. He was watching a crew of four men and three women work their magic.

Meanwhile, employee Frank Fort was hiding in the bathroom, conducting experiments in imagination-expanding masturbation. It was a fun fifty-five minutes, to say the least, but a blackspot on the day's Factory Efficiency.

Frank Fort exited the bathroom. Factory Ed stared at Frank from ten feet away, nostrils flared, and Ed asked, "Everything come out well done?"

"Oh shit!" shouted Frank Fort, and he ran back to his throne.

Ed was satisfied the next time Frank Fort exited the bathroom because he smelled a little like poopi instead of a little like seamen. Still, "You're fired!" Ed shouted. "If you had to masturbate for more than twenty minutes, you should have done it at home."

Uncanny, Ed's sense of smell. Perhaps the reason he was chosen.

Penniless and ugly, Frank Fort had naught to experience at home except more masturbation.

The Factory Man, Pants in the Family, nicknamed Mr. Pants by his closest friends, received a disturbing email.

Hey Mr. Pants. Ginger here.

I love that cock of yours, Mr. Pants. I'm sure gonna miss it.

George isn't watching me write this so I can say things like that lol!

Your cock always tasted the best, Mr. Pants. Please don't tell my husband!

I just wanted you to know George and I are leaving in four days to disappear.

I was so sorry to hear about the Factory fungus problem.

Bye.

Mr. Pants made two phone calls. The first call was an attempt to persuade George and Ginger that there was no reason to move, as the fungus had been surgically removed. Ginger answered the phone and congratulated Mr. Pants on his success, but explained that the reasons for the move were mostly personal.

Mr. Pants called Ed to have Ed send a guy to Ginger's house for one last rug pickup.

But back in medieval Chrystal, Our Boy Timmy had his shoulders plugged into the divine white shoulders of a gloriously glowing female Individuate. It was an exercise in concentration and polarization, intended to harmonize the energies of participants in a sex rite. This particular sex rite was Timmy's Fourth Degree Individuation Ceremony.

It was also a sacrifice of Timmy's virginity, the sacrifice said to be most pleasing to the divinities, and so of it, Timmy said, "To all the gods that were and are, near and far, high and low, by this great sacrifice I summon you." And of the female Individuator, Timmy said, "This woman that is all women, this holiest of grails, I know this cup and no other shall receive the Divine Will."

It was the most successful Fourth Degree Individuation the Order had on record up to that point, equal to the legendary initiation of Kalith Alur, and thus improper to speak on further.

Rather, the ceremony and its success are improper topics. One aspect of the ceremony, its only failing, can be divulged to the masses without invoking the wrath of Creation.

Since Timmy was a virgin, he spilled his seed rather quickly. Fortunately for Tim, high as a kite on the dankiest hashish available, he was able to orgasm four times, and every orgasm after the first sent seizures of ecstasy up his spine. Such was the only failing of the seven hour ceremony.

Actually a boon, for the divinities have always considered virginity the most pleasing sacrifice.

It is recorded, Kalith Alur did not orgasm until the moon fell and the sun returned to His throne in Heaven.

The Kundalini Spiral was fully active! Positive energy overflowing, and directed at will to anywhere. All-out, full-on, total body rapture.

Timmy walking around feeling like one constant orgasm. And Eddie sees Tim out in the town square so Eddie's all like, "Hey Timmy! There's something I gotta tell you!"

"What?" asked Tim.

Eddie's all like, "I think you're my uncle from the future, man?"

Timmy said, "Well Eddie, my head's humming too loudly for you to be laying that trippy shit down on me now. Hit me up in a couple of hours, when I'm feeling like a mere mortal again."

Bump!

Mark saw Timmy headed for the Deflowering Suzie.

Mark calculated a sneaking on up to Timmy, then did so half way in case of miscalculation. Timmy still managed to detect the presence of negativity.

"I notice you've detected my presence," said Mark. "Therefore, AHA, hello, my friend."

Timmy said, "Leave me now, Kind Sir, for I've the service of pussy to hire."

"I thought you were heading for the Deflowering Suzie," said Mark. "But alas! MY people have sent me to make a present of you." Mark attempted the smashing of Timmy aided by naught but an electric guitar.

And wouldn't you believe it? Timmy saw that guitar and Timmy ignored that guitar, a piece of the illusion not worth acknowledging. The humming, the buzzing, the ecstasy... Timmy was living in a higher state of mind.

And the guitar was as if not, not at all.

"That's some crazy shit," said Mark. "Where the fuck did you hide my guitar?"

The pack, Mark's support, minions of the Yellow Raincoat Man, encroached silently from all sides. They were like green little trolls, they were like hallucinations with teeth.

Timmy said, "I'm beginning to understand the difference between an illusion and everything else. My dick is throbbing like an atom bomb during the countdown... I'm in desperate need of pussy, man, see you later." (Imagine what it would be like to be a twenty-year-old virgin with a constant hard-on, no matter how many times a day you masturbate.)

Timmy vanished.

Well, the happy two Gs were off to Florida together. George was getting a might bit suspicious of these energy spikes Ginger kept having... Every time Henry fucked her, the spine tingled that much more gloriously... But George didn't know that...

HONK!

Did he? George was drinking camel blood, and experiencing such vivid insights. The spirits were constantly encroaching from the earthly plane, and planes lower still... None of them could be trusted. No thing could be trusted. Even the Goddess might be a betrayer.

"George?" asked Ginger from the seat beside.

HONK! HONKHONK!!!

"Anything you want, sweetie," replied George with a smile and no thought, and he kissed her with the briefly summoned passion of his hottest ice, passing such from wrist to wrist.

The traffic light turned red. George put the pedal to the metal.

The paranoia was a result of some silly flimflams.

Blue and crimson, the blood, the glory, the power,
Ashes to ashes
And the dust where it belongs.

Painful, the memory
And hunting for what really happened.

Bob woke up, vomit and absinthe foaming between his gums, in a gutter in medieval Chrystal City. His memory of the night before was foggy, trippy, something like a dream. It involved dancing, naked midgets, and no-talent clowns.

Bob crawled through a swamp of mucus and puss, piss and bat droppings. He arrived within inches of the entrance to the Deflowering Suzie. His vision blurred momentarily, and then he managed to stand.

Bob stumbled into the Deflowering Suzie like a wind-tossed, alcohol-stained paper bag. The flaring nostrils meant trouble and fear.

The rest of the class was quite unimpressed w/imitation empresses.

Bob addressed the bartender, "I need a job."

She said, "Ok, you be the fucking bartender." She went in the back to cook food.

Bob became instantly Bob the Bartender. Not only that, She gave him a free plate of rice patties.

That was usually how those things had a recurring tendency to splendidferously work themselves out.

A man in a hooded white robe walked inside. As the door slammed shut behind him, he pulled the hood down low so that only the small of his chin remained free of the shadows. The shadows got his chin, too, when he turned his head. At last the light settled on the pale and pointy tip of his nose, as he settled into a barstool.

"Get me a beer Bob," said the hooded one, an Individuate on a Machiavellian waltz, judging from the way he held his nose, and the way he flashed his pointy teeth when he talked.

Bob was quick to fetch the beer before asking, "Do I know you, man?"

"The name's Jzearuth," he said. "I knew you in another life."

"That explains it," said Bob. "I've had so many of those lately, of course we must have run into each other."

"Are you drunk man?" Jzearuth asked Bob.

"Always," said Bob. "I can't help it... There's this creeping mushroom crawling up my coat tail."

"I guess I know the feeling," said Jzearuth. "Then again, you should probably get that looked at..."

Eddie steps inside.

A silver pen on a silver string dangles ominously from his right forefinger. His blue jeans carry the stains of dirty living in the time before detergent. His shirt is a little ripped. There is a rip to the right side of his chest intended to reveal a hairy little man-nipple and a splotch of freckled skin. His straight black hair is just barely long enough to cover his sad blue eyes.

Eddie picks a stool two stools down from was-a-Saint Jzearuth.

"Get me some chicken," says Eddie.

Bob shouts into the back, "Shey! Hey SHEY!!! Slice of chicken!"

Eddie surveys the room, winking at all the whores. The whores know to compete now for Eddie's favor and breadcrumbs.

The whiskey was going down smooth that night. Eddie had a papyrus-rolled fatty between his lips, and the more he sucked on that bad boy, even before the alcohol started to really kick in, the more the room started to shake.

Jzearuth shouts, "Pass that shit, bi-ATCH!" It was Jzearuth's shit anyway. So fucking dank you could smell it burning five miles down the road. Eddie got hisself a free bag earlier that morning.

"HEY BITCHES!" shouted Eddie. The whores aligned themselves to his person, a 10-person line. The most expensive two whores were supposedly still virgins. Bob promised a significant discount if that virginity happened to prove itself false.

Of course Eddie chose the "virgins". Who could predict what diseases a prostitute might pick up in a shithole like the Deflowering Suzie?

Blood and all, a true virgin. That girl, seventeen, creamy dawn-kissed brown hair swaying beside her narrow cheeks, her moist, fat lips, the lips of the flickering tongue.

Maybe she'd sucked a cock or two in the past but that was it.

Eddie couldn't stop sucking and squeezing on those creamy little breasts. He smacked that ass, too, you can believe it. Bitch started sucking on that dick like a mermaid.

Some awful nice semen shooting soon went down, down town in the vaginal place. It was really great, man.

Roughly 11 years later, Eddie comes wobbling downstairs. Tim and Jzearuth are at the bar talking.

Eddie wavers slowly back and forth, and he can't for the life of him decide if he's going to pass out... or if he's about to run twenty miles without breaking a sweat.

It takes over, you know? there's nothing you can do but run with it. when the tides turn and it all flows in. Steady like the best boat in the harbor turning into water, slipping through the cracks in a way impeachable. Yess.....

The blunts seemed to last and last that night, and they kept on coming, whatever else happened.

"Are you high enough yet man?" Asked Jzearuth of Eddie.

"What the fuck is 'high enough'?" asked Eddie, snatching a blunt right out of Jzearuth's fingertips.

"I'm impressed," said Jzearuth. "You're really getting good at that whole time travel thing."

"For better or worse," said Eddie. "Although, I must say, I think it's been good for me."

"Indeed," said Jzearuth. "A pity you're still searching, though..."

"Yeah, well," said Eddie, "at least I'm fucking enjoying the ride." But there was that one great sorrow.

"I know a space where things go right," said Jzearuth.

"I've been there, man," said Eddie. "That blissful escape where you're not thinking about it, you're doing, experiencing, and it's the only thing you're experiencing, the only thing worth being experienced at that moment, A kind of unity between self and surroundings, a Proper cooperation of one's own karma, ... I don't know, man, if that's what you were talking about."

"Pretty fucking close, if it isn't," said Jzearuth. "But hey man, let me ask you something: What are you looking for?"

It was at about that moment that I, the real writer here (God's mouthpiece), found out what I really want.

KB is the Virgin Whore. He would have given everything he had for a Her until he remembered the Is.

By that time, a network of women (or just a network), possibly a conspiracy of know-it-alls, even Aphrodite Herself, even the nazis in the hotel room, conspired to accept the virginity of the virgin whore. But he had already given it to the IS.

KB experienced a full-body orgasm w/o the sex. That was nice, beautiful. But it was still restricted to the body. And he held to no delusions that it was any better, was convinced in fact that it was inferior, to the transcendental out-of-body orgasm that might have followed Kalith Alur's ceremony.

And he was flung into various erotic situations, and when his libido flamed up it burned not nearly so bright as it had in the past. So he cured himself of his addiction to masturbation.

And *they* or *her* indicated without saying, "Ask and yea shall receive." Even beyond that, "Act."

But I'm done chasing the pussy. Evolution, stability, life, death. I have turned my Will over to the Is. I am the Virgin Whore.

I must thank women for curing me of feminism. I love myself no more nor less than a steamy pile of poo, or a cigarette butt. God as Everything includes that steaming pile of poo, and that is the sense in which I love women.

But Eddie said, "I'm looking for my father."

Jzearuth said, "I am the Father, the Mother, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. None may come to God except through me."

Eddie said, "I agraa. The father and the sun. The mother and the daughter."

"No risk have yeah taken, child. A gra indeed, short of acceptance. The method is easy. Thou hadst it all along."

"Steak sauce?" inquired Eddie.

"A burning asshole for the gods," replied Jzearuth, drunk now, truly drunk on the finest liquors and the finest buds.

"Rose buds," said Eddie.

"Lie not to me," said Jzearuth. "I am truth alone. Lie to the women. They enjoy it."

"Alone?" asked Eddie. "I know well that feeling."

"You only think you do, my boy," Jzearuth replied. "Know yea not with whom thou speakest? Damn it, man! Damn it no more! You were never alone."

"I always felt alone," said Eddie.

"And so you were," Jzearuth replied. "But stop worshipping that fucking lie."

"What lie?" asked Eddie.

Jzearuth smacked Eddie with the might of ten men. Eddie saw not the back of that hand.

"OUCH!"

...

the

the

End Time, Book 2

The Fall

Chicken-Bone-Sawing

Jack fights the liver in the kitchen. That bitch was getting saucy.

Oh! The doorbell's ringing again. Might be Jehova's. Might be little girls selling cookies. I'll toss mine, Jack thinks.

Jack grabs the cookies by the balls and tosses professionally. Nothing burns. Everything is tasty. He goes to check the door.

"Hey ho, neighbor!" shouts neighbor Mr. Bill too excitedly. "What's that wonderful smell smelling up the house?"

"The crappers won't flush," says Jack. "That or the cookies I'm cooking. Now be gone! I've doings to be worked!"

"Hey ho, then!" shouts neighbor Mr. Bill to the slamming door.

Suzie is supposed to show tonight. Ifn' she c'n get off, Jack and Suzie'll get off together, proceedings scheduled to follow a wholesome and delicious meal.

Jack flips what's sizzling in the frying pan and thinks, "My, the bones told too many lies to believe. Next time I'm in Texas I'll have to see better shamans."

Jack flips on the music to sooth the food.

Jack flips on the television to sooth the eyes. Porno gets his noodle going. We think we'll just let it ride `til maybe the jackrabbit jumps and misses the hole. Cartoons entertain as well.

Jack sweats and air-conditions the house with battery-operated fans. He then introduces burning candles to dispose of wanted and unwanted smells, replacing with thoroughly pleasant smells and moody burning.

Suzie ding-dongs the door, signaling for the dong. Jack opens promptly and invites a woman on in.

"Nice candles," says Suzie. "Nice music," says Suzie. "Such *nice* food!" says Suzie, addressing all sincerely save the saucy liver.

The television had clicked out.

Two fleshies jiggle as one flesh, with enthusiasm, and that was how the night ended.

Morning. Foreign toothpaste and pancakes and orange juice. Small talk chatters on too long, somebody's gonna be late for work.

"Shit I'm late!" shouts Suzie, rushing off without a kiss good-bye.

"Shit I'm late," exclaims Jack calmly, checking his wristwatch against the hallway clock that makes the cat sounds at midnight. He heads for the station wagon parked out front. He turns around and walks back inside because he didn't finish his orange juice and pancakes.

Jack is a hitman. He is freelance and thus his own boss. His name and number is in all the reputable local classifieds but his answering service is poor. He rarely answers willing to service.

The phone is ringing when Jack arrives at his office. The phone is always ringing in his office. His is a popular phone number.

"Whip, whack, whippedy-smack," says Jack to the telephone, which ceases ringing upon command.

Jack leisures in a sticky leather chair while the dead phone sulks. He wonders what it would be like to smoke a big fat cigar. He pulls one out and lights `er up. It feels about like he expected.

The day at the office proves uneventful and thus successful.

There is a brawl in the barroom. Drunks do such nonsense. Fists flying and superman fails to intervene. Well, why would ol' Blue show up there? Make you a deal, stay on track and I'll contact the train.

The workings are all geared up perfectly clockish. It's time the time has come time to do to do it's time. Jack knives through a stick of butter. His sensations are faded-wonderful. He spreads the

butter like an eagle. He chomps down on buttery bread and spreads his arms and looks through the roof to the sky. He tumbles into air-o-plane mode.

Shenanigans matter most, most else is antimatter. Like the beaver eats the wood doesn't give any back.

The beaver eats the wood. The beaver eats the wood!

I'm drowning in a forest of smells so thick suffocating and choking and turning blue it's in my lungsa-oh-ah!

Jack takes a tab and a tab and a tab and taps the grass taps into the grass and flies like an eagle. A woman with hairy armpits, the most beautiful woman he had ever seen despite, said skin was a chain you gotta break the chains all the chains there are ways you can do this. You can do this. You can, c'mon, I know that you can do this.

Jack goes driving without wheels. He forgot his keys. And he sees many mysterious things.

The bat had a heart attack, fell down on its ass. You're thinking, What's he say9n' well, The beaver is gone. She ran away to damn another river and profit from the flow.

Goop sticks to shoes. Goop goobers. Goopsreads. It's all over the bottom!, all over.

Jack wanted to know was this bliss was there more bliss could he quantify bliss? Could bliss be infinite? Could there be an infinite? On and on and on and....

Suzie came on over and had herself some orange juice. And what is the importance of orange juice? Well, there are acids inside the juice that break it down break it down...

Happiness is bliss. Happiness and bliss. The two together folded between a paper candy wrapper. Getthetastythetasty.

Wings expand as combustion, heat rises with Jack above it.

Your head is shaky your brain is ripping ripping a hole through ripping a hole right through right on through your chalky white chalky white skull and skin and skin.

Listen out for the creepers, Jack! AH! They've spotted us. They're rushing in. They're rushing on in. They're coming...

You've waited your whole life for this opportunity, Jack. Don't let them do this to you. Don't let them jack you. They jack you, start shootin'. Shoot `em up shoot `em up. Quick!

Nights fly. A keyboard turns orange. The puncher punches the keys.

"Hey ho howdien hi, Suzie," says Mr. Bill to Suzie. "Is the macaroni prepared for consumption?"

"I'm not having any macaroni today," says Suzie, chucking the plate into the air and listening to the porcelain crackling. CRASH!boom!

It's like a cartoon when dynamite takes away all the fun. If you look closely you will see what I mean. Anyways, the moral is pagodas. You can't have enough of them. Everybody needs to sit.

So Jack was running, rushing in to save the day. Jack wanted to save didn't want to trip next to the beehive, but that's what happened. They stung him and stung him. Jack, a monster, inflated, beat up Bill.

There was no reason to beat up Bill. really, Bill was just too damned nice and annoying and stupid and ugly for anyone's good. Leet me tell you a story I heard this once this time:

lionhunt.

Jack hit the deck. Jack rolled and recovered and ran. Sweat glistened.

Joe-jo and Marcus shouted, "Fuck! He's got the chess!" Joe-Joe ran straight and Marcus ran a circle.

Jack was a sly lion and he knew the streets. He had holes every which way. When he settled, though, he settled heavy.

Jack flopped down on Buddy Moe's couch and said, "Thanks man for the shut-eye." Before Buddy Moe could reply, Jack was out on his side. If anybody tracked him there...

Knock-knock! said the lady on the other side of the door.

Jack rolled over, looked up, opened his eyes. He gnawed on a sweet slice of neon chess.

Moe said, "I'm comin', Jill, jis wait."

Jack said, "Shit Jill's here?" said Jack said Jack.

Moe opened the door and said she said said, "Fuck is that Jack?" Jill said.

Buddy Moe threw up his arms and he said, "Oh hell. Well, you's always together sometime. Take the breather then let it ride."

"Oh you may come in Bill," said Buddy Moe. "I mean Jill, Jill. Jill."

The door shut hard and Jack and Jill stared.

"So you got the chess," Jill said, chest heaving, anxious heart beating.

"Yeah," said Jack, "And you can have a bite."

Jack and Jill finished the chess together then crawled into the sewers and made love `midst the muck.

Buddy Moe slapped his thighs and thought, "Those two..." It was then that Marcus finished finished his circle and called on Joe-jo to finish his straight.

They killed Buddy Moe on account of the chess crumbs on the floor.

But some stories belong in the past. Not all the pieces fit. No matter how much two pieces look like they belong together, there's always a chance they won't fit. You'll never finish the puzzle if you keep fucking around with the same two pieces.

So Jack found Suzie and while they've decided against further fucking, they are occasionally lovers. This involves romantic devices and patience and much careful positioning. Both parties access all spare stamina.

The thing is, the bed is squeaky. The screams wake the neighbors. They're out looking for pitchforks and torches, things no longer easy to find. Where there's a will there's a way. Rob the farmer who pitches the hay.

The thing is, the village. Is up in arms. Everybody out to make a kill out to kill the sin the noise the annoyance. And Bill was a good guy, is a good guy, and under no circumstances was Bill to be harmed!

The churches pass out as many whispers as the telephones. That Jack, he's a psycho, a stupid psycho drunken bastard hangs out too much at the bar. That Suzie, she's the psycho's tramp. Tramp all over the tramp, trample the couple, their romance isn't genuine. Evil! Evil isn't genuine.

Jodie is a Jew and if she wasn't so liberal she'd be angrier than she is. She used to know that Suzie and how badly that relation hurts her reputation now! Stupid tramp has better taste than to sleep with any old shit head.

Jack, though. He's got the guns and the castle. Try and storm the castle. Just try and storm the castle. He dares the mob. He baits the mob. The mob doesn't bite. Alias is on the television, it's time for everyone to go home.

Reputations are such fragile things. Once they're broken, repairing them is more trouble than it's worth.

Jack gets into the Wild Turkey and breathes it all over the secretary. His secretary is a troll sits on the computer tells him things with its eyes. The troll shows no disgust, only understanding and joy forever.

The office phone is ringing again.

Whip-Wack! Whip-Wack!... Ah hell," says Jack, "I feel like talking. Hello."

"This is Jodie Foster the bacteria manufacturer. I got a hit I would like for you to execute."

Jacks says, "Hey Jodie. What's the pay?"

Jodie says, "Good pay. A baker's dozen pink bananas and a little cash too. Stop on by to sample the produce."

Jack says, "And who's the bull's-eye?"

Jodie says, "His name is Mark and he wears slacks. He stole my bacteria, man! Must be returned."

"The return's extra bananas," Jack says, swigging the Turkey.

"Alright," Jodie says. "Fifteen bananas total."

The phone slams down. The door slams. The car door slams. Jack is anxious to sample the produce.

Jack swings by Jodie Foster's place. He snatches up a pink banana and shouts "Thanks!" as he dashes out the door to his station wagon parked in the parking lot for the purpose of getting away to something.

Jack drives chomping on the pink banana.

Jack swerves a little. He thinks he just saw a coyote. Barking pointy-eared bastards.

Jack finishes off the banana and chews on a smoking cigar. He knows where the hiders are hiding.

By the damnit! The horn's blowing hard! Who's that bastard driving too slowly onward?

Jack shouts out the window of his station wagon, "Bloody bastard, punch it! I'm in a hurry!"

"And where are you headed, then?" asks the man in the car ahead with a greater quantity of etiquette than might be justifiably expected.

"I don't know," says Jack.

The man in the car ahead appropriately accelerates his vehicle. Jack treats his own zoomie to a similar adjustment, and they're off at a decent rate.

Jack slams on the brakes before he bumps the bumper of the man in the car ahead. "And what the hell's the holdup, now? I'm still in a hurry, you know."

"The road is ended," says the man in the car ahead apologetically. "I can't very well punch this ol' clunker off-road."

"No, I sympathize," says Jack. "This bitch of mine couldn't make it afp - away-from-pavement either. We'll have to turn around, I suppose. Huh. The road ends. How do you like that?"

"Strange," says the stranger in the car ahead. "I feel myself vanishing."

Jack blinks and the road extends and the stranger and his car have disappeared. Jack drives on into the Moe's Tavern parking lot and parks in a rude angular manner. He then finds himself sitting at the bar in front of empty mugs. The next thing he knows, his vicious fists are swinging, and those guns down many a drunken bastard. Soon after he's sitting on a park bench with a wino talking about the case.

"So," says Wendy the wino, "So, so. So who's the vic?"

"His name is Mark and he wears slacks," says Jack, "says Jodie Foster."

Wendy looks cross-eyed. Says Wendy, "Sounds like a bum I know."

Jack says, "Great so just show me where he's at and I'll be grateful thanx bunch."

Wendy says, "Listen here pal I ain't no rat no how so none of that sly manips `gainst the old woman my grandson's about your age. Can't give him up sorry pal can't do it but so out of curiosity uh what's he done?"

Jack says, "Uh lady a person in your position would not want to know too much guilt-pressure. But hey I'll tell you anyway because you asked and maybe I'll get your help after all, you hear this. See, Mark not only wears slacks but also has the mindset of a thief he steals bacteria. Chemical warfare man it's the only one of the only well big threats right now to us and maybe Mark's a terrorist and anyways I'm not a cop."

Wendy says, "Well now that's a different story isn't it? I think I recognize you, you're Jack. I heard things about you and your tramp. Evil persons shouldn't breed is the word on the street. Yeah, I heard about you, Jack. Your man's at the docks man sleeping in his b-oa-t/fl--ting house waterbed. Don't kill

him too hard man Mark used to be a-o.k. guy ago long time"

Jack says, "Hell yeah, lady, thanks!" He speeds off in his station wagon parked somewhere in the park and drives to the docks he has spent many weekends with in order to familiarize himself with the terrain as a just incase, foreseeing unpredictable future occurrences such as the future at present being atoned.

Mark is at the docks all right. Mark is in his slacks sleeping onboard the outboard motored boat-house. His bed is a white net swaying lazy because Mark's lazy. He is playing with dangerous chemicals and carefully contained bacteria.

Jack says, "Yo you're going down clown. Jo mammal've fucked I used to pop the beef."

Mark says, "Hey, pig. Onto me at last, aye?"

"Your eyes taste yummy, they shall. Egg-like, like my favorite eggs. It will be a delicious midday treat!" says Jack.

Mark says, "Yo copper ain't got nothin' on me back it off the scare tactics."

Jack pulls a switchblade from his pocket because it is his favorite knife and he is planning on cutting severely the target Mark. As Jack executes desired action, Mark gurgles a scream before he loses that ability, a window of opportunity shut rapidly. As an afterthought to a promise, Jack eats Mark's eyeballs.

Jack is delighted. He will soon be munching avariciously away at pink bananas galore. But wait, the menacing music is playing...

(Scene switch)

"AHA!" shouts Jodie Foster in/with/containing glee. "Falling right into my trap, the boyfriend is... AHA!"

Jodie Foster mixes magical potions carefully, distributing magical elements and separating magical elements and all-around getting magical with the elements. Can you see the purple smoke clouds?

"Aha! Ha Ha! HA! The rat is in the cage. His death will sate my rage. I am evil like a weasel. Chillin' and killin' and bringing down the town. There's no stopping this drop---In life force," says Jodie Foster.

Her evil plan is unfolding right before your eyes. Jack should have gotten himself better acquainted with his girl Suzie's friends. If he had he would have known about this psycho crazywhore.

Jodie Foster looks up names in the phone book. She makes some calls. She connects all her connections. She arranges an ambush.

(Scene switch)

Jack makes a call through the telephone lines and as his voice travels into Jodie Foster's earpiece, he considers the many treats he is in for. The earpiece says, "Hey lady I killed the Mark and I'm coming on over for the payoff."

"Oh, there'll certainly be a payoff," Jodie says. Her hand covers the mouthpiece and she ejaculates mad laughter.

Click. Click. That conversation proved brief and rewarding. The real rewards await us in the distance... Forever in the distance.

Jack pulls into the parking lot. He frees the hurdy-gurdies. He rushes into the building and shouts, "I'm here for the bananas!"

Right off, nose twitching, Jack senses something fishy.

THWAP! Says the salmon that slams right into Jack's back. Then, *THWAPTHWAPTHWAP!*, as more salmon join in.

The gang's got the fish by the tails. The gang's playing Jack like a kettledrum. Only, there's something the gang doesn't know about Jack. Jack is a strong man assassin(everything's political)

dangerous fellow.

But not strong enough to rise up and conquer. Not strong enough to end the beating.

Jack waits until the wind is out of him then tries to suck in some more.

Jodie Foster enters the room and starts screaming all sincere, what's this horrible mess on the floor? Oh, Jack! What are they doing to Jack!? Out, get out! I've got a gun! Outoutout I said now get! All the fish-wielders drag their salmon through the door and hop into their getaway car.

Jodie Foster says, "Oh, Jack, are you all right?"

"Yeah," Jack says, "As soon as I get some pink bananas."

Jodie Foster says, "How many fingers am I holding up?"

"I don't see any fingers," Jack says.

"That's not good," Jodie Foster says. She stuffs a piece of pink banana through Jack's rugged-cool dry lips.

"MMmmm..." says Jack. "I see fingers now. And I taste them. And I would like a little more banana please."

Jodie slips banana chunks in and out and spends the next few hours nursing Jack back to perfect health and contentment. The moment is intimate in part because Jodie added magic of her own to those naturally supernatural bananas.

Jack is in love. With. a woman. Her name is not. Jodie. Her name just might be... Suzie/. Bum bum buuum bum. Bum bum bum bum bum. Bum bum buuum buum. Bum bumbum bum. Oh, Jackie was a banker, Jack was a clerk. And he thought to save her. When he got home from work.

Jack is inside love with sUzie. Jack and God got a deal. Jack and God got a deaaaul. Oh!

Suzie is married to Jack. Jack is married to Suzie. Why, then, is Jack fucking Jodie Foster right now? Why the fuck? What the fuck? Fffff-fuck!

Oh! Oh! Oh! Jack, jack it, Jack it Jack jack it. Jack it like a jacket, oh! jack it.

But foreplay is two player. Bananas arrange themselves in strange poses and insertions.

Follow it up. Follow it up the critically acclaimed. You're with the clique. You're with our clique 2-night, Hey.

Well now now now dog...

Jack fucks Suzie into oblivion. In his head. In his head all is well. In his head all is gone. In his head Jodie Foster isn't getting pumped hardcore.

Jodie's breasts jiggling, her vaginal area sucking like a mouth. She knows all the good positions. She knows how to twist and shout and turn it all inside out. Jodie fucking Foster. Pays in pink bananas and a little cash. Jodie is a special kind of john.

And when Jodie says, "I know now what Suzie sees in your drunken bastard hit man ass." And when Jodie mentions Suzie, Jack should catch on, situation the should click for Jack. But no, oh no. Stupidity is not the reason. For neglect and seasonal. Irresponsibility. Can you beat the magick?

Jodie says one last o and the fucking ceases and Jack falls asleep and Jodie clings to Jack and falls asleep. Hours pass, Jack wakes up and says, "What the hell is going on here?"

"Hey baby," says Jodie. "You're a real animal with those bananas."

Jack unexpectedly calls up Suzie on the telephone and says, "I have something to confess to you. Last night, I ended up balling Jodie Foster. Sorry I don't know what happened."

Suzie says, "That jealous bitch! She's trying to break us up. Get out of there with whatever you came for and we'll reinitiate our oneness later tonight."

Jodie Foster didn't expect that crazy phone call. And Jack was out of there with pink bananas and a little cash. Suzie sniffed some snow and sucked some snow and it was a good night.

Wicked plans foiled easily, wicked plots must rise up to replace. Many wicked plots been brewing long time. The town's in an uproar. Ifn' it wasn't so gawdawn anarchistic a thing, the town might very well riot.

Thing is, Jack's popular, a stand-up guy. Only, nobody wants to admit it. Jack's a secret idol

to hundreds. Everybody wants to be Jack and nobody wants to be thought of as an idolater. It's how it always is.

Next time you're looking for a little turkey don't come accusing me of theft.

Jack settles into his desk job waiting for calls and entertains himself by watching the ringing phone. He thinks, "I just had a hit yesterday. Today's break. Maybe I'll break some bones. Don't the bitches know gambling's an unhealthiness and sin?"

Jack says, "Hey phone!" He answers the phone. There's an old lady on the other side of the line.

An old lady says, "Hey man how's the flow?"

"Flowing," Jack says.

"I feel you," she says, the old lady. "I feel you aright. Yeah, Granny's feelin' it. Pass some that flow over here!"

Jack says, "Lady, what's the job?"

An old lady says, "Hey man, here's the dealio. Fat Frank's shaking down the hotdog stands. He's messing with the business. My dogs ain't like that none too much. So show Frank what for before I gotta stick my foot up his ass!"

"Addresses, lady," Jack says. "And make me an offer."

Meanwhile, still outside the city limits, we find two troubled teens sitting, chilling, shooting the shit from the back of a battered blue pickup truck in the McDonalds parking lot.

"I don't understand what's up with Fred," boy Mike the high school senior says. "He's doing things... He's gonna fuck up his whole life."

So girl Janet the high school senior says, "Well. Well, there's this thing inside people. Sometimes, people just want to--there's this terrible need, suddenly, to do something so incredibly stupid all jaws drop. Or a need just to fuck things up. And when you have to fuck things up, what better to fuck than your own life? This thing, this rebel urge, it's inside us all and can as easily manifest itself as mad naked runs through the local Wal-Mart as, say, road rage or the meter smashing seen on that movie Cool Hand Luke. Now we've all got this, this thing itching to surface, I think. I have it. Some of us get over it, some of us repress it, and some of us have it bad... Like our friend Fred. I think what it comes from is being surrounded by, by this, all of this! School and work and the world and all these little moving parts. Are we more than moving parts, responding to stimulus depending on vague predispositions, responding predictably most of the time? Can it be escaped? If we attack it, will it go away? I don't think rebellion is the answer. I mean, it's all politics, and politics are the biggest contributing factor to the problem. Like, we have to all be simplified to function properly in this world, in this nation, in any nation, and if we outright don't fit, what then? We only end up hurting all those people around us. We only end up hurting ourselves. But if we don't break away some how, what are we? Are we machines? Have the machines already conquered?"

Mike says, "Yeah... I'm getting a chessburger. You want anything?"

Janet watches Mike jump down onto the hot pavement and she says, "A vanilla shake would be nice." She pulls up her legs and rests her chin between her knees.

Jack is searching the bushes. He thought he saw something moving in there. Well, it's gone now, so he heads inside. He says, "Hey Suzie. We got any beer left?"

"We never had any beer, Jack," says Suzie before grabbing her husband and greeting with passion. Something stinks.

"Oh shit. Shit floating in the toilet again?" Jack asks.

"Yeah," Suzie says. "We're going to have to call a plumber. What did you do at work 2day?"

Jack says, "Got a job beating up a shaker. Good pay. Shouldn't take long to find the bastard, I

gotten the message all right.

"I know you!" says the hotdog vender. "You're that pimp can't keep his hands off our ladies."

"Who's ladies?" Jack asks.

"Our ladies," says the hotdog vender. "I mean us decent working-class Christian Americans. You keep stealing our hos, yo! First Suzie... Suzie used to be such a nice girl. A cousin of mine has a friend who used to date her. Word is she was *nice*. Now all she does is smoke dope and fuck all the time. Suzie was bad enough, then you seduced Jill, then you got your hands on Jodie Foster! Why don't you chill with that stuff already?"

"I'm a decent working-class American," says Jack. "So I hit a few in my day. That was two days ago that stuff used to happen. I'm all about defending the weak and the helpless, now."

"Weak and the helpless my ass," says the hotdog vender.

"I helped you didn't I?"

Says the hotdog vender, "Well, alright. But what about the hos, man? You've been banging three pretty ladies and it hasn't even been a full three days! You've been corrupting the females. They're fragile and impressionable, you know. You gotta watch out for that stuff."

"Jodie Foster date raped me," says Jack. "Not only that, we weren't dating. I haven't banged Jill in years. I am half a flesh."

Jack coughs.

"Well," says the hotdog vender. "Well. Well, well, well." The hotdog vender wags his finger. "Well okay. So you have a point. But you're still a stupid drunken criminal."

Jack stomps out his blunt before wandering on down the sidewalk. The old lady lives down there a ways. She probably already has the money all ready and waiting.

Janet is sitting in English 12 contemplating the meanings of two related words: dig and grok. English 12 seems the appropriate place for this sort of reflecting.

Can you dig dig? Can you grok grok? Can you dig grok and grok dig? Are there differences here?

To dig is to understand, sort of. It's deeper than understanding and it's affectionate. It's positive understanding. And a kind of seeking, too. Yeah, that's what it is. I... I think I dig it. Me digs the thinking past-in-stance.

To grok is to drink, agrees the Martian. Grokking this discourse, I ponder. To grok. Grok is a word with an entire dictionary devoted to defining it. To grok water is to drink water, then to feel the water, then to watch the water from all sides, then to become the water, then to step outside yourself. Grokking is not defined in English. Grokking can only be defined in Martian, a language that does not exist.

Is there a language for the dig? We're all digging for something. We dirty our fingernails looking for truth. The dig is a good attempt at the grok, but it is English. Also it is cultural and we want cultural. Grok is dweebish sci-fi.

The Martian, no more a stranger than anyone in this strange land, no more a stranger than anyone real, came and taught impossible things. And now we have those New Age sexual freedom fighters fighting for a fictional religion. Stranger in a Strange Land is as biblical as Thus Spake Zarathustra. Unfortunately, those counterfeits can't help but fall short of the high hopes directed toward them.

Particularly if I decide those high hopes are impossible, for then becomes true, as always, the notion that my reality-loop has been accepted into being.

Dig is an important word. I will dig, even through the granite. And I will grok the digging. What have I to do that's any better?

A piece of chalk rolls onto the floor. Nobody notices.

Jack walks up to the old woman and she says, “Yo dawg how’s it progressing?”

“Fat Frank won’t be shaking down any more hotdog stands,” says Jack.

Announces the old woman, haggard now that she’s not talking through a phone, “Marvelous news! But listen, man, I got your money but you might want to just chill here for a while before you take it. I’m saying, you really want to haul a big sack of cash around on these streets?”

Jack says, “I don’t think two million is enough to tempt anybody anymore.”

“Bullshit it ain’t gonna tempt nobody!” says the old lady. “You just hang for a while and my husband will grant you the Cadillac escort to wherever.”

“No,” says Jack. “Lady, it’s a long drive and a short walk. I’ll be okay. Just hand me the sack.”

“You sure?” says the old lady. “I’ve got cocaine. You want to party, Jack?”

“Cocaine!” Jack shouts. “What do I look like, a detective?”

The lady hands Jack a two million dollar sack and he’s off. To buy dangerous illegal drugs. To sell to the neighbor’s kids.

“Hey neighbor Mr. Bill!” says Jack early one morning a little to excitedly. He has just rung the doorbell and it has just been answered.

“Uh um Hi, Jack...”

“Look, I’m sorry, Bill,” says Jack. “I should never have beaten you like a whore. It was a wrong thing, and wrong things should not occur. I want to make it up to you.”

Oh, okay,” says Bill. “That’s mighty neighborly of you. You had better watch it, Jack, or you might turn into a right nice fellow.”

“Yeah, Bill,” says Jack. “I’m really sorry. So I was wondering... I have all day off today, so if you need anything at all, you just ask. I could even watch things around the house for you, do any kind of little odd jobs, try to free up some of your time so you can go out and do something with your wife.”

“Splendid idea, actually,” says Mr. Bill. “Only thing is, Randy gets home at twelve... Mark at 3:30. You don’t mind—do you like kids, Jack?”

“The least I can do is baby-sit for you for a day,” says Jack. “I mean, I hit you pretty hard, I hit you a whole bunch. You really didn’t deserve any of that... But this has to be the day, the only day, because I’m taking a break from work.”

Says Bill, “It’s settled then! The carpets need vacuuming, the windows need washing (Windex is in the hall closet), and I’d appreciate it if you could bake up some brownies for when me and the wife return. That shouldn’t be until about 8:30 tonight.”

Bill is quite pleased. Bill’s wife is sort of pleased too. Bill’s wife is also a little suspicious. Luckily, Bill drags her out the door and into the car before she has time to ask any questions.

Bill’s wife has frizzy hair and crooked makeup. She looks like a pretty practical woman, a woman with her shit together.

Jack rests upon the Bill residence living room couch, clicks on the television, and whips out a big fat blunt. He watches some Toon Disney. He gets up to fix some nutmeg tea. Once the nutmeg is ready, he pours himself a cup and relaxes again in the living room. He drinks in disgust. All he really wants to do is sell some drugs to the kiddies.

Will Randy ever come home! It’s been twelve for ten minutes now, and now it’s 12:02.

Randy walks through the door. “Hey who are you?”

Jack says, “I am a pusher and a puncher. I kicked your daddy’s ass and now I get to watch your house.”

Randy says, “Cool, man. What’re you drinking?”

Jack says, “Never mind that. I have some drugs for you. How old are you, Randy?”

“Almost twelve,” Randy says. “I’ll be twelve in less than a month.”

“That’s old enough,” Jack says. Jack pulls out a big bag of dangerous illegal drugs. “I’ll sell

you this whole bag for five dollars if you promise to share with your brothers and to finish everything before your parents get home tonight at 8:30."

"Wow that's a good deal!" Randy says. Randy forks over five dollars. He asks, "Do you have any gold paint?"

"No, sorry," Jack says. "Thanks for the five and remember what you've agreed to."

Jack went home to his house and lovely wife next door.

Little Randy died. Mark didn't die because Randy had already died thousands of times before Mark got home and so Mark didn't know what to do with the drugs.

The Bill family had a cat. The cat snacked a little on Randy's cheek.

Now, none of that turn-for-the-worst actually happened, in part because Jack would never waste so many drugs on others. Jack never gave away his big sack of drugs and Randy is only dead because Jack stabbed him in the head with a fork.

Right now, Jack is cooking cheesy catfish because it is his turn.

Georgio was a hobo and Gergio, he was too slow to catch the train. Gergio failed at everything then he failed at that. Now Georgio's living off an ant swarm he's just discovered, hoping and praying for the proper nutrients.

Georgio wanders onward to destinations unrecorded by the mad scientists with their testing tubes. Well, the thing is, there was ice cream on the tracks. It was completely ridiculous. Georgio ate some of the ice cream and he was happier than he had ever been. He wanted to get fat and useless.

Mad cappers trap the Jackstring in the organism in a wire. The third head develops quicker than was at first expected. Ifn' yea can read, read this on all road signs: Fish sleep with prisoners. What means this?

Meaninglessness is a concept carefully honed throughout history and paryticularly during the hobo depression of 1872. During that period, many uncouth individuals left behind mindless careers to pursue mindless wanderings. Aimlessness became a new religion and Georgio became a follower. He mowed his neighbor's lawn in order to make a buck with which to fund his travels.

Tie the g-string clockwise and counter it with hype. Georgio was still looking for a train when it rained all over his rubber hose.

A little senior high school girl of about age 18 with pigtails approaches Georgio. She says, "Does the next train go to Springfield?"

"How the hell should I know?" asks Georgio.

"Nobody knows," says a frog named Bill who is squished by the incoming train. Splurt!

Georgio and the little girl, who's name is Janet if you haven't guessed you stupid idiot, jump the train. After they jump the train, it's smooth sailing into Tachachaka. If only she (Bess/I mean Janet) could get a ride across the ocean. Janet certainly deserves a ride, don't you think?

Uncertainty plagues the wisdom teeth.

What's on the other side? What's void? How can I know?

How can you not put importance on this you sonuvabitch.! I don't like it when they work it back.

Study, study, study. Experience, experience, experience. Whatever comes of it will do you good, whatever the good. What else can be?

Bad is bad, finite is better. We are afraid of finite because we are afraid of beginning and end. We don't want to end. We don't want to go on either sometimes. Just blow your brains out, go to hell. It's automatic suspension of privacy. I'm going to write a letter, but I'll be back and you literally won't notice.

Boom! Haha! Explosions make a "booming sound" which cracks or shatters windows.

Questions are for the curious. Damn them.

I think I would like Janet, were she a real person. There is no way to tell. You can't look inside people when they're real. If you look inside real people, you crapsa your pants! And how do I know if she's hot? That's important, you know. I haven't described her so I can't know. If she's hot.

Subjective/objective, which is purely possible and which is infinity?

The meaning is meanness. The quality of being mean strays the cats from their milk due to intimidation.

Intimidation... Hmm...

In a week Jack got a job as a car salesman. After he quit that job, he became a bouncer at a nightclub called Ante's Sweetness. In addition, he was racking in much cash with his freelancing.

Jack and Suzie bought a new house. It was a nice house with nice windows. The walls were dirty. The floor was sometimes very dirty. It was a good house.

Jack made a good bouncer because all he had to do was chomp on a big fat cigar and shout down bastards. He let in most folk regardless of circumstance on account of his being an understanding sort of person.

Jack bitchslaps his new bitch. Not Suzie or a new girlfriend. He has recently purchased a dog. The velocity of the bitchslap is such that it teaches a lesson without injuring. It is recommended that all dog owners slap their canines on occasion.

Jack would never abuse a pet.

This guy in a raincoat (it hasn't even been raining outside) is trying to get into the nightclub. Says Jack, "I think not pal oh no way."

Says the guy in the raincoat, "I'm a nonconformist, man!"

Says Jack, "Self-righteous bastard!" Then Jack punches guy-in-raincoat in the nose.

Jack knows a little telepathy. There won't be any more trouble with the visitors tonight.

Waiting in line is like turning tricks for some of the club whores. They smile and go through whatever just to make the green (here meaning cut).

It goes on like this until Jack gets his break. Broken from the club, he is free to visit the office. As late as it is, or as early, depending on how you look at it, the phone is ringing frantically. The phone is crying out, "Answer me, damnit!"

Jack says, "Oh all right. No, never mind, I don't feel like it." Jack whips the phone into shape and goes for pizza.

The pizza is delicious. Sleeping Suzie deserving of a break, Jack munches alone. Raindrops begin falling outside. Jack cries for the guy in the raincoat.

It's a madhouse out there away from home. You gotta deal or you'll get passed dirty cards. Well, why not. Fox trot. Shake it, honey, you know the steps.

His expressions melt into in two... Divided we fall. Fox trot.

Janet and Georgio exchange stories in the train. An environment whizzes by outside. Georgio's stories feel artificial.

Janet says, "It's cold tonight."

"Hell's bells," says Georgio.

Janet says, "What does that mean?"

Georgio pauses. He asks, "What are you running from, Janet?"

Janet is running from the whiz. She says, "I'm not running."

"No, you're running," says Georgio.

"I'm not running," insists Janet.

"We're all running," says Georgio.

Jack pulls into the parking lot outside his work. He glides into his office and has himself a seat. He kicks his feet up. He disconnects the phone then picks up the phone and says, "Hello," into the mouthpiece.

"Get your ass over to Food Lion if you want some kind of cash!" shouts the earpiece.

"Well," says Jack, "No reason to shout."

"Ca-Ching! That is the sound that is shouting at you this minute! Come on, easy money! Bam!" shouts the earpiece.

Jack looks at the phone. He hangs up. He heads out the door. He turns on his car and heads for Food Lion.

Everybody works at Food Lion.

Don't do it hard right, work it hard left.

Jack walks into Food Lion and recognizes everybody. There is one person he doesn't recognize and that person is holding a five.

"Wow, a fiver," says Jack once the money has been accepted.

"And there's more where this came from," remarks the stranger oddly rhetorically yet not theoretically but a bit theatrically. He had the voice of a voice-changer, before it changed.

Jack says, "So what's the job g-spot?"

The stranger says, "I have this crazy little multicolored cat who only pretends to love me. Every time I get close to her, she scratches out my eyes. Teach my cat the meaning of love and I will give you another fiver."

"Sorry," says Jack. "I can't waltz."

"Hey man, I know the score," the stranger says. "Reliable sources reported to mine ears the information that you have discovered the secret to the meaning of love."

"Magicians never reveal their secrets, unless Fox offers them the appropriate viewing audience."

Says the stranger, "Aw, hogwash!" The stranger stamps the mud off his boots all over the clean Food Lion floor. He walks out the automatic Food Lion doors and searches the Food Lion parking lot for his car. He finds his Cadillac and drives home to his wife.

Jack has the sniffles. He blows his nose all over Food Lion toilet paper from the toilet paper shelf.

I feel like I'm driving a lawnmower in the rain.

One day.

"Hey Janet, want to fuck?"

"Okay."

Janet & Company fuck.

No regrets.

(This has been a poem about searching for w/o finding love)

Back on the train, Janet's got her chin tucked between her knees again. She'll never ask you please again. Georgio is sleeping beside her. Georgio is dreaming. Some of us might be dreaming also.

Janet wants to write or do something. It's been so long just sitting in the cold. Finally, she falls into a meditative state. No more time is wasted.

Suzie is being hassled at work.

"You know you look like a whore, Suzie," says coworker Rebecca who knows and feels things to which she would never admit.

"Do you know how I feel?" asks Suzie.

"No," says Rebecca. "How could I? How could I possibly know what it is that has possessed you to fuck that Jack fellow willy-nilly and smoke his dope willy-nilly and move into his household and completely ignore his disgusting escapades? Did you here about what happened with your old friend Jodie?"

"Jack told me all about Jodie Foster," says Suzie.

Rebecca gasps. Says Rebecca, "Suzie honey, what *are* you thinking?"

Says Suzie, "You can't know, Rebecca. You can't know what I'm thinking and you can't know what I'm feeling. You *can't know*."

"Fine, honey," says Rebecca. "Fine. Spend all your time with that moocher, abuser, born loser. It's your right. It's your life. Let me give you a little advice, at least. Would that be all right? Just a little advice?"

"Sure," says Suzie. "Say whatever you want."

"Have an affair, honey. You'll gain back a little of your self-respect if nothing else."

Says Suzie, "I am half a flesh."

Hell's bells.

Jack wants to get a job as a banker. He walks up to the bank and the people there tell him, "You don't have enough of an education."

Jack says, "I went to Harvard. I'll even write as much on my application to prove it."

The people at the bank were like, "Yeah, right. What the damn."

Did Jack go to Harvard, or is he telling a dirty rotten lie? I don't know. What would be most probable considering improbability as likely?

Jack never will get a job at that blasted backhole-sucking bank, in any case. With or without education, his reputation is too good for the banking type.

Jack makes good money as a banger/slash freelancer. He doesn't really need extra jobs, anyhow.

Suzie makes pretty good money, too, at her job working for the man.

Between Jack and Suzie, there's plenty of money.

Jack goes out and buys a waterbed. It isn't just any waterbed. Oh, no. It is the most comfortable waterbed in all of the Mattress King bed-selling chain. It would be wonderful making waves in the waterbed.

Right now, there is nothing really special going on in the world of Jack.

Franz the Goober Eater was catching a bus from the comfort of a sidewalk bench when a purse-snatcher snatched up his purse. Franz said, "Hey! You damned purse-snatcher! Come back here with my purse!"

The name of the purse-snatcher was Randy Bill, in case you're wondering about the purpose of this interlude.

"Ready?" asks Georgio. "I'm getting out of here!" says Georgio.

He jumps.

He rolls.

He's out of there.

Janet watches trees and fields and dirt and gently sloping hills and a small stream and rough rock hills and less pebbles, smaller pebbles, there's a bit of sand, there's some dirt, there's--

Janet rolls and rolls and rolls. Who the hell knows what happened to Georgio? Janet grunts, sits up, shakes some dust out of her dress. She looks around. She knows in which direction to walk. She knows if she walks far enough in this direction, she'll come to a road.

Georgio, he knew what he was doing. What the damn is Janet doing?

What the damn is wrong with you, man?

Janet finds the road. She could hear the cars from quite a distance. Now that she's here, she sticks out her thumb.

Zoom in on Jack with hat hair. He has just taken off his brand new red cowboy hat because he thinks it is a stupid hat. It was presented to him as a present by a guest of the Ante's Sweetness.

Jack walks away from the line. He has been switched out for the night, switched with a fellow by the name of Weak Tea. He has plenty of time to drive on over to the ol' office and consider carefully whether or not the phone deserves his attentions.

Jack steps into the office. Jack falls into a warm leather seat. The leather sinks a bit. Jack weighs options with a scale of pinpoint accuracy.

The phone is dancing to the rings.

Jack pulls A Sherlock Holmes Collection from his little desk library. He ponders that old lady. That crazy old bag!

Jack reads:

"Which is it to-day?" I asked, "morphine or cocaine?"

He raised his eyes languidly from the old black-letter volume which he had opened.

"It is cocaine," he said, "a seven-per-cent solution. Would you care to try it?"

"No, indeed," I answered brusquely. "My constitution has not got over that Afghan campaign yet. I cannot afford to throw any extra strain upon it."

He smiled at my vehemence. "Perhaps you are right, Watson," he said. "I suppose that its influence is physically a bad one. I find it, however, so transcendently stimulating and clarifying to the mind that its secondary action is a matter of small moment."

"But consider!" I said earnestly.

But consider. Consider the consequences... Think long-term... Don't forget what happened to the Jackrabbit, son.

What is there to reward Sherlock Holmes, when all the mysteries are solved?

"For me," said Sherlock Holmes, "there still remains the cocaine-bottle." And he stretched his long white hand up for it.

Well, Jack is interested neither in transcendental stimulation nor in the solving of mysteries. He isn't even interested in solving the mystery of the ringing phone. Who might it be calling at this of all hours do you suppose?

"Hello," Jack says into the mouthpiece.

"Hey," says the earpiece. "What's shaking?"

"Joe?" asks Jack.

"No," says the earpiece, "I'm just a telephone."

Jack hangs up the phone. He waits three seconds for the phone to begin ringing again. The phone begins ringing again. Jack picks up.

"Hey, Jack," says Suzie through the earpiece.

"Yeah?" asks Jack. "Suzie? How'd you know you could get through? I hardly ever answer this thing!"

Says Suzie, "I knew you'd answer for me. Now get over here you stupid fucker."

Two phones hang up. Jack heads for his station wagon.

For days, I've been waiting beside this yellow stop sign for an unusual sign. When it comes, I am told, I shall recognize it right off. I will know to strike!

I'm hoping for fire and brimstone.

"Need a ride?" asks a right nice fellow in a pickup truck, a fellow nice enough to pull over, a

fellow with greasy black hair. "Where you headed?"

Says Janet, "Just drop me off in the next town." Janet gets in the truck.

"I'm Chesterton," says the driver.

"Janet," says Janet. She plays with a clump of hair hanging across her face.

"So," says Chesterton, "where're you headed?"

"Just drop me off at the next town," says Janet.

"I mean," says Chesterton, "in general. In life. Where're things taking you?"

"That's what I'm looking for," says Janet. "I'm looking for a destination."

"Well," says Chesterton, "If you need a job..."

"No," says Janet. "You can just drop me off, I'll be fine."

Janet is dropped. That's all there is to it.

Janet walks around the town searching for a soda. It doesn't take her long to find one of those. Those things are everywhere.

Janet drinks.

It's a cold Mountain Dew, high on sugar, caffeine, and taste. Both thirst quenching and refreshing.

It's a great day to walk while drinking a soda. To explore and be happy because you've got soda. Seven scoops of vanilla ice cream would make it the happiest day ever.

Janet walks into a Food Lion. She really can't afford to waste all her road money on junk food. It would not be a responsible decision. Sometimes, however, spontaneity is its own reward.

Janet picks up a box of vanilla with fudge swirls. She pays in full for the item, a price of \$8.22 with tax. She carries the product outside, opens, and consumes rapidly. Hands become spoons become shovels. The empty box flops against the ground. Janet walks on.

There's a hungry animal on the loose!

Jack is out walking.

Jack bumps into Janet.

"Hello."

"Hello."

Familiarity rings true through the black void.

The echoes cascade lonely into a kind of twilight.

Jack and Janet say "Hheelllloo"

Jack says, "Do I know you?"

Janet says, "Do we know anybody?"

Jack says, "Insecurity is expressed."

Janet says, "Always, insecurity is."

Jack says, "The person is the situation."

Janet says, "The person is universal."

Jack says, "And they shall spread their false testimony and yea shall smote them."

Janet says, "The wicked hide their evil in a cloak of righteousness, the deceivers hide their deceit through accusation, the witch hides behind the witch hunt."

Jack says, "How's about we chew the fat?"

Janet says, "All right. Let's walk this way."

That's how the first part goes down. Stick around, Charlie, and grab some popcorn.

Janet says, "The fish know how to swim really well."

Jack says, "What the hell you talking fish for."

Pause. Button pressed.

Janet says, "I really like ice cream."

Jack says, "I can tell you fat pig."

There's this funny squealing sound.

Pause for Janet. Opportunity to think.

Janet says, "I'm *not* fat!"

Jack says, "Well your boobs are fat."

Janet says, "What's up in your life?"

Jack says, "The highs, and even some of the lows. "

Janet says, "Nice."

Jack says, "It really is."

Janet says, "Things can be nice anywhere."

Jack says, "Only when that's true."

Pause. Somebody lights a cigar. Somebody inhales deeply. Jack says, "So where're you headed, Janet?"

Janet says, "Oh, I think I'd like to live in the city." Janet smiles.

Janet smiled.

Jack says, "Pollution will be high."

Janet says, "Most certainly."

The rending has begun.

Jack says, "Bye."

"Bye," says Janet.

It's like, here's the secret: The secret to the meaning of everything is (shhhh.... If you can read father your ears are too distracted by your eyes for you to hear the secret)

Page-turners can be monsters. And they maybe. They are permitted.

Jack's ears wake him when his alarm clock radiates ringing waves. He leaps from the covers as if the protagonist from Frogger. His muscles twitch in anticipation of the day.

Jack and Suzie have a good-morning screw, just to get the hands turning on the clocks.

Jack dashes off to work at a time acceptably beyond scheduled departure. He arrives and injects some cocaine he bought off a bum.

That is all need be said of Jack/Suzie. Oh, otherwise of importance! Jack and Suzie grabbed hold of many pink bananas *of ambiguous origin*.

What's your favorite cartoon? Go watch it on the television set located somewhere within your household. This Jack and Suzie show is off the airwaves.

What's your problem, buddy?

That's the type of thing Janet would like to ask certain people in the world whom tend toward a disposition of meanness. She never does say such a thing, reflecting on perceived meekness in the act.

There was such a thing as a stallion tw tw two stallions actually

all twisted together like in a sort of huddle

Janet is searching the seashore for a boat. She finds a canoe. She boards that canoe and properly handles the paddles. Janet is crossing those tranquil seas.

Janet is frustrated. Veins popping, breaking mirrors, squished heads, general squeeze. Twist

is something not to knock, the door handle does
twist graciously for the time being.

Janet knows what she has to do. Janet paddles. Oh, she paddles through the waves, through
the blade, through the trails, through the cycle, through, through she's THROUGH!

The canoe hits.

I say, the canoe hits the beach.

The sand explodes a jubilee.

Janet drops the paddles. Janet jumps from the boat. Janet moves on into the sand. Janet
sneaks into her island through the back door ready to conquer ready to take the throne, the
throne, bitch.

Shit. Shit on the floor. Shit on the walls. Shit peeking up through the cracks in the sand.
Watch all the bobbing shit heads.

There was--

He was...

When he

Sss.....

The gates swing wide. The gates alone see the sight so impotent so
 motiveimportant. to Be seen. I just don't understand what hand you've had in this young blood.

The skies whistle and bang like kettledrums.

We had better squish piggy with a rock when he squeals. Oh you know he'll squeal son.

Janet walks into the bar and says, "Bartender, what're your views on religion?"

"Religion?" says the bartender. And darn if that bartender doesn't run straight out the door.

There's a squished rat laid out across the bar. It's a big`un!

I can't fight it. That wouldn't be right for therapist.

Rape me, rape me of my milk.

Would you istyento the poetry that huy is spewing out like a trained actor. The color depends on
weather conditions/ We atrbrtu upset about somethinhg y8u should go to the sour e and do something
about ut man, It can't possibly wrk this good.

Fire Gods light `er up. The answer is in the bubble.

Rage against minimum wage. Rage against the rages ain'r real popular at the moment.

Everything is shaking. There is an earthquake. Eruptions occur. Eruptions are Hardlyh a
wortyb pursuit. Don't ever go out to drive

On a successfull run.

The unraveling of silk tapestries places an unusual strain upon the diligent spider. Our spider
is called Boris. He is resting just now.

Janet steps through a portal into a motel. She gets a room cheap, a room full of crawling
protein.

Janet looks into an empty hole. SHe sees that the hole is indeed empty. SHe ponders the
emptiness of holes.

He. She was a da.... H/s/hE.

It's comforting to know the space has been wasted.

Janet falls into a bed. Dust clouds engulf her. She closes her eyes and sinks into the void.

Then it was 8:30, and the nutmeg had taken over.

Jack, never to be heard from again, is today mowing the lawn. Tomorrow he will water a
flower. His is a happy home. Some day, plants will wither and there will remain the happy home.

Suzie, never to be heard from again, is working today out of a stuffy office. Mashed potatoes

are delicious with the right preparations.

Jack and Suzie remain never to be heard from again.

He can't push it too hard.

He's pushing that rolling rock up this steep incline. What we need is a decline. At the top there's a decline, but that decline works too well.

Janet sees all this through her motel window. She ponders investigating further. The trappings of such actions seem quite alluring.

Janet waltzes out of the motel like a professional waltzer from the days of waltzing past.

Janet spots an unattended vehicle. She breaks on in, she breaks on through.

What does she find

On the other side?

It is well to leave well enough alone. That well dried up years ago.

The gorilla warriors is hiding in the bushes. Waiting to charge the turkey.

It's free of associated presses they're a ripoff, man!

Janet goes to hide in the bushes with the gorillas. The gorillas smell and they're full of parasites. And they're always paying more attention to their guns than to the real world. Janet is hiding with them.

Janet wants to jump free but the hoop is in a circle. Infinity is a circle, sort of. Circles are finite forever—infinity. That's the difference between

Shattering the glassbrain.

Glassjaw cracks.

CRACK!

Janet is typing on a spare typewriter provided by motel management. She is typing a letter to her one true love in the world whomever that may be. I'll never let any of you look at that damned letter.

You think you're smarter now, don't you? Your IQ is leaking out.

Experiences come with holes. Brand-new holes. Poked, ripped, prodded, dug. Holes and cruising.

Janet thinks, *What if my one true love is the rock-pusher?*

Strange oddities work their weirdness upon your nightlife. Upon Janet's nightlife, too.

It's a good thing Janet carries switchblades. She's out after hours, a gang of hoods welcomes her to the city with an attempted mugging. They don't expect so much fight out of the old girl. Janet didn't expect to give so much fight.

Adrenaline, with the lizard, sneaks right up on you. Fingernails high five the chalkboard. The blood is spilt, it is not yours.

Janet's attackers run scared. Janet cleans her switchblades and swishes them into her jean pockets.

It's what's to be expected. Officially home, Janet needs to find a secure source of income. She's out of cash, my brother.

People mug you in vain.

Well, she could try Bobby's Burgers. Greasy.

Janet gets a job at Bobby's Burgers. She serves on the drive-through crew. She serves the meal and she also serves a smile.

I'm really fucking high. Oh shit, I'm really fucking high.

Janet is swimming. In a kind of pool. It's break time.

Janet, she's in the money. Oh yes, she's in the money.

People with jobs are so rich!

But there are still many dangerous gangs in Chrystal City. Mighty lion was never quite powerful enough to stop them all. There will always be gangs, whatever Mighty lion has to say about it.

Hit the curb, you reverb. Janet she is walking home from work one day. And the gangs, they think they got something to say.

Boy named Roach pops out of an alley, steps in front of Janet and says, "Hey you know where you are girl?"

"No," Janet says. "I'm just trying to get home," says Janet.

Roach and his gang of hoods pull their coat hoods over their heads so their faces are shadows. They look at Janet with extreme perjury. They have baseball bats and chains.

Says Roach, "I know you're new in town and ignorant of our ways. However, this is no excuse for behavior inexcusable. So me and my roughneck crew shall attempt a severe beating." Severe beating is attempted, yet never accomplished.

Janet is a good runner and a good hider. She hides behind a blanket she finds. Lice crawl out of the blanket and into her hair. It will be difficult obtaining the correct eradicating shampoo. Oh well, Janet is free from a beating.

The rest of the walk home is pleasantly atmospheric.

Don't look over your shoulder. They're waiting for that. You think you could spot them back there? You think they need to be seen to see? Ain't nobody could penetrate the network.

Bending plastic.

Look out you fuck.

You fuck, look out!

If you touch the negatives, I'll negate you.

Blending plastic.

Blending.

Janet is carrying a shopping bag. She is filling it mostly with ice cream and nutmeg.

Janet nearly trips, there's a bump on the grocery store floor.

There's an ache.

No

Excuses.

Janet is ordering a meal. She has purchased the ice cream, frozen the ice cream, and now she is in a fancy restaurant. She is ordering a great big helping of catfish.

The catfish comes. The catfish is eaten. The catfish is delicious.

The waiter says, "I hope you have six dollars lady."

Says Janet, "You shall be paid in full for your services."

Dine and dash. Janet is out the door.

It is a life of crime and cashing in.

If you have a happy heart then this is the place for you on the other side of the rainbow. Ponies is jumping all over massaging your back.

World peace, that is, the problem of creating world peace, has been taken up by yours truly. Truly, though, I've given up on world peace because all the methods that work are either extremely deadly or extremely boring.

Choking me choking it out.

No form of affection may be superior to others, the singer told me.

Janet is not hungry. Janet, she is a little sleepy. All the roughnecks out there, they know to stay away. They know what happens to the stand-their-ground kind. It's pretty special to be a known-of, to be putting on red pajamas.

It seeps through the cracks in the old crack pipe.

Don't run from the hungry beast, says Janet. She says such things without thinking and it's like she's not really talking at all.

Thought of/for whom as. Thought of you with/in everything. I saw you and I knew, oh, c'mon, girl! You know the know how they do it down there.

How is it you don't know how? This how to-for what in purpose?

Helpings are taken. Hearty helpings are taken. Janet is a hearty has a hearty stomach.

How did it get that way. It's hard to say.

Janet is in the kitchen preparing a glass of tea. She likes the taste of tea and the tranquil feeling she gets from drinking the tea.

The warriors are all standing in a row prepared to take their shots in the ass. These warriors know what is coming, they know what they've got coming. It's a type of fish.

The lights are shining in her eyes acting hard on her vision hard on her eyes. She'll go hard on you hard on your eyes hard on you tonight. It was beginning, the seeing, or the nownow, liiight.

Janet is sleeping, picking up the things she drops on the corn rows. She sees many familiar faces and everything in fact seems so real some of it must be. You don't really want to understand chum you're just looking for the pretense of having to search. "Search" is necessary to determine position of the find.

Illusions and pretensions clouding your dumb head. YUCK! Says the goat after taking a bite off his favorite slice of chess. He's been carrying that chess so long, nibbling, nibbling, finally the chess has started to stink something awful.

Drifting in the breeze, drifting like a forest would. Flying high above, falling down into love. It's circling until the time comes to release the Illuminatus Primus who is to conquer with prejudice. The sun is shining in my eyes.

The eye beholding is not to be discussed as the beholder. Don't touch the sparrows landing you FUCK! It's not funny that way.

What is it?

It's wonderful.

Is it? I can't tell.

It's beautiful. The most beautiful experience. The most we humans may ever achieve.

But what is it?

BOO!!

Janet is waking and pouring herself a cup of orange juice. After, she pours herself a glass of tea. She carries the tea along with her and drinks to attain and maintain a state of supreme tranquility. She meditates under the apple tree.

Janet is particles.

Janet is for a moment particles in a particle accelerator.

Then Janet is just particles.

You shouldn't have cheated back then back there you shouldn't have.

It wasn't right. You can't

t think i

t wa

s right.

You can't

think.

This isn't Janet speaking. Janet is just particles.

Particles under the tree sitting in the grass drinking tea. Particles sitting on and under particles interacting with particles.

Janet reaches out for a rose bush. She touches a thorn. She squeezes until her finger bleeds. She caresses a rose with her finger.

She is looking up. She is looking at new skies, our Janet.

The human side of things.

Is that really the right side?

Plop!

Georgio is dead. The other night, he got really drunk and tried to wrestle a housecat. Cats are pretty vicious sometimes. This particular housecat only looked like a housecat. It was really a swamp cat. Georgio should have realized this was a possibility. He was chilling out beside this suburban swamp tossing empty green bottles into the water and watching them float. He saw this big orange tom and, well, he felt like a brawl. I thought you might want to know.

Well, he had a real good life. There were ups and downs. It was a real good life because Georgio had more ups, and he never had any trouble, when it was down, getting it up.

There's something strange about midgets. If you're a midget and you're reading this and you're feeling justifiably(???) offended, I apologize. Really, it's not midgets that are strange. Really, it's people's reaction to midgets that is strange. I mean, whatever it is about a person that makes that person different, it's enough to earn a little prejudice against that person. We're all victims of some kind of bigotry and we always will be. The most offensive kinds of bigotry will always be those socially unacceptable kinds, such as a general prejudice against midgets or women or people with pigment. We all have some sort of pigment, but that doesn't matter. There are people out there with a different pigment. It's difference we hate. The sad thing, the really sad thing, is that there will always be socially acceptable bigots. Those are the kinds of bigots *I* find most offensive.

"Janet?"

"Yeah, mom?"

"What are you writing in that journal of yours? What are you thinking about?"

"Nothing, mom."

All that happened a few years before Janet packed her bags and found the island city.

Today, Janet is going out into the club world. She has heard all sorts of crazy rumors about club people and club music. Where she comes from, a few of the crazy rumors are true.

Janet walks into the club dressed to kill. She has two switchblades and a short skirt. She is probably one hot cookie, but this isn't for your penis pal she's not even a cartoon!

Janet pops a cap. She pops that cap into nobody because she forgot to bring her cap gun. She crawls through the masses and dances with the masses and she's not really that into the music.

This club has a very special band. It is a metalliskacoregrass/hip hop blend. It is called Root Maggot's Puppy Loving.

Janet enjoys the music.

Janet is feeling a little sick. Her throat is patchy white. Her nose is really runny. She has a very heavy head. It'a

Had a drea,

Sick, Janet is not getting very much work done. It's why she's out dancing in the hip club world.

In this city there aren't too many hip clubs. When you find a hip club you sit around and wait

a while. It won't be so hip in a month or two. In three or four months, it'll be a zoo.

Dr. once told me the best thing would be to let the healing begin.

Janet has found her drink-on at the bar. She is winning a race.

Lately, Janet has been feeling sick and heavy-headed.

Oh shit, that crazy soap opera is on the television again. What's the dealio with that? Why do they play shit like that at clubs?

Twin Peaks. Reminds me of boobies.

It's a boob tube.

Janet throws a shoe through the tube. To execute said actions she waited for the appropriate soap scene.

Janet dances with a hot red head. His shirt's off so Janet gets to see his muscles. He's not a big caveman or anything. He's about five nine with that sexy Jackie Chan build she's so crazy about. His face is smooth, his hair is long and wavy and all over the place. He's not wearing any shoes. He has blue pants. He is very clean.

Janet walks outside. She smokes a cigarette and notices the nutmeg's still with her. It's funny, she thinks, because it's been a while since the last time she took the revolting substancetute.

Janet walks back inside. She coughs a bit of snot into her hand. She looks at her hand. She rubs the snot off on her jeans. She goes to the bar and gets fucking hammered and walks back outside. She smokes another cigarette and wanders for a bit.

The air is good. It's dark, everything with lights on looks gold.

She's walking next to a set of train tracks. She doesn't know where they could possibly be headed. Hills and trees surround the tracks. It's a pretty rural-feeling area.

She wanders away from the tracks to wander more adventurously.

wait.

Janet enjoys the music.

Janet sees a man. She taps him on the shoulder. She says, "Hey, man."

Man says, "Hey lady what's happenin'?" Man's eyes are red and bulging.

Says Janet, "What's happening with you man?"

"Oh everything's terrific," he says. "Couldn't be better than now. Ain't never better than now."

Before Janet can take a slice through all that crazy mysticism she moves on through the crowds. She ain't motivated by love, she ain't motivated by hate. She's irate, she's irate!

Janet squeezes through the puppets on the strings. She squirms her way up to the stage. She ate maggots out on a table later on.

A voice booms.

BOOM. "What is the meaning of life?"

"I'd tell you, son," says voice designated Opposing Voice. "The thing is, son, it's something you have to work for."

Says a bum voice, "The meaning of life is to find the meaning of life."

Says Opposing Voice, "That's only true until you *do* find it."

Well, at this club, Janet is looking for the meaning of life. She's not looking too hard, bro. She'll look harder when it all comes out backwards. She's always been looking. We's always been looking. She's looked a tad bit harder than many of us, a tad bit not quite so honestly as some of us.

Well, Janet she is a dancer, and, Janet she is a singer, and, Janet she knows how to play the kazoo. You call me up and I tell you all the intimate details about Janet's life. And Janet, she is dancing

wildly at the club. She might even momentarily consider the chicken dance, once she exhausts the eternal others of the world of named dances.

Janet is a star. She has a dance floor boyfriend. He looks like Fabio meets Bruce Campbell. Can u pkchure that? However, he lacks that Campbell charm.

To get out of that join-t, Janet leaves her dance floor boyfriend in a cloud of his own smoke. This succeeds in yielding desired isolated results.

Chocolate bunny rabbits are often large and usually empty. Janet buys this bunny from this guy with a street corner candy stand. The bunny is completely filled with the chocolate sweetness which, in regards to other bunnies, may only go skin deep.

The directory is opened to page twelve. We have a list of names calling down through sky-fields.

Askance it has been. Gregory Bass is on the take.

Mila Goo-GooGhou(agirlfromagovernmentclass)Gaganicelegs was a bowling ball. She rolled into several leftover pins and knocked them all down.

Janet wasn't a very good bowler. Occasionally, she was a telekinetic bowler. It's been years and years since she's bowled at all. She might consider bowling tonight if she comes across an alley.

Alleys are all over the place in Chrystal.

Well, Janet never bowls. She heads home and checks in. Big day at work tomorrow! There'll be a quiz at school.

The monotone deaf pretty boy sits under the stars contemplating the difference between circles and infinity. He comes up with many life-changing revelations worth recording. Unfortunately, the monotone deaf pretty boy is shy and forgetful. He will probably never record any revelations.

Your loss, right? The man knows what he knows.

Hey, maybe shy and forgetful really means greedy and selfish.

In any event, Janet has fallen asleep.

BOOM! Janet wakes up. She puts on her red pajamas and steps outside. She knows it's time for the donkey party even though she doesn't know what goes on at a donkey party. There are donkeys. That's for sure. Whatever goes on, it's really fucking exciting.

If you can't stand the shut up hurt get out of my house too.

Janet sprinkles some nutmeg in large doses into the tea she drinks and spins. Janet is on a wheel rolling up a hill. Like in cartoons where one of the cartoon characters such as Ed Edd and Eddie gets stuck in a tire. You need to move, whatever happens to be your crazy problem.

Acting is acting. If you're an actor go be a fucking actor. Go be whoever.

The alarm clock's ringin' and I'm still singin' and it's time to dance on the tap. The dime is spinning on the table. How much for a little pocket change?

Janet has a cute little brown dog. It's not one of those toy dogs. It's like a mix between a hound dog and a black lab. Really big paws, doesn't grow much larger than a pit bull. It's a very loyal dog named Tramp. Did I say that in the past?

Janet is sick of playing games so she starts making up games to play. She knows some really good ones. She could get a monopoly on the monopoly board game manufacturing business.

She is very good with that particular type of game.

Board games

I made it easy for you.

Janet jumps on board the monopoly. She wins several times and rakes in the cash. She is a cash machine. CaChing. Ca-ching.

Wow. That was a hardly oddball. Now strap on them boots and come on!

Janet buys a pair of roller skates with the money she made from her monopoly monopoly. She has always been a good player. She has always admired the glow.

A piece of man meat asks Janet, "Hey Janet?"

Janet says, "Yeah?"

The man meat says, "What do you look for in a man Janet?"

"Cries and joy and I can't tell you that would fuck everything up," says Janet.

"Oh," says the man meat before walking away.

"I thought you were just watching," says a guy with the common name Jack.

The sign on the store window switches from closed to open. Janet walks inside and buys lots of hotdogs. She rapidly consumes. She has a hunger.

Hungers expand you know. They don't just go away when you stop eating. The best thing in the world for you would be to kills one of those little toy dogs and eats it like a cow. Make doggie steak. The little doggies are sort of annoying anyway.

Dog doesn't taste anything like chicken.

If you just rock the house it shall fall down. It is certain.

The donkey arrives.

Gasp.

Awe.

Amazement.

There is a midget strapped to the donkey's back. The midget is strapped with itchy yellow ropes. The midget looks very uncomfortable.

Shouts a someone, "That isn't fair treatment of the little people!"

Shouts a naked fairy, "I agree!"

The donkey releases the midget and joins the party. Eventually, the donkey dies of alcohol poisoning.

Well, Janet decides to go home. She is sleeping in her comfortable bed.

Morning arrives. It comes with mourning, in the form of a letter. When Janet checks the mailbox she scratches her head. A letter from mother? Who delivers to Chrystal City?

The letter reads

Dear Janet,

This is Mom. Your father is dead. Have a nice day.

Signed Mom

Janet doesn't believe her eyes. They offend her sense of reality. She plucks them out with a spork. Unfortunately, this works all too well. Rather than negate vision, Janet has unleashed infinity! What isn't seen now? Nothing isn't seen.

Well, near-omniscience achieved, there is no point in following further this hatched egg. Except the experiment failed because the spork broke. It caused only minor eye irritation and then it broke.

Janet isn't going to the funeral. Dead people smell funny. The funeral is over half way across the world. Picture a *perfect* sphere with irregular curves.

Accomplished accomplices aren't easy to come by. It's usually the accomplice that takes the fall. That's why everybody needs an accomplice.

Janet is walking through the wasteland. She has on a pair of very special boots. She is also wearing a very special pair of shorts that shows off most of two very special thighs. These expensive clothes are worn in the wasteland because nothing else in the wasteland is expensive. A rare rodent lives there. The rare rodent is not in very high demand.

She switches the boots for a pair of roller skates. She blasts off. Janet skates out of the wasteland.

There is a dog named Tramp following Janet around. Occasionally, occasion being any rare

period during which attention is scarce, the dog named Tramp barks at heels. Today Tramp is hungry. Even when he isn't barking you can hear his smooth little tummy rumbling.

Janet skates into an ice cream store and splits a box with tramp. She uses a spare spork to scoop some of the vanilla fudge swirls onto the sidewalk. Tramp tries to get his maw into the box. He jumps. Eventually he gives up and eats the stuff on the sidewalk. Taste buds explode into Scooby Doo rocket ships.

Janet acknowledges affection towards Tramp by barely rubbing his head. This accomplishes naught. Tramp wants more. Janet caresses for several minutes her rotten mutt.

Nostrils flare. Furry pointy ears extend. Special innate canine psychic powers automatically activate. The dog barks a monstrously sharp warning.

Switchblades activate in a manner not at all similar to that of canine psychic powers. Says Janet, "Where's the danger, boy?"

Tramp telepathically requests he be addressed by his full name. His request is denied due to communication failure. Janet feels dog thoughts oozing through her mind. She watches Tramp.

A snout indicates direction.

Roller skate wheels click against the sidewalk. Roller skates are directionally adjusted so that oncoming threats may be handled most efficiently.

Threat comes running in the form of a hungry raptor. Janet spins on one of her skates and kicks off with the other. Dinosaurs require more than mere knives if you are to have a peaceful midnight snack.

Fear is afraid. Of the termites. Shock is.

Who in the hell expected to see a dinosaur at this hour? To be honest, the dinosaur is actually a video game character. This is bad news for Janet. Not only is her life in danger but her quarters too.

Tramp is an excellent runner. He keeps right up with his master. He doesn't want to get eaten any more than he wants to die.

Janet rents a shotgun from a store specializing in such nonsense. She blasts the dinosaur until all its health is gone and then she hides the body in a sewer so it won't stink too much. Tramp and Janet go home and fall asleep.

So much is resting on the accomplishment of these few simple tasks exorcised in a mannerly and aerobic fashion.

The things about gnaw is gnome. Ifn' instrascatchitit the k i tten. The snow is falling on her head as we speak she's drenched in sweat exhumed like my grandfather's corpse. IF it weren't for freebase, there would be no base neither in-base the bases aren't loaded. Well, it's like this: the panda population is in trouble! no

doubt. About such nonsense puddles may aver some knowledge.

Janet is on thirty-31STSSsssstttttttt..... street. The acknowledgement of this fact is habitually encouraged. If this bothers you you should leave the room.

But

the salad dressing isn't

served properly,

YO.

SO mix in a little this, a little thas, a little thistlewood, a little thatsit,boys.

The point,

What is the point?

The point is the sharpest location. Everyone has a point. Some points stab.

What is a point?

A point is a joint down 31st street near toids and doinks. The popular vote may be popular now, but will it tomorrow? Honestly, the tomorrows keep coming! Foilique.

Janet is

Janet is searching right now for something more than a point you know something better by ten times five-four-three-two or any of those digits. Harshly wedded to the source of the spring of freshly brewed Arabian camel milk tastes like it was milked from a snake. Well, virtuously, the snake departs. It happens in a leisurely fashion. Not the east bit leastly am-bunk-shush.

Lots of the scary stuff in there tonight. The not-so-pleasant AH!YOU'rerui ning my MeDITAtioN!! Which is basically people stuff. Fuck the other stuff. No fuck that(scratch). The other stuff is all-fucking-right, babe. Things is build your empire. Build your appetite.

_____thetthheettththththhheeee BOP. It's boppin'. Yeah, truly amazing swing. Juliet wasn't ruined nor was Romeo they were made. But fuck Shakespeare, says Janet(I certainly wouldn't suggest such a damned abominable comment!)while contemplating her approach to English literature. She would stick to her guns: The Cazoiie medicine cabinet. Filled with holes where the pills slip.

Througghhghghhghggghhh...

It's no problem, you know? The answer was to be-come a dancer. When this occurred, Janet's head was always held high. Her head is high right now. CRaziness. In a bottle called Greased Fuzzy Strikes Matches Too Quickly For Consumption Of This Most Spectacular. Stupendously wonderful product. It worked miraculously, somehow wond-e-rously. It worked like a kite works, it worked like the working ensuing right now. What Janet likes about the pooti Ta shazam is magical powers enhance coolness where properly massaged into unheated fleshy areas. This extends the scope of the investigation, Opaz facTum.

This madman is standing on the street corner preaching of events passed like, far in the past. His madness is addictive but not freshly ground as well. In a flash, there is light. There is plenty of meaning behind your senseless ranting you fudge-fudge-jiggi-swirls-shotgun. Well, my eyes grow heavy. Weeping is.

Says Janet, "Goodnight Tramp." His barks echo but are obscured by the barks of another dog. In the onion ring in the well, let's eat it if it's so big. Oyu Iam Out of nowhere. Finding this Popsicle stand irresistible, I purchase a Popsicle.

I don't know, problems arise. That's just the way it is you man. Janet, I say face your damned problems.

What are Janet's damned problems?

Well, let's discuss

this avenue further.

But first we must board the jetplane!

Away, Janet! Fly with me! In the aeroplane(airplane) straight up straight down. Don't ask about the little blue suit rested for being arrested and becoming sleepy over the worn out. Well, if the trails go away, I'll be tidly bit sadly. Yuck, you've fucked a duck. Just because the words

had rhythm. Ex

plore.

I don'

t really think

to

o highly o

f this gesture.

OOpen as

it

may very well be. I

suppose.

But like so many others,

That didn't really happen.

It's happening right now as we speak this minute.

Janet approaches the madman and hands him a bar of delicious candy. It is a fine chocolate specimen much appreciated by the madman. This is irrelevant. What is of relevance is that the madman says, "I love peaches. If you ever see a peach, you pluck that peach from a tree and enjoy the delicious fruit flavor."

The mad know it. The mad are prophets. We've told you these things before.

Twenty-three pigs dance into a stoplight and die of heat exhaustion.

Oh to be. To be or not. To be not would be an unrepeatabe experience. It's what makes it so rare and longed for. Well, that and lots of other things.

Stuff. Stuffing in the bear in my closet. Janet never let any of her bears lose any of their stuffing. It's because bears suck dog shit into their lungs before they take a walk into the bathroom. And because Janet took good care of her pets.

Tramp is barking. Tramp is hungry. If only that dinosaur had been edible. "But damn it, dog," says Janet, "you've just had ice cream not so long ago. What you want with dinosaur meat?"

Says Tramp, "Bark!"

The end of the world is spiraling staircases. People always try to make you walk too far. People are out to strengthen the leg muscles of their neighbors. There's something about a nice set of legs.

Janet walks through the park looking for doves. She doesn't find as many as expected. She feeds a few some breadcrumbs. Tramp scares some them birds away. Tramp has a funny little stomach. He's trying to eat the breadcrumbs!

Janet once handed Tramp a grape. He pawed at it and played with it. He had the grape in his mouth, more than once. That grape kept Tramp busy for hours.

Dogs are silly creatures. Dogs are perhaps a joke on humanity. Furry creatures 100% loyal to humanity doing tricks for your entertainment. Dogs fuck indiscriminately. Dogs fuck other dogs or pillows or whatever's around. It just doesn't matter. And their love is unconditional.

Unconditional love is a biblical requirement. Unconditional love for everyone. Indiscriminate fucking is a love all requirement (along with unconditional love). Are dogs symbols that should have been exploited by the Martian?

You tell me this: Have you ever been completely all-the-way happy through and through, blissed out of your mind, temporarily in a state of pure paradise? If you answer in the positive, let me ask you another question: Were you on nutmeg?

But Janet is getting lost. She doesn't know which way to leave the park. She leaves the park. She doesn't know which sidewalk to follow. She follows a sidewalk. She doesn't know the sidewalk. She follows another sidewalk. Nothing whatsoever issues the slightest sense of familiarity.

Janet invents the left-turn philosophy. In order to go outward from the center of the city, she takes strategically quasi-random left turns. This keeps up until she miraculously ends up exactly where she wanted to go all along.

Janet walks into the pet store. She buys her heel-biter some food. She also picks up lots of little treats and fancy biscuits. Tramp wags his tail to signal joy.

Outside the store, Janet distributes biscuits. Just a few. She wouldn't want Tramp getting morbidly obese.

It's an experience, listening. Patti Smith grabs her by the heartcords and drags her into the Kettledrum Keeper's Goober Floober Experience. The albums and concertos, individual performances produce distinctly separate religious experiences. Unfortunately, Patti Smith doesn't live in Chrystal City, so when Janet gets inside the Kettledrum Keeper's Goober Floober Experience she realizes all she is listening to is one of the world's greatest musical *recordings*. This only slightly diminishes the sense of particle expansion.

Things happen for a reason. Reason isn't running away from us. Is reason trying to trap us? Is reason a trapdoor or on the other side will we find freedom? Freedom. Suck that word into your lungs.

If the rain were to come flooding our bases, we wouldn't have a chance to track down the base raiders.

Janet and Tramp are in a building listening to the religious experience. What will they do when they run out of Patti Smith to listen to? When all the songs have been heard? Tramp doesn't give a damn. Janet will probably just listen to everything over and over again until she dies or finds a place to go to to listen to Bach.

Meanwhile, do you hear that whistling sound?

We'll leave Janet for a while. She's with Patti.

It's bullshit. It's on my shoe.

Where is there to run to? You don't have anywhere to hide. From what you're hiding from.

Helping hands squeeze too tightly. You're dying! I'm sorry. I'm a part of it. Them. They're a part of it too. Yeah, heh, them.

The free spirit cannot be conquered with such methods. Inhale it.

Janet wakes up this morning and a rabbit jumps onto her open bedside window. The rabbit smells like shit because earlier it jumped onto a stinking pile of fuckingshit. Says the rabbit, "Hey Jan girl what's happenin'?"

Janet looks at that fool rabbit and she says, "What's the dealio sucka?"

Says the rabbit, "Man bitch why you be cutting into the rabbits? We bleed, yo. And whore, I know where you can get some fine motha sucka pink bananas."

"Prime shit?" asks Janet.

"Fool," says the rabbit, "You talking to a rabbit on a window. How you think I got this way."

Says Janet, "Shit dog. Hook me up."

The rabbit looks sly. He decides he is a mischievous little rabbit. The rabbit says, "The price is your orally presented view on the meaning of life, summarized to the point where we can get out of here within at least the next ten minutes."

"Well," says Janet, "New horizons."

"The new horizons will contain."

"Define infinity."

"Comprehend infinity."

"I am as a human being struggling with God. I'm like Jacob. I'd like to think I'm like Jacob. I'm sure the angels are more than willing to wrestle with me."

"Paradoxes: Love, infinity, freedom, poetry, art, the human/inhuman relationship."

"What do we care about other people? Are they merely important in relation to us? Do we aid out of a selfish desire to make ourselves feel better? Is everything necessarily selfishness?"

"Leaving questions unanswered, answering questions. What is productive?"

"New horizons. Choice."

"Infinity and choice."

"Infinity is ultimate good. Choice is good."

"Infinity is the absence of choice."

"If there is a Supreme Being, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, this Supreme Being is the only being without choice."

"I hope I haven't just committed blasphemy. ha!"

"Choice is a weighing of consequences upon imaginary scales. Choice is a judgement call. With the all-knowing, judgement calls aren't necessary. What is right is right. What is wrong is wrong. All decisions have already been made."

"But if God does exist, why create? What could possibly be gained from creating a flawed universe within which everything that will happen has already been foreseen, yet is not predestined (as that would cancel out free will)?

"Not all the cards are on the table. I'm not infinite, you're not infinite. My knowledge is finite, limited to my surroundings and inherent personality and possibly sources, such as God, which exist outside and within my surroundings. How can I understand infinity?

"The failure to understand is one of the greatest arguments for acceptance. All the big things are beyond understanding.

"Freedom. What is freedom? How can anyone be free, God or no God? We are products of our environment born with certain prevailing tendencies. No matter how complicated this equation becomes, it does not add up to freedom. Yet without freedom, the world is blameless. We are all equals until death. Without freedom the world is meaningless. We accomplish nothing, we are all slaves. All the same, we have this need to be free. We all struggle for it. Freedom may very well be the struggle for freedom.

"Poetry. Poetry can be anything. How, then, can there be good poetry? If there aren't any boundaries with which to judge, there are no judgment calls. Yet this is a falsity. There is such a thing as good poetry. There is such a thing as bad poetry. The proof is in the reading. Of course, it is always possible the proof is illusion... Why, then, write poetry? For poetry.

"Love is chemical reactions. I don't believe this. Chemical reactions may be responsible for feelings of lust and even affection, but not love. Affection is conditional, as lust is conditional. Affection is for those we find appealing within. Lust is for those we find appealing without. Love is for all. Love is infinite and without condition. Love is as much for the serial killer as for the saint. Not all people love. Nothing material comes of loving. All that is gained is love, and that is enough.

"The meaning of life is to find the meaning of life. This is true until you find the meaning of life.

"A paradox is a seeming contradiction. A paradox is a word for things beyond human understanding. It is possible there is no *beyond human understanding*, in which case all is meaningless. It is also possible there is a *beyond human understanding*, in which case human reasoning cannot be trusted. If there is a *beyond*, we are to trust in its instructions. We are to struggle with this *beyond* until we die because, until we understand more than is possible in our present condition, we cannot but struggle.

"I am discouraging human rules or laws of any kind, for what justification, other than cosmic meaninglessness, can there possibly be for allowing crucially flawed, finite beings to enslave each other with their incomplete logic? It is also meant to encourage a personal relationship with the Supreme Being, for what but the infinite has the right or the ability to give worthwhile instructions? And if there is no Supreme Being, it doesn't matter anyway.

"The Martian told me, 'Thou art God!'"

"Damn," says the rabbit. "Damn. That's some heavy shit. You could change the world you got your hands on a few good pink bananas. I'd like to hook you up. Unfortunately, the answer I was looking for was to come in the form of a blow job."

Before Janet can kill the crap rabbit and cook it in her microwave oven, the bitch up and hops away. The lesson is you shouldn't talk to rabbits unless there's a knife within the distance required for a grab-and-stab.

Janet gets up -773and walks outside. The sun hits her eyes. She rubs her eyes with her hands. She gets chalk on her eyes. She isn't sure where the chalk came from. She knows when she was little she used to draw pictures on the school chalkboard all the time. Thing is, that was then, it is now.

Janet outstretches her hands to make a gesture of exaggerated befuddlement. A peach lands in each hand. She devours them both without giving any to Tramp because Tramp is a vicious carnivore.

-end

Hell

The Sugar Quest

Mr. Danvers was a man obsessed with firecrackers. He ignited a firecracker beneath the ass of Democracy and the people shouted, "We want more of this jubilation!" That is how he was elected King Danvers. It was a speed bump in the career of a journeyman.

Danvers was always adventuring. He had been from the start. The essential turning point didn't come until the Sugar Quest.

School was no place for adventures. Occasions appropriate for such came less than rarely, and then only during lunch. It was during lunch that Danvers heard about the sweet, sweet Sugar Nose.

Maggy Sue told the tale, a tale not to be repeated because it was all true. Danvers listened with the keen ears of an ice cream eater. He was hungry for anything sweet.

At first the quest brought naught but figments of a power. Danvers inspected to reveal illusions or mere powder. It was fucked up.

Danvers did not give in. He knew roadblocks were only constructed when worthy drivers were being made.

Danvers was up late one night drinking a glass of water and thinking. Notions plagued him. Who had been in the Easter Bunny suit? Why are clowns gallivanting upon the front yard? Is the correct spelling of gallivanting "gallivanting"? Do trees whisper advantages to the grass? How will this patch survive the hunger of the cow? Is Father Time waiting within the tree house? Danvers could not sleep.

Water quenched a thirst for something pure. A common theme throughout the many painted lives.

Painting for you tonight is a very special artist. He has changed momentarily. Here's wishing the metamorphosis is to your liking.

"Are you coming Fred?" Lee Anne asked Danvers late one night. Lee, Danvers' wife.

"Yeah Lee," said Fred. "You just let me get my hat."

Fred had recently acquired a very lucky hat. It was a blue hat but it wasn't sad! It was a shadow hat; the shadows kissed his face. None could see his eyes. It was a good hat for playing poker. Sometimes, the wicked trickster glimmering behind those eyes scared away the sucker cards. Sometimes, had to have the sucker cards to pay the bills.

Fred and Lee Anne were out the door. They hopped into a little green truck and zoomed through the night fog. Acceleration reached its peak going up a rather steep hill as the pedal pressed down to the floor, the truck lurched back briefly, and the engine roared clear, a green spot weaving through low visibility slow traffic.

Lee Anne twisted the bracelet on her wrist. "We're not in *that* much of a hurry," she said.

An easing off the pedal, a light tap on the breaks... Fred Danvers replied, "Sorry, honey. You know how I like to drive."

"Yeah," said Lee Anne.

The car eased into a stop along the sidewalk. The bumper came within inches of another parked car. A key twisted and got jerked out. Danvers hopped out of the truck. He ran around to the passenger's side and opened a door for his lady. The couple coupled around necks and leisured into a home.

The front door had opened into a kitchen. A skeletal lady was sitting at the table taking a nose full of snow. Suddenly, Danvers understood what was going on. He looked at his wife and said, "Thanks, honey, for feeding my coke habit."

But there are gaps.

The long, free, sleepless nights...

The speeding through the active zone...

The dog purchased on impulse...

That damned mutt was never good for anyone. The only good thing was he died quickly.

Running with wolves...

Hunting the music...

Singing with banshees...

Hops and skips and jumps into the away...

So many gaps. How had the time come? How long ago? And where was the acid?

The acid, that was hiding in the frigid fridge. George the boxer had put it there. Thirty tabs of Buddha and no time to go back home. Damn.

"We're just here to see my friend Lisa," Lee Anne said. "You do what you want with what's left of your last paycheck."

"I sure is glad I saved my money," Danvers said.

The image of the Jesus Freaks flashed through Danvers' mind. They were slicing at his fingers with long knives. He was too quick for them. They wanted to chase him down the alley. He was too quick for them. He disappeared. But why was he remembering that now?

The Jesus Freaks, a gang of ruthless Christian crusaders attempting to rid the world of its ungodly elements. There was nothing ungodly about Danvers.

The wild thing about the central station was the flux of objects into its vicinity. However far or near, objects always seemed to be pulled into the central station. It was a magnetic attraction, an irresistible force. Some of it was convenience, too.

Like the strangeness of the strangulated corpuscle

Fred was once more on the move through the funky groove of potential. None had heard it like it should have been. Not the image of the music manifest before them. Not a wall too tall to climb for Peter's sake. For Pete's sake, the fish is in the barrel.

Shoot it.

Come on, shoot it.

"Ah!" Fred shouted as he peaked over his shoulder.

The *pathetic* DXM-Mushroom trip commenced after the two days of sobriety that had followed the frequent acid consumption during

speed injections. Many could not admit to the masterwork provoked from thence. It was too much to admit so many beautiful noises intermingling in such a brilliant classical tapestry could have been produced

by the careful hand of a speeding genius.

I hear here an exploration of those areas of the mind that barely get so much as a candlelight's worth of clarity and attention. The dark is just too much. But what is this piercing the darkness? That is the melody of Bach and Lycan and George Clinton's alien mothership readying to struggle free of the cobwebs in the shadows.

It is a triumph. Yes, here is a triumph.

"Metal Machine Music" was playing on the stereo. Such a canvas unleashed, upon which a painting rivaling all paintings came into being. And what was it Lou said in the big book of lyrics? "My week beats your year." They can't look past the dirt mask.

Lou Reed. Possibly the greatest guitarist to have ever lived," said Danvers. And there were new ways to play it.

The music came from the machine. Oh, what madness, what clarity, what a world!
 Lou was going too far for them. His mind was racing through the new intelligence, *for professionals only*. Who could possibly hear the music peaking through the distortion?
 It was "a limited market"... it is less limited today
 Fred walked through a world created by the distortion.
 Somebody switched the stereo over to Wagner. What a change in landscape!
 Or was Lou finished yet?
 The tabs, they hadn't fallen behind the freezer again, had they? Had he eaten them all, Fred asked himself? And what of the milkshake? Ah, yes, it was waiting for him at McDonalds.
 "This party seems to be winding down, Lee. Take me to McDonalds?"
 "Certainly, sweetie," Lee Anne answered. "I'm glad I get to drive for a change."
 "Oh, you're always driving," said Fred.
 Fred also said good-byes, and so did Lee Anne, and a few party animals in reply. It was a warm parting. The car gently rolled into the McDonalds parking space.
 Fred and Lee Anne walked into McDonalds. Fred looked from side to side and then at his wife. He asked her, "Do these people seem strange to you?"
 "What people?" asked Lee Anne. Then: "Oh, never mind. We're up. What do you want to eat, honey?"
 "No," said Fred. "I'll have a vanilla milkshake, thanks."
 "One large vanilla milkshake and one #3 with a coke," said Lee Anne.
 "Do you hear the blessed melodies of silence trickling through the air?" Fred asked his wife. "Like purple snakes splitting, the rich veins slither across light and space until they vaporize just inches from the inner ear."
 "All I hear," said Anne, "is a faulty light flickering and buzzing on the ceiling."
 "I hear that too," said Fred.
 "And more," said Fred. A tear trickled down from the corner of his eye. If only he could share the blessed miseries with the world. The world would have none of it.
 "Count your blessings," said Lee Anne. "We've had a fortunate turn lately."
 Had they? well? No, not all was well. All never is. Well enough, so yes, a good turn. Fortunate in that it had been full of fortune, fortune as in riches, riches with which to buy important commodities, such as toilet fixtures.
 Fred sipped his milkshake. "Damn this is one mother fucking tasty ass milkshake," said Danvers.
 "The best ever?" asked Lee Anne.
 "The best ever," said Danvers.

In the car again. Danvers was sitting in the back seat. Stereo pumping out Voodoo Glow Skulls. A more and less reckless adventure.
 "Why are you sitting in the back seat?" asked Lee Anne.
 "Just drive babe," said Danvers. He could feel the nausea bubbling up as the PCP flooded across the mushroom textures. It was at that moment he discovered a notebook. The Journal, it was entitled, and Danvers recognized the handwriting as one of his own. When had this blessed text been divined? A recording to aid the memory, no doubt. What secrets were hiding behind the cover?
 Danvers leafed through the pages...

The dropper's neck glistens in the candlelight...

On the horizon...So much coke...

tap...tap...tap...

...and a tab and a...

Where is Lee Anne? Where is anyone? Where...

Walking through the snow...

I want to dance on the scum frogs' bones...

I want to dance on the scum frogs' bones. I want to grind them into a powder and inhale the powder to receive magical powers. I want to leap over tall buildings in one or two bounds.

The lepers fling their flesh at me then cling to post-hasty legs fleeing, begging as lepers beg for mercy and a holy cure. Red spots boil over the cauldron, hot blackjuice spills, chases my feet. I can dance in the mud instead of upon the bones. Splashing, splashing below me, burning flesh and the clinging lepers, fumes rising up, poisoning the air. I must escape this convulsive ceremony.

I am hungry for the fresh meat lazing by the docks. The little boys and the little girls selling themselves to aging perverts, the next generation of capitalists, mature before their time or doomed never to mature. I want to sprinkle salt on them and bite into their livers.

I'm headed for home, Saint Malcolm's Mortuary. It's where they've stored my children. They let me sleep on the old mattresses in the back. They never let me take anything home or dig up any knowledge. Then when I leave that place the world pushes books through my skull.

The books are bad. Books bad, Satan good. SATAN! AEIAI! It's all trash, is what they feed my head, in volumes. I'm so overflowing I puke shit.

Waltzing through the junkyard, headed for garbage. My stack's reserved. Some locals don't get the memos. There's a weakling, thinks he's got the stuff, all the stuff. Thinks he's strong, thinks his metal is strong. His metal isn't strong.

The Tin Man wants to take me down for stealing all his scrap metal. I'm burning his oil fields so he'll squeak and freeze. Bam! More scrap metal for my projects.

You'd have to be an artist to live like I live. People see my static machines and think, no moving parts. The moving parts you can't see or hear. The moving parts are internal well-oiled invisibles, like soul. I sculpt souls.

The Tin Man has oil to spare. He never falls. Back to him later. He'll catch up with me in a while. Mostly, there's running.

Hilarity is a kind of clarity beyond your reach. Hilarity is the divine comedy nobody dares to touch, but everybody thinks they're touching. Just so long as they don't touch my pee pee.

I'm walking the brown mile. Poop rained down last night and plopped into the sidewalk. The sidewalk is a long and squishy path hugging my favorite suburban road. My feet sink into the wet pavement. I'll have to keep moving, moving quick, or I'll get stuck.

The sidewalk ends too abruptly, spitting me into the grass. I roll down a green hill and into a swamp. Listen to croaking scum frogs serenading serenading serenading. Gulliver did less in a lifetime than I'll do in a week, I get hold of those little froggies.

Let me have your liver, let me have your liver! Swamps don't want me, I'm at the docks, chanting. Let me have your liver, let me have your liver! But here comes the head man supercop vigilante with burning eyes, ready to club me to death if he has to, gotta teach the freaks a lesson before there're too many, set an example.

It's a milk carton with holes, hanging from a pole like a flag, leaking into speculation. I catch the white raindrops and they bless my throat as they ooze down. I glow, calcium surges through my bones, enforcers are repulsed by my aura.

I climb the pole, hungry for more, lusting after the sky. The top of the pole runs with the sky, runs up. I'm climbing infinity until I weary and fall, arms flailing, down, down.

The mole people organize on the rusty tracks. They join hands by the glowing altar and dance to ward off the cold. When I come to visit, the ghost train rumbles down the tracks and everyone hates me hates me. The train bursts through my chest like vengeance, singeing chest hairs, failing to do much observable damage, a mere phantom feeding on externals. The mole people chase me away.

It's cold out under the rain heavying my hair. The lightning lights my path, the thunder drums my song. Park benches call for newspapers. The trees, scarce here, ache to be chopped. Rain floods the streets. I go swimming with the cars.

Horns honk at me. Red light, green light, yellow light, flickers the lights in confusion. Middle fingers

stir the air. The water level is rising quick.

Zeus spears my back. I swim faster. I swerve and veer through traffic.

Nothing fails the nobody. Nonentity never ceases. Nihilism contradicts the question. Nuclear fusion fizzles.

Insects, palpitating legs, hard eyes, crawl across the rainbow bridge, ready for an attack. I want to cut the bridge, no tools. Can't reach. Can't slice. Can't... The ants are marching. I plant a rubber tree below the bridge and no ant passes. The other bugs abandon the mission or die abandoned.

The swimmer swims as the river dries. I flap my feet and arms like fins against hot black pavement. I look beyond the emotion of the thing without disregarding feeling and see another true color.

The water evaporated into living clouds. We're stuck like fish.

I make the best of it, it being this and everything, everything being but a moment, a moment being but a vague conceptual theory, theory being accepted into facthood, facthood being irreproachable except through the invention of new facthoods. I know a chubby cow wishes she had more productive utters, even when the world drinks her.

The Tin Man hits me with a tin can. Soda stains my shirt. The tin can drops and tings. Things go crazy, things always crazy. I dance in the soda splashing droplets onto Chiclets on the floor. The Chiclets taste like some chikkies I know. The orange is bursting with delicious fruit flavor.

I throw punch at the Tin Man, rust his armor. There's sugar in my sweet punches. I send that tin man back a few, he's a sticky rusty mess on the floor. Crack! Says the floor when he falls, splitting open, devouring my problems.

I outstretch arms aimlessly, then with purpose, leaping backward, avoiding the expanding crack, the hole, the floor's mouth trying to suck me in trying to swallow.

I get out of that house through the lion hole. I'm clever. I escape.

That's how it flows every time. Tin Man and copper dock watchers and rivers and frogs chasing the toads. The milkman leaves his mark and the gypsies sign the bark. The lepers pick a leader like skin cus they wanna go ethnic. And I'm an artist.

Statues...

But that was yesterday.

Today, I'm expanding to a new set of particles. The particles composing parcels. I'm out to conquer the parcel business.

Parcels or packages, I'm impartial. All that matters is the dog gets a water change. Zeus cries salty tears, which makes a poor drink. Not even a dog deserves that.

Purity. There is purity in the water I'm after. Good water is pure.

Purity is so hard to find in a land so full of pollution. Ah, well. The oil fields shall blacken no more the Earth with their corruption.

I can. That is the mantra. For anything. Today the deed is conquest. I shall be presented one by one all the pollutants. Before the dog may drink, there must be house cleaning.

Illness always ascends from the ruts or descends from the clouds. Somehow, illness always arrives to plague my kind. It is a kind of one, I am of one kind, a lonely one of a kind. Never arrives too much kindness. Nevermore. That one was a door locked long ago.

I am in a boat parting black waters to get to the clear. The clear is swimable, drinkable, malleable because pure. Pure is fresh clay uninfluenced by any yet, a clay to be influenced by none but my hands. They are capable hands with fingers aware of all of the weaves.

Weaves are carried sometimes by spiders from this corner of the world to that other, then another. The spiders spin powerful threads but rarely make much progress. Their conquest is always crushed too quickly.

Occasionally, I feed on the spiders. Their power is satisfactory to an extent. Too much spider makes for a stomach ache and the power slips away, ejaculated or otherwise ejected. If only injected, it

might mingle with the blood.

Something dribbles across my chin. I look up. I catch the eye. With fingers, I stab. There is a shriek and the threat is gone.

Most threats require bold opposition.

Slinking, sinking, chasing, falling from it... Harder, they wanted it HARDERYOUBASTARDS!!!

The water is still black. The boat is sinking. No wood is strong enough to withstand this filth for long. Dark waters must be cleansed somehow. Nothing cleanses better than blood. The blood of the children, willingly sacrificed, shall clear the waters. But that one is a project for a later date.

The pure tides are within view. I will reach them in time to swim away from the black. Black veins popping in the eye. Well, I killed the eye and it fell from the sky. What a mess to leave the near-shore seas. Oh, what a mess. So now I must row faster.

Faster, ever faster. I am a flash across a crystalline surface kindly responsive to the sunlight. At that point, I dive. Down, down I go, plunged into the freshness. Above, quickly dying flee the ripples.

And I remember Sam I Am and wonder, whatever happened to that crazy cat? Last I saw of him, he was battling insomnia with pills. He worked the day shift even though he was best suited for the night shift. Whatever they asked of him, he gave. Always, he was a giver. Never asked for anything in return. Never got anything in return.

Every time I used to see Sam, I used to run away and cry. My heart would bleed so much over that poor, pathetic drone.

The water pressure is getting stronger. Soon, dark tendrils will be streaming from my ears. My brain will pop like a squeezed grapefruit. I will sink. I will land a bloated blue statue on the ocean floor.

It happens. Only, I don't stay grounded for long. My corpse floats up so swiftly and my bloodshot eyes begin blinking, blinking, blinking to the resurrected beating of my heart. Nothing can die in the pure waters. Death is impure.

Having performed my test, I drink of the waters. I drink to my heart's content.

A zombie shivering in the moisture, I pull myself aboard my boat. I bottle the water. Five bottles I fill. Five bottles for the canine. Five bottles to be delivered promptly.

Promptly, I row from pure to impure and then to the shore. Soon enough, the dog is pleased to receive his package. He howls many thanks.

There are more packages to explore. I stalk the mailman. I know he is the mailman, for I have seen him riding the truck. Delivery boy. We are kindred spirits in that respect. The difference is, my deliveries are important.

There is much sin in insignificance. Insignificant is the worst existence. For that reason, the insignificant should not exist. Mayhaps this stroke strikes the observer as superfluous, but wasted space must be cleansed.

There is a disappearance. A mail truck is devoured by the gold. The driver is devoured by the gold. The gold cannot be questioned.

The gold is just another evil!

I see it all from my perch atop the leaning tower. Windows crack. Dried flesh and wet wrinkled flesh rumbles, and the old geezers release flatulence of such an explosive quality the entire city is endangered. Many die of suffocation. Others die lighting one final cigarette. I am lucky to be above it all.

These are harsh times for any kind. Charity, though tempting, would only spoil the meat. The maggots have enough already with which to feast.

I see a worm piercing the surface of the world. It jiggles and sways above and below the dirt. I pluck it up. I know the magic of the worms. Worms, tricky bastards. They know more than they're letting on. Noble creatures, despite. As a favor, I chop the worm into one thousand pieces and sprinkle

a dust over them all. Them, the new worms the dust devours in an ecstasy of rebirth. These thousand worms lack a quality of ordinary.

Once, there was a storm. Ice gripped the soil, killed the plants and coated the sidewalks, coiled around the standing snake out by the hen house. None of them hens wanted any of that storm. They shook within themselves. The sky was black where it wasn't blue. Winds were winds, real winds, the sort of winds to blow down pedestrians. It was a storm predestined to happen and it may occur once more.

I see the black smoke rising on the horizon. Smoke signals signal the coming of another storm. I am ready. This storm will be different. Nothing will be lost forever.

I know a man once capable of riding the storm clouds. That was before he lost a leg to an alligator on the loose. Lately, the alligators have been emerging with the scum frogs from the swamps. The alligators are planning an invasion. During the storm is when they shall attack.

For that, too, will I be ready. For that, too, am I ready.

It is happening.

The sky rumbles. The earth quakes. A reptilian mind splits open as the reptile emerges from the leaves. The corpse gets sucked through cracks in the dirt.

The eyes have returned. There are so many. They are so large. The solid black pupils expand with the vision into forever, and when forever is seen, there is no longer a need for the eyes. I watch them fade into everything.

I am struck by the image of the twisted purple lightning that shatters against distant surfaces. Surfaces are all around however hard one tries to flee them. The surfaces will never flee. They are grounded in their still, solitary vigilance. No matter. I will walk atop them.

No matter the particles, there is always more to the matter to be explored.

I am digging now. My tunnel is as the tunnel of the worms. The dirt sustains me as I journey below. There is more dirt below. A violence goes on above. I am sheltered as the mole people are sheltered in their separate tunnels. Sadly, a day will come when the mole people suffer for their prolonged cowardice. I could today devour them all.

There is only one solution to the problem of the mole people. I must accept their petition for leadership. I must take charge and initiate a new era. It will be an era of much war. The suffering is exchanged for helium. The helium lifts the sails. The ship glides into the sky. The empty spaces part for us. No terrain exists outside the limits. The limits shatter. Our war has shattered them. We are victorious?

See them through the eyes, see filth smudged across soft cheeks and naked, empty bellies, and study the ribcages visible through clear flesh. Those are the warriors of future dreams.

A song ripples into an impact. The song hits me and I fall into an ecstasy of seizures on the floor. The floor is the wooden floorboards of a ship, our ship, the warriors of the dreams, the future of exploration, the modern adventure we have undertaken. The stars whiz in trails. Liquid eyes bubble in my sockets.

The desire is the exquisite betrayer whom defeats the impulse to normalize. We all share into the desire. They all fall into the floorboards, my people, communal in our seizures, our intangible, celebrated lust. Yes, they say, we all say, in answer to a question, YES!

Out By the Docks Again

My people have come far enough. There is nothing more for me to do for them. You see, progression has become perpetual within the group. I was a catalyst. It is a function rewarding to perform.

Now there are sacrifices. That is why I am here, arousing the docks again. I must free the children from the sales game. They are too far gone. Zombies now. Death is the answer. Black the only answer. Black as the night sky. Oblivion for the children. One by one, I push them into the ocean. The

crashing waves perform a suction. The bodies sink to the bottom. At the bottom, the bottom feeders swallow. The bodies are never to be seen from again.

Gilled things rise from the decks and stare up at the docks. Their stare catches mine. As the stares intertwine, the stars hide behind blankets. Furthermore, dust shuffles across the wood and the waves subside into bubbles. I pull myself from the stares and the gilled things disappear from my reality.

Sometimes, the anger is enough to power the guns. Manning the cannons today and firing out at invaders, fictitious or real. Explosions shake the airwaves. My call is heard clear across the worlds.

The blood bubbles inside my body. My arms, legs, hands, head, impressions, these things shake and shiver. Brick walls fall to my fists. Rampage seeks to sate the rage. All around, there are things to be had. I shall have them all. All shall fall.

No wall is too thick, no armor too strong, no army too large. The worlds fear me in this state. A bouncing ball ripping down across and through the hall. A digger digging into untold terrors. A dragon slayer conquering the world beast. The forked tongue flickers out and teases my cheek. I rip that tongue free of the jaws of the beast.

My belly grumbles the complaints of the dissatisfied minorities. I walk into an ice cream store and order a milkshake. That always cures the belly's every ailment.

Do you feel it? Does it twist your flesh as mine flinches? Do the tangs reach you from your seat? The throne beckons. Answer the summoning if you're to be a king.

I require only kinship in this existence of one. A kinship of one. One so above himself he fell one day into his own body. When that happened to me, I collapsed consciously into a semiconscious state. There were whirlwinds.

On and on, the marble stairs keep climbing. Climbing the stairs requires an energetic persistence I have. The winds slipper through my hair as I climb higher. Higher, we all want to be a little higher. How high is too high? Every step brings me more danger. The danger is greatest close to the edge. I have reached the edge.

Standing on the edge, I look down. There is a swimming pool down there. My hands steady themselves at my sides. I will never fall. Never, for I am ready for the pool. I leap...

The body tumbles with the mind into twelve thousand flips. The body splashes into the clear waters of the pool and, after a time, finds the bottom. Bare feet push off the bottom and I emerge from the waters clean. Cleansed, I look to the future.

The future looks back at me and says, "These sights aren't yet for you to see."

The past calls out from a backward distance, "Nothing is behind you!"

I draw a blank. There was an object I desired. Memory has faded with the happenings.

Oh, yes. It was milk. Calcium to train my mind and strengthen my bones and prepare this warrior for the brawls to come. There shall be a brawl on the streets tonight. I'm going to light up the town with found strength and the spatters will wet the carpet. The carpet and the streets, the streets a carpet for the speeders, the speeders speeding freely now.

My skateboard peeks at me from behind a bush outside a highway McDonalds. I catch a speeder and drift behind. The horn of my ride blares at an inconsiderate elderly driver ignorant of the function of the turn signal. I hear through open windows, "What the fuck you doing man?"

I release my ride and jump and fly down the sidewalk. With a grace to disgrace Tony Hawk(whynot?), I slide and spin and flip into a flurry. The skateboard lands behind a new bush, wood behind the bush, and I land at a running pace.

People seek to own the sidewalk. No man can own the sidewalk! I jog through the throngs without so much as a consideration for the whims of the family men and women and them family children. The people part for me. Things are as they should be.

It is leisure, this. A workout to keep the blood pumping. An easy relaxation to keep the muscles ready. Loose or tense, I'm a hard man.

I rub the bristles sprouted out across my chin and cheeks. I plan shenanigans for the future. Little mischiefs to keep the cake as sweet. And I'm licking the icing.

It's been a hard life. It's been a good life so far. There's more to come.

Like the cum dribbling down the eye of the ancient immortal whore, a whore ripe in all the important fruition. Frolicsome now, the whore seemed an appropriate treat. I want the anus, however. Mine is a rod to drip on into the late hours without losing its steel. And of course I'm going to get my money's worth.

The whore is grateful for the cash. I'm sure her pussy does none too terribly thanks to the occasional pokie. "I'm gonna poke yea now," I say, and she gets ready.

Our screams rouse the jungle beasts. The jungle explodes into an orgy of cacophony. We are two lovers keeping awake the neighbors. Our neighbors are the gutter people. Our nest of love is an alley mattress with loose springs. The bouncing alone would widen a few eyes.

A murder was committed. Who committed the murder? Where was the murder committed? So strange, this report coming now.

The banshee whispers into my ear so that only I can hear her death-blown tornado songs mystifying all under the moon. She is one with the moon beasts, one with the reaper, one with the weavers, one attached to all the threads. The patterns intensify into cold metallic grip freezing soul like hellfire.

The banshee sprays her secrets in a layered language only her priests may understand. I am a priest of the banshee. I know many things. I know of the blessing on all things, the holes of our ass and the holiness of a single blade of grass. All is holy, she tells me. She has never lied before.

Hers is a wicked magic. It is the kind of wicked to make one tingle with dark delight. I feel not morality as the love envelops a servant. I am forever a servant to the banshee. She calls to me, desperately because all is desperate. Perversions of the flesh fold over perversions of the mind and they keep each other company. It is happening under the old maple tree in the park. The stars are not hiding tonight.

Tonight is the right night for the fight. There are no obstacles in or out of sight. The light is dim but here. Here is the only here, it's here or nowhere. The cabby takes a fare to nowhere for a price just as nice as that Dune spice going around town every time the sun goes down. We've found the secret to harnessing the spice. The secret is the worms.

The worms, divided. Dividing still.

She is with me forever. She walks by my side and worships my ear as I worship her voice. We bathe together with the serenading scum frogs for entertainment. She is fast enough to capture the frogs. Her voice is death to the frogs. She places them before me, a tribute to a loyal servant.

The bones are mine. Mine are the bones! The bone powder that whitens my nostrils and fills me with up, up the stairs again. Running fast this time. Faster than ever before, I am a blur on the horizon. I am the purple lightning slicing the skies. I am the tranquil dove riding a smooth breeze. I won't ride any current for long.

The howl penetrates my pores. I ask her, "What is this howling about?"

The banshee says to me, "We've seas yet uncrossed. That one was the howl of a generation." Sleep, oh, so distant a moment ago, when it comes I fall into the arms of the banshee and she caresses my head into freely feral dreams.

It is liberating to run with the beasts on occasion. Only on occasion. I can never forget for long this thing that I am. Never long lose one's humanity. There is freedom in the sanity struggled for by a minority of humanity's every generation. That is what the banshee was trying to howl.

Treasure Chest

There is a treasure chest on the beach. Silver and gold and platinum hidden beneath the closed lid. So many precious metal chunks waiting to be revealed. I open and dismiss the bounty. I

leave the treasure chest behind.

There are better things to do at the beach. I walk across the sand. The waves tickle my crusty feet. The gilled things beckon with blank white eyes. Such sad eyes, those of the gilled things. Always salty wet. The worst thing about the gilled things is they carry the curse of Villon. Their smiles rip apart mine heart.

I am walking. Walking is the greatest of active relaxants. Peace must be found to make the walk tolerable. That is the magic of the steps. Every step a journey deeper into my own mind. I feel it expanding beyond the reaches of my skull.

An idea will fizzle out and I will have to capture it again another day.

The tribes are drumming a song. I hear them behind the foghorn. The foghorn blends into the music. I dance.

Mine is a dance to my goddess, a dance to the sand, a dance to all that is blessed. All that is under me is blessed. My feet say as much. All that is over me is blessed. My hands say as much.

The blood of many innocents crusts my hands. This contributes to the vibrancy of the dance.

I rush the waves. They are not cleansing. They are muddy waters. Filth obscures the blood. Finding shore again is a struggle. It is a struggle over which I am victorious. In celebration of victory, I sit upon the sand and meditate upon meditation. Clarity comes with chaos. Meditation is chaos.

When the clock strikes a digit, that digit will fall. It will be time to rise. I rise, then, and walk on. The beach is empty tonight. An empty beach welcomes the company of a warm cigarette. My matches strike upon a flame and light a Lucky Strike. I feel the charisma of the blessing.

An empty beach. Good for much, not good for an eternity. I move on.

I am in the middle of a journey. I've no idea what will be enough, no idea when the journey can end. Even the word "end" is a question mark. It hasn't come yet. That which has not yet occurred may never occur. Would it be such an evil fate, journeying endlessly?

The sun is out now. It is a new day. Every day the sun shines, it can be assumed much fortune will present itself. Present in disguise, so accepting may prove a dangerous adventure. Any adventure is time well spent.

I raise my mug to future adventures. There are enough drunks at the bar to amplify the gesture appropriately.

I stare at the world threads. They buzz and shake, twine and intertwine. A wisdom unravels, a gazing into the big events of the now.

The soul of an unharnessed childhood ambition comes to fruition as a spontaneous expression of that which refuses to fade. It is a quiet explosion lighting the rabble streets, a new heat to warm the hearts of the discontent. While it ends a new beginning is born, a birth torn between an inheritance and the tremulous fears of inexperience. Delirious, the child holds out his hands and comes to terms with the cleansing.

He is the link that breaks the chain. He is standing under the crimson rain. His is the blood, the blood of the infinite heart, love, pulsating on, bleeding forever... Drip. Drip. Drip.

I am heading for the jungle. A man is waiting for me there. He doesn't know it's me he's waiting for. He thinks he is waiting for the sun. Well, it's dark out now. It'll be dark for hours.

Darkness can be disconcerting for some. Others find no difficulty in adjusting.

"Jonas is thy name," I say to him as we come eye to eye. Face to face with a man with blood on his hands. I can see the stains, washed away as they are, because all actions leave behind a residue.

The jungle is always alive. It's easy to feel the activity going on all around. Jonas feels it, I am certain. He is sensitive to the currents. He travels, as I travel but not as I travel. He has seen death. Death in the form of skulls in the desert, then death in the form of a body falling to the bar room floor. It was the

body of a man taken down by the power in Jonas's hand.

My lips twitch as the visions flash before me, twitching as if tasting the events being played. I wonder if Jonas notices the preoccupation. He has spoken. I have said nothing in quite some time. I will listen, but I will not answer him.

"There are many roads and many trains and many fields. Some fields, it is possible to live on the corn or grapes or fresh carrots always ripe. Many a grape have I plucked only to be shocked by the unexpected satisfaction. I plucked those grapes while walking through a stranger's field. Who owns the land, really?"

I look off towards some Easterly sight and meditate on the moment. The banshee is here, waiting for me and my attention. Jonas deserves more than that.

Twenty seconds more. Twenty seconds and I move on.

On. On to the library. I've a pocket full of matches and they're all itching to burn.

Burning books smells better to me than burning flesh. Better even than the ancient flesh rotting in the basement. As this building blazes, thousands of voices from the past scream their wizened agony. The pangs of reason ping against a reality of pain. The burning consumes the being, their being, and they glory in possibilities revealed by the exquisite horror.

I am dancing atop the ashes. The dance continues the scattering until all is taken by the wind. All and nothing, for before the wind there was nothing. Nothing of significance had been left for the wind. The wind. I will one day take to the wind. When there is nothing left, when I am emptied, a pile of ashes on the floor, the wind will come and sweep me away. It will be a ride but not a journey. As nothing, I shall become all - an illusion hiding the fact of oblivion.

Banshee

She is standing on the surface of the moon, performing her seduction. She beckons me on and up. It is a crescent moon and she is standing on the tip. A NASA shuttle, seduced by the banshee's ecstatic scream, impales itself upon the tip. The explosion silhouettes her form.

Always, with caution, I respond to the banshee. I will not die tonight. What service to anyone would there be in that? I desire to serve, for service is the greatest possible human function.

The peasant serves the lord as often as the lord serves the queen. The queen serves no one, for she serves many always. The queen is beautiful and charitable and received always with kindness. Received always with kindness for good reason, for it is thusly she receives me now.

I embrace the waiting arms. I suckle upon the soft teat of a nutritious breast. She holds me in her arms. Our skin, warm against warm, touching everywhere, comforts us in our union. The quivering neck of the banshee proves sensitive to my lips' caress. My sliding fingertips tease the small of her back. We are so warm, yet shaky as young virgins succumbing to a transcendent lust.

Upon the moon's surface, sexual urges are satisfied. This brings about sympathy with the moon itself.

The twat is an orifice begging to be satisfied by mine tongue. She pulls her little feet towards her buttocks and squeals of positive response surge. My serpent tongue flickers and coils and slides. The muscles of her thighs tighten.

The banshee is not to be limited by flesh. Flesh, however perfect, is merely a vessel with which to enhance the act. The act is a ritual of worship and reward.

A leg rests upon my shoulder. Cock in her hand, I am pulled to plunge. I am an explorer enjoying the mysteries of a dark cavern. We are loose and tense and absorbed.

The moon is gradually falling. With it settles the mounted tension.

A man once asked me, Who makes love to the antelope if not man? The answer, arrived at following a vigorous examination of the bitter datum, is A friend of nature and one of many means.

Some cares do not extend beyond the limitations of convenience or experience. Experience is the conditioning factor, for all is experience. There must be levels of experience, or an experience beyond the grasp of unconscious submission to the tides.

Yesterday I entered the jungle, tomorrow I enter the jungle, today I ride the amazon. My riverboat comes equipped with a willing well-paid crew. They are a crew paid by the banshee's hypnotic spell. They exist in a temporary state of active inhibited but perfect pleasure. They are grateful for the chance to work under the tutelage of such influences. It is an unfortunate state of affairs.

I've never been one to ponder much misfortune. On occasion, I might ponder great misfortune a little, but never a little more than less.

I do not recall ever before noticing an unfortunate state of affairs.

Occasionally, my memory leaks like a poor man's ceiling.

Many clever snakes blend with the trees. Others glide across the water's surface. An anaconda dies under my strangling grasp. Dinner for me and the crew. It's best they know ahead of time I have fast hands.

It's a good thing the introspective retro hippie doesn't digest well when consuming corrupted datum. But then, it makes no difference, for I saw him last in an age long since passed under the desk.

The riverboat spits smoke in a steady series of rings. The waves toss us some. Logs and sticks and other things float up against the boat. There are sporadic knocks, knocks controlled by the rate of drift. In silence, I stand and watch the water.

The crew is getting restless. We are delving too deep, they warn me. It isn't good to explore these waters. These waters are private property to beings better left alone. If I can keep things running smooth, we may have crossed these territories before sleeping landowners rise to the dawn. The crew may not have the patience for that.

We've stirred up the ancient things hiding beneath murky patches of water. They hunger for our energy, hunger for our life force. Their stomachs grumble. Only warm piss served with a side of liver can possibly sate their appetites. That is, unless we surrender. Men have surrendered to the ancient things before.

More coals are thrown into the furnace and the foghorn sounds. No attention is paid the sirens calling from the rocks and the mist. No time exists to spend on sirens. The only sirens of any matter are those piercing sirens of the boys in blue, sirens designed to intimidate from some distance.

No such sirens exist in the river.

I call for the boat's delivery to some riverside shore. A new plunge is conducted into the jungle.

Monkeys eat bananas or grapes or pick lice off each other's backs. Some fling feces my way. I am quick to sidestep the doodie.

I like best the birds. In every direction, caws and screeches. I cannot decipher species merely by listening. Each call a bird makes is a mystery, one mystery in a thousand. The birds are finger paint for a canvas of sound.

I am alone now. High trees and hanging green and coiling vines and mysteries surround me. I need a hatchet to clear a path. Luckily, there is one on hand. Just to probe, I outstretch my hand and part the vines. Further progress requires a bit of clearing. I swing the hatchet and slice the vines. They fall into the ground like decapitated snakes.

A cock distinctly crows in the distance. I cannot know if it is a rooster or a penis, for it might be something else entirely. Only an investigation will reveal the truth of the matter. Unfortunately, my curiosity is not so extreme as to compel me towards any such investigation.

I sleep the sleep of the full-bellied man. Fancies are sprinkled upon my mind. The sprinkles are rooted in something deeper than that network just below the soil. Perhaps they've come up from the bottom. How so? Some questions provide answers, others are worth answering, and still others merely exist.

Merely exist is the term for a condition torturing so much of what is observable. The mustard relishes the torture, weak minds rarely catching up to the running thinks of running thinkers.

A hotdog protrudes from the soil. I eat half.

A dream, only a dream.

When I awake I want to go swimming. Not across the amazon. It's islands I'm seeking. The island utopias created for the purpose of allowing an isolation of one or another philosophy. The islands are safe for the natives and welcoming to strangers. The problem is, cowardice, selfishness, for not everyone swims as well as I. The goal is not to hide from a problem world, for the world finds one or a community, however isolated. It is not only inevitable, it is instant. The goal is to exist within the world without being corrupted by it.

But that isn't my goal. It was, once. Oh, those were the golden years before the ecstasy. A rod has been slammed down my brain and now there is only pleasure. Pleasure in pain, pleasure in inevitability, pleasure in the questing. The journey through the raving joy.

Call me a victim of the worst puritanical fear, a being trapped, tortured by a thing that should be relished by any and all.

I am swimming. Not for an island. I am swimming through the dark waters because they are easy to confront. I am swimming through the pure waters because they are a part of the path. I am swimming for home. I am swimming until exhaustion drowns me. It is nothing, none of it is anything, all of it is everything. Oh, banshee, save me from myself!.....

-end journal

So that was where he had been! Wandering the (streets?), all that time? So much time again! How was there time to record the journey? How was there the presence of mind? Or had it all been a fantastic concoction, a story to trick his waking self?

Waking? Was he awake *now*? Well, almost... The floor of the car was sucking him in.

But it had happened, all of it. He remembered some of it. And what would happen? What tricks would plague the mind? What freedom would the mind find? What bars would shatter?

The document must forever be hidden from Lee Anne. She could never understand. Unless... The banshee, who was the banshee?

Of course, Lee Anne was always understanding of everything. It was one of her greatest of mechanical, sometimes animal functions.

Questions, always questions poking, "For," he was saying, "reality must always be uncertain. Were it certain, rigorous, stable, there could be no question of freedom. The answer to the riddle of existence cannot be the chains of fate. Meaning or meaningless, I am limited. I cannot be sure. Still, I must strive for the answers... I cannot be sure, but I can know more. More than now, probabilities and possibilities, is there anything else? Speculation and educated guesses... What a nightmare more might turn out to be."

"Babbling in the back seat again," mumbled Lee Anne. "Ah, well, what have I to complain about? We got to go to McDonalds! And the sex tonight will be great..."

"HA!" shouted Fred. "I see your face, God! You try to hide it behind your hands... But you aren't God. You're a reflection of a reflection of God, conjured by my subconscious mind. By God, you're a reflection of me!"

That super skunk was skunking up the air. This might have been a problem in front of the authorities. Fortunately, our boys played it cool. Cool as the crisp cool mountain air sucked into my lungs after that last blunt.

Ah, yes, ahem, our story. "The story must go on," said Ed. Err, that's Fred. Fred McDonalds. Ronalds, er, I mean Danvers. A secret agent name. The thought had occurred to Danvers. "Working for the CIA," he said.

"Ah, stop it with the pills," said Lee Anne.

"Shut up bitch," said Danvers. "Get out from in front of the fucking television."

"Alright," said Lee Anne. Lee Anne took two sidesteps to the right.

"Hehehehe..." There was a mysterious snickering.

The mood was not all bright and candied apples. The problem is, our recorder has fallen victim to the trappings of the moody good mood. Yes, high off the ass of a sky high fly. Twisted, me brother.

The clouds were crouching in. A black fog enveloped Danvers' vision. Strange, the twisted repercussions. Repercussions for what? "What sins have gone unnoticed?" Danvers asked.

The fools had thought it through for naught. But I haven't told you about the fools. Oh, sorry. Fading memory in my senility. Salinity, too. My wrinkled skin carries some salt.

The fools, the sailors in the tightly tailored sailor costumes. Constrictingly bittersweet tight. They had muscles to crack walnuts. Like, with flexes and stuff. Fred said, "I'm really fucked up man."

And he was thinking about the sailors. The damned, darn, plotting sailors, mad about the dirty looks they thought they got. Danvers don't give no dirty looks. Unless, perhaps, we're talking here about Him. you know?"

"I'm going to record a sentence upon paper," said Danvers.

"Another one?" asked Lee Anne. "Fabulous!" shouted Lee Anne.

Yes, it was fabulous. Perhaps a career was being born. Perhaps a career to fuel their awful, evil, expansive, glorious, experimental bliss with great cash flow. A flow straight into the pockets of capable hands. Yeah, just let the good times roll.

And they were certainly rolling that night. Up until the arrival of the void. The void, oh, Danvers could remember conversations concerning the void. Conversations at houses where people gathered. Hospitable as those people usually appeared, it would have been easy for things to have taken a turn for the worser worstest. A spark starts, an explosion ensues, the resulting chaos, words exchanged, blows exchanged, would change them all for the rest of their lives. It was not always a good change. Occasionally, it found the tinge of the bittersweet.

Anyway, the conversation Danvers had, it had not begun to accurately describe the inky depths. True nothingness experienced for one shadowed moment. And another, and another, and as the moments accumulated into singularity, Danvers experienced the meaning of eternity. An eternity of nothing, an eternity of the trap. It was not a necessary eternity, nor was it a pleasant one, but Danvers was convinced it existed as a possibility. The strongly possible eternity. And Fred faced it.

The alternative, that was out there somewhere. Was there only one alternative? It remained to be seen. As Fred's vision became cloudy and clear, and so much more open than ever before, he accepted the possibility of all possibilities. He accepted that and remained convinced there was one probable conclusion to the equation of life. Why was the conclusion always eluding him? He could feel himself drawing closer, ever closer...

And that was when the idea struck him, Why not run for Town Mayor? It could be a fun job. Politics weren't that complicated. Might be fun to pull some strings for a change.

That is how the Danvers '02 campaign began. Nobody expected all the firecrackers.

Firecrackers, yes. Speeches on firecrackers, the legality of firecrackers, free firecracker giveaways. Campaign posters commonly read, and I quote, "Fred Danvers For Mayor: Have A Blast!"

It was fun. Everyone had to admit that. And sometimes during all the trip-driven Fred's Big Public Speeches hoop-la, people garnered some shred of wild sense. The wisdom flooded over in such high quantities, people couldn't help but absorb iotas of inspiration. There was also the joy, for people tended to be happy when Danvers talked and they listened.

"I've been riding the merry-go-round these past seven years. Now that things are heating up, I'm not about to fall off and hurt myself. I won't tumble, and neither will the people that support me. Mine is a mental well-being transcending inner peace and externally-directed clarity. Clarity is the

word. Have not a doubt in any of your minds that the outcome of my decisiveness will never be anything but peace and prosperity.

"I've been spending many late nights in the office studying pie charts, and I think I've come up with several workable solutions concerning this region's tax problem. Much money has been changing hands beneath dirty tables. It is time we finally put a stop to all such greedy nonsense! It is time we put the people before the power!" Danvers said. He said it on Channel Twelve. So moving were his speeches they received an alarming amount of media attention.

The fat cats in the White House were worried. Yes, even them. Could you really blame the string-pullers for so quickly fearing a superior string-puller? Big boys on both sides of the heaviest political coin smelled a dictator. Of course, any threat by one man to all their powers could only be labeled a dictator.

And that was why things went so far. If things had been left alone, one tiny corner of the United States would have gotten a wise and charismatic leader. Democratic and Republican heads seriously discussed assassination, sometimes Democrat to Republican. "But," said Senator Glasco, "that trick's been pulled so many times before. We can't underestimate the voters."

"Yes," said President George, "even those idiots think sometimes. And we don't want those darned Libertarians jumping down our throats, now do we?"

"No," said Senator Glasco. That was about the gist of that particular super top-secret meeting.

The day came when Danvers had to step up and thank the American people for their support. He gave a grandiose speech concerning the wonders of the windy city. He didn't live in a windy city, but there was one nearby.

Fred said, "I've said it before and I'm not ashamed to say it again: Turtles are easy animals to take care of. Some say they stinky, others say that they are not. All I know is that they are friendly, and my girlfriend who loves them is hot. And that's all I have to say about that." Danvers stepped down.

Nobody booed or cheered. Confusion enveloped the masses. It was a liberating chaos, liberating in that only the loss of the illusion of control could give the people any chance at real freedom. Fred was targeting the chains coiled around the minds of the young and old.

There were a few riots. The panic was widespread. All cool heads prevailed and benefited thanks to the occurrence. Historically, this had happened before. Many of the history books frantically erased the facts.

He disappeared. There was a poofy sound following Danvers' speech and he disappeared. At the decisive moment when Danvers was in a position of real power, he vanished forever from out of the political spectrum. A shower of bullets shot through the empty air where he had been standing.

Five frustrated snipers hastily exited tall buildings and reported their failures to the boss men in the mammal costumes.

Five snipers and they had all fired at the same moment. What games were being played? Even Kennedy, however many rifles were aimed at him, only got one or two bullets. No matter. Fred was beyond the games.

Our prayers are not directed towards these snipers at this time. We, the two wise, one male one female, and the brainwaves fluctuating between them, the upper brain, the third eye, the identity capable of understanding Mule Variations. Our focus has not been thusly distracted, sadly for the snipers. It may turn hence hence. If that ever gets here, I'll pay in dimes. Well, I'm not putting up much.

No more than the common man. No fault is with him. However, neither is attention, for he is common. Attention is rarely more than wasted on common things.

Danvers was no more in thus or any other existence, but rather utterly separate from this world. The curtains had parted, the picture had played. A new picture was playing through the movie screen, his mind. A terrible thing to waste, a mind. A more terrible thing would be wasting any part of one.

for parts parted, not completely annihilated, bring sadness.

Danvers saw the Red Sea, what the event had *really* looked like! Fucking incredible, man!
"And that won't be the last of it!" I record in my journal!

It's gone so low, the waltz. Oh well. My steps can't be touched.

The Far Off Path had arrived at last. Here's hoping odd meant it'd be the right one.

But nobody could understand. Because of the beauty of the horses. The horses have to be interpreted at some point. And what is this indecipherable code? Shenanigans I say! Begone! Setting the tale de-funkdi..... At! At! At! AWAY!

Danvers found himself climbing a vast and snowy mountain. Pick in hand, he made use of the ice. Crunches and cracks echoed all around. The Blue Beast was chasing its tail through the air. The air was on fire.

Wild colors flooded into his head. The colors were sounds, sounds like snakes swirling straight into and through skull, connecting directly to brainwaves.

...But when had Danvers ended the Sugar Quest?

"It all started when I was in the tenth grade," Danvers was telling his seventh grade teacher/girlfriend.

"That hasn't come yet, dear," said the teacher from outstretched across her desk.

"No but I have!" said Danvers. He then erupted into boyish giggles.

"You want me to show you something special?" asked Mrs. Spunkier while standing and crossing legs.

"Sure," said Danvers. "I like surprises."

"All right," said Mrs. Spunkier, "look at this." She pulled a glass drawer out the back of her desk. Sitting atop that drawer was a straw and five lines of coke.

"Is this going to be your first line of coke kid?" asked Mrs. Spunkier.

Danvers smiled and said, "Yup."

"Kid, take the big one," said Mrs. Spunkier.

"OH! HOLYFUCKINGSHITMONKEYSThis is some great COKE!" said Danvers.

"Fred... You want to take another line?"

Sucked into the life of white by one of life's appointed instructors. And Fred fucked Mrs. Spunkier until unabated infinite bliss got old. Actually, he fucked her up until about four hours before school was getting ready to start.

...And that had concluded triumphantly the Sugar Quest.

"I write," said Fred, retrieving his journal once more.

Pen to paper: Dpgajlkjeio L:ieiiiieieie Aia
wel[,help:

fin too flavor

make your meeter

great meat sauce

it's the

Dog Days

KB is smoking a cigarette hangin' out with his bestest pal this side of Vegas. The cigarette Donkey fucking became the only pastime he would except for grapefruit juice, that is.

Time is size. Because time distorts with size.

Fluctuation occurs because of time. This effects, not affects, because I really don't know, size.

The capture yielded pleasant results because the king left his fox unattended.
Now, Where was the king?

The king was on the beach smoking crack with his prostitute bitch named Filedelphia. Filedelphia wanted to hunt foxes but shes too foxy for the king to agree to that nonsense. The king smokes his crack and fucks her in the tightest dirtiest shit hole until she bleeds horrendously.

There is a dove. The dove is picking up straw with its beak. The dove is white. White is pure. I, the category. Going on a quest into the mindset. State of mind affects end results. I will not lay down my arms because I have a right to bare them.

This is a little toola fish. The fish swims in a swirly bowly and then goes home to the ocean. She has used unusual roads and emaciated a great quantity of bread. The bread is bitter because it is molding. Shit on a stick hits the spot up the cringing asssholemotherfucker.

Holy bitch the shit just flapped the farm. Ifn' you can guess the answer to this riddle, I'll give you a Scooby snack. The riddle is: What will the white tailed dolphin do to the dinosaur? The answer? They are from different time slots you fuck.

Dolphins are swimming upstream to meet with the teamsters. They will exchange numbers. The numbers exchanged will be handed out randomly at intervals. You have to watch out for the sea captain. He cooks a pretty rough stew. Cooks little boys, if you catch my drift. HA! HA!

The Sailor shouts, "Hey man give me a fucking penny."
Shouts Heyman, "Alright thy almighty."

It's like that in wonderland because everything has got to be wonderful. What's with all the shenanigans upstairs? Don't ask me, grandpa, I'm sculpting a cake to sweeten the hearts of cake mixers everywhere.

Cake mixer of skill level number# 7 says, "Yo this is some damneded fine cake man." That was when the fan went to shit because all the drug lords moved in. Drugs ruin everybody's party. Ifn' you slip into a magical state of mind, this can all end here.

And it does. Swish, and it's gone. Now we are standing on a red carpet drinking herbal tea the kind they give to pussies. The thing about pussies is not all of them smell like chocolate. Some of them taste like sugared raisin bread. It's an odd thing with people which must occur.

Somewhat disturbed, a line ran up on me. I took it in deep and it only burned a moment. The burning sensation went away with every other sensation. When all sensations returned tenfold, I was taken aback because the burning was still missing. It was a strange mystery.

Right now, I'm eating ketchup because I've heard the stuff used to be used for a medicine. It's silly, really. I had a cold a few days ago. I should test the ketchup when I'm sicker.

Scrolling through the datalog, I come upon this passage:

WAKEUP YOU SHITMONKEY

What does it all mean? Is the vortex closing in on me?

The ravings of Oscar Wilde keep me up all night long.

Oscar Wilde. He was doing some opium out by the hash hall some fellas in that joint don't know straight from shit know what I be is saying? A phrase, is all.

Well, tiger, I hope you don't touch down too soon because if you did I would land in a yuck-yuck green puddle out by the hope of Hope Of My Best my best wishes for family and friends alike since they're all connected by the same sort of cord and since DNA has been mapped back that far. Well, show you me some cheater trying to play a wrong hand, I'll smack him two ways to Tuesday's Place.

It's not that I don't like organ music, you understand, when I tell you that organ music is the problem. It is that I am addicted to BACH when it's organ music because he was a damned fine fellow.

Dialectically speaking, your captain has no clue what on earth is happening around heres. I have a hunch which is a sort of hunch back. His back is one he-he-really big object such as an enormity/or monstrosity.

Well, we can't escape, which is okay, since this is Kansas. In Kansas dust bunnies and tumble weeds roll all over our dreams. Which sounds better to you: **SHQUAWK!** or **SQUAWK!?** If in short range, I'd say the first wins it. However, you should never begin a sentence with "however". More on this anomaly later John Dover the Lawn Mower. Squawk is the correct spelling and looks more pleasant on paper. Shquawk sounds much better I think however. Also never never end the sentence with however.

Your dreams on a leash. Watch them choke. You is bad owner. Bad. Bad. I say, I said this to thyself too and also the other day in addition to when Sheila did that nonsense.

Breakfast will be a hearty meal at McDonalds. If not at McDonalds, the screen is pulling back. Pulling, it's pulling pulling away from me me hearty. Hardly ever have I broken so many strings.

Well, your guitar stylings are rough on the guitar you mother fucking cock sucking rock and roller-blader.

If I went out, it would be for my own humble purposes. The difference is in the circumference of the circular motion whereas most people believe it to be in the motion itself.

Separating vines here with a really sharp hatchet.

Anger management will not release the green skin, man! Leave all those damned silly and stupid support groups behind. Don't fuck w/me yo sumbiatch. I catch you doing that again, I won't think even twice about cuttin' joe, your friend joe's monkey ass as well as. But on the 14th St., nothing went down at all. We had a bad fall. That's about it. Unfortunately, the fall was into a mud puddle which messed up my messy dress.

Why not shrink too much to be seen ever or never at all alone in the basement because it's cold in there. I done up and told you this shit before man.

Unseen, that's what it's all about. You are unseen by those close. By the side of the road there is a man

he is a curse-giver. Giving curses is somewhat alike to riding the donkey like a bitch. At Alabama there is a store where anything can be bought. And sold for cheap isn't the kind of selling. We want to do it right.

Standing on the mountain's top, I think to myself this is I think I'm thinking thoughts will run away from me. Well, when they're running, I won't try to catch them. You try to catch them they try to run faster you let them be they be. They be inside your head. Inside your head again.

Again and again, he said it. It said, "I smakest thou." Thyself included. Not in a science. Scientifically speaking, the atoms are scattered. Atom is the geek word from Greek parts. Grease it up proper, don't laugh so sad. I've bee in a hive his name is Sherman. Had before you won't be the last.

Disjointed fairy boats slipper through the old rusty shoes seeking new insights into past revelations. Predictions fall through, falsities having manifest themselves as actual destinies. The rolls fall jelly-style into oblivion's warm heart where the caged beavers chew on wood. Splinters pierce cells into nonliving organic antimatter. It was in the Full.

The summer will be maggots secreting away devices aimed at erasing decay. Nourishment shall come in the form of rapid heartbeats just barely avoiding the sustenance of attack. Janet hit the fan and the fan blade sliced through her fragile hand flesh. Let me go, I scream for that.

Cries are answered in the null. Baud is bad. Strike out at with whiplash in under the on Friday's only.

Ecstasy. In the form of a word. A word changing forms. A morph. Make it quick.

Bitter quiescence leads down wind ending up calling the dogs home from work to do what dogs love best which is of course the fucking. My answer shall not cure all ailments, however strange this estrangement becomes.

There was something about digging into an epic chaos to draw forth a mighty creation, a set of universes, with which to indulge hermaphroditic fantasy: the solution produced by the key to Eschillion, Eschillion...

Docking, I here the boat's steam release. If it's go you shall you must go now.

Don't let picked noses steal away all your boogie nights. Dance through the nails and glass striking fictitious poses by the flowerbed. Flowers are too soft to allure.

Cut off, sliced cords, no brothers. Blood jutting and spurting. Not enough blood to kill. The train is rumbling down the tracks again. KB wants to catch the train. The train is moving slow enough this time. Reach out your hand and grab something. It will certainly be an adventure, however brief or long and torturous.

Eternity is a question. The contentment arrives when said question is abandoned in favor of trivial pursuits. It's why trivia shows find popularity. Lines are drawn between contentment and joy.

This is about the demons now, real and in mind, slipping through subconscious cracks to lay their traps. When the nutmeg takes hold, Lucifer jumps in and spurts out delicious prose to entangle his victim in worldly success and corruption. The key is in knowing which door.

Calm. Calm is calm. Fragile is breaking apart. Breaking apart like bread so old there's hardly any bread left.

One thought

Exchanged for the exchange of goods is the better economic system.

The dog days are the days when you have a dog at home waiting for you and you feel sad because you cannot feed your dog. You are not at home.

These streets aren't going to mean anything to the likes of you. You haven't experienced the kind-hearted slug life, a life always threatened with a slugging, a life kind despite the slime trail. You wouldn't know a thing about snails.

If the line is followed to the finish there will be assorted tricks. Handing out the tricks, Slug M breaks off from his hard day at work to do what is necessary.

And what exactly is the meaning of cream chess? I mean, it doesn't taste all that great man. If I were a wombat, I would not be afraid of me. This is because wombats are not scary. However, were a wombat to appear this instant, the freak-o-meter would clock off the chart. This is an unexplainable phenomenon.

Seeking light is the same as closing your eyes really close to brightness.

Do you get the message in a bottle, man?

Upper on anatomy.

The human psyche is a twisted loop. Transverse backwards and the results remain the same.

Black from back from well, This is an attack you son of the gun.

It is not fair, the shit going down all over this fucking town. It's like a stinking Virginia toilet. All toilets stink to an extent at certain time periods.

Not-So-Kind-To-Elephants-Sam had himself a shake. A milkshake, that is. Ha! Ha.

Otherwise, it would have to be vanilla.

Chocolate is the favorite.

Since you've chosen, let me issue these restraints: Handcuffs, iron bars, string, balls-with-chains.

How is it not expansive?

Inversion is the key. That is important also. You had better monitor the salinity level. These salt-water pools get out of hand real quick. People try to put boats in salt-water pools. The fabulous thing is fashion design. I've designed some pretty hot pools myself. Not to mention hot tubs.

Punish me, gov'nar. If not, I'll only do the wrong a second time and probably also on a third occasion here-to-for unmentioned. How do you get yourself into these things?

Damn, it's backwards.

Turn it on the side.

Now it's triple-backwards.

Slurp-and-garbled messages hide themselves within the confines of the broom closet. If close-up, far away. Fade to black if white isn't good enough. Fade to white if you're hoping to gobstopper.

My nose is running. I just thought you should know. Like, maybe I will get snot on your keys. Nope, not me. That would be an asshole thing and a stupid thing to do.

I see that this isn't a new experience. After all, Forest Hill. It's where they keep they thing. The sparrow has a wingspan error slash misconception. The problem came when he came in her pants.

So, KB is surrendering his body to the tides and successfully making it back home. These miraculous happenings have much to do with divine intervention. The bubble of protection is strong and I am thankful. Only, what's it gonna take to slam on the emergency brakes and wake up the call?

It is morning. The sun is clear as the clearest imaginable crystal. The clearest crystal I ever saw was fake.

Half baked, the crystalline form regurgitated. The regurgitation took place at an undisclosed location.

This information is top secret.

It's disgusting.

So, let's get this party started.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles, a fat albino with itchy skin, wanted to better himself. He started out trying to find really good moisturizers. Eventually, this simple task became a wild and crazy quest. The quest became the greatest adventure in the life of Enemy Agent Good Smiles and all the Smiles that came before him.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles walked into a store. He looked all around that store and couldn't find any moisturizer, damn it. He walked outside. He looked at the store sign. It was a kangaroo store so it only sold kangaroos.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles walked into a health store which sold all sorts of self-improvement items. This got Good to thinking. If he went self-improving every which way but Sunday, he could improve more than just his pale and itchy skin. For instance, have any of you ever heard of vitamins?

Don't look at words all funny when I say "any of you". Even when there is one, there is no "I".

Enemy Agent Good Smiles was at first unaware of this fact. The health store had him contemplating every avenue except identity. He even contemplated ego, yet miraculously simultaneously avoided identity. This accounts for much of the strife in the world, pondered correctly.

Our man bought a bottle of moisturizer. The moisturizer was full-body moisturizer. The cashier held up the bottle and said, "Wow you really need this man."

Said Enemy Agent Good Smiles to the cashier, "Thanks you fucking asshole." Enemy Agent Good Smiles then jerked the moisturizer out of the cashier's hand and ran out the door without paying.

Every local authority was alerted to the horrendous crime. Luckily, Enemy Agent Good Smiles had the clarity of mind to flee the city for a few years. Instead of the city, he rented a house in Richmond. It was right off of 34th Street. The pigs were always oinking too loudly to acquire the quantity of stealth required to sneak up on Enemy Agent Good Smiles.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles was prepared to try something new and never tried before. Remember that? He tried spider dust. Spider dust perfected his skin and he became a kind of perfection. When it comes to down the free ones, base your decision upon risk and consequence. Responsible choices must be made this way.

Why must skin consume senseless imbecile beings? Does this occurrence seem fair to the widower of Jonathon Edwards? I think the real question here has no true answer.

Answering services piss me the fuck off. It's not right that Lewis Clayborn should be put on hold a shorter interval of time than Janet Jessica. When you think about it, what Enemy Agent Good Smiles was doing was not all that original. Lots of people have itchy skin.

Itchy skin is a condition not to be confused with dandruff. Dandruff is embarrassing. Itchy skin is no big deal. Enemy Agent Good Smiles is an albino, not some fucker who doesn't take care of his hair.

Now that we've the details sorted in a mechanical fashion, equatorial lispism is fine motha of pearl.

So, Enemy Agent Good Smiles applied the moisturizer. This is key. The moisturizer was colder than the North. Some would consider it a mighty feet possessed by Enemy Agent Good Smiles beneath mighty shoes and their eyes would bulge as Enemy Agent Good Smiles coated the feet in moisturizer. Everything, from head flesh to toe flesh, found itself coated in cool moisturizer.

Skin remained obnoxiously itchy.

Brows furrowed.

This was an quite unexpected occurrence.

Matches, agitated against rough surfaces, lit the air.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles ignited a cigarette and pondered the misfortune of his situation. He would have to find a stronger moisturizer. This would be no easy task. The men in blue were after his hide. He muchly desired to keep his hide.

Just when you think the secret is out, they show up at your doorstep.

They: them. The thems I'm always telling people about. People are all thems.

You're with them!

So Enemy Agent Good Smiles located the most excellent moisturizer and applied generously. The brand name was Most Excellent Moisturizer. It is what was then desired.

Said Enemy Agent Good Smiles once, "I here quaking." That was long ago. And he was.

Well, to be honest, Enemy Agent Good Smiles never knew too many people. But then one day he walked into this fucking shifty ass drugstore looking to score some underground moisturizer. This guy up and walked up to Good. Good said, "Hey man wanna be my friend?" A beautiful relationship bloomed from the asking of that simple question.

The guy's name was Leaneriu. He had big muscles hardened beneath gray skin and constant toil under the sun. Leaneriu was a field worker. Said Leaneriu, "You might get some fine bitches if you changed your hair color."

Enemy Agent Good Smiles held up his whiter-than-white itchy albino arm. Now, most albinos don't have the kind of itchy skin Enemy Agent Good Smiles possessed, so it might be said that he was a super freak. Leaneriu, being a good friend, pointed out this fact and added, "like a Blacksploitation superhero."

"No," said Enemy Agent Good Smiles, "don't try to make things better. I must come to terms with the cracker within/without."

Enemy Agent Good Smiles walked out of the store to look for a Spiritually Enlightened One. He found such a one in a random apartment elevator. The Spiritually Enlightened One said, "I know of you, Enemy Agent Good Smiles. Thou seekest inner peace."

Enemy Agent Good Smiles nodded his head in affirmation.

"Seekest," said the Spiritually Enlightened One, "and thy desires shall shift into the territory of the fulfilled. Only perseverance is required."

Enemy Agent Good Smiles went back to the drugstore. He knew he would find no fulfillment there, for Leaneriu had departed and his skin no longer itched.

Don't give out when in doubt. Don't give out when in doubt!

Billy Holiday came on the radio weaving in magical tones a sad song, a genuine song about life. The whole room shed tears, but Enemy Agent Good Smiles was the only one in the room because the radio was really his alarm clock. Enemy Agent Good Smiles was genuinely moved. However, his tears were merely the product of sleepy watery eyes.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles threw the alarm clock across the room and went back to sleep.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles don't give a shit about no Billy Holiday.

Things got sticky when sugar was introduced to the mixture. It mattered little, for the

concoction tasted delicious. There are rivers not as thoroughly enjoyable. Some such rivers exist within the grasp of hungry fingers. Hungry fingers seek impatiently.

The bowl is quickly licked clean. Cleansing rituals are often aimed at purity without ever truly achieving the pure state. The statement, examined internally, is easily confusable with embezzlement. The neighbor's house has faded into wood chips.

Wood chips cushion roughly the harsh fall from atop the lumber mill building. Thousands of hard little arms welcoming a cracking back.

Hands tighten, knuckles whiten, the body drops.

The body drops.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles rolled over and thought to himself, *I shouldn't have broken my alarm clock*. It was probably pretty late into the day at that point. Oh well. He was off to find some day labor for a later day.

That was when the winged demon arrived with a singing telegram. Sang the demon in the voice of Frank Sinatra, "Those sirens by the sea never knew your kind of beauty. Won't you be mine, sweet vanilla valentine. I've lost my way but hey, today will be a new day. Join hands though I can't command it, for I burn for it, yearn for it. Join me by the river, brother, or I'll pitch a fit." Leather wings kicked up dust and the demon flew into mid-day sun.

It was something like "It". Like licking Popsicles for the flavor. Rather extravagant an experience, really. Fine for you. Finer than powder. What kind of powder? Sugar. Lick it clean.

The sugar attracted ants. Exterminating the ants proved a task worthy of hiring a specialist. The specialist was a blonde with purple lipstick and great legs. She gave really good head. Then the ants ran away in fear of the flood of cum rushing forth from the gagging prostitute's big purple lips.

An old man on a balcony miles away said, "Holy shit that's some fucking huge amount of cum over there."

"The old man's right!" exclaimed a mischievous pink rabbit as a chocolate egg squirted forth from its asshole.

The rabbit later played many wild and crazy pranks on total strangers to the rabbit kind. Afterwards, the rabbit played some poker with an elf who was looking to quit Santa's work force.

Elves live off of fun in the winter. In the summer, blueberries are involved. They aren't just any old ordinary blueberries, either. They're very special brand new honeybees. The honey isn't ready in time for consumption. Consumed prematurely, honey is poison. Even the sweetest honey is poison. It is the sort of poison which clogs up the throat muscles. This was all brand new information to Joe James Smith, a supposed blueberry specialist.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles found himself within the comfortable confines of some big park. The park was closed from without, perfectly wide and open within. Within which subsidiary? Linear progress was attained for a few brief less-than-infinities. Underneath the window. There was a flowerpot.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles was standing beneath the window. The window smashed down, glass shattered. Enemy Agent Good Smiles said, "What in the world are you doing closing your window so hard man?"

The guy on the other side of the broken window looked down on Enemy Agent Good Smiles. The guy asked, "What you want standing under my fucking window pal?"

Enemy Agent Good Smiles ran off in an Easterly direction. The eastwardness proved less than easy.

The window was opportunity. Enemy Agent Good Smiles was a peeping Tom cat wild as can

be with his perverted sight seeing.

A middle aged woman heard said by Jimmy the Frog, "I'm the frog mother fucker."

Said the woman, "Shit man get me some crack."

Said the Frog, "Okay but you gots to give me some fucking suction, bitch. I'm talking big time mother fucking head."

The bitch went and gave that mother fucking Jimmy the Frog some mother-fucking head. What followed was pretty gory and graphic and like losing virginity from five or six angles at once. Unfortunately, the virgins weren't out that night. It's only now and then you get a virgin bitch who wants to party fucking hardy.

`Help is out there. If you're looking to get some fucking help, GET SOME FUCKING HELP.

What in the hell did Enemy Agent Good Smiles have to do with all of this?

He supplied ether for the odd concoction. It was an quite odd concoction.

So Enemy Agent Good Smiles was strapping on some leather armor. He would have purchased the metallic sort of armor but he was short on cash you. Oh, you. So silly. So Enemy Agent Good Smiles was ready for battle with a really fucking sharp wooden sword made of the kind of wood found only amongst magically enhanced oak trees. To magically enhance a tree is quite difficult.

It wasn't until Easter I got one of those fucking eggs. It was, however, good chocolate. Good as shit. Shit which looks anyways like chocolate. I've seen chocolate that's better. Motha-fuckin' better. Better like a bed wetter. Better wetters whom wet often.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles is a fucking mama's boy. Couldn't you damned well tell that on your own by now?

What the damn is that supposed to bastardly shit-slut-slash mean, mother of peril's little round child? What was him sayin'.

Yo, what was him sayin'?

Saying the right shit dog?

Shit out of the right dog's asshole. The left dog is all stuck up in that particular area. Stuck up like a gooey insect trap. Insects that smell and look like shit.

Let's play body Body Harvest," requested Sam's mom. Lucky Strikes looked at Enemy Agent Good Smiles and said, "It's cool man." And it mother fucking was. Mother fucker. Fucker. Mother fucking FUCKER.

Peace," they whispered to Enemy Agent Good Smiles. Then they trashed his fucking house up and left.

It was lastly taken place on the fifth of August. Snow had occurred. Many snowball fights outnumbered the quantity of gerbil fuckers. The gerbil fuckers were running out of toilet paper rolls.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles never liked the gerbil fuckers. He felt uncomfortable around them sorts of people. He had once heard a story concerning a depressed firecracker enthusiast, whom inserted a lit firecracker through the rectal area.

Shit. That's what that's about. The shit.

They were a myth confirmed by the conformation of their mythology.

The short fat albino whom had found inner peace looked at himself in the mirror and saw a short fat albino. And he was content with that.

The end to all fulfillments is the fulfillment itself. What more can there be?

Native American #30023 was hunting buffalo. The buffalo fell in unusual quantities. It was a sad day for the Save the Buffalo military power. However, the buffalo had given in to the hunt. Having lost their spirit to go on, the buffalo were doomed.

DOOMED!!!!!!

"I desire you," she said, the street corner whore. The whore with the pretty blue eyes and the

small pointy nose and the killer's thighs. Whom had she slain? Having lain with so many, the question very well may be unanswerable.

It was a painful skinstrike. Strike upon the skin, I mean. Skin and silky silk to caress, the caress of an experienced lover returning, returning from the eternal departure, flesh still hot from the mark of the hell flames. He sees her and they live in the flames forever, entwined forever.

But it was not to be. The whore's pulling gaze amounted to naught. Enemy Agent Good Smiles hadn't the pocket change to spare.

It was, however, a beautiful moment.

I heard a voice come out of a box and I was in love. The greatest of loves come from the music, the singing as singing should be sung, a vocalization of soul whatever the words, and then the words come always right. Only a few of them ever notice. Only a few of them even know why music is music. But when I heard her voice I knew I was in love. I was too young to know the world's definitions, so many definitions of love. I knew, despite what I'd yet to be taught, what I'd never be taught, I knew I was in love. And it was worth any burn, any form of rejection, any torturous sorry, just to experience for a while the exquisite pangs of that thing that hurts so wondrously, that hell and heaven we all strive for, that damned thing love. Let the demons ascend and rip me apart. I was in love and for a moment I caught her eye.

Above, two(three) hers are mentioned. They shall remain nameless.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles didn't know a thing about love. He had never heard the music. He had never felt the flames. Then one day she reached into his brains and plucked out the secrets. Her name was Wendy.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles never fell in love with Wendy. He did have a kind of love for Wendy and so the pair had no trouble regularly fucking. It was some pretty good sex. This one night there was so much damned cum tidal waves of the pale gooey arced out over all the neighbors' houses. A squirrel sitting upon a tree branch got splashed and shouted, "Holy shit man that's some fucking whole bunch of fucking I mean, that's a lot of cum."

Wendy had a pretty clean pussy. It smelled of daisies, but only when she was keeping her daisy plant within.

Daisies grow best when moisture is provided.

Provided there isn't too much moisturizer.

This one time, I had a daisy growing in my back yard.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles was chilling by the docks with chicken on a string. He threw the chicken in the water and used it as a sort of bait. He captured many kinds of fish/crabs. Some of the crabs itched on for days.

The week after it all went down, a Mafia hit occurred. The fellow whom felt the infliction of said hit played not the role of victim. Kicks and screams occurred weeks before the last week. Tremors would only tumble through the temporality on that rare happenstance. Hadn't seen happenstance in a while.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles was moving up in the world of super evil crime. He convinced everyone his super evil ideas were really good, thus corrupting everyone. Every innocent in Chrystal City fell victim to the corruption invoked by Enemy Agent Good Smiles.

A thing happened with teeth, Enemy Agent Good Smiles got some golden teeth. Teeth made of gold entice not wandering eyes. Wandering eyes wander towards the candy, that candy becomes the desired item. Candy killed the teeth of Enemy Agent Good Smiles. They were such perfect teeth, once.

Teeth ain't everything. Not only that, fellow, but you's gotta know gold is precious. You know how much Enemy Agent Good Smiles could get for that fucking tooth? He could probably get some rocks.

Rocks have been popping up all over. Them rocks is getting pet names. People be dressing

they very special rocks all up in costumes and shit. Kicked backwards, remember.

He sat next to KB at a train station and they smoked Lucky Strikes together. The cancer teased their lungs with the experienced strokes of a temptress. She was a subtle background seductress.

Lbrador Labradors make faithful pets. Much more faithful than those damned still rocks. Rocks bring only the hard life.

When the killer emerged from beneath the small boy's bed, screams shriveled the ears of outdoor peasants and parents everywhere.

It was what occurred.

Something like Snickers candy, the innocent blood to the killer's mind.

Mafia don't put up with no random violence. It's all about the organized crime, man.

Some of the most organized killers were serial killers.

Competition.

"Squeeze `em out, Smiles."

Bang. Says the gun.

Success! Another one another another you're such a success...

So Enemy Agent Good Smiles was climbing. He was slaying child killers. Heroic deeds score big with the familyFamilyFAMILY. Yeah, Smiles was fucking climbing. The smiles were plenty and life was delicious/I mean(insertion:good). That's how the machine clicks.

GS was hanging with this mafia bitch by a soda machine. The sodas coming out of that machine were fat motharfUCKing refreshment beverages. The atmosphere was chill as the shit we swill.

"lisa's the name," said this mafia bitch with black hair named Lisa. Sometimes she called herself other things. Back when she used to be alive. She's dead now.

Onto other things Enemy Agent Good Smiles did to Lisa. Like fuck her until breakfast time because he's a meditative fucker. Lisa used to cook up a pretty mean breakfast. Came with bacon and everything, yo. When I say "yo" I really mean "yogurt". Why is it I can't get enough of that sweet yogurt goodness? Yogurt sounds like yoga. Can't stand yoga, which is boring. Enemy Agent Good Smiles couldn't hack it either.excerpt for future's sake the muscle's role

Except under the covers for a few hours. For a few hours everything ran smooth and intense. Good times by the clean water fountain. We used it to wet our lips and throat. We used it to replenish the spirits of man. It was an enchanted fountain.

Three breasts guarded the enchanted fountain. They were voluptuous creatures. Nipples conformed to the perfect shape. Ah, and there were slash marks. You could tell them girls had been through some kink. The kink gets you every time.

Always kink. Enemy Agent Good Smiles was prepared for that. He released as passion the cure. Thus released, a great weight exited a great sword. Having placated the whores, Enemy Agent Good Smiles crossed the bridge and drank of the enchanted fountain waters.

What powers were thus inherited?

More questions, gah, No more questions!"

It was proclaimed a law.

The shotguns were cocked. We had cocked them, yes.

The Enemy Agent Good Smiles and I, we were charging the convenience store together. It was our way.

We were able to pay off all outstanding debts due to the convenience store bootie. A fabulous time, really. We thought of the cigar smoke. The cigars ignited.

It was the aura that mattered. And Enemy Agent Good Smiles had remembered the drugs. He had remembered them the sort of way a mother might remember not to leave her child alone in a big

and dangerous house.

The house narrowed window eyes. Eyes, windows to the soul of the building, a soul pitch with time-inflicted misery.

We weren't about to be go and wait around all the days.

I left Enemy Agent Good Smiles alone, then. He would catch up to me later and fill in the holes to the story currently being unwaved.

He walked across the bitter horizon line, then. Shoes of state of the art quality protected his fragile feet. His albino flesh was a red glowing organism. That sort of organism is dangerous to the host.

It's what was brought about by a hard day of painting incorrectly.

Well, the well was dry. I was flabbergasted when at a later date Enemy Agent Good Smiles alerted me to that fact. I mean, it came as quite a shock.

They got lost in it.

Since you're waiting for a cure, perk up them ears sunshine. Lepers are curable in this district only. It is unlawful to cure in other districts. So here you go, take this cure home with you shrouded in secrecy. Someone might suspect something. What terror!

Next year will be different. Dissimilar.

Dissimilar attitudes are comparable to ape intelligences. They occasion upon this problem as well. Still, it was a surprising thing for Enemy Agent Good Smiles to chance upon.

The checkpoint was there. Waiting to be grasped. There waiting to be grasped. We wasn't prepared fa that.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles walked into a convenience store. He purchased a loaf of bread. It was a loaf of bread that went deliciously with cinnamon and peanut butter and lots of heat and sugar and butter and marijuana. These things in conjuncture combines formed the makings of a delicious sandwich. Yummy in my tummy tum tums. That's how we say it down back east sideways. Spiders crawl this ways.

Strange.

You wouldn't have expected so much of a result ratio. It's fuckin' ridiculous.

The string ripped apart at all angles. Things slipped through various scattered cracks. And crack ruins everything again. Tasted fantabalistic before the antranfantimation on almighty helium. Inhale that bitch. Yowza yowza, is that cherries I taste? What a wonderful concoction! Guard from evil eyes.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Be real, I'm saying. I'm saying, be for real. For real, I mean real. Real, yeah. Bounce is what it's for. The kind of bounce bounced by rubber balls when those balls go sailing through the atmosphere to the rhythm of words being sung.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles was one with the ball.

A rhythm was generating.

He had his hand on his sword it. He retracted his katana and sliced through neck flesh and neck bone. The head made an obtuse sound as it smashed into the ground.

There can be only one.

Chance it. Everything for all. And those were his thoughts as he rolled them heavy dice across that table. The Lady of Luck waved her magic wand and weaved the proper tapestry. AHA! The night was won.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles took off with a pocket full of cash. He drove out of Vegas in a shit station wagon. He drove home to Chrystal City and gambled with street people.

Have you met the street people?

I once knew a few. Occasionally, I would hear the shouts, the shouts for “CRACK!”

It was tough. Luckily, Enemy Agent Good Smiles knew them streets. He had a knife in his back pocket.

It wasn't until morning the sunshine hit me. I was in mourning. So many dead bodies to consider. My heart was withering.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles delivered to the Chinaman a delicious slice of steak. The Chinaman was most grateful. However, the Australian with the clarinet was much more gracious and grateful. The Australian with the clarinet paid in hundreds. It was really quite mother fucking incredible for a single payoff.

Alas, Enemy Agent Good Smiles quit the restaurant business. It was just too much servicing for the free spirit to handle. You'd understand if you were him you ununderstanding fucker.

Free was the key word. Freedom was what he needed. If you saw his condition you'd relinquish control to free the tormented spirit. The spirit must be free. More value that way. Enemy Agent Good Smiles understood. Have you come to understand?

What is this message this odd preacher be preaching? Fucking hocus-pocus? Sure hope not.

Well, Enemy Agent Good Smiles, he dipped it in honey. It is oh so sweet now.

Really can't wait any more. No more. In store for him. That was the message. They designed to spread.

It was fair to stink his bones up in gooey. If Nicodemus Cayenne Pepper Mixer was about to break on through, deliver to the whistler. Can you chase the whistler?

Hemoglobin yields heme nonsense and pressured blood to this organ. This organ. It stayed this way for a long period of time, pure. Fuck, Fuck this loud hammer is gripped from somewhere. Yet a slippery handle smothered grease stains and smooth worn wood. Fuck, ever sense it bleeds inward a green mixture of paper for blood. Designed to spread. Designed to spread inside. Fuck, the message is still pure just around the courtyard. I picked up where the genius left off.

A little whiskey in the spaghetti.

The spaghetti goes nicely that way.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles got into some Salvador Dali shit. It was fucking hocus-pocus for sure, only the soaped-up clean kind. Fucking crazy mother fuckers hang out by the gallery. Enemy Agent Good Smiles got some numbers. Foxy ladies hanging out over there.

I wanted to move to the beach. The homes there are expensive but extremely rewarding. I told Enemy Agent Good Smiles, “We gots to move to the beach bitch.” He was all like, “Alright you mother fucking tart.” We were off to move into a beachside home.

That's how you gots to do that shit as well. You know? What? I's confused about the meaning to things. There are various sorts of meanings. It's strange. Wired, really. Who electrifies your wires?

It went down like a zebra top. The top to the zebra's drink was succulent. It was strange in a paradoxical manner. Not to be confused with tuna fish. Tuna fish? That's fucking nonsense! It's tula fish we're after.

The silent one made much noise that night. Much of the noise came from the consumption of fish. He was a messy fish eater.

Him which him? The male version. Of him. HA!

Whelps pop out of the creak. It was because of the dog.

We all know your technical difficulties applied simply because of applicable laws.

Technicalities shall not conquer in the end. Your sheath extends to enrapture the falling object, a weapon. Well done, Soviet Soldier.

Dear Adrienne,

This shall come as upanstance shock: I knowest now (obscurely) the spelling of thy name. As thou hast deducted.

Ha. Ha.

I would love to derange the kangaroo, but I've got business to attend to. This business is pressing. Your business is pressing as well. No compromise is possible.

However, I am in love with love forever. A fruit which shall never be pluckest dry.

Thine ears having understood, meet me by the river by the bay (meaning the bay). I am quite insane, however a shock this shiver sends. But ain't you no crazy ius abways too? If grokking understanding comes understanding grokking, Devilish Wisdom Hidden.

If thine ears have the heart of thine eyes, meet me by the river by the Bay (meaning Chesapeake Bay.). Period. /insertionA m

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(space)

lids of the all-seeing beast.

It burns the forest,

Burns it down

It is a sadness

but it is not sadness /endsertion

Actually, the train tracks. The Bay is flooded.

Can uundoerstand?

Deviance trance séance in France.

It will occur, wait and wonder. This is lies!

Besieged! Drat!

--(Paper Attachment to Letter: Fuck the Bay.

But not too hard. And make sure you keep the ol' gal clean.)--

Please marry me or at least grab some delicious pizza,

Signed

KB

Post-Post-Post-Post Script: What I want is a goddess to worship, an obsession worth obsessing over, and I want to be worshipped in return. I don't know who or how many want this thing also, but if you're reading this past scars (including glorious, distant Adrienne and the woman from the dreams), no hard feelings and I am yours eternally available, to all of you and only one of you eternally devoted.

To Adrienne in particular: I'm still waiting to read your shit.

To my dream girl? Intendedst thou to haunt me? Thou art ist thine and mine ambiguity compliments, may it, the banshee's mystique. Even if she ultimately comes to reject labelsof any kind, as I always have, and particularly that one.

Well forest, will forest. What was his name, the albino?

Hoivy! I am a great storyteller!!

Found the fairest did Sir Jonathon. `Twas a lady. `Twas her.

HER! Hurk!

He hurkled a burple!

Excitement.

Down, periscope. They shall never understand. Dreams are difficult to comprehend. This must be expected.

Must it be expected?

Wait for the rain. I'm waiting for the rain. That about describes it.

It, the situation.

It is a letter within the pages of a book not addressed directly to Enemy Agent Good Smiles.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles was a figment, an invention created to make things easier. Did it work? Has understanding arrived? Have you grokked? You dig it, man?

I'm not prepared to sit here and scramble oranges like eggs all day. There would be no point in leaving oranges in such a strange condition. An orange would be quite nice right now.

You think the think tank has left the waters. Well, the waters are roomy. It is impossible to fathom the depths of the waters. It is an impossibility to which you are not up. Up, what is this? A call for up?

The fall has occurred. For talk of up always seems to bring about the fall.

The fail is long and painful. There are much ouchies.

When yellow bricks ascend so rapidly upon your path upon your progress, find shelter. There must be shelter out there. Reach for the shelter. Nobody wants a brick in the head. It could be deadly.

Damned right a brick in the head might kill. Whom might it kill? Any single person. This would be hilarious. Dead bodies thumping against the pavement, dead bodies having been previously thumped in the head. It is the joke of the circle.

The circle is a joke because the circle is not infinity. There is no circle. The line goes on and on without ever returning to its beginning.

The line or the ray, for the beginning of the line is impossible to trace. The ray begins and then continues without end. It is the ray we're after. COKE!!!

I don't think anyone understood his plight. It wasn't the sort of situation to be attributed to such a noble creature, or such a pathetic creature, however they saw things. I was wondering how the poor kid got into such a bind. I never figured it out. Enemy Agent Good Smiles had been such a nice guy once.

I offered him bread. "FUCK YOU!" he barked at me. Like that, the lights went out. In the blink of the eye everything blinked. There was a flickering. Finally, the floodlight kicked in.

He wanted to liberate himself from the tangles. Tangles hooking him into the oil. Why did his father have to piss in the eyes of the oil company? It was hardly fair to anyone.

Gazes squinted threats. I wasn't going to punch him. I wasn't even really angry. I just wanted him to eat, damn it.

The bastard squealed like a little girl and took two steps back. He covered his head with his arms. "Please don't hit me!" he shouted.

I dropped a loaf of bread on the ground and started to walk away. “Wait!” he shouted. I paused. He picked up the loaf of bread and he said to me, “Alright, man, I’ll take your damned dirty pity bread.” As I heard the chewing commence, I continued in my steps.

There was a knocking at the door. It was my door. I was walking up to it. “Hello,” I said.

“Hey man,” said the man moments ago knocking at my door. He turned around and looked at me squarely. “I got that package, man.”

“Oh,” I said. “Splendid news,” I said. “Come on inside,” I said.

It was indeed splendid news. Finally, my blender had arrived! I could use that sucker to make milkshakes. I shoed out the delivery boy and set to work right away to make a milkshake for my friend. I knew Enemy Agent Good Smiles would be happy with a milkshake.

I found him sitting out on the curb smoking crack. I offered him the milkshake. He said to me, “Shit yeah man! Milkshake goes great with crack!”

“Smiles,” I said, “you’ve come across some hard times. Stick it out, man. Burying your troubles in a crack pipe won’t help. Believe you me, I’ve seen people in your place before. You’re at the crossing. Choose the right path.”

“I’m far from any path,” said Enemy Agent Good Smiles.

“No,” I said. “You’re on the path, all right. A path headed straight for the cliff.”

I turned my back on him, that figment. I snatched away his milkshake and turned my back.

I lost all respect for Enemy Agent Good Smiles that day. Lost all respect and turned my back on him. Fuck him. I haven’t seen him around since.

It was a sad moment. The sadness was balanced against the tasty. The joy of the tasty very nearly defeated the moment’s sorrow.

Yes, but the Easter Bunny. Think about the Easter Bunny for a moment, reader. A fellow in a pink costume? Perhaps. The same could be said of Saint Nick or good ol’ King Pumpkin.

It’s All Hollow’s Eve, so I’m thinking about King Pumpkin.

Actually, it’s October 23. The Illuminati number coming up during the wicked month. And there’s vibes in the air. The time of year doesn’t scare me. It’s a good time of year to plug into the vibes.

Anyways, the Easter Bunny. Possibly a real bunny. Hast thou considered such a possibility?

I had a little pink rabbit once. He arrived on Easter. It was a surprise the family hooked up.

The bunny was faulty. He could shit all he wanted but he couldn’t piss. His bladder killed him in the end. Yeah, those things go.
Out.

Out like a light.

There’s a flashlight signaling in the distance. Some guy says, “Hey what’s up?” I say, “Nothin’, man.” It’s a damned, dirty lie and I regret it now.

When something’s up, the best plan is to admit it. Well, honesty and covering one’s ass. Deceit isn’t necessary for the promotion of a safe and healthy life.

I mean, safety. Impossible. Why lie for safety’s sake?

Why? It is a craving. And theirs is wisdom in covering one’s ass, when such does not require a lie. For lies conceal truth, and truth is important. One of the premium importances. If there is to be a clear and correct perception of reality, there must of course be truth. (Of course!)

I’m trying to crack an egg.

Some eggs, maybe a good number of the eggs, are already cracked.

Have you broken through? Or are you an egg, waiting?

It has risen, the sun. A new day has arrived. The dawn has passed.

Dawn, I knew a Dawn once. Didn't like that stupid cunt. She had red hair, though, which is probably why she was named Dawn. The point is, I'm waking.

I'm waking and yawning and as my muscles stretch and as my bones crack, I decide to conquer it all. I have awakened as king. King of all. What can't I conquer?

The foot is placed upon the down. Having put the foot down, none question judgments.
WHAT RIGHT HAST THOU TO JUDGE!?

It was a comfort I awoke to. It was not power. Not really. Though there is power in the realization. The realization: I have learned enough. Enough wisdom is in my possession at this very moment. Enough. As much a quantity as any man should want to amass before death. And there was more to the comfort than merely that. Merely that! I knew there was more to learn. I had learned enough and I would learn more!

There was more. Yes, even more. I was peaceful. I was calm. Nothing could disturb the calm. Danger wasn't real. I had conquered the fear of harm. I had conquered the fear of death. There will always be new fears but the largest of fears I had conquered.

I wish to share my wisdom with the world. This wish is a selfish wish for it springs from the desire to live comfortably. Why desire comfort? Comfort is comfortable. I wish to share my wisdom because when my wisdom is understood, I will be understood. This will bring recognition and money. It is a selfish wish.

It has become an insignificant wish. I am comfortable.

There is more, still more. Much, much more to be perceived through the drug-induced euphoric ramblings.

Lately, joyless occasions have been naught. I have experienced personal fulfillment. I have experienced love on various fronts. It is the kind of love that is infinite. I have experienced infinity. I am experiencing all those things infinitely. Forever, what is there to be unhappy about?

There will be sorrow. Sorrow, and other kinds of pain. Joy exists despite.

A lady once passed an important bit of information my way: Before control is to be found, control must be lost. Surrender.

I said that already.

Things being repeated are doubly important. TAKE THAT INTO CONSIDERATION!

A few will understand.

This has been a partial diary I leave now in dedication to Tramp," I said as I exited my domicile. It seemed an appropriate thing to say to the potent barks emanating from the back yard.

And I signed it in my little book,

Signed,

Danvers & Co.

Back to planet the planet I'm talking about, and things are going down. The whispers in the darkness may signal something strange. I cannot know for certain. The approaching body is of ambiguous character. Perhaps friend, perhaps foe. Certainly deadly, under the appropriate circumstances. Deadly when he has to be.

Him, our hero little George and his little green connection. Yes, it really was an inexhaustible connection. And that is why wave after wave of them keep coming in.

George has the connection and it just keeps growing. That's what connections do. Pretty soon, there's a vast network. Networks have a way of getting things done, whether or not you're aware

of the connections in your present state of mind. But man, if you look around you and pretty soon just start seeing a lot of green, you don't have to know where it's coming from.

On Planet Danvers, a revelation was coming in to trip out previous question marks. The time was unimportant. When has time ever been important? And in its insignificance, it found some final speck of attention.

He found out what was going on. Danvers got to where he could actually see the webs. After he saw the webs, he remained quite happy for something of a spell. Thing was, he saw the webs, motherfuckingratbastardsonuvabitch.

Went on an adventure. A favorite song of his playing on the stereo. A very reliable provider had provided the speakers. It's good to have a few of those in your pocket.

Danvers understood, just like he'd been trying to tell them. But they couldn't see through all the obfuscation. Just too much of that was around.

Danvers got put in front of the keyboard and he cranked out a message. Let this message be heard. There was a yelp.

The problem was there was no solution. Oh, man, when you're down in the stacks and you have to pay the brass tax Jack, let me catch up. "Me! ME! ME!" little Enemy Agent Good Smiles was shouting. "Come on, man, it's me!"

"Off the crack Jack?" asked Danvers of Enemy Agent Good Smiles.

"Nah," said cord. "It's jist a cord." "Jist a cord, man?" "Jist a cord, man."

Enemy Agent Good Smiles looked down at his feet. Naked chubby white little feet anxious for some new mole hill to conquer. The thought occurred to him that it might be nice to write something down.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles said, "Hey Fred, I'm going to write you a message."

"All right, man," said Fred.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles pulled a piece of paper out of his back pocket. He pulled a pen from his front pocket. He pressed the piece of paper against black pavement and scribbled out,

*Trance,
the sequence
Trance,
the sea*

*Lost in
waves
The same waves
flowing*

*Eyes
Blinking
Pupils
Dilating*

*Skin
Heaving
Chest
Heaving,
heaving heaving...*

There was more but Enemy Agent Good Smiles decided to end it there. He looked up and said, "Hey man, come on."

"Oh all right," said Danvers. "You can walk with me again if you want, man."

Some things never change.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles stepped up to the podium, tapped the speaker, looked out at the audience, surveyed an array of possible responses to their blank glares, and opted at last to recite a poem.

"The squirrel's twilight eyes glitter with
their
eyes glitter with
their
eyes glitter with
their alabaster majesty.

I remain transfixed
in the joy of
the moment

It is truly a twisted image of paradise, but
it is paradise!

And winter is here,
an additional chill carried
by the winds
The bright colors honor dry leaves
and fall.
Before long,
seasons end.

There's more, folks.

You want to see my shit? What? You want to wiggle a little bit? A little bit? Maybe a little bit
more.

The window
Holds its mysteries

One is
tempted
into
lifting blinds
to gaze

The distance
Holds its mysteries

What hands
reach
from the
distance?

What hands
grasp
for your
hands?
What eyes
gaze?"

I stepped up behind Enemy Agent Good Smiles and tapped him on the shoulder. "You think they want to hear another one?" I asked him.

"Yeah man," said Smiles. "They can take it. I know these people."

"Then shoot man," I tell him. "If you think they're ready, just go ahead and fucking shoot already. I'm up for a little something new."

The lamp's
light was
flickering

in the
absence of

fucka duckw hile you're in the attic

all hope.

Yes,
the harp having been plucked,
the cord rings true on an empty, unstirred air

Yes,
bold sights passing before the eyes of the wild ones,
we were ready for the hostile takeover.
we were ready for the coming dawn.
we were ready for the passing moonlight.
we were ready.

Yes,
the bounty having been presented to mine arms I grasp,
squeeze tightly,
Squeeze until the juice oozes.

th
ejui c
eo oze
s.

Oranges a'plenty fall into his hands. He bites down and sucks up the nourishment.

Yes,
Yes! Yes! Yes!
Mother fucking YES, man! THE meSS
a
g
e
hi
d
d

en

enenen....

The hidden messages have been revealed to him. Finally, he understands and knows what he must do.

The lamp's light
was
flickering
in the absence
of
all hope.

Again,
He said it
AGAIN!

"Oh the poet in me," said Smiles. "He's looking for some worthy audiences," said Smiles.

"I know what you mean man," I assured him. "You mean you're a fucking good-for-nothing crackhead," I assured him. Me, Fred. Kid Twisted. Twisted backways. It had very nearly overcome him during the initial phase of onset.

"Let me tell you a story about some friends of mine," said Enemy Agent Good Smiles.

"No, never mine," good Enemy Agent Good Smiles said. "The crack pipe hasn't yet been reloaded."

Luckily, there was an extra hit in the car. Sure, I was planning on giving it away, but man, I didn't know it was going to be like this. I was thinking along the lines of some twisted forest of revelations. Existing in a state of permanent revelation hadn't occurred to me as possible. But Fred ate some acid! But Fred took some DXM! alittlemeaslypettybumpUNCLEAN! But Fred was riding this fucking wave wherever it took him! So KB walked out to the car and grabbed himself a slice of heaven in the form of LSD. Yes, he surfed the glorious waves, then he had the audacity to ask for more! MORE! MORE! Like the notion of pure, unabated, unhindered orgasm combined with the

"KB is a space cadet.
a space cadet
space cadet
ace abet

"Kb is a SP (space)Cadet,"

Somebody suggested before the trip began, "KB is a space cadet." Echoes of the memory fluttered through his head. My head.

And another memory, as well.
The white shrill cry pierces night
White as satin,
A white satin

White caresses legs,
White thighs turning beneath
The scream
Turning beneath
The scream

Ed. Edd. Eddie, he knows more than he's telling us. What are those jawbreakers the kids are so crazy about, really? Just something for which to sink teeth into? I think there's more being symbolized here than ca

KA

KAND

CANDY!

"Just um give me some of those jawbreakers man."

S OKB/Fred(fred)smiles(GoodSmilesgoodgoodgood) walked out to the vehicle and karate-chopped into a tunnel of beautiful acid energy oozing through the seems of seeming reality(a suggested pure state of existence.)

At the center of it all I found fears abating. Fuck fears. There is no need. For, my friend, let me tell you. There's no sense waiting something like this out at home but for a little while you can just...

I can just...

Relax.

monkeys shit in the putrid streams of black gold slowly flowing beneath the

decaying rai

-I--can__Just...

Relax.

They thought they were pointing towards something. Pointing! I saw it all. I knew what they were tapping. I knew the purity of the green.

And so Fred Danvers reclined out by the pool. A glass of lemonade was in one hand and a fat sack of coke was in the other. A present, yes, the sugar.

For the sugar was not just,

could not be described as just being,

can not be followed in a justly fashion,

just

For the sugar was not just sugar

For t e ugar as ot

For the sugar was not just sugar,

The sake was not just coke. Well, okay, there's a big sack of coke in Fred's hand. It's pretty beautiful 100% pure stuff man. A present from his wife Lee Anne to her man. Because all the drugs were free (like books checked out at the library!).

But the coke symbolized something more than coke. Something more than a mere powder racing with the mind. For the mind was always racing with other things.

Always racing, that mind.

Fred Danvers didn't want to be mayor. There were at least four midgets around willing to force his hand if necessary (and one midget that proclaimed him a king). Unfortunately for the four

midgets, Danvers was superman. "And I'm not going to be mayor," he told them. However many times those pesky midgets begged or shoved, the answer would always be the same, a resounding, "Fuck you!"

The "Fuck you!" with the power to turn back any assaults against personage, however seriously portrayed. But what schemes was

the mad scientist hatching now?

Noises? funny noises? Were there some funny little noises getting in the way?

The show goes on, regardless. I mean, it's just some noises.

ometh

Some Things

seeing some things?

Ouch!

What was that?

Insignificant. The show goes on!

The show. Oh, the show. Welp, "Whelp," he said, "that's all I've got to say about that."

The mind's genius need not be doubted for humility's sake. In mean, I mean meaning. Can you fathom that concept? Meaning meaning? As you ponder the depths of that, let me ask you this quick question: When was the last time you gave the doggy a little tap on the head? Hehe. Hey, I see what you're doing. You do? Yeah.

Hey, I see what you're doing.

That echoes. "Hey, hey, hey..." Yeah, so, hey, man, I see what you're doing.

Okayt h h h h h

h HENST

OPIT!!

And there was only one voice. The mind's greatest groove. Things making sense.

"I've mastered the harpies!" I shouted into the distance.

"I've conquered the tempters!" I shouted into the distance.

"I've defeated the fates!" I shouted into the distance.

"I've realized deceit!" I shouted into the distance.

"I've silenced the voice of HIM!" I shouted into the distance.

My distemper at having upset such a tremor with the missuz at home quite disfigures the vaguest flicker of a notion ...

Vaseline lotion is rubbed in massaging motions over my face.

is rubbed

by

a nice

being.

is rubbed

by

A right nice being!

Yeah, so hey, you dig it cuz? You gonna go for the gold?

"At the end of the tracks is

golden pot,"

Paul said. Yeah, he told me this one time we were walking the tracks together. Walking the tracks, man. I tried to show them how it was to be done. His ears are good ears.
is ears are good.

Some listeners have the minds to define the limitless. Others prey on the attention of their talker. Either way,

Information is exchanging hands.or
you're still trying it out a bit.

Why yes, certainly.

Well, okay. Let's walk together.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles and I, we journeyed into the central nervousness(AH!). It was a wild irritation concentrated in this one little spot.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles and I, we had some times, some fun times, inside the pulsating muscles of mind-flesh oooo "I've seen the mind stretched to such expanses it became nothing more
oozing. than a muscle being flexed."

Enemy Agent Good Smiles and I,
and I.

You dig?

Well, regardless, the well water is frozen, slipping across cold roads, tripping piss drunk, tires disappearing, sirens wailing, the ground, another crack opening to devour the idiot...

Agent Danvers asked Lee Anne, "Hey bitch, what do you think of my spiffy new suit?"

"What? Oh, um. Ouch!" "Hurts me to hit you, to do you like that, but I've got feelings too and I need that money, honey, so rock the sack and suck more cock, bring in the dream team, Ram it home, Damn the bone, Too high strung, too young for your rough lips. Well you're my whore, bitch, don't pitch a fit. I know all the answers, I've pranced with the reindeer in the sky, I fly that high all the time..."

And she pleaded with thee,

"Leave mine bosom be!"

And yea said to her,

"Life's a blur, riding

the whirlwind,

glowering asshole,

Darkthoughtsdarkthoughts

A bell ringing,

my childhood..."

And yea fucked her brains until her soul uncoiled betwixled the great

Symphony of Destruction,

a reduction in power,

An otherwordly power,

Dear Lord, What have you done to the Goddess?

Ripped into a tarnished raiment,

the flesh roads of the silk traders

the fresh meats moving always

This very instant,
All instants,
This no second,
None arriving,
Trapped without an invention,
An invention that stopped the movement,
A body moving across them vast black seas,
Them surging waves, with their electric crackles
The energy
to tackle
Synergy
or
Synchronicity,
Distemporalment,
Resented exposition of the deposition,
now listen to what I am telling you:
Hate the eagle. Kill on sight.
Not right, left of the rainbow.
Pulled back,
boing, An arrow released
Teased to the surface
Blarble, garble, marble, gerbil,
what werbills?
In the cage,
It runs the circle
Again,
For the 1,000,000,000th time
It is how the thing was
Meant to happen,
It is why the thing
was.

It is the trap we create for our pets.
We responsible owners
Of animals
Like ourselves,
I thought
and sometimes think.

What is it the dolphins are saying?????

Don't jive
too long.
Now sing
a song
of love-e
dove-e,
Hugs and
kiss-ses,
Best of wishes,
Do the dishes,

Put him in stitches,
Kill the fishes,
Will back the wishes.

I thought I saw a
kindred spirit.
Perhaps it was
a peer indeed.
There's certainly
a need,
For something
yummy, something
warm, something
great Something.

OH!... Something.

He slammed on the breaks but it was too late. The pursuit had dragged on for hours. The destruction wrought behind was of less consequence than the spinning machine lost within the dance, shot up and signing out... Bars again, real law, real cages, the mammals and the other animals rattling the bars, should have been, "You should have been a politician," said Lee Anne from the other side of the caged dizzy daze.

Boiling, burning, coiling, cooling, twisted straight, leaking, he wants out, the screams jingle within his ears, the memory of what his arms went through... Familyfamily...

I don't understand standtanbanfanland I'm under a lemonaidedfadedfaydead struggling, you see? right through it all.

Some quests never end and deep within the answer to the riddle. Be. Inconceivable.

Inconceivable truths present themselves. Out like whores.

:_____/_/_/_/\VWVUV_

Dirty Days

Bob lived on a farm with a roommate named Jim Bim, Saboteur. Jim Bim, Saboteur never was much of a talker or a listener, or even a worker. Jim Bim, Saboteur was a fat man with lots of cash. Every week, he pulled \$900 out of his ass and placed it upon a table. The rest of the time, he slept on his side on the living room couch.

Bob always did like cows. If he could have, he would have run a cow farm. Unfortunately, when his grandfather died, all the old fart left him was a hog farm.

Bob never did like hogs.

Bob was at the grocery store one day. This fat bastard walked up to him and said, "Hey man, can I be your roommate? I'll give you \$900 a week." That was how Bob met Jim Bim, Saboteur.

So Bob worked with hogs for a living. It wasn't a bad living. The tax-free \$3600 he was getting monthly from Jim made it a pretty great life. Still, hogs can be a real pain in the ass. Filthy, fat, cannibalistic creatures. So Bob up and decided one day, "I'm going to kill all my hogs and sell a little bit of the meat." He gave what he didn't sell to Jim Bim, Saboteur.

As a farmer living on an empty farm, Bob made a pretty good living as a professional dancer. There was this club in town called the Purple Penguin. It was a hangout for pirates and other local hooligans.

One night, just getting off work, Bob was walking out the door when a tall man with a purple eye patch caught Bob's attention with his good eye.

"Is there something I can help you with?" asked Bob.

"I'm looking for a few good men," said the man. He was stroking the length of his multicolored beard.

"Who are you?" asked Bob.

"The infamous Captain Rainbowbeard," said the captain. "These seas, or any seas, is always my seas."

"I've never heard of you," said Bob.

Captain Rainbowbeard stomped on a peg leg. "You can't be serious!" he said. "That's quite surprising, considering all the infamy," he said.

"Well," said Bob, "It's the truth."

I can't know now any more than I did a minute ago because a minute ago I didn't know anything and now, although I know enough, I still don't know anything despite the everything I have learned. Being a god is a big responsibility.

"Being a god is a big responsibility," said Captain Rainbowbeard. "How would you like to be a god?" asked Captain Rainbowbeard.

"I've never considered the possibility," said Bob.

"Accept the possibility," said Captain R. "Join my merry crew."

Bob rubbed his stubby chin while Hmm...ing. He said, "What's the name of your ship?"

"The Delicate Blowfish," said Captain Rainbowbeard.

"I'll have to run all this by my roommate," said Bob. "Where can I reach you when we're ready to go?"

"Eat Our Docks, pier 33."

When Bob informed Jim Bim, Saboteur of the situation, ol' Jim turned into a little gray squirrel and ran up Bob's side. Jim Bim, Saboteur perched himself atop Bob's shoulder.

Bob was confused. Bob took the unusual turn of events as a sign proclaiming a yes. Bob walked out the door in search of the captain.

"Treasure! Treasure! Treasure!" chanted little gray Jim Bim, Saboteur. "Treasure for me, treasure for you, treasure for everybody. These seas is ours, there's gold to be had. Treasure! Yay!"

"You greedy bastard," said Bob.

"Hardly," said Jim Bim, Saboteur. "Where's my money been going these past few years?"

Out by pier 33, Captain Rainbowbeard was smoking a Newport whilst searching for his missing donkey. He never should have let that tricky rascal off its leash.

A donkey tail flickered serpentine from behind the dark east corner of the Eat Our Docks.

"Aha!" said Captain Rainbowbeard.

Much scuffles and many shuffles and even more tumbles disrupted the night tranquility. In the end, the donkey got the victory. An exhausted Rainbowbeard rubbed his rainbowbeard in thought. What the hells bells was he going to tell his crew? If only he had two good legs, he easily could have conquered that stupid donkey.

"Hey Rainbowbeard, what's up?" asked Bob.

Captain R's eye expanded with the notion of a plan. The infinite deepness of the pupil focused on the neutral gray of the squirrel. He said, "Say, that wouldn't happen to be a magical squirrel, would it?"

"I sure is!" exclaimed Jim Bim, Saboteur before Bob could make claim to anything.

"Well," said the captain, "I could use the both of you."

"Treasure!" exclamatorily commented Jim Bim, Saboteur.

"Certainly," said the captain. "Don't you know I'm Captain Rainbowbeard?"

"I'll be wanting an ambiguous percentage," said Bob.

"Ambiguous percentages for everybody!" promised Captain Rainbowbeard. "Hop aboard," said Captain Rainbowbeard.

Everybody hopped aboard the Delicate Blowfish. The rest of the crew was smoking diamonds below deck. That's how rich was this crew.

"All right. Here's the treasure map. There's our goal. We've been pirating these and all seas for centuries, if you can believe it. We've acquired quite a horde, if you can believe it. And there's more treasure yet to be had! My goodness, we'll all be richer than any kings."

"What do you by with your treasure?" asked Bob.

"Mostly crack," said Captain Rainbowbeard.

"So we're not stealing anything?" asked Bob.

"Not today," said Captain Rainbowbeard. "Today we're just going to pick some shit up. Tomorrow we're going to by some highly advanced weaponry. The day after tomorrow, we're going to steal something."

"Neat!" said Jim Bim, Saboteur. "Sails unfurl!" said Jim Bim, Saboteur.

The sails unfurled. The ship shot out.

"Wow, you really are a magical squirrel," said Captain Rainbowbeard.

The ship landed on the top secret Inner Easterly Coastal Plain of Chrystal Island. Treasure was retrieved. A few purple penguins were attached to crack sacks and unloaded. The penguins wandered into the island city to peddle their goods. They were to be retrieved in a few days.

"Oh, I have a present for you," said Captain Rainbowbeard to Bob. "I have a good feeling about you, so I'm going to give you a very special present."

"Wow, thanks times infinity," said Bob, and he was completely sincere.

That was how Bob got his magical guitar.

Sometimes, when dreamers break through, they forget what it is they've found. It stays with them somewhere.

The Delicate Blowfish hit land somewheres. Super weapons with lasers and beam cannons and stuff were loaded up.

Jim Bim, Saboteur killed a man. He crawled into man's backpack and then into man's back and then out of man's chest. It was a rough but quick death.

Lots of other men died, too. None of them of Rainbowbeard's crew. It was a merry pirating operating. They attacked from the back so nobody saw it coming. Lots of gold was acquired. Some nifty silverware, too.

"We are gods!" said Captain Rainbowbeard.

All the treasure was taken back to the island. Penguins were reloaded and thoroughly examined. Despite all the spending going on, the horde was still steadily growing.

"Want some diamonds?" asked Captain Rainbowbeard of Bob.

"No thanks," said Bob. "All I want is ice cream."

Captain Rainbowbeard served Bob a tall plate of ice cream. It was delicious.

Meanwhile, back on the farm. A hog thief was severely disappointed to find an empty farm. Nothing else of greater significance than that significance possessed by everything occurred.

"You're fired," Captain Rainbowbeard told Bob.

"You're fired," Jim Bim, Saboteur told Captain Rainbowbeard.

"Well, we're just all fired up, aren't we?" asked Captain Rainbowbeard.

Funny, the laughter. It was everywhere. It all disappeared. The Delicate Blowfish was ruptured. The Delicate Blowfish was quickly sinking. Under went the Delicate Blowfish.

Bob got an ambiguous percentage on his way swimming home. Home wasn't the hog farm anymore. Home wasn't anymore. Still, Bob swam home.
Jim Bim, Saboteur popped like a pimple.

The last thing Bob did before he crossed over again, he sang a song:

There was a time when I cared for the sky

There was a time when I cared for the man in the sky

There was a time when I yearned for a piece of the pie

We are all gods
We are all gods

My deeds were never ruled by a desire for power

My disease was never a desire for what they call power

My deeds were never ruled by the clock's ticking hours

Or the rising and the setting of the sun

We are all gods
We are all gods

But for a time I obeyed the king in the clouds

How I've escaped and found myself beyond it all,

I cannot say

How I've seen we are all beyond it all,

I cannot say

I can only tell you

And hope you already know

We are all gods
We are all gods

The Rest of It

The whirlwind arrived. It wiped the slates clean of all the positive progress. It dirtied the fields. It killed the cows and the farmers. It trapped the hero.

Bob, the hero. He wanted to ride the whirlwind. He had even summoned the monstrosity. Yes, sadly, he was a hero in spirit only. In deed he brought naught but destruction.

It would be difficult to make amends from within the city's crowded cages. One thing Bob

had promised early on, he wasn't going to let them take his freedom, whatever else he had to suffer. Well, freedom isn't freedom when it is a result of location.

Bob was still a hero at heart. So as the questions poured forth, "Who supplied you with the magic? Do you know the significance of your birthday? What can you promise us? What can you give us? Are you dope sick, man? We rub your back, you rub ours," Bob just smiled and shook his head. His sad smile had them all in a frenzy.

Family was all Oh so supportive. "We know you're coming through it now," they said. "We know this is the moment," they said, "you're going to turn your life around." A moment of ill decision, an instant without control, and the stupidity was supposed to infect all past decisions. There had been a need all along, in their minds, for a change.

Conehead light cheap buzzsaw. Grass is in the kettle, kennel dogs barking. HGoing to the free zone to make a faker tajke hger to the prom. Dominatrix pulling fixes when the finish line is in sight and the beginning is the end. It isn't the kind of thing you know or need to do, it's the kind of thing you need to say when you're too far away to make a confirmation.

Light wheel dancers prance all over the butter spread a roos rust dust cross out the biways or the what Mavrick Marvish MAyviekie best test dezz coes does was. Not to be mistaken for a plate of plankton in the rice or the syriupity. Syrindinini filli fool proof to booth the boost of both kinds of English, King George.

He had confirmed the black spot they were trying to paint over *his* life.

The bibles were raining down from the sky, thumping like Lady Tucker's kettledrums, striking thunder and righteous lightning into the heart of the defeated wave rider.

It wasn't a good place he was in. He deserved it. He had fucked up, and everybody, through all the sympathy and understanding, was going to take advantage.

It started at a party, a gathering of mammals and intellects. There is a dark place in the city where the calls for "Crack! Get your CRack! Take a whack today!" sound and the whores with hairy, boiling lips get their customers. This was the niche, behind a tall white fence, within an old tall house. Nobody cared what experiments were being hatched behind that gate, behind those doors.

Mystic music too alluring for the public intoxicated all visitors without ever escaping through the walls. A rhythm was always generating, a new rhythm always generating. The power to the words, often subliminal, sent most ready minds on a journey.

It had been a wild ride and Bob had only one regret. The bottle should not have factored into the equation. It was bad medicine and he knew it. He had held the bottle in his hands, looked from side to side, and announced to all, "This is bad medicine, friends! I'm headed for a dark mixture of chemicals. This with that and that and that... But if it's what I have to do to find the whirlwind..." He chugged that Bourbon like delicious, nutritious fountain water.

It was bad medicine *because he knew* it was bad medicine.

And the whirlwind arrived, friends. It was wild and crazy, a hazy run for chess through a quaking maze, a good time up until the rough spot at the end.

It was funny, because everybody knew about the mushrooms, everybody knew about the constant churning madness, everybody knew about the chants for chess and the alcohol... There was that one other subtle, ill, crazy substance he'd never let any of them detect.

The vehicle went spinning... Spinning straight up into the air. Bob lost his eyes through an open window. Into the debris went his glasses. And he was thrown to the ground. And the cuffs closed tightly around his wrists. And the shackles captured his ankles. And they said to him, "Blow hard, sir, into this tube."

Bob saw a light. He was digging downwards when the light shined up. He thought back on a certain sparkling white stone... It was gold shining up at him now. And it became now.

So Bob stares at the solution and thanks his God and gives thanks even for the wall he almost splattered into. He knows what he must do and he still feels justified in his position, Fuck what they think. *Fuck them all if they think I'm fallen, fuck them all if they think I need their hands to pick myself up. I'm stuck between a rock and their cruelly beating hearts and I'll never get away unless I pay them back all they think I owe...* So submission is the answer, as he always thought. Physically, he gives himself to them for a little while.

They can't get inside him. Despite the trail he's painted, despite the trials they've seen, none but he knows where he's been.

The cops took his new knife, the Panther, his second line of defense. They didn't know about the curse or the mystical significance of the other knife, the Snake, the knife he got from the aging junky crack dealer. They could have found some things out if they'd run some tests on that blade...

A blade infected with black magick, a dark wand from the low side, a token to be held close always.

Heh. He had asked, snorting some heroin off the glove box door, "Hey man, want a taste...?"

The funny thing is, Bob just found another important knife, the Guatemala dagger gift. That dagger got him through a few rainy, homeless nights on an island in the city.

Bob will always have a second line of defense.

Bob needs a new adventure to keep strong the soul. He's pierced the void and seen the squid and danced around the lizards. He's made the mystic sounds with the hidden messages and he's sketched the far reaches of the mind. Tomorrow, perhaps, he'll find something new to talk about.

He'll get on the telephone and he'll say, "Listen, if I on the ball I'll see drumming strong. Want ant goddess and hot billing to kettle for anything less. Worship's too stemma for boat people, but it's call I gave to give or nill at all. Don't peck any ring from a body but if you set me groove I'll worship you, from the source and on into divorce. If too much such, see you on the flip side."

Maybe all that's too much to say over the telephone. But then, the poets told him no distance is too great for the Norse Rainbow Bridge.

Bobby Brown licks a dime from a long list of options. He had earlier chopped the Chopin into fragments to rid the pantry of souplless objectifications. All choruses had been accomplished post-vocally.

So Bob's in jail, only for a little while. The first thing they ask him, "Hey man, coming down off the dope? Eat lots of chocolate and you'll be alright in a few days. Plenty of people coming in here looking like you."

Bob is not dope sick. Bob doesn't understand why everybody thinks he's dope sick. Some chemicals even Bob won't touch.

Still, they see that vomit flowing and they see the condition of his arms and they saw his mushroom eyes when he walked in. He cannot defeat their suspicions. He just walks on down that lunchroom line, grabs hisself a tray, and he eats his meal amidst the crowds.

Bob is a loser when it comes to monopolizing (and other particulars). That one, money management, was never his game. Besides, he lost his eyes. Until he gets them back, he can't even read a Monopoly board.

He doesn't mind the orange uniform. The hunters will know he's no deer.

The tunnel system is calling. Don't you know a monster lives down there? It's roaring messages straight up into the jailhouse air ducts.

There was a time when certain of the pale ones could summon forth any manner of abomination merely by willing it so. As the power of the surface of the land faded into deeper, ever

deeper depths, as the lava boiled hotter, as faith in superstition lost all appeal, greater and greater complications were devised to enhance the ritual. Today, only a few remain to carry on the intricate secrets.

The simpler potties are in control. The dice are on a roll. I miss my aluminum foil bowl. I ate great quantities of soup out of that bowl. The answer will come in the form of a hole. The dirty cannot be mapped. The tunnels always changing. The changelings will guide thee. Don't ever doubt the word of an honest man, when you find one somewhere. "His greatest flaw," they said of Him, "was that he never learned how to lie. We all hated the ugly bastard."

They stomped out the flames before the blaze inflicted destructive intoxication upon the forest. It might have all burned down if not for the strife of the life of white he had chosen for himself. Well, he got out of it and he ran for cover and nose, the blood was flowing and he tried to escape but every hiding place had already been discovered so no more flames were ignited, the pyro was cut down by the butcher's knife.

chess would have made for something tasty. Wasted land smelled of rotting chess. Wasted chess smelled of rotting flesh. Fresh chess rested in wait behind the chest of drawers. It would never have been the same as before the fan went down and spread the whiz all over improperly prepared crackers cramming the grams. In fact, the digitation went swarming the beehive. It wasn't a jive they'd heard across the radio waves. Rather, chess was making a stand. Nothing stood in the way of the great weight falling onto toes. Honestly, I don't know why.

Gremlins wanted to find the answers so they could sabotage. SABotage! SABOTAGE! And every time s/he sheath shithed wiped win shields to wind unwound, winding up for the cure. Thought they found a cure. Couldn't make it through the door.

No quantity of amounts could hold back the gas. Wide-eyed, he sat listening, as always. Always wide-eyed even when they were gone.

For he had lost them. He had since acquired an insufficient pair.

The shrimp shriveled amidst stands grandly held aloft. Tossed into bossy busy-body, no thing budding there. The phone ring-ringing on deaf ears. If it was, it hadn't been and mattered not. Dishonestly disassociated from the horde sinking ever deeper, never to be seen from again unless mixed amidst the boiling boils on skin. A sinful thing, something to occupy the attentions into the attempted frustrations of attention until not heard from again. Not to be mistaken for, Hey, don't come knocking on my door.

He went shooting through the slots. A word resisted, unfair. Well, judgements perceived ironically enact true judgements upon the perceivedly judgmental. In fact, he'd been there before, in this and a former life. For looking deeply inside, the deep past stares out at you.

Concealed amidst the jumble, the pathetic frustration, the frustration of having given it all up and just wanting two minutes, of having had two minutes and having wasted it. Of wasting away beneath aims at no expectations. And the clean life kept him so.

Bob is working on his memory. They haven't let him bring his books into the jailhouse so he only works on what he did read. On remembering how it was he was supposed to remember...

Images and places, something along those lines. He was either supposed to devote all attention towards images and places, or he was supposed to eradicate all place/image associations. He could store within an encyclopedia of words or visual stimulus. Despite having lost eyes in the past, the choice being his, he decided he'd absorb pictographically.

No thing stood in the way of the secondary twister churning. The pages of the spelling book got sucked into the winds and so the winds, they were spontaneously enhanced and sporadically diverted. What havoc was coming!

What wrought iron claws heavily fall from the worn fingers of the flesh-wearer.

Nobody could tell the difference between left or orange any more. Neither would have been

correct. Actually, in actuality the only difference was in the similarity between dissipated dissections on the table.

They look at Bob, Bob not a boy anymore, and they ask him, "Hey man, will you save our city from the coming storm?"

"Why must I always be caught in the middle of these things?" Bob wants to know.

"What has Richmond ever done for me?" Bob asks.

Nothing could not if not for not being. No longer persistent, he gave into the inflicted soft rejection being doubly broadcast. He would rather a smack in the face than an intentionally obvious string of lies. But the mind always carried, even his mind, the falsely obligatory easy letdown. Still, in jail, the importance of phones might occasionally carry the weight of a strong man's backhand.

As his mind wandered away from the discussion within which he had been stationed, his leg shook and his fingers tapped the tabletop.

It was Bob's spelling book causing all the damages. It was Bob's lockup keeping him from that book. Detained from the datum, what could he do? He would not accept their guilt trip. Nobody likes a guilt trip.

That's why I'm going to tell you right now. I'm sorry to have to do you this way but it's the truth. You're guilty, you vile, filthy, disgusting, stinky sinner held squirming betwixt the twisted fingers of an angry god. He has ever right to be angry, look at you. Oh, so, brothers and sisters, come on now, I want you to accept the mercy and let it shine on down upon your wretched, undeserving soul! His fingers are getting slippery, brothers and sisters! Your slime's rubbing off!

There was a time I used to masturbate to pornographic videos and smoke hash on into the late ours of the night. There was a time I was almost as dirty as you. And I'm still dirty, don't get me wrong. Saved by grace even though I don't deserve it, so although not sinless, at least now I sin less. Come on! A monkey would know it's the right thing to do. If I'm wrong, you die and nothing happens, and none of this maker stuff makes any difference. But what if I'm right, brothers and sisters? Forever is a long, long time to spend within the icy-hot fires of hell. Are you willing to throw your souls into the nine pits for demons to prod with pitchforks while you burn just because you couldn't accept this free grace my Almighty God is offering you? Up here on our priestly horses, we have a word for that: stupid!

"What? What's this?"

"Just sign here, son," says Bob's lawyer, shoving the pen into his hand. A pen, mightier than the sword, of a greater range than any gun.

"It's the right thing to do," says Mom.

"Your lucky to get off this easy," says Dad.

"Shouldn't I read..."

"I think you've done quite enough reading already, you squirming little bookworm."

"But I want to..."

"JUST SIGN THE DAMNED THING YOU BLOODY IDIOT!"

Bob's behind bars and the whirlwind is sucking up houses. *Fuck what they think* holds water even when it's not on the angry side. Especially fuck the thoughts of them that think into existence expectations. What's the logic in that?

The last two sentences in the above paragraph can be explained as an expression of the turmoil threatening to turn the hero into a damned whiny little bitch. The doers do what they can to prevent that from happening. It's happened to so many before. Though not necessary, it is understandable.

And understanding's one of the few things anybody really wants.

Until the music stops.

Yet another body drops.

Cattle mutilations.
The blood rain coming back to haunt once more this fortress.
This fortress community, locked in on what is needed to promote general wellness.
Even wellness "correctly" generalized.
Digging through shit to find the fungus.
Stampeded by the bulls.
You just gotta grab that bull by the...
AHH!!! Ahhh...
Um, not interwhistling, howthing.
Tree, do not trot too closed. Free, an illusion evaded.

Bob meets Billy the Junky.

"Hi, my name's Billy. Every Friday or other day I like to shoot junk into my head."

"Straight into your head?" asks Bob.

"That's where it's all coming from anyway," says Billy.

"True enough," says Bob.

"So," says Billy, "hey, you, like, know where to get some cid, man?"

Bob shakes back his lion mane hair and he smiles. Behind bars, the junky and the blood mage forge an alliance.

There's no need for an escape. Time is no kind of obstacle. Bob just waits it out.

The fat cats are sweating more than bullets now. They're thinking of charging Bob for all the people he's killing while he's in prison.

Well, technically, Bob's not killing anybody. It's just his magick left unchecked.

And there's no evidence, other than the hovering pages, to suggest the whirlwind is his.

If only a sample could be obtained... There's not a man on the force brave or powerful enough to get close enough to the whirlwind for that.

Anyways, life goes on... Love and lose and love and give and really, What right has a stranger even to expect honesty from a stranger? What right as any one over another?

Bob plays and loses many monopoly games. His slow talking and eternal trip fosters suspicion amidst the other prisoners of a slowness. That Bob, he's not so fast on the draw. Rather, Bob, yeah, a tad bit detarded. Just lookit the way he drools in sleeping. Just watch`at rangeh egives. No so far, no?

Somehow, Bach is smuggled into the jailhouse stereo. Bob eagerly sucks in the rejuvenating energies. He seizes the power of the particle shower, the interaction between agents within the reaction chamber discussing top secretly.

This is something grasped by Bobby Brown and few others. In fact, even junky pal Billy the Frogger Fragger is annoyed. And Bob won't let them turn off the stereo.

"You poor, pathetic bastards! Don't you realize what you're missing? I've nothing but sympathy for you."

"Sympathize with our ears and end the symphony, asshole," says Sam the Big Guy with Big Muscles and Big Teeth inside Big Jaws, tools to clamp down upon pesky heads in the viscosity.

Says Bob, "I feel very sympathetic towards your impoverished ears, but I'm not letting you steal my mojo."

"We'll do something with your mojo all right," says somebody somewhere.

Smack! One of the rascals attempts a shanking. Smack! Back he's smacked!

Smacked like a shower bottom. Cheeks pink with embarrassment.

"There'll be no shankings here tonight," says Bob. "I've got my mojo. You crackling fiends

can't touch me now, can't ever touch this. Back, I say! Bach, Isay! Scat, fatty mc fat fats, scat!"

After tonight, inmates cease doubting Bob's velocity of intelligence. He was slipping in and out too quick to doubt, although his sanity remains forever in question.

Incredible! How's he do such marvelous magnanimous insanities? Quite good, sir. It is better with butter, goes smoother down the throat.

Shasta shosta shootin' violin floorit fasterfaster. My man the shouting Shoostir was boosting is booting now.

Ring. Mother answers the phone. "Hi, son," she says. She says, "Don't you know I'll love you whatever idiot choices you make?"

"Yeah," says Bob.

"That's good, son," says Mother.

About that time all the phones are disconnected.

"All right, Boy," says Agent Danvers through the bars. "I've managed to cut you a deal, man. You're outta here tomorrow. No strings on your end. I had to pull a few to make that happen."

"Thanks," says Bob.

"No problem," says Danvers. "Lately, I've been so wrapped up all I have time to do is play with string. It's my only source of entertainment. Since Anne left me..."

Immediately noticing the arrival of a sob story, Bob rolls over and goes to sleep. The tale flutters into his dreams and forever intertwines with the back of his head.

Sad music arrives from Berlin. Through the sorrow, it's called a fun tr Ibumprip. Bob doesn't doubt it. He does, however, wonder where all this free music is coming from.

And the free soda. What is the meaning of the free soda boy? Should gifts be questioned thusly? Free things, whatever the usual price, arrive so rarely these days. Ominous origins are always suspected.

Bob, for when, is willing to benefit without doubting.

And so it was to be, and so it is. Bob knows everything is gonna be all right again. Everything is gonna be all right again. He's running through, rushing the walls they created for him. He's got the war chant playing, sending surging the energies into him. And they said they said they said, "We're gonna rush ya, watch out. It's because we love you that we do these things..."

The battle fought on a battlefield of the enemy's devising brings much pain and tears, as many as any war before it. The blood keeps coming and the salty ocean washes, cleanses, leaves wrinkled the flesh of the bodies at rest. The rest of the campaign brings naught but the same until he says to them, pushing the finality through full throttle, "I can't be living here anymore."

He'd served his time so he wasn't going to go home just to serve some more. Their loving glares couldn't hold him prisoner anymore. Nobody was going to hold him prisoner anymore.

He had, with a word and a gesture, dismissed the raging winds. The Samson hair they took from him fluttered not in the dying breezes. They didn't know what was hiding behind his mellow pupils. They'd taken his drugs for a while but they'd never succeeded in taking away his high.

Bob is in the run from the emotion of the matter. He doesn't want it to matter so much to him anymore. Even if it does, he's not going to just stand there and let the chains pull him down.

The memories, one by one, flip across the slideshow he built inside his head. He analyses and decides, *This is the best thing to do.* Only, he doesn't know where to go, high school drop out, and it really doesn't make a difference.

Bob walks. He's had practice with this. He doesn't know where he's going but he has a destination in mind.

There's a reason for every rash decision, especially. It was an especial order ordered by Bob

at Mario's Italian Restaurant, where everybody speaks perfect Spanish and serves your salads tossed, included many smiles.

In Paris, she danced with him. He didn't have to say a word all night long to talk to her. She had a head for subtlety of communication. She knew how to make the candle flames respond to her will. She knew how to lose control and regain it in an instant. An instant without enough is often enough to make all the towering dominos tumble. They tumbled before and behind her and stood right back up for her.

It could only have happened in France.
Bob wasn't looking for France.

Some kind of time. Haha. He was too dangerous to evade forever the private eye. He knew all about the swimmers drowning and how to drown for a little while his pursuers. All the answers to questions of bloodlines are always at the ready. And he said, "Back then, I was taking so much... Haha. Well, it's finally catching up with me."

He inhales one more fat cigar. Another punch into his superman lungs. He's in mind a magical mystery cure! Only the good die young anyway.

It's why the private eyes had no power over him. They never could convince him to fear the grave. They couldn't even convince him to expect the grave. All they could do was watch him fade into the background. He was only good at blending in when he became truly invisible.

The people saw him walking by and some of them said, "Look at that man, he's obviously a fool." Some of them saw that knowing grin and they said of him, "I wonder what secrets that man is keeping from us all."

Bob isn't about keeping secrets. Now that he's away from all eyes, he can't help but keep some things for himself. Back when he used to stick out within the crowds, he'd answer as best he could any questions they asked him. He rarely had to answer many questions.

Right now, Bob's taking soil samples. He's looking for a world he's yet to explore. He only vaguely suspects its existence. He is searching as much on impulse as anything. A gut feeling, you might call it. He's out in the woods digging holes.

Bob throws his hands up into the air and he shouts, "Come on up here, bitch!"

Nothing. Nothing happen. A leaf whispers messages across the currents.

Something. Movement deep down below. Sifting desert sands miles away. A low rumble.

Yeah, the bitch heard him all right.

Bobby Brown says, "Damn it, bitch, I said UP!"

BOOM!

R-A-A-(A)-

A claw emerges, dirty, long, metallic, glistening through the shadows. Six feet under, the wrist moving up. The claw shoots high and comes down hard and digs deep and pulls the abominable brown twitching arm, the body, some kind of body... What body!

Duplicated, the harp heard, duplicated into the guitar. He's shuffling the guitar to concrete the magick.

Bob had never very seriously taken concrete into consideration. Still, more is usually much better than less.

Heaving, hairy, drooping chest. Eyes with blue flames trapped inside. Flaring green nostrils dripping acid. Oily gray skin. Nipples dripping rancid milk. The wretched titan falls forward in tribute. Anything will be done by this one in return for a good song.

"Take me into the tunnels," says Bob.

Bob with his acoustic guitar in hand is snatched off the ground. Bitch jumps into the ground.

Are you ready for a war, friends? Well, you're gonna get one.

Wars usually come when they're invited on over.

Somebody says, "Hey man, I'm a little short on cash. Let's go kill some Arabs for pocket change."

Somebody else says, "All right, man, it's been a while and the people are thirsty for a little bloodshed anyway. They all feel like losers after that faulty trade agreement last week."

The people are ignorant of their own desire, which is indeed near the surface bloodshed.

Thirsty for blood, red in their eyes.

These things happen under the dirt.

Yellow and green drips from the moist curvature of the rugged ceiling. The ground here is a thin, sticky mud with something solid beneath it. It is dark but not pitch black.

Bitch, task performed, has retreated.

Bob understands not the faintly glowing symbols scattered across the right wall. He believes there is more to them than the task of providing some miniscule iota of light. Cautiously, he drags his palm across a few of the symbols. Nothing changes.

Bob attempts a divining into the nature of things. He comes up dry. He doesn't have the powder for the task on hand.

Bob does what he does so often on the surface. He walks.

Bob is always on the lookout for something brand-spanking new. He is always on the lookout for a brand-spanking.

Bob had plenty of nifty a life to look forward to, his whole life ahead of him to look forward to. His whole life past he can look back on to learn. His life ahead he can look forward upon to sketch. He sketches it all in the little purple notebook he brought along for the ride.

It's always a ride, man.

When the coaster tumbles, that's a ride.

When the trembler trembles, that's a ride.

Every time it's pumping inside him, he starts to shake a bit.

The intensity brings a bit of the shakes.

The intensity of the experience of the surgin' adrenaline brings a tidy bite shaking.

He's prepared. For whatever is out there.

He's hiding behind the impression of nervousness. It is a fragrance he exudes. Insensate nostrils twitch anticipatory of victim.

Wheels spinning within Bob's skull. Gift dagger and crack dealer pocketknife at the ready. Whatever comes rushing forward... Whatever's making that sound...

A woman pops out of the shadows and says, "Hey man! I'm Lisa."

"I've heard of you," says Bob.

"Yeah, I used to be famous," says Lisa. "So anyway, you're new here, right?"

"That's right, ma'am," says Bob.

"Itch fin fab tas fag drag rag mopped sippy bucket soapy water, I'm borderline, take inside stride, ride, tight hold, be bold, gra ra ra, Hahaha, no more chess or de double," says Lisa before disappearing.

"I hear a popping sound," says Bob to self. He slips his blades into their proper places, retrieves his guitar, and he plays a song.

The notes
choke out.

The notes
rope a draught.

He takes a tote and
plays just one more.

It's so thirsty
up there,

Down here.
Somebody wants to have a talk with that boy.
Somebody waiting beyond the end of the tunnel.

Where you're sitting from, see if you can hear the smell of Bob's caress. Bob is pushing through the pages to find his day in blue giving loom. Too soon to tell w/o ball ball well water splashed sploshy across green acres. Raked, sake, shake well, Italian dressing makes it special.

In shirt, dessert, work pith dip drive jive shades, concealed, illness, what dirt, allergic reaction to the puddle mess fast for having not taken under the windspan too wide for those wings spread. Rolling hills. Killkillkill, dirtyRustcunt. Not to be taken with the out of want desired in having naught else in pocket strap, boot heel falling again.

"Bobby, bobby, bobbing boy," they call from way, way down the hall. He hears the faint tip of the call attempting a piercing through thick armor. The calluses he'd trained. So many uses for those, so much wasted abuse.

Bob walks on.

The walls and the ceiling and the floor become circles. Everything is circles, it's walking through circles. The stalker stalks from far behind. The stalker will always remain behind because he's stupid ass.

Everybody knows it.

Bob emerges from the spinning environment. Bob is spat upon an artificial floor of an almost liquid quality. He sinks without submerging. He emerges to stand and the floor holds his weight. He turns to view surroundings. So plush, so civilized, no civilization. It's just him standing on a waterbed carpet.

The lights blink on. No light source. So bright. A blanket of white conceals surroundings. Bob wanders through it blind.

And falls into another tunnel.

Wandering, stumbling, tripping
Into it.

This has never happened before. This is new. The sensation of alienated familiarity intertwining between the desire for oddity, the urge to grasp the ungraspable defeated by the limitlessness of what is graspable. Telepathic, incomplete revelations being transmitted from an undisclosed location. A message of mercy piercing the thick skin. And

Hey, ho, come to us now. We're waiting, arms open. You're what we've been looking for.

Bob doesn't like the sound of that. Somebody looking for him? Always means trouble.

What's a guy to do? A guy's gotta walk. Bob steps into his own strides. He heads for what's ahead.

Bob walks that thin line between all things. He walks between, from beneath, all things. What he really wants is to score w/some score. Settle an urge. Satisfy a need. Blow his load. Any old vagina will do.

B o b b y- B o y . . .

Meanwhile, way back in the city jail. Billy the junky is sniffing junk to boost his telepathy. He's trying to get through to his only friend on the other side.

Billy cannot penetrate the underground reality tunnels at this time. He'll need to smuggle in some needles.

Bob... Hi, Bob. Just follow my voice. I know what you want. We have what you want.

That's right, Bob. Right this way. Come on, now, pick up the pace. He's behind you, you know.

He's afraid of getting closer so you can lose him if you hurry.

B o b b y . . . We're what you've been looking for.

Bob walks. Bob follows the voices through the dark tunnels. It is the only way to navigate. He goes along with everything for now, everything except the command to hurry. He vowed long ago never to fear the things behind him.

It's curious, the voices. How can they promise so much?

They're ugly, filthy, smelly liars, that's how.

Bob arrives. He falls into the small town, into the waiting arms of the gathering mind-callers. They gently place him upon a crooked rock bed. They look down at him.

Bob says, "So what's happening, people?"

"Yeah," says one, #1, a fellow with long gray hair, smooth marble skin, and a walking stick with an illuminated head.

"Agreed," says Sara, just some pussy. She's just the pussy Bob's been looking for!

Bob and Sara retreat into the Public Fuck Place (as written on a big sign sticking up out of the ground), a pink bed surrounded by four black silk curtains. They drop some ideas and accomplish a few hours of fucking before being kicked out of the Public Fuck Place to give some other people a turn.

"It's a nice town you have here," says sweaty, naked Bob.

"Has lots of ups and quite a few downs," says glistening, naked Any Old Pussy.

"I didn't catch your name," says Bob.

"Call me whatever comes to mind," says Pussy.

"Okay, Pussy," says Bob.

Pussy releases mischievous purrs.

"So, anyway," says Bob. "Them voices. How about them voices?"

Pussy curiously asks, "Hearing voices?"

"Not at the moment," says Bob.

"Oh, yeah, that was us all right," says Pussy.

"I know," says Bob. "So how about them voices?" asks Bob.

"I wouldn't worry about them," says Pussy. Pussy walks away.

Bob gets dressed.

Back in prison, Billy's still on a quest for a bigger and better heroin experience.

It was never to be released, the tape. Never to be released, it never was. Since it was a successful cover-up, it never occurred, whatever "it" was.

In fact, having suggested the existence of further proof, executed. On the books as routine excretion of excrement.

The secrets were still whispers only. He'd catch the drifts and learn a thing or two. What Billy needed was some good junk!

FRUsTratedbattlesfor further farther father of thededietysodaCoke a Cola, served cold, inmates screeching all hours of the night.

The one thing, where was a guy to sleep?

"Just pick a bed when you're ready to fall into it," #1 says to Bob.

"No offense," says Bob. "I suspect there's an Illuminati on your shoulder."

"A common suspension," says #1. "I'm certainly illuminating," says #1. "Just look at my nifty walking stick."

"Looks useful," says Bob. Bob picks a bed to rest upon. He chooses other than the Public Fuck bed. He chooses one with a green mattress privatized behind sliding iron curtains.

Bob meditates within the curtains. He hears a voice reaching. He can't quite make out the pull or the address... Something from above. It could only be one fellow.

Bob sinks into his shifting green mattress. He finds himself in the most comfortable position possible. An invisible sheet falls down from above. Even though the temperature is quite comfortable, Bobby Brown appreciated the fallen sheet.

The tumble terlic derlics derelected officially restrained deranged hanged from noose, loose goose cooked, booked across town, lost too soon to ever be found, went down before your shift, a long time ago in a town of original deceit, weepers taking aim, for shame, thoughts floating through, throats jumping, head spinning through my head, your head, a time well spent, the minutes passing, the hours past, too fast to let it slow, no more milk for the kitties, the kiddies wonder what's with that guy? So strange a time, the crimes he commuted, could have been committed, the things he could ave good better, got mixed, so tricky, take it gogogo!CaTGO!

The tranquility of virility, a minor defeat, a defeat over the minors trying to drink, trying to get their drink on during the wrong shift don't they know lunch ain't the time to come, back again? My friend, don't go down on me unless you're ready. I'll understand man I promise. Just you make me a promise too: Never again do me that way, not that way, sorry to jump it shortswitch but pissed, bitch, watch yourself.

Viral infection trapped within the disease expanding, books expounding rhythms upon it, a lick too soon, doomed never again to ride the train through the rainstorm, stolen lines, he stole my line, doesn't think I know, I saw that shit go down didn't want wasn't in for a killin' that night, too tight at the time, too separated from the crime. I'll stick a lemon into your tea and you'll forgive me. Don't forget the straws!

And don't you know the meaning meannnnnnn of those cars tar bars wicker wicked stick taking a turn for too far not north of the put south it damn man, not your game, don't float don't drown, swim learn to swim.

Bob knows how to swim. He learned long ago. He's been swimming nearly all his life. He actually came close to drowning once and that was it for him. "Damm...it," said Boy Bobby, "I gotta learn me how to swim." Next time he stepped into those waters, he was ready.

The meditation helps.

Confixing dentures mad to fly affix-o-matrix. Bent, dead ponies rotting.

The Council of 8citizens gathers around Bob's bed and discusses Bob within earshot. It sounds rather an obscure discussion concerning obscure things, things mumbled in the jumbles like the words they're spitting.

"Pry at bott fox boogie toddler, no nay Aye sir. Biggit gettup, mightyfine. Ain't it xtant, in that, such as time, highest offer, notes taken, blotter paper, big deal. Con won won't take, con earned can't con long. Sing it as many licks."

"But bot bottle bogger bogus, no sight, wounded rabbit. Bigger, better game for tiger. Tigers running hard. Panthers, choose cats house falling fire set, slithering, whistles, no choice. No room for, doors to be closed."

"Mistake in assume, no need. Television playing picture show, watch out for McGov'nar, hide in place, snakeboots, jackknife, now how brown as low-down, out. Peace if asks, man."

"Peace, man, all say. No way to glowstick if worms infect wound. Booger boggles operations manual left set up table tops spinning, top heads, top hat, jacket, obsessive. No room now for blue solution."

"All say, have fun, make the run. Tame the typo into no mo fuckup the licks. A battle, can't avoid dinosaur so big. Jake, takeon, take it off. Nest infiltrated. Teleprompting donkeyfucker. Going through the niches, stealing honey. It has been predicted."

"Indeed?"

"Nay, in intent. Future tense. Not to be, if steps. Ladder to start with. High reaches made readily assessable."

"Acceptable if not for into conned fooled a tool, no? Usable until expiration date, the milk. Drink of until drank. Not to be made drunken by the intoxicating nature of the affair."

"Agreed." "Arguable." "Agreeable." Argue." "... "Settled."

The Council disassembles. Bob decides to get in some rest. He drifts through the meditation into that other illusion.

Heeeey... Hey man, are you listening?

Billy? Is that you?

Only in dreams, brother. At least, until I get me some good junk. Man, I know what you think about my-

Say no more. No, say something. Tell me what you wanted to talk about?

This feels like a phone call. I see sharks in your pool.

I'm aware. Is that all you wanted to say?

No, man. I wanted to tell you, man, I'm getting out. Where the fuck are you? I need your help. chess on the Chile.

Huh?

Nothing. You're messing with a good dream.

Okay, man, I'll hurry this up then. I need you to send my father this message: Your son is clean.

Bullshit your pops? I'll see what I can do. Sorry to say, it might take me a little while.

Do what you can. I'm dying in here.

Peace.

Peace.

The chess is spread straight across Chile. Newport ignites the smokestacks. Lycan screams curses free across the moonbeams. Babylon calls the lonely tongues back together again.

Bob is drifting in a small canoe...

Bob sees chess pieces, oily black and white rocks falling on points, and eyes glaring. It becomes easier for him to think of things as a game, as it all being a game, as the game being played, contests being waged. It seems so petty a notion. It does make things easier.

Bob is rowing through white water in a small canoe.

The first thing Bobby Brown notices upon awakening is the dome. His eyes wander across those areas of the dome illuminated enough to be perceived from so far below. Brilliant renderings of somethings, foggy sketches, shadows intertwining with such a brightness. It appears to be a cathedral foam penciled in over the bubbles.

Funny he hadn't thought to look up until he was already looking up.

Bob studies the dome in a daze. He shakes his head to free himself of its power. He sits up in bed and slaps his thighs. He wonders if it's morning. He wonders then realizes he has no reason to care.

Bob steps through the iron curtains in eager anticipation of the games.

The original cosmic funk crew is designing to bring about the fall of the barriers between the groove generating on Planet Funkipussy, a groove being transmitted across the theoretically inclined ultramegatronics. It started a long time ago when a weapon was ingested to counteract the dark currents being created by fat cats in wide hovels. It was there all the time to be tapped whenever by a free energy supply for the heroes of the groove.

One nation living underground, one nation living under a groove. This was the phenomenon Bob initially went looking for under the dirt.

Bob fond the fronds in the fnords. He berzerked a club into blood frenzy. Shiny pib onto pub tap. A service.

Well, "Well, well well," says Sally Sue the village zookeeper to Bob.

"I like your skins," says Bob.

Sally Sue slides slender fingers across the scaly red smoothness of her glistening overcoat. She winks.

"Which of your animals did it come from?" asks Bob.

"Oh, um, well, it didn't come from one of mine," says Sally Sue. "I'd dizzy daze if as to become so crazed to kill a keeper's charge."

"Understood," says Bob. "What's up?" asks Bob.

Sally Sue pulls back her coat and says, "I'm hoping for your dick."

"No problem there," says Bob. "I really dig redheads."

Bob and Sally retreat into the keeper's tent for some foreplay to the real show.

"My, you've got some tasty nipples," says Bob.

"Oh, that's nothing. Wait until you..."

Hey, Bob, what's up!? I finally got my shit together, man!

I'll be with you in a little while, Bill. I'm kind of inside of something at the moment.

Oh, wow, those are some pretty flexible legs... Peace, out.

Back in the city jail, cartons of cigarettes changing hands. Delicious Newports ad herrennnnum.

Billy has those journey eyes. Not even Jacques Ellul could resist discussing the phenomenon. Once it started circulation within the prison system, Ethics of Freedom, for obvious reason, became a popular pick-up and, due to the intimidation of length, a popular pass-on.

"For," said Jacques, "the neurotica coming, bare to witness, left behind..."

Billy sits Indian-style upon his top bunk ripped green mattress channeling. Through his fingers and toes and head and through the narrow slit cut across his forehead especially, the energy is received and sent on down the line and on up the line and all these power sources acting in unison and, "Beyond Bach," says Bernette Adette tettetnet et et.

Such a thing as could be pondered is pondered briefly until Billy wish beyond that too and he knew knows he wiz onto something, going somewhere, limited by the, "I say, how can one know, perhaps limited by the enhancement of the," could he perhaps be limited by the progression of the transference transfused? He has this urge to dance a bit this urge to ride the cry the tears of the man watching over the flow of rowboat toe-to-to, to jut the cut foxie Foxlene Frenzic forensic kick.

Tick tack, a pad punching, the music was magical. *"We're the opening act, we can't come back"*

"Get dressed!"

It wisn't unBill to filler the willed-upon with wished fishes of the mindfield. Explosions crackling plastic delight through the other side of a friend struggling up and out, a bird in a cage singing a song about freedom, the other junkies crying tears for the necessary treachery of the other kind of creature, all creatures battling political under addiction-of-choice. What is your addiction of choice?

A buzzing lights the bright air of the underground. It is faint just now. It'll pick up harmony as the hours pass through the pass-out of time, running out of the machine ticking, a standardized unit of measuring things falling; something falling shortly.

"Who do you work for, soldier?" Chiseled chin, thick neck, high shoulders. Green scale armor seemingly emerging from skin. The man's little beady eyes peeking through the flaps seem a

quite unnecessary intrusion into activities of very immediate interest.

"Come back when we're finished, Jobio" says Sally Sue.

"Just so long as I can get an answer to that one reasonable question," says Jobio.

Bob says, "Hey man, I work for Uncle Jam. I'm on groove maneuvers."

Jobio's beady little eyes express mild frustration upon exiting the tent.

The Jobe of ob unt bunts past into recoil, recollections gathering to be arranged. Persian delights frighten the inexperienced lovers into notary indinphinfixpin. Faux fata megalith. Try as high kite, don woes not the beers. Kicked back and saturated. A debate raging. Prepared to face-off. Not-with-standing-manding-pan-pin=punfun. Lunar tubes jett jocul bobbit. Lyrianda cann wor war wors worms turs tis inti bice notepad jotted, rot blot blotter on the run, tu tu tididi.

Unbest we cuss out pout, he pulled it in. Mmm...

Pledge your allegiance to one nation unified by chemical love of funky-funkyMmm...

Billy qsploshgo gosh hosh hussy tussle. Not to got rot to fuck muce bu bobobobobobobobdo up the see, spied a vagina. She was some kinda time, it could be told froma armo aroma distance.

The cage rattles within a localized earthquake. All the doors swing upon an open disposition. Prisoners are deposited without. Billy hovers across the thronged rushers rushing away.

Bobby plays a song on his acoustic.

A big guy runs up. He's gritting his teeth and stomping his feet and he shouts, "All right, enough of that shit! It's time for your interview."

Sally Sue literally kicks Bob and his guitar out of her tent. Bob and Jobio tumble into a pile of assorted pebbles.

Bob's still playing his guitar.

Jobio pushes Bob to a stand. Jobio stands.

"Enough, I said," says Jobio.

"Indeed, you did," says Bobby.

Bobby strikes a cord and drops out of cord-striking. He says, "Okay, man. I'm all ears."

"First question: When and where were you born?"

"June 23, 1984, Henrico, Va."

"Very interesting," says Jobio.

"How so?" asks Bob.

"I'll be asking the questions," says Jobio. "Now, then, Under what circumstances were you conceived?"

"I don't know," says Bob.

"Unacceptable, but I guess I'll have to take it," says Jobio. "So, next question: What is your true name?"

"Bobby Brown," says Bobby Brown.

"No, I mean your true name."

"Bobby Brown," says Bobby Brown.

"When you're finished playing games," says Jobio, "I'll be back."

Jobio slips on a pair of shades and exits never to return.

"Wow, what a relief," says from somewhere #2.

"I disagree," says from elsewhere #1.

#1 and #2 sinchromnaustyickally aligned over the bowl.

Fwloooosh.

The stalker falls into the carpet.

The stalker stains the carpet.
The stalker emerges unscathed.
The stalker, little pudgy feet, pale skin, gleeful eyes, dances beneath the dome.
"Ta da da!" he shouts. "Tee he hee!"
Bobby doesn't recognize Enemy Agent Good Smiles dancing up from the south side of town.

There is no limit imposed upon the ways to lay it down. There should be no desire to create limits. Limitations set against creation to noisy up the walls already shattered. The little ones, dying inside through the imposed process of maturity. Adaptations necessary for survival and acceptance evolve not the special is

Some of the, were they born that way? Or was it a thing falling into the waiting arms? Or had it come from stimulus beyond everybody's control? The technique envisioned by the dialectician? Dirty dishes in the sink.

Bob throws on a heavy brown raincoat and ties it like a robe. He pulls down the hood. He walks through the town.

Everywhere, beds. People, everywhere. So many pretty, glowing faces. So much pussy and free drugs for the taking.

"Get your shit!" says a man wearing only a white hat and a long white beard from behind a lemonade stand. "I've got the good shit!" says this funny, skinny fellow.

"I say," says Bob, "but what is in that bag?"

Lemonade man picks the plastic white bag up off the lemonade stand and he says, "Free lemons."

Bob wanders away from that part of town.

Everywhere Bob goes, he sees happiness. Some of them smiles send chills down his spine. All of them smiles have him on the alert. He's seen similar ecstatic faces at Quixtar conventions.

"Hi Bob, I'm Jim," says Jim reaching for Bob's hand.

Bob and Jim shake hands.

"Nice to meet you," says Jim. "That won't be your last handshake," says Jim.

Indeed, everybody around town eventually wants to make handshake introductions.

"Uh, everybody knows my name?" asks Bob.

"Yeah," says Jim. "But I've always known you, Bob," says Jim.

Jim wanders into smallness and scurries away.

#1 asks, "Is it time yet?"

#2 says, "I think it's almost time."

Queen says, "Give it a few hours, boys."

From their respective places, #1 and #2 take their respectful bows.

The most beautiful woman Bob couldn't remember imagining, a woman of the ungraspable quality of a shattered crystal dream, approaches Bob and says, "Hey man, let's fuck."

Of course Bob agrees to this proposition.

When everything is said and done, #1 & #2 ask, "Now?"

"Now," says the queen.

Incessant buzzing shifting in pitch. Rifts being ripped. Tarnished threads snapping, a carpet unwinding. Centered below the bottom of the dome, air crackles and bubbles pop and a door makes a slow creaking sound.

An event disconnected from the intent of the tightly connected hordes.

The most beautiful woman in the world opens wide her jaws and long fangs protrude as her skin rips back and her skeleton disintegrates and her mouth stretches forward and Bob reaches for his dagger and Bob rolls off the bed in time to avoid the first lunge.

Bob strikes hard and fast. He readies his pocketknife. He turns his back on the dream girl's corpse.

Slender black shadows speeding in from all sides. Nowhere to run but up.

Bob cuts into a vein and circles himself with his own squirting blood. The wound flares up and so does the circle. Ain't no black snakes gonna get through the red flames.

Bob sits. He places his knives in front of himself in an X. He closes his eyes and rubs his head.

His head is a drum. They're trying to get inside.

Fucking monkeyshits trying to get in.

The buzzing is drowned out by a vaster, faster, growing, approaching buzzing. Clouds of little yellow and red dots make their angry charges. They're flying high and they're not afraid to swoop down low to overcome their prey. Prey, a man hiding behind his own blood.

The bees smell the blood. The bees frenzy for the kill.

The original buzzing is drowning out the bees. The sky is falling. No, by George, it's Billy the Junky!

Enemy Agent Good Smiles is dancing in for the close-up.

Laughter echoes over insane layers of gleeful obsession. Conceited joviality collides with the good-natured self-empowerment trip of a former albino cracker. Enemy Agent Good Smiles sees the queen and she sees his wide-open smile and his perfect teeth and she scratches her head in ponderous confusion.

The bees are only momentarily distracted.

"I've found the Inner Light!" shouts Billy upon landing in a running stance. Billy runs a circle below the dome and the light is projected outwards and Enemy Agent Good Smiles reaches inside and Bob feeds off of Billy and everything is so bright there is nothing, there is everything there is...

There is Bob and Billy and Enemy Agent Good Smiles. They are together in a small white room. Bob opens his eyes, Bob grabs his blades, Bob stands.

The queen's presence remains. The queen phases back into corporeality within the confines of the revealed small room. She says, "You boys pack quite a punch."

Bob ignores the queen. He looks at gleeful little Enemy Agent Good Smiles and he says, "Hey man, who the fuck are you?"

"HaHaHAHaHaHAHaHa!" says Enemy Agent Good Smiles.

Billy says, "I've had a talk with Bruno. Those things you were trying to tell me, Bob, I really was listening. And I've finally gone beyond Bach. As soon as I got him, I passed right by. Oh, wow, holy fucking shit! There are no words to describe the outer reaches, no, that place beyond place, no, there are no words to describe. I've been somewhere, man. I've been nowhere, man. You know, like, when you look at yourself, and you look around, and you rush through thousands of perspectives at once and you feel and you think and you say, 'Hey, oh, I got it!' The world spins, the universe stretches its legs, and you sit back for a while content to enjoy the ride," says Billy.

"That's nice," says Bob. Bob looks at Enemy Agent Good Smiles and he says again, "So, hey man, who the fuck are you?"

The queen shivers and stomps her feet and clenches her lips. "Cocky motherfuckers," she says. She disappears.

"I'm the Enemy Agent Good Smiles," says Enemy Agent Good Smiles, smiling still.

Billy pinches Smiles' chubby cheeks and looks at Bob and says, "This little guy's on our side, man."

"Oh, okay," says Bob.

Bob sits and spaces out. He's a space cadet. He's got that whole trance thing perfected.

...

"So," says Bob, "what are we doing here?"

"You mean right now," says Smiles.

"Thanks for clarifying," says Bob.

"We're here to help you through it, buddy," says Billy. "And get this, man: I'm coming out of the dope sickness."

"Really? How long ago was it last we communicated?" asks Bob.

"Between a month and three days," says Billy.

"Between two and three centuries," says Smiles.

"I'm the stalker," confesses Smiles. "Agent Danvers asked me for a favor."

"I don't trust you if the government sent you," says Bob.

"Maya, Danvers and me go bath fatter and tat," says Smiles.

"We should get going," says Billy.

Boobs books to pounding. Finding non avail., try the might, no doors. Zits fish an empty loom.

"Through the walls?" asks Bob.

"Through the walls," says Billy.

Bob circles until he detects the best route. He steps into it. They step into it. They walk the tunnel of choice.

Three adventurers face a world of shadows and mystery, and the queen.

An ancient artifact lights the end of the tunnel. It is drawn from stone like Arthur's immortal sword. Bob holds high the Spoon of Digging. Bob plunges the spoon into air and rips wide a gap.

Three adventurers leap impulsively through the gap.

Things are approaching. A mode of existence changes.

Bob sees the hive. Bob follows the veins of honey being circulated by the drones. Bob follows the honey to the surface. Bob follows the honey to the source. Bob sees the birth of the drone. Bob enters, visually, the vagina of the queen and he knows he's been there before.

"I'm still waiting for you," she says. And she laughs. And perspective rushes back into normalcy.

Bob and Billy and the Enemy Agent Good Smiles pass fat blunts and walk the tunnels chattering. The enemy expends much energy upon the task of seeing through the smoke clouds.

"Man, that's just what I needed to kick it up a notch," says Enemy Agent Good Smiles.

"So where were you just now?" asks Billy.

"Gaining a wider perspective," says Bob.

"I'd never settle for just one," says Enemy Agent Good Smiles.

"This one's useful," Bob says.

"I'd never settle for just one," says Enemy Agent Good Smiles.

"We turn right here," says Bob.

"Man, light up a few more blunts," says Billy. "Let the cherries be our torches."

It ain't just one network beneath the dirt. So many products moving, so much competition going on. Barrels and barrels of that honey goodness changing hands. Everybody's got a sweet tooth. So many teeth warped by the addiction.

There was a time the bee queen approached Enemy Agent Good Smiles on the streets and she said, "Hey man, \$5 a diamond." She showed him some gumballs, brother.

Smiles' eyes lit up and he thought to himself, "I need a little something to kick it up a notch." He said, "All right, lady, here's \$25."

Smiles ran with the candy for years. People would try to pull him down and he would say to them, "I know what selfish hearts beat inside the chests of men. I don't want no part of your self-serving sympathy. I'm mostly happy where I am so I'm in a better place than I've been before. You try to take my candy I'll bite your hand."

Smiles lived in a temple of aluminum and wood. It kept the rain off his head and the rats off his ass. It was his holy place. He went there on those occasions when he was downtown and out.

Smiles had a house in a good neighborhood on the outskirts of the city. He lived a short distance from Danvers. He wasn't always around because he'd sold his car for a shitload of assorted coke products.

Smiles dropped a bomb on everybody when he dropped right out of circulation. He got a free milkshake and everything started looking different.

Smiles isn't looking for anything anymore. Smiles ain't chasing a fix or a state of mind. Smiles is doing a favor for an old friend down and out.

Shit happens, man.

Enemy Agent Good Smiles holds Bob's spoon in his left hand. He picks his nose with his right. He giggles.

Bob says, "All right, fellows, it's time for a change."

Billy says, "Bow do doodie blow coma low alt ass mic. Sidney `ow many qualification? Drops falling, swallowing, seeping in. Rich ritual free for all, frenzy not, good stat to free in. Methinks now appro," agrees Billy.

"Lets kick this mother up a notch!" shouts Enemy Agent Good Smiles.

Ha.

Well, wober dooble, Mr. Google. Icke a dyke to dry paddle-whipping Irish crazy. Spirits alive, channeled from the past, talking through, and coming up, Are you ready for this shit? Am EheRedIferDin'sit? Pud, pod calling, mode falling, lip sip Is the rated best, I say, socially, notably not unless within riotous or anarchistic circles revolving counter to the clock. I say, stop punching the tables, Granny-boy.

Tunnels narrowing. Tunnel-vision fading. Fading, fading, fading...

The reality tunnels are rallying together. The reality tunnels are overlapping. Passing through, another ocean within which to swim, another nothing within which to something, the Owl Towel Toe or the

substanceless ground for reality's walks. Grabbed by garbled ears and hidden within wide open places.

Empty, Privates, riots, blasting chaos, can't hear, can't see, can't smell, can't touch, can't taste, Only sensing now, sensing it, insensate within the sensation of It.

Three cheerful cherry-eyed fellows merrily make their berrilicious way through places, through things, and through people. People trying to stand before them, people trying to knock them down. It was a thing of ill repute, a goober dripping down the throat of an angler out to make a score.

The rifts send gallant calls for gallant guys wotj droobi drope rope nties, eyes, Somboodie answer and say, "Hello."

"Hey, whut's shakin'?" the three reply.

"Joe?" asks the rift.

"No," says Billy. "I'm just a telephone," says Billy.

CLICK!!!

Rings fall in series from the systematic shutdown inflicted via doubt of ability, a play on artificiality, it's naturally not the first thing to think upon. It's just a bicarious bickerous blkiterdust friggermusty too rusty for me.

It's better when something is falling than when nothing is special about the reason for the suppression of the arrested attention of the Eagle's Shining bloodrunner throatcutter, *Slit!*

The rest of the story is not to be told following the haste of the concern. The diggerty of the jiggety cannot be compared to the smiles exhibited equally deterministic. Hoodlums slum together with drunk chums buried in rum and keeping it low.

The thing not to be too drastically exhausterpragated tom boobit too loogit boogist bootonist making his way across the COmic HEadlines.

When it became apparent the shit was off the fan, the on button found itself switched.

"Hey! Hey motherfuckers, I'm looking at you. Hey twisted truckers, I'm staring right through. Right on through/ slashRight Right on Beyond Beyond Beyond it tttt.....

"Sitting untwisting, rolling up my sleeves, shaking my hands, making a stand, saying Hey fucking titlewave, I'm ready for your passage, You fucking tidal wave, Give it to me now."

The bastards thought they had a line on a little something. Didn't know what it could be. Maybe something good, maybe something marvelous. Maybe it'd be something, HOLY SHOIT! Shootin' fruity shit! YYYyyyuuuuummmmmMmyyy....

Well, you know, I'm saying, get some things straight here SSSsssooney-Booooooo.....

Well, um, I mean, HEY, I um, HEY@fishbowl, HEEEEEEEEYYYYY!!!!!!!1

"What the fuck do you want?" Bob asks.

"Just your ear for a moment," says the projector.

A stance is struck to strike the proper degree of fear into the heart of the Sizzler. The Sizzler leaps back and says, "So you've spotted me. Well, now. How now brown cow?"

"Doing alright," says Bob.

"Splendid."

Sizzler says, /"Behind every beneath. There is a riddle. Goodness, it's good to finally meet you face to eye to eye, know what I mean man?"

"Yeah," says Bob.

"We sure do," says Billy and Enemy Agent Good Smiles.

"Know what? Know what I'm be meaning? Know what meanings I'm proketnicking? Know what I be saying, foo?" Says sayssaysAyzthe Szilber.

Sizzler asks the three, "Have you the power to defeat me, silly mortals?"

Says the three, "Gods are we all, weeping watching yea fall, tears shed for a brother, a brother we fucked like his mother. It is no bother to send a jobber into the jive of this turkey. We'll send you to a place you never thought you'd want to see."

Says Bob, "But hey man, thanks for all the great music."

Sizzler says, "How can you presume to... AHH!!!"

"Well," says Bob, "but, um... Uh, hey, You know what I mean?"

"No..." is the last thing Sizzler says before he dies (a teleportation).

BringBringBrrring.....Brrring.... Teep A Telephone. Not to be mistaken for unless since seen.

Not to be mistaken for without more illusory datum.

Not to be mistaken for unless divorced from the notion of the thing.

Not to be, it wasn't

Could be. "Yes, no, maybe so. Hehehe."

Listening to some shit, man, know what I mean? Well, man, there's some shit playing. Hey,

man, um, Watch out. Don't fall into it. Hey lady, don't drop off of it.

Bleeding eyes, babies cry, we ain't never gonna die.

YaggayaggagabbagabbaHey! Gabbagabba Hey! We accept you We accept you You're one of

.....

The television is spinning off some images. We flip a mode through the heart of it. We slide a splice through the back of it. We twist a wish across the lot of it. We spin into a single try at it. Just once lets us make an attempt. Something to do instead of what's supposed we to.

Frightening things ripple across the rice paddies. Gobbles goober all over the toaster sent spinning beneath the bread. It falls and is rejected. It falls and is sent away.

No, you're not imagining pictographs of the illusionings required to digress upon the rest of this mess. Illuminations wonder into the wander-lust of the thought spectrum so loosely kept maintained upon the surface. A hook drags now through the surface.

Compression. Communication compressed ass backwards.

I thing to fling into the figuring of the thing.

Three riotous hooligans extend an ample amount of care upon the task of underground navigation. They act the parts of astronauts exploring new territories. They aren't afraid to pirate boldly through the dark dirt. Desserts of unexplored subterraneans drip with the undrinkable blood of their sacrifices. They three aren't affeared of scarred skirts.

Barrels of grog take rollicking rolls down untended staircases. Nothing short of unimaginable occurs to counteract the something tremblific of trembling tumblers.

Our heroes hear the tumblers and wonder. No conclusive conclusions leap to mind.

The problem with meat sauce is in the processed meat rolls left on the table after hours. Sometimes, outside (in), there is a odg parking.

The snuffle shuffle alerts not a change in mood. There was the cloud of doubt. A white, puffy cloud ascending.

"What? You think I'm Cherokee Holmes or something?"

"Cheebooheap. Your fuckinga' cheebooheap."

In the scarlet lettering of the birthday present was tertwined the sphinx of an inspiration: this message: Happy Birthday You Stupid Bitch!

"Uh, even thou art el not in te Tea habit of sacrifice so barkalichious an un. With her habit back-screwed? Oh, how simply fragborapple, darling. Did it break sic been?"

"And also, hey ,am. <am. Man, what's up?" asks Shiva Pee Potato.

"Nothing shwanging, Purple Chew Burple," says Guyber HG Goober Woo Threep Steepwood thrust.

"Ooo... Nice," says Shiva Purra Puddle.

"Thrust to bring about the bounce about the friction nationals in the egged harbored discuss circuit crackling attempted but decracktificafied through the pronounced process of rescue vibrations. Pulling me away from your illusions, you fucking frolicsome honey-pusher!" shouts followed be mad giggles the Good GB Gobbler Goblin smiles.

"Such a handy tool," says seductively the sheepish Shiba Shivering Shiva Shaker.

The converging fleshies find equality a painful burden to bare. So Enemy Agent Good Smiles surpasses her and passes the challenge on to another.

"Get back in here!" demands the honeyed tongue of the chirruping smackerling lips of the whip-snappedy speedy buzzing bee. Those wings shouldn't be able to support such a girth as that! Oh, but she keeps those wings beating so fast. It's crazy the things she'll do just to get a good licking. When it's souls on the line, Oh boy howdy partner. I mean, my gosh.

Danvers spansk that ass. It's his official occupation these days. He just grins and bares the all-consuming pleasure vibes.

liII -- --+++++P

You're not listening, "I mean, I'm not listening," says Billy, "Bot kissing for a fool, trot missing the dripping drool, no biscuits for a whore."

FlamSmangit,Mr.Guydyver.

Annnnnniiiiiiiiieeeeeeeeeee?A/AiahiiaiiiiiiiiiehkiiiiiaiaiaAhhhhh

Jupiter's gravitating back the transmission transimalated from an amphidextrous moonshine.

Kind not can of worms, chewing, chomping down on the squirms. Not for a box closed on the ideas. Hiding behind the cardboard, why sealing there for now brow plow? HOf so meat toe? Swiss sauce on theInside, dragged out of me.

Bob-Yo, what up foo?

Job, get a nob to turn?

-Hey man, I'm fucking Joe! says Smiles. eyeyeye Aye

-Yeah? Well, drink thinkdisinkisisis..... H-H_h-hhe eeey, are you all right?

donkeyfuckerjackrabbithoppingmothball eeeeeee eee man, ru all----

Sinking, tooth decay, a fab fan of -ppp---PPpppppppppppppppppppplllllllllllllllllllllaaaaaa

"Plastic is our past," says Billy.

"BLUE, R ED GREEN O RANGEN ONPIN, KAND UR PLE<GOLD, is OUr Fu Tu Tchoo turokockock Looook tooooooooooooooooooooooo the colors!" says Giddy Guiles.

-Not to be mistaken for tou to da da, says Sa mm I Dave, Seniority.

-I CAN! yells some tanned man.

"Lame fucker," says Bob.

Iiiiiiii

))))))lay'

002020200222000110010010100200022223330000022221111

wheshuni 000999 0----00000----) mow on boo

UUU ()))))))

-Enemy Agent Good Smiles is giggling again, says Dancer Mr. Agent Dancer Danvers from quite a distance.

FFFfff-fff-fffffff...f.f..f.fff.f.f.f.ffff-----FFF

"`Tis mine task to slay thee!" shouts gleeful Kid Crystal Carrier to the party of three merrily making their pleasant time through the void of much formidable digihabit forminting (Fur, form, fear, tears, dripdripdrip) danger.

Damage done, run usuck, Fuck a duck, take to taskit basket blobber bloblowblottototoOPerrrrr...Bation ritual magick.

ASSMONEY smuggles it through the clenching doors.

-Not I! shouts the wonderose miplankticking pyrabid.

SSssssssssSSSSssssssSSSSsssSssSs

Shake, "He says shake well before she operates," onstich blisted kid Kite Flier.

Too much, "Sprinkle a little dust ontop," insists insistently bottom-feeding.

Onto, "Into pieces it goes," notes noticeably a consistent watchman of the affair.

-Bob takes the two pieces of pizza and munches. A great hunger is quickly satisfied.

ASsoQuick, the dripping, it falls too quick to, "Didn't you notice, hey!" you, "You Crapsa YourAnswer!"

"I've got you in my basket!" announces magnanimously unanimously Abnominous Oxitenton, Kid Crystal's little sidekick.

-That's my kid, says the kid.

Somewhere a a voi, joy, toy, a voice, it says, "Hey man, I'm ready. Brting it on, All you got, too hot to trot through the public's eyesockets sizzling the sizzly, I'm ready. Sh... We'll keep this on the low-down low."

And a changes bands. To do the things we used to, We had to arrange for certain comparisons. The comrpobise was bot a slaw bun.

Ambi waiting for his score.

To kill the motherfucking boar.

Ambi doing all then more.

Ami gonna ambi in the flames.

A head, it's flaming atop the skull, leather-bound, inside the hog heven hoddin dodging to get, moving down through the dirt, cycle blaring, fighting to find hell.

And a am man, "Hey, wake the fuck up you slob!"

"Sorry," appologuises Kid Crystal.

"Well damn, Mr Dan, Hunt a runt and make it even."

Kid Crystal Draws. "Unguard!" he demands.

-This is all that I have to guive u bucker, fucked her like your mother, heading for the tuna, moving through and past the tuna, you want my shit well here you go, look at this shine, well look at this.

Dodged, merged, purges, Bob jumps, Bob leaps, Bob takes the charge in the chest and he lets it sink in deep.

Bob looks into those Crystal eyes and he laughs and Billy laughs and Smiles laughs and they say, "Hey you shit, we are united, we are islands, we are the cherries burning briefly before the cigarette is stomped dead. We are the dead rising from their graves we are what the living craves and now we're inside of you!"

Kid Crystal runs screaming.

Abnonymous Obsicbentin drops his basket and follows a master down a tunnel.

Somewhere the queen's dead frown deepens.

The fnord scored a jord outside the board's directory.

Bop bees waxcat.

"Quill boys, Are you out off itshit bet?"

"Man, clea until been we buiilk... MAn, I say, I say sir. Good day sir."

"Who the fuck was that?"

"Who the fuck are you?"

"Tmfreeblyperstoo"

Bob's digging with a spoon. The sun is filtering through the little hole. A sign, the best sign. He's reached the top.

Bob and Billy and little leaping laughing Enemy Agent Good Smiles dance within the sunlight.

WWelllllllllllp, little one squirming.

A brittle welp squirminating.

They should be dating.

Ewwwwww

-end

Abyss Crossing

The Value of Unique Experiences

Like the glass falling from my hand is the sensation descending upon me. It is a wave, sent by the ocean oblivion, crashing.

And I
Fall.

I hear her giggles piercing the walls of the void. It could be the last I'll ever hear.
Is This Death?
No, I'm waking up. Cold water trickles down my forehead.
"Hello, Ariel," I say to her.
She asks me, "Was it everything you expected?"

Chapter 1

I'm sitting in the passenger's seat of a \$500 car riding above the clarity of the moderate mushroom trip on two Newports. An old black bum sees me and he smiles. And he waves. And I smile. And I wave.

Think about that bum for a moment. Picture the niche he must occupy. There are things I know that you cannot know because I saw his eyes. Either he's chasing a fix or he's chasing a state of mind. Most people don't know the difference.

I'm in Richmond tonight. It's the closest city to my birthplace. I'm always a visitor here, but I've visited the best and worst of the town.
No, that's never true.

The smoke cloud exiting my window cancers the lungs of five second-hand babies. Truth is, I was aiming for them. As their lungs shrivel within their lithe chests they choke away the air necessary for noisy tears. Noise pollution is air pollution too.

The car starts up. It is time for the package to be delivered. This is a quite decisive moment.

I believe I hear the viola. Ah, yes, Heroin is blasting on the stereo. The music sucks me in and out of the importance of the present. And I desire that sweet, annihilating darkness. A feeling described by the feelers as the most beautiful nothing attainable by man. The greatest journey of standing still, or sitting still, or tilting your head back and just marveling in the glory of creation. But it is an evil thing, a scary thing seeking my soul through addiction, so I will never touch it.

Acid, man. One nation unified by chemical love. I need to get my hands on some more of that delicious LSD.

Well, the ponderings have taken flight along with my inhibitions. The adventurous wings of reckless submission leader Peter pushes pushing through to the top of the falling drop off point. And the diamonds sparkle within the twist-tied plastic.

Right now, I'm following a train of thought through conspiracy datum. No, followed through that rabbit hole before, nothing new to discover tonight.

What you should know is

Eyes are expanding
With the mind
A symbol of the vision
Beyond vision
And of the black tides
Surging

A twisted paradise
Twists the
Twisted soul straight

As I run
Through the memory of the

Great Run, I
yearn for
Another run.

Another trip into the
Depths of the
Deepest
Place
Where the Wise One lives.

Like an Olympic medal winner,
I seek to win the gold again
Like the ancient general Hannibal,
I seek to storm the city
But now that I'm at the
Gates of Rome
Hasdrubal is dead,
The troops are underfed,
The enemy is hiding in my bed,
To folly forever am I wed.
No more fuel for the fire,
I'm waiting cold as ice
For the day another slice
Will be mine.

The crazy Rocks Deliveryman sitting next to me must think I'm nuts, reciting poetry at a time like this. But what the hell, right? I'm letting him use my car for no reason.

Use my car? What the fuck! Oh, yeah, unique experiences...

My death may come tonight. I am ready. As certainly as I know anything, I know that death is not an end.

What does it matter, the date to one's demise? Once ready, readiness is. There is family, there is friend, and there is everyone else to think of. That is all.

Yeah, I could die tonight, but I probably won't. This guy's old and sedated and I'm not gonna piss him off anyway. "We're all looking for some kind of bliss," I say. "We do what we can to get it."

The crack dealer snorts some heroin off the dashboard and says, "Right on, man."

We pull into the Crown and I unload the guy. "Next time you come through here, holler at me," he says.

I drive to a friend's house, I deliver a nearly empty pack of cigarettes. "What kept you?" he asks me. "I was out making crack runs," I say.

You know, I really do go back to that gas station. I see my friend the crack dealer again. He wants some money.

"Hey man, you gonna give me that ten dollars?"

"Uh..."

"You said before you'd hook it up so, you know... Oh, I got some good bud man. You want some good bud? Great fucking grass man, you won't believe it."

I don't believe it. Not for a second. This is a fucking junky I'm dealing with.

"You put in ten and I'll put ten on top of that."

"Yeah, whatever, here you go."

What the fuck was I thinking? Ah, well. It's something I can't touch. Somebody might as well.

Chapter 2: Making a Living

The job market these days is pretty competitive. I've applied to seven or eight places, haven't got a single reply. Of course, there are things I could do. I think I'm going to study hard and become a Pharmacy Technician.

So not too many drugs coming my way lately. Enough. I'm not the sort to party every day, anyway. I like moderation. The potency of any experience, I've always believed, is inevitably reduced if faced with overindulgence.

Actually, no, scratch that. I don't like moderation. What I really hate, though, is addiction. I don't want addiction controlling my life.

One solution would be to sell drugs. I don't feel like it. I'm not incapable, or morally against it. I'm just lazy, I guess.

No, bullshit, I'll sell some drugs.

And on the plus side, I'm on the plus side. Things are not only up, they're looking to get upper.

I'm going to try to sell some fiction for money. Fiction as fictitious as this, reader.

Money isn't so low it's priority right now. Priority is, I want to get a good woman. Somebody I can fall in love with. It's not something I want to grab, though. It has to come about as a result of mutual decision-making. So I play in the fish pool for a bit.

Dear dearest Goddess,

Whatever be thy name

If your lips part the fibers binding

My soul

And your fingers free the beating Of

my heart

The tart taste of past follies will leave

my mind

And you will find a spirit too

devoted,

too...

blessed, restless longing!

Too kind to kill, too

blind to will upon

Naught but what aught

To be.

Maybe somebody will find more than crap. Maybe you, reader, might come to love me. Whether you do or not, in an eternal sense without any strings attached, I love you. In fact, if you ever see me on the streets, feel free to ask a favor. If it ain't too much, I'll certainly give it my best shot.

On the other hand, you shouldn't trust me. I'm a damned, dirty stranger. Pay close attention if you don't want to be a stranger anymore.

I need some sticks. It's been a while since my last stick fight. I think I dropped my sticks at a friend's house. I'll have to retrieve the bastards.

So that's my excuse for being on the road with a head overflowing with acid energy. I run over a few bunny rabbits and a cartoon pigeon or two. I don't think the world will miss them.

Well, I win a gummy bear in the end, where everything is groovy. I make myself a vanilla smoothie and do the right thing, which is suckling that bitch down. Sensation here is defining right and wrong. There would be no justification for the consumption of disgusting, unhealthy food. This one

really is a taste worthy of the fat cells.

I run the vacuum to suck up the evidence. Nothing escapes the vacuum. Not even nothing, really.

Caffeine, can't get enough of it. I'll down some Ginseng with my morning coffee just so I know I'll be awake when the time comes. For tonight, you understand, shall be a special night.

Heh, Caffeine... Vitamins... People pushing through the lines to plan on getting ahead.

The petty stimulants of the businessman and the politician. Not that they never have better stimulants.

Tonight, special in what way? Any which way but Tuesday. It isn't Tuesday today.

"What we need is some coke," somebody says. "I'm thirsty," says that somebody.

Now, I think I'll make a telephone call. Be back in a second, fellow," I say to my computer screen.

"Welcome back," he says to me.

Holy shit.

Well, that was certainly weird...

I'm planning tonight's adventure. Hopefully there will be a diversity of players. If not, we can always resort to some other sort of nonsense. "We" meaning I and whomever.

Life is the meaning peaking through the meaningless. Life is filtering truth through truth until there is nothing but the truth.

Life is too many things to be definable.

I'm walking out onto the porch to conduct a conversation regarding oblivion with my neighbor Patti J. Ariel. She seems to think the emptiness is a source of deeper freedom, for what can be deeper than oblivion?

Every time I walk out onto the porch, this conversation picks up where it left off.

"You know, you can experience oblivion for yourself," Patti tells me.

"I don't think I'd want to," I say.

"You sure? Free of charge, 20 minutes of absolutely nothing. It will cost your body nothing and it will cost your mind nothing and it will cost your pockets nothing. Thing is, you HaVe TO TRUst mE! This all comes in the highly edible form of magical mystery pill. It's neon pink, tastes like candy."

"Yummy," I say. "Sure does taste like candy..."

Like the glass falling from my hand is the sensation descending upon me. It is a wave, sent by the ocean oblivion, crashing.

And I

Fall.

"Well that was fun."

"Yeah. Uh-huh. Um, yup."

Chapter 3: Childhood Memories

I've been having strange dreams lately. Intense, vivid, full of interpretable symbols. I've been analyzing. Maybe I've been doing a good job, maybe not. In researching deeper into the mystery of the dreams, I've begun examining my childhood. Perhaps some clues shall surface.

It's first grade and time for computer lab. I push down a wall of books. I'm such an angry little child.

Foam at the mouth and ADHD!

At least, that's how they'll diagnose me in a month. I'll be medicated for years.

"Your little Ben," says the shrink.

"Yes..?" says Mom. She leans in.

"Yes..?" says Dad. He leans in.

"He's a very unstable child!" shouts the shrink with an expanding nose and hungry pockets. The hospital passes a few bills under the table.

I'm in a padded room. I look up at a camera. I ask, "Can I go to the bathroom?"

Minutes pass.

I look back at the camera. I shout, "Let me use the bathroom you stupid fuckers!"

Another minute passes.

I look at the squishy blue walls. I stand in the corner.

Squirt! Splursh!

Urine streams down the corner.

What is this place?

Escorted to a room, my room, by a nurse. There's two beds. Didn't they tell me? I'm going to have a nice little roommate. Of course, it's nine o'clock, so lights out.

My roommate looks at me from the other bed. He says, "Do you believe in faeries?"

I say, "No."

He says, "Shhh!!! Every time you say that a faery dies." He claps his hands and says, "Maybe that saved it."

Silence. I close my eyes.

"If you close your eyes," says my roommate, "and concentrate, you can open this cabinet door with your mind and journey into the faery world. I do it every night."

"Oh, how wonderful," I say.

I fall asleep.

Sleep interrupted. I sit up in bed. Why are the lights on? The nurse is handing my roommate a glass of warm milk. "It helps him sleep," she explains.

Not wanting to miss out on any special privileges, "I want some warm milk too," I say.

That night, I took my first and only sip of warm milk. Yuck.

It's three o'clock at the hospital, playtime for me and nine other patients. This fat girl walking next to me, she's a few years older. She looks down at me and asks, "How long are you staying?"

"Mom says I'm going home in a week," I say.

The fat older girl laughs. "A week!" she says. "Yeah right. I've been here for two years!"

Mom visits me at the hospital. It's rather late. "Slip on your slippers, Ben, and your robe, and pack up your things," she tells me. I slip on my slippers and blue robe and pack up my things. My things consist of a soap container filled with football cards and a picture of Saint George the Dragon Slayer I got a patient at the hospital to draw for me. Actually, no, I just pack up the soap container. The picture was very badly drawn and I don't know the artist very well.

She takes me outside. It's raining pretty hard. We hop into the station wagon and blow that Popsicle stand. It's an exit in direct opposition to medical opinion.

Well, if I'm not in a mental institution, it's best I spend some time in a special school. Not too bad, really. Between first and second grade, I get into a few fights, I get smacked in the head with a lunch tray, I piss on a tree, somebody hits me in the eye with a baseball bat (I beat the shit out of that little bastard), I nearly choke to death on a mint, and I meet plenty of wonderful people. This one kid on the bus, he steals all his dad's favorite baseball cards and gives them to me in exchange for five minutes on my Gameboy.

One day, I don't now know how, I misbehave. They lock me in this blue padded room much like the mental institution's blue padded room, only it's smaller. Through the door, I shout profanity. Not coherent insults or anything, just profanity. Just "bad words". I don't want punishment of any kind to "fix" me. I want to control myself. If I let their punishments influence my behavior the way they want, I'm not the one in control anymore... I don't at this point understand that a negative reaction to punishment is as much a surrender of control as a positive reaction.

This school has its ups, too. Sometimes, we get to play Sega or Super Nintendo in gym. Sometimes, the Sega comes to the classroom.

The last day of second grade, we cook steaks and watch a tape of Clinton's campaign for Presidency. There's also a little bit of footage on the Jackson Five.

By third grade, they decide I'm regular enough for regular school. I go back to the same place they kicked me out of back in first grade.

In fourth grade, there's this special program in the middle of the year. All us fourth graders either attend or participate. This one girl, she sings in the middle of the program and I'm watching her and listening to her and her voice, an intentionally goofy imitation of the South, and the lighting, and I don't know what else... I could hear my heart beating. It wasn't beating quickly. It was just a more distinct, more powerful drumming inside my chest. That song was the only part of the program I truly enjoyed.

Next year, that siren was a member of my class. It was a pretty big class. I never talked to her.

Sitting at a desk, listening to a woman. Well, not listening. Not to her. Her voice is background noise. Listening to the thoughts: *Why is she still talking? She explained the solution to the problem fifteen minutes ago, I figured it out twenty minutes ago. But we're trapped. Can't move for another hour. In an hour, they'll stuff us with grilled chess or peanut butter and jelly and I'll wash that down with some chocolate milk. Then we'll all come back to class...*

A bell will ring. The bell that Does Not Dismiss You.

It rang. We were dismissed. We rushed the door. Lunch time!

The lunchroom, the line. Some bring lunch from home. The rest walk the line. A line, long, monotonous waiting. So tempting to cut. Cutting is bad. I won't cut.

"Hey!" I shout. I twist an arm behind a back, twist a wrist, twist, twist.

"Ouch!" Bobby says. "Ouch! Let go!"

I release. Bobby stands behind me. Damned, dirty cutter.

"Hey, where'd you learn that hold?" Bobby asks.

"I have lots of brothers," I tell him, and that's the truth. But I didn't learn the hold anywhere. Didn't think of it as a hold, really.

"I thought so," says Bobby. "That was pretty fancy."

That Bobby's all right.

I've got my food. I'm sitting at a table. This is the last of the elementary years. Next year's the big time. Sixth grade. That's when the big things come. Drugs and profanity and Domino's Pizza Day. And social pressure intensifies. For now, there's a friendly atmosphere amongst peers, with a loser or two with which none of us associate (next year we'll all be losers). And the tables. Sit wherever conversation is easiest.

The end of the year arrives. Teacher gives us all a book of fables. I think the book is mildly entertaining. It's much easier than the last two books I tried and failed to read. I just wasn't ready for

Moby Dick and Gulliver's Travels, though Gulliver was pretty interesting. Oh, but I remember some good elementary school reads. There was Lizard Music and there were countless books on Greek mythology and a few good fantasies and some Norse mythology too, and also plenty of comic books. I was addicted to comic books.

I would be addicted to comic books for years to come. In fact, I would never truly give up on comic books.

The Ghost Rider is one of the most underrated characters in Marvel history.

We're all pretty excited about the coming year. What will it be like? Different, we know. Brutal, we imagine. Exciting. A new opportunity. It will certainly be an adventure.

I don't want it to be too much of an adventure. The teacher tries to recommend me for advanced math and science classes. I say, "Listen, lady, I can't take all that homework."

It's sixth grade. All standard classes. Right off, I'm failing math.

It's lunch. There are four of us. Aaron and Jack and Mike and me. We've got but a corner of a table, the rest having been snatched from our grasp by so many obnoxiously arrogant jerks. They want the whole table for themselves. We aren't giving in.

Aaron is sketching a penis man riding a skateboard. We are all laughing because the Headman Dan is standing behind him. Aaron is laughing because he thinks we think the sketch is funny, and we do. Not as funny as the look on Headman Dan's face... It's off to the front office for Aaron.

Most shenanigans happen at lunch.

One day during lunch, I throw a roll over my shoulder. I don't know why. The guy sitting directly behind me gets hit in the head.

The guy sitting directly behind me is this really big football player. He turns around, punches me in the back, then turns around again. I turn around and say, "What the hell, man?" He turns around, doesn't say anything, stands up. I push him down into the table behind him. While I'm pushing, he gets in one more punch and a teacher pushes his way between us.

We go to the office. Next day, word spreads around school about the ass kickin' I got. I'm willing to admit it, I come out the loser here, but twenty seconds is hardly enough time for a proper ass kickin'.

It's sixth grade. I'm a fucking loser all year long. At least, half the school thinks I'm a fucking loser. Things, things like the "friends" I've had for years, friends that mostly end up being popular, and a "cool" brother in eighth grade, keep the other half of the school from thinking I'm a fucking loser. But the people that're convinced, man, they're really convinced. Sometimes, I feel pretty good. Other times, I feel like I have asexual romantic tendencies, and that feels pretty good.

This year, Mom decides, I'm going to take all my courses at home. After all, the public school system is a melting pot of evil influences. There's a potty mouth around every corner in junior high.

Classes are a breeze. I get to grade my own papers... Finally, I'm an ace at everything!

Sometimes, old friends will come up to the house, knock on the door, and ask, "Can you play?" Once or twice, I'll say, "Yes." Usually, I'll be too preoccupied with watching cartoons to go outside and play football.

In eighth grade, I'm still being schooled at home. We're moving into a new neighborhood. As I'm helping to move all kinds of boxes into storage, I come across these two boxes filled with a plethora of alcohol... Mint Schnapps and Benedictine and Whiskey, Bourbon and Gin, Oh my! My stepfather tells us all about those boxes... Back in college, he'd been quite a wild guy, my stepfather. He'd since given up alcohol, so he packed away his collection and left it in the attic.

I steal three bottles. A few nights before we move, I get some of my old friends together and

we walk out to the swamp and I get hammered. It's only the second time I've ever been drunk. The first was a year ago when my brother and I found a bottle of Canadian Whiskey in some hotel.

I walk home from the swamp all fucked up and my mom's husband is waiting outside. He says, "Hey KB, let's load up some of these heavy things from over there and over there..." And we do. And I walk inside and go to sleep.

Yeah, that was the final bang in my original neighborhood. It was a night full of forever good-byes.

Then came the new neighborhood...

I'm still living in the new neighborhood. I'm trying to expand my territories without moving my base of operations. Eventually, I'll move my base of operations too.

I just gotta get a job. That means study, study, study. I've a booklet to memorize. Through careful research, I have to learn to be a Pharmacy Technician. I'm looking at an eventual income of \$15-\$20 an hour. Sounds good to me.

Only, it'll never happen.

Chapter 4: A New Revelation in the Dream World

I spend a week at the beach. I get in a few meditations and I read this book called the Televisionary Oracle. I pray to God for good dreams. I get several good dreams. The final dream comes to me from out of the thickest pits of the dream-fuel. Yes, friend, it was certainly served thick, vivid, and fun. I've had some crazy fucking dreams. This one takes the cake.

Eventually, I'll have even better dreams.

Even better dreams! Holy fucking shit!

And they arrive! Holy fucking shit!

I suspect I've stumbled upon the thin veil separating the dream world and the waking world from the other place. I haven't quite crossed the veil, only caught brief peeks into the other side, but I'm on my way.

Do you want to hear about my dream? Regardless, I want to tell it.

Let's see... What I remember:

There is darkness, sheets of it. My senses are blurred by weariness. The darkness, sleep, keeps encroaching. I am asleep dreaming of falling asleep.

When I awaken, I am resting in a condo bedroom. There is a fan throwing a breeze at me. Sometimes, still fighting the weariness, I am levitating above the bed, levitating towards the fan. I pull a string, conquer the fan, shut that puppy down. There is still the breeze.

And I'm walking on the beach...

Falling asleep on the beach...

Waking up in a condo on the beach...

I don't remember how many times I fall asleep or how many times I wake up.

Me and everybody, just some friends, we're hanging with Robert Anton Wilson. Mary Anne tells Joe Bob about Wilson and Joe Bob tells me, "Sometimes, it's like she understands the guy, and everything's so simple. His ideas, she tells me, they're so simple."

Robert Anton Wilson tells me one day, "My books are actually quite simple."

"The Illuminatus! Trilogy seemed kind of complicated, to me," I say.

Robert Anton Wilson spits out some crazy jargon as an explanation for something. I catch it at the time but later it passes through me.

There is still the drowsy stupor. There will be until the handshake.

Oh, the handshake!

I have to drive somewhere. Home, I think. I'm struggling to drive without falling victim to the stupor. If I just close my eyes for a second... I'm going very fast down a dark, undivided, two-way road and I can't, or won't, slow down.

Bob and I park somewhere in the city. We throw some things, maybe tennis balls, at a wall. I think I see my stepfather's father and some other guy. I wave. Recognition flashes across my stepfather's father's face... as he spots Wilson.

Bob and man, a man no longer my stepfather's father, greet each other. I want to introduce myself to man and when I realize that's what I want, man asks Bob, "Did you get the KB position?"

Political intrigues scent the air.

Bob says, "No, but I'm here with a KB."

Man shakes my hand and whispers something to me conspiratorially. I leave the room to walk into the hall. Man teleports behind me. His clothes and general appearance change. He is holding a machine gun and firing into my back. The bullets do no real damage.

I vanish and reappear in another part of the room. Man reappears too, and he shoots me again. I will myself into an upside-down levitation. Hanging suspended by my feet from nothing, as a symbol of my loss, I will streams of blood down my body. I drool. The drool drips down mingling with the blood. There is laughter somewhere.

Man says, "That's the end of lesson one."

I'm in a classroom all of a sudden. Man walks in and he starts talking to me. He rambles on and on. His head keeps squinting up into this smiling, stretchy, yellow thing. Sometimes, he turns blue. Students have entered the classroom. They are all very young.

There is talk of a name having been written on the floor, or left in writing on the floor. Or was it the right side? In any event, it is my name, I left it on the floor.

Everything is so abnormal now. The rules are different. Will is all. To will is to bring. It's a game.

I realize these things and wonder why, now that I am in the trip, everything seems so clear. The fog that was before the handshake has utterly lifted.

A child I met in the classroom talks to me by the front door. He thinks I'm in the right state of mind to listen to "the Clown Song". I refrain because I listened to it earlier. I really did, about an hour before I fell asleep.

Yes, my mind is that of my waking self, struggling to interpret the ride. I am riding. I want to learn from this world of symbols and oddities. What is really going on around here?

There is a telephone spread between two couches.

Mysterious things I will not reveal occur concerning the telephone. The importance of the telephone is that it reveals to me the identity of the house I am occupying. I will not tell you the identity of the house.

I look out the living room window. Strange images are moving around outside. It is colorful, layered two-dimensional scenery.

I will tell you I am levitating. Only now, I don't *have* to levitate, I have the ability to levitate because I'm tripping.

I'm upstairs, overhearing a conversation concerning the potency of the drug I'm on. A character in the dream I call Girl ends the part of the conversation I overhear with, "...the last \$30 worth."

A little later, me and Girl get to talking. I'm on my way up the stairs, nearly to the top. Girl is at the top looking down at me while we talk.

We say some things about this and that. She says, "You should get some more from here."

I say, "Yeah, some other places aren't so good."

Girl says, "There are some other good places too."

Maybe we say some more. Afterwards, and I don't realize it is him at the time, but Bob is standing at the top of the stairs staring at me. Girl fades out of the dream. There is a shining white gemstone off to the left of Bob's chin. He is smiling. What suspicions should that smile ignite?

What does it all mean? I'm looking right at Bob but don't realize it's Bob. Bob lights a

cigarette. I ask for one. I want to use my new white lighter from Uppy's pier. Bob bums me a cigarette. It falls out of my hand when I reach to grab it.

I say something along the lines of, "Don't worry I'll get it." While I'm crawling around on the floor, a floor of cigar and cigarette butts, I realize the cigarette is still in my hand. The cigarette is still in my hand... I realize where I really got the new lighter. It was from a man on a pier, back before I fell asleep for the first time. Memories between the pier and the bed come flooding back to me, and I know I am dreaming, and suddenly I am awake.

Chapter 5: the Ghost in the Graveyard

Everybody tries this out at some point. Some friends get together, they take a bunch of acid, and they journey into the midnight graveyard. A few people actually have a good time.

I enjoy chasing spider monkeys most of all. They are so mischievous and rascally. As they leap from tombstone to someone, my eyes glitter with a childish glee. I flee the scene upon the back of a giant vulture.

No, I am not dreaming.

I want to watch a cartoon. Perhaps today Tom shall capture Jerry. Perhaps Sideshow Bob shall become immortal and kill -- everyone! Perhaps George shall get thall a tall one, finally. `T'i.s.n't for me to decide. I've got to watch the box.

So, sittin' back... watchin' the box. Yup, that's what I'm doing. I feel my brain slowly melting away. It is a golden liquid misting upwards from my body. Or is that my soul? Or is there a difference? Or is it all difference?

I see it. The ghost is coming right fucking at me, man!
Ectoplasm is dripping from my hair.

Brrr... It's so cold out.

The ghost! He's back!

Ah, well.

Me and friends head out of the graveyard. We will take forever with us, and take forever what we have learned.

Chapter 6: A Quest Ignited

I walk into this jewelry store to ask some questions about jewelry. Bart, the blue-bearded man, taps me on the shoulder and whispers in passing, "Follow all and none of the clues at once. Can you do both? It is your only chance, my boy."

I do not turn to follow Bart. I know I am to continue in my pursuit of truth. I walk up to a register and say, "Hey, ma'am, can I ask some jewelry questions?" The lady steps to the side with me and we get down to business.

I am learning so much about jewelry. She mingles within the answers to my questions the answers to questions unasked. Did you know most people I know, including me, find the subject "jewelry" repulsive and disgusting? It is an odd thing, this.

I am not interested in pretty things. I am interested in meaningful things. The expressiveness of and intent behind an object determines the true level of beauty. And I do feel justified in quantifying beauty.

I have always been intrigued by the appeal of graveyard statues. How does one describe it? Really good graveyard statues age like wine, getting better and better as the centuries pass. I've seen angels crying. I've seen scarred guardians. So solemn to begin with, once the scarred guardians cry a chemical scene has blossomed to promote maximum sadness in the viewer.

And where went my heart?

Yes, it is a cruel world, this one. Cruel in that there will always be pain and degradation. It is tolerable also because, for those with open eyes, there is always joy somewhere.

I notice my hair in a wall mirror. *Coming along nicely*, I think to myself. I soak my hair in gasoline and set my head ablaze. I dip my head in a fountain of water and pennies and when I come up most of my hair is gone.

I find somebody in the mall willing to spark the heat of the conversation. "What must be justified?" she asks me.

"Everything perceived as being important. There is then less a danger of perceiving an illusory importance."

"What is your justification for faith?" she asks me.

I smile and say, "I'll tell you in exchange for your phone number."

"Here are the digits," she says. She hands me the digits.

"Faith is the only honest mode of belief," I say. "It is the only mode of belief which admits there is always, forever, and with everything the chance of being wrong. To have faith in something is not to know something. 'Know' is really quite impossible because nothing in the history of ideas and senses has ever been certain."

"What is your justification for drugs?" she asks me.

"They give me something to do when I'm not playing Sega Genesis."

We go out to her car and smoke some opium-laced fruit flavored marijuana. It is quite tasty.

"So you're cool," she tells me in the car.

"Yeah man," I say, "I'm alright."

"What's your justification for truth?" she asks me.

"Truth is correctness, truth is the only right, truth is understanding things as they are. Truth may not exist, but I have reason to believe reason is real. There is meaning, for nothing can come from nothing, therefore all perceived meanings must have roots in something. Tracing the root to the tree, perhaps we might find the correct interpretation of a stable universe. Is our universe stable? At least on some levels, it must be. If the universe is stable, that must be true. If anything, there must be truth."

"So there must be truth?" she asks me. 't overloo

"There is probably truth," I say. "I am human. I may have overlooked something. Or perhaps there is nothing to overlook because there is nothing, not even truth... but then, wouldn't that be true? Truth seems to me an impossible paradox to conquer, therefore, by faith, True. A real paradox rather than a simple contradiction circle... I must of course test and prod such things. I must examine more than their status of 'true paradoxes' before I accept or dismiss them. Still, I am at the moment convinced I will find all such things equally true." o!

"At the moment convinced," she says to me. And she says, just to groove her way deeper into the conversation, "Nobody should ever be more than that."

"How do you justify transportation?" I ask her.

"There are many places I couldn't go," she tells me, "if I didn't have a car. I get anywhere faster because I have a car. It saves time and energy."

"That's a pretty mechanical answer," I tell her.

"It was a pretty mechanical question," she tells me.

"You have a good smell," I tell her.

"You don't stink yourself," she tells me. "It could happen any moment," she warns.

fWooSH!

"HeeHee." "TeeHee." (giggle after childish stupid fucking bullshit giggle...)

"Well Frank," she says.

"My name's KB," I say.

"Well Ben," she says, "you've got the digits. Want to see my phone?"

"Sounds like a party," I say. "Can I get a ride?" I ask.

"Yeah man," she tells me.

We're zooming off when traffic gets thick. Thick and stinky as a pile of unwashed underwear so old it's half decomposed. It's okay. This woman can drive.

We get to her place and pet the pet dog for two hours. We consume a ridiculous quantity of alcohol and she drives me back to my car so I can pass out on the back seat. She drives home and I never see her again. Why? What the hell was that night all about? Oh, but she gave me the digits...

The digits... I... should call!

But no, I don't feel like it right now. Why? Too shy to pry through myself.

Ah, fuck it, what's a phone call? *RiNGRiNGRiNG!* "Hello?" Hey, how's it going?"

"Let's go kill some fruit flies."

"Are you mad, man?"

"HaHa! Bugs Bunny shall be in attendance!" Indeed, I see Bugs Bunny at the celebration. Who is the man behind the costume? Is there really a bunny behind the costume? Probably not. I've never seen or heard of a talking rabbit large and flexible enough to play the role of Bugs. It must really be Bugs Bunny, then!

Holy fucking shit!

You're not falling for the nonsense, are you?

We're at a party, this girl named Cindy and me. This guy bumps me on the shoulder and says, "Hey man, are you down on every level?"

"Down and up," I say.

"Good answer," he tells me. "Listen, man, I got some wisdom for you: When next you get a chance, raise thrice the GB. Don't get sucked into the desperation, man. Learn to live as constructively as you can. Never set a limit, on that or anything. Peace."

"Peace," I say, as he heads for the door.

Other things happen at the party. Stimulant conversations and lots of fun drugs. By my standards, it's a pretty good party.

A thought occurs to me. A confession I'm willing to make. Not even a confession, really. I suppress the impulse to say more. Usually, that's not a good thing to do.

I know one thing with absolute certainty, and that is nothing. I know nothing, certainly.

The quest is on my mind. I must accomplish the quest. What is this quest sparked by guy? Study the wisdom until you've figured it out. Me, I'm ready to get started.

Chapter 7: the Wedding

I wanted to get John Cale to play the piano for our wedding. Sadly, he was dead and I wasn't that connected.

Today, we're getting married, Cindy and I.

"On the wedding night," says Matt, "all you need is PCP."

This kind of occasion calls for some IPSCdP. I want the night to last forever. The Goddess, in conjunction with some kind of psychedelic wallflower, awaits her partner behind the dirty of the mixture. And much cigarette smoke will wither my lungs as I cough the cough of the elderly.

Well, really, my health ain't bad yet. No, I'm momentarily quite healthy.

Cindy isn't the least bit nervous. I'm a little nervous, but only because a bulbous pile of holy macaroni is conducting the ceremony. Thousands of things could go wrong.

Have you ever been married before? How long is that? I'd have done the same in less time.

Jiggles,

isn't it a funny word? Jiggles and giggles and the stomach wiggles at the rate of consumption.

Mucus is disgusting. Don't ever let anyone talk you into buying his or her mucus. No, sir, don't drink the slime. Don't drink the slime. I'll say it one more time, Don't drink the slime.

I hear the wedding bells. Am I ready for them? What is marriage? Unity. "What is unity?" "Between two people, unity is honesty and understanding. Unity is absolute openness, sealed by the resulting absolute love. What is not cause or ends? The eternal, perhaps? Perhaps the eternal is cause for all, as well as ends for all.

The alpha and the omega. After you die you find eternity, you understand eternity, and you return to eternity, one way or another. Finite existence ends with death. What can that really mean for the individual? In any event, there is choice, so if you're ready, choose. Am I ready for marriage? Yes, I choose to be ready, for even that must be a choice. Choices and consequences... Ripples in the threads... Understand now... Now? Yes. Got it?

"I do," says Cindy.

"I do," says I.

Roughly an hour later, we feel the barbs activating. We are ready for the barbs. They haven't stung us yet.

Our wedding night is an end and a means. It lasts forever...

Chapter 8: Riding the Stallion

My first experience on three hits of acid. It was like riding some fantastic horse for hours and hours. The horse's power surged through my mind and my body. The stallion and I raced through problems and chaos. I knew from the start I would have another, better experience, despite the transcendent glory of the blazing on. I would have to.

I walked the tracks for a while that night. It was only during my walk with the tracks that I had a bad experience. It was a moment of darkness that failed to overshadow any of the many moments of good. I began digesting the strange things going on in the Hanover background. I hadn't detected many or much of them. Were they all connected?

The scents of many friends and the scents of many enemies caressed my nostrils that night, as well as the temptation to manipulate... the means and temptation to manipulate people. I resisted in part because I had already cut myself off from everyone.

My first acid trip. I can't help but look upon it as some wonderful turn for progress in my life. There was a moment when I actually doubted the value of any drug other than acid. The night before, a brief encounter left a lasting impression.

the Scene

Outside a midnight theater, half way through the movie (appropriately enough, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*), I'm waiting and talking a little.

I tell a girl I know a little about tomorrow's adventure. She says, "I'm so proud of you," and she gives me a hug. I think to myself, "What has this one experienced? How much has this one seen? She'd probably be fun to trip with." Most of those things, I think after that night.

"I'm so proud of you." It's like something a teacher would say to a graduating pupil. It's like something a mother would say to an accomplished child. What did it mean? So curious a thing to say. Was it just some casual statement? "Wow, good for you." Was *that* the intended meaning? It's how I took it at the time...

Many ways after tasty first drip, I abided to lease my first fungus pip. It was food for my head, crude for my lewd. It left me yearning for more museyroomies... Both rips obtained important olates of charity similar in a few days to the cheer-headlines resulting from implication olates. Well, at half they're tasty.

I'll report back here in a little while.

Inside a Little While

Hello there, ladies and gentlemen. I just want you to know, fellows, the show's been fantastic so far. Yup. Yupcream. What is yupcream? Stuff your dream. Dream, you devil. Rebel.

Why, the south side of the mind is similar in a sense to the east. All directions are similar in a sense.

Boundaries, don't set those up. No, Just cut them down. Ground out beneath boot heel.

I must not fall into the trapping of trappings of Transported to

Where? Where hast thou been transported? Understandest thou the trappings? tappingtapping
What sweet things he brings on his spontaneous wildfire
chariot.

don't.

Taste the chestnut, honey, and bask in the hazel wood of the eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee....
dragging, man. Man, dragging, what a drag man.... Man, what a man what what whut something

steel?

pshhh... something

ether

Ethel

Strong s

Something slithering,

KB's@t

the_l_ → crustyhellcroatotmailom

tuff.

Slithering, the snake. Jake the snake wasn't wide awake when the earthquake rocked LA. He was into figuring out what was going on. droning on. on again. repeating. this same, "This same song, man!

"Didn't I tell you about the time I wrote this song man, It was on the transceiver end of the microphone. Don't drone out get in the zone the... TERRIFIC! Having a splendid fucking day, man, listening to this same song.

"Feeling the felling the feeling too dealy to stealy, who didit? The arrow ->is pointing this way, man. Peace, yo on the bitches and ho, no, don't blow no steam for me caught in the dream for me dream team gonna win it for me spell it out without a doubt for me it's easy, breezy, beautiful. Yeah. Yeah, man. Heya, tea off, coughing in the background noise getting louder growing closer move over, over, hey yeah over, to the land rover parked next to your other thing with swing, the thing from the West side of the fence

"Since when did you win any for the home team junior? DON't you think you could've batted sooner?

"Like, stuck in another universe, reverse that, sounds too rehearsed, no switch it. Digits flixed betwixed the twisted glow of the flow joe, until you Know, let it snow, let it snow

"No more food now. Not hungry. Done with quoting-touting-tote. Smote. Dope? Nope. No joke? N/JKing... Okay, we'll play. Pay this,

"Oh this?

too much happening for you?

"No this."

Say it ain't low. Robin in the hood aiming to blow some snow. Lay down low and let it blow over. Not like a lawn mower. More of a good rower. Rowing through the right streams now.

Rowing through the right streams despite the busted dreams aimed to redeem the Maplewood. Wouldn't it be good to dynamite?

Dynamite under the knife? That's too much strife for me. Not a bit too trite for me but bright? We'll see.

do more

Rowing right into a pow wow. This is Virginia. Virginia power, motherfucker. Power, the weather, television, revision, incision, are you ready? Or too heady? Don't feed me no needy shit about this it fit for what? Trot with me, trotting horses, We'll see.

It really is a terrific world out there. So many uncharted seas. So many missing daisies. Something about this mission is hazy. Hey Daisy, where you headed tonight? Avoid the dynamite. Alright!

some crazy shit going on in

I'm gonna be

Alright. I just might

take

be Out of sight.

some more.

there's nothing going on in Hanover

If that's alright

with you now tell me truly.

What a dozy dose douse doss toss toss. Lost in it my friend

Is she a floozy?

Tell me Tuesday,

saw u last october

That'd be okay.

do u re-member? Dismember? Distemper? temporal and plural, take me

Would it? Could it?

for a whirl

curl the curly

It certainly could would should if you would only join membership fee is nothing

A network of minds working together...

swirl the swirly.

Scheming, dreaming, shrooming, blooming, fuck yeah man.

This is your chance, man. Sign me up for this master plan and we'll wheel into the fan planning something tight. It's alright, I'm alright, we can be tight.

Right?

Fight, there is a fight on 34th Street. I see it happening. The trappings of what the flower power brings rings too truly to mine ears to succumb(ingmy hair)um to the fears and get my rear in gear, As they say. But hey, at least it isn't Tuesday.

Today.

Tuesday today? Two to day? Really? Hurray, what a splendid array of varnishings was tarnishing these walls. Water falls, ivory halls, shopping malls, hungry dog waiting for food. Hold on, fellows.

Fellows. Let me mellow with the dogs. Just sitting back, tossing togs, mogs, zogs, begogs, black logs, brown logs, flogs, floggings, have a flogging... Who is to have the flogging?

Are you asking me or am I asking you? Decide. You tried. You died. Really? Death?

Meth? Chrystal meth some, man in the sand? Tanned good? Could you? That's be true blue. No, please hold the police. Tease the least you have to do what exactly? Tastic. FAntistatic, fantasy static, fantastic static, fatic, is it? Vatic? Is that it? Mattafactitis. Man_u_facture? Manure? mJoin the tour, tour de France, what time?

anyou'really out there

Wait for the wind chime. Eat the yellow lime. Drop a purple dime. Os is is that a crime? No time to explain myself to this bunch of blue collars. Bother her? Don't dawdle on the doodle, man. Use your noodle. Train a poodle. Really? Mud puddle. Cuddle. Cuddles. Huddles. Out by the field. Infield?

Rebuild. Thrilled with the chill tranquil alabaster majesty. What brilliant stallion taming. What wondrous wonders raining OPPORTUNITYKNOCKINGONTHEFUCKINGDOORYOUASSHOLE!!!

I stole that line from a silver mole hiding out behind the telephone pole. He stole my jewels and used those tools to do duels. Mules were bucking against the tides. He rides it out. Without a doubt, that's the route I'm about.

Peace

at least

agree

Out.

to

that

No, lock in, lock on, hold it, told it to you once, told it to you tons, get me some mons money for the free feely tree tea? Tee hee! Dancing in the madness of the hidden gladness fabfixed to sticks to stick to this. Just for this. Shut that door. What for?

The doors, watch out for those. Those explode if not imploded to be overloaded with denoded nodular infoplication streaming across the trafficking through the

Sticky, itchy webs

HA HA HA

Ha.!

congested, yes? invested? wrested from whose grasp?

Whom? the man in the golden tomb. Forshrooming the throoming roving treasure trove of love lovable
dove gliding riding the waves

Ride the wave, man. Fan the flames, the beast he tames, where's those dames?

In your dreams

Shall yea redeem

Varlet

the forbidden acridness

Vermin

Of tested, tasted waters.

Vermilion

Whose daughters?

Six Trillion

You taught her what!?

Don't strut so majestically. Mythically. Enthralled. Failed. I, did not. Tater tot. Connect this dot with
that robot. Trot on up to the maple syrup and eat some waffles. That's awful, no? Yo, no joke.

Take another toke

Hey bloke, take another toke

Talk took what?

Mautters deyre they're martyrs' tears glistening, shining tears, it brings springs of wealth of for whore?

No!SHe'snOT!

Snot. In your. Dot on the board. I toured with him and her. It was a purple cure for the pink bazaar. It
was a shining star in my hand and I held it, and I grasped it, and I rasped on it, and I trespassed into the
vast trash land where the Spaniards fight the blind warriors in the silvery whirlpool of riversquirrel
having become a tool to duel with. Duel thee? I'd duel thee gladly. Tarry forth, then, and spend a token
on the spoken of word of mouth South of here there is a river runs through the old country want to
come with me? Tree huggers. Where? There.

Merely a breeze. Easy living the this spent on invested with.

Stiff, are you stiff, is it a stiff, a stiff in the dash inside the dash? Well spent. Rent a video why don't
you. Catch the low on the down town action. Tonight at midnight a movie will be playing.

Am I going? Here's hoping. It would be open season on the reason hunters and their thunder ready to
rumble in the old engine it would take ten men to take down.

PoundingpoundingpoundingHOLYFUCKINGSHITMYPoundingmotherfuckingheadache!!

Take a shot. Why not? Think you got the snot? Think you're too hot to trot? Wamt some Pot?

Alot? Al ute? A lute? Rootin', tootin', I was boozin' to cruise on in and send a message

Through the digital airwaves

Behave, now

Now,

Don't have a cow

Now,

Do it Now. Urgency. Surging. Surging urgent energies seize the besieging enemy and he decides to flee.

Thought he could see through but was too new to the game too tame too lame...

So sad...

A tad bit vanishing in the wind.

Sending through the wind.

What are they sending through the wind?

Are they mending broken hearts?

Are you bending yet?

OLetm... Oh, Let yourself, release yourself,

BEYOU

not blue but true to a true cause because I was lost to it, Tossed into it and riding it. Striding right
through it before the new boys aim to forget the tit of the teat of the bulging teat of the tasty treat
served up nice and neat by the hag.

Tag,

toads raining from the sky

Taoism?

Unload that magazine.

From out my limousine?

Shit you ain't never seen.

Spilling forth from the frothing spoken spleen. Teenagers and their behavior, then labor, us poor slobs struggling through the muck.

Learn to churn wisely.

Tuck it itin so they can't take more than already that which having been took, spook by spoke the spook? Tooth ache? Milk shake? Delicious. Robitussin... bustin' robo from the hobo going too slow to show no grit. Well get with it or split. Spit in the eye of the eye of the... the Eye of the Pyramid! What? What is the eye doing on the pyramid? "Why, that is where we store the Great Wisdom. It'll take you through the slums and it'll take care of your chums. Just remember where from you heard the shout out."

It's all about the boogy, the jiggy craze surging through the rave bone. Beefing it out all alone so soon?

Tune in, turn on, drop out, out, Out there, He's Really "He's Really out there you know?"

Toe to toe with the mojo, the flow joe, the jamming devices. Splices through the rices, rice pudding.

Budding in the garden. Rose bushes? Nose cushes. Coosh. Cushions tons of bricks falling cushions the cushions INCOMING! cushions the blow.

Blow itll....

Cartoons, watch

Let it snow, let it snow.

out for

Yo, I said, hey

them

"Yo, doctor, where's the tractor? Trailor? Trajectory? The trajectory for the path into the past, we blasted right threw away through and drew new attention to the sea of breezes of fleece networking sweet release.

NetworNewport. Are you short on cash? On gas? Gotta make the blast last, fabtastic, chilling yet still thrilling, staring through the chill and the thrill to the grill where the coals burn under the silvery slippery learnings of yestoryear. The tears do stream and the dream team scores again. Ten point, two point, point 359, save 623, on the 323 avenue. Stew inside it. Ride it, my goodness!

RENO! We know? Indeed. Believe. Shine so spine tingling from the shingles on the shangles falling from the star spangled banner waving, caressed by the breeze. Tease it if you please. Bees? Beez-wax. Mind that.

Tit for tat for tat. A

Leave a message.

Massage this.

Twisted lisp lipping through a thisble a thimble? Stimble? Stumbling? Tumbling, rumbling, running, trotting, spotting some sport, retort? Chortle. Whistle. Taste a little hazel in the tistle textile. Revile.

Reptile. TEpid?

Teptiptiptripping on everyany which way?

Lay low. Take it slow. You don't know what to d

Virginia woods,

The woods of Virginia,

Walking the tracks,

Al

Awaiting the train,

Abdul

Training a thought,

Al

Bought a taught teaching,

Qidam

Leeching the fluids. Tooooo..... Toast.

Tom?

I can hear a head-trip ready to ripple through the semis. Semms... Seeming as it seems?

Whistle while you work your berserk herky-jerky magic and grab it. Dag nab it, take it to the lab. Tag, drag, take a drag and tag it. Snagged it and

Mom?

You quake.

Bomb?

Feel the rake
 in your hand
 Fear the rake
 in your hand
 Digging through
 The twisted sand
 We wished it,
 It came fished out,
 about that time came out the Labrador
 A good dog,
 Watching out for you
 A good cat,
 Watching out for you
 Smart animals,
 Especially mammals
 Watch out for the dolphins
 Talking to us?
 Trust that notion will you?
 Me too, maybe. Not
 ready yet n
 ot quite set for Ti
 bet.

To
 Place a bet
 To wet the shape of things
 The appetite the shape
 Of mighty of things
 Hunger. brings
 Thunder in his veins, comprehension
 The screams of the insane
 Seek to tame over extraordinary
 Tender hearts carry-over
 Or clumsy farts. slipstream
 It's all a part light beanstalk beam
 Of the journey, data, digits, midgets
 the game. Scared of midgets?
 Remember Flip down the
 that movie? tipped scale
 Did you see it in 2D?
 Or was you a floozy?
 Or a wee bit boozy?
 Tuesday?
 Choose? Stay? choose, stay or go.
 No,
 What is happening? trip with me
 Sap-sap-sapping don't you see?
 Me we be free
 And the when the
 Biting flea when you

Boom.
 Choke.
 Smoke a little more.
 Pour us
 Some juice.
 Boost us
 Some boost.
 the goose,
 Chase the goose,
 it's on the loose,
 Are you ready A loose goose again
 for the other
 stuff?
 Or
 Have you had
 Enough?
 Buff the notion.
 Keep trucking.
 Keep bucking.

weavingHumdumdum...

brings out my mind is ready.
a doubt-
ful belly full
for some

swallow. Swallow___→Swallow swallow. Too slow.

Let go.

Oh no!

Too soon?

Mid afternoon.

Yup,

Unloading a book. It took, they took a look. They knew the stew I had cooking. Couldn't stand taking such a baking. Making me out to be Be

What?

Strut, peacock, you think you've earned it. You've just burned it. Burn some more. Floor it. Tour until four minutes to five, strut that funky jive and open up the beehive to strive and thrive.

Ride the tides,

Ride them out

Ride the tides,

Take it in strides,

The stranger hides where?

Than fiction in the kitchen where a fin pokes through the folds to be so bold as to state,

Watch out, Pout

a bit

and

doubt

a bit

he bit

right down

Where is the stranger?

Gandorf the Glad sacked Queen Jezebel's Elizabethan drama playing overtime. It's hi to have some high times cashing out in the insides of the wind chime so sublime. Time to monitor time more closely.

Where is it all going, man?

Straight into the pages.

He rages and thrashes inside the cage, an animal hungry for the new experience. Just don't forget tie or to rinse off afterwards. Walk towards the

Don't forget to

I abnegate thee, SATAN.

Make sure the

Doors are

Silk, satine, fashion, trash and

Closed.

stuff.

Frozen?

Tough.

You were chosen. Where you been? Ten times what I've seen.

A bleeding spleen.

Peachy-keen. Give me some green.

Green through the screen. Seen by eyes. Tries, oh he tries. Spider webs ebbing with the flow. Toe to toe with the know how. Trout grog?

Are trout in trotting season?

Are seasons reasons?

Seasoning for the tea?

trippers

Certainly,
 For you see chug in the mug
 We be
 Seeking
 Happy. whispers
 Don't
 try what about frogs?
 to
 trap me. jitterbug
 The music!
 Keeps you on your toes.
 Nobody knows the secrets

Make sure all the doors are closed. Keep some ammunition handy. Everything will be just dandy. I know a guy knows a guy. Scheming under the thunder. They're just guys.
 Networking,
 Jerking jerkily across the decrepit tepid leper slobbering upon the front doorstep. Should he be let in?
 Sin again? Take more money, honey, or I'll hit you
 Thought we were through?
 Do to What was you gonna
 Him/mesphere. Nusfure. Misfire. Blur. Turbines generating a tide to ride out through the dracula
 Count Dracula? Fwatashidname, again? Tim. Spent,
 He went
 on Proud and rowdy,
 His merry I am
 way Another
 To carry Person,
 weight the first
 And marry Person to say so
 maybe. To say
 Marriage? CanUCare enough? Is it fluff? Muff? Buff the notion.
 Study the ocean, Thank you for saying thank you,
 Here it comes It's a very nice thing to say.
 Coming?^{now} Com along and savethe day YEAH, BB-BABY!
 Hey, play it slow, ride the flow, know the Joe, go for it.is young, still
 Forfeit? Nay, sir. Turkey isn't escaping that easily. night, a Still
 Chisel de dum. and tranquil night.
 Rim flam rumbles a mound to
 In the dark. tone it down town
 forty-two pound
 Chapter 9: Out Converting Mists of Abe-alone

I think of a true conversion as the result of individual decision after proper reflection upon the given information. Keeping all that in mind, sometimes I'm out trying to get people to convert. I try to help people, including myself, to get their minds working in the best possible way--*for them*. I have this feeling that once people get in touch with what they *really* want, they'll naturally uncover both internal and external truth. It is important to resist such instinctive and illusory needs as "safety" and sex. If sex can be more than an instinctive act, it always should be. I think. ...

Proper? Did I just use that word in a sentence? Honest abe
 But that's all just a head-trip, man-. Really, what you should be focusing on is your insides,

I go off by myself and do some stuff. "Stuff" consists of not much. Not even small mischief lightens the day's stagnant status.

Well, there is the high. I'm high, and that's never nothing... I mean, that's something.

Are you righteous? Have you suffered righteously? Do you call your suffering righteous? Do you call your life righteous? Are you clean, motherfucker, or are you human scum like the rest of us, just jiving to get ahead? Answer me, you fucking shit-eating donkey-loving twerp!

Is your life a good one? Ain't hurt nobody but yourself? Well, the guilty tip is falling, the guilt trip is rising, it's coming in from all sides. The people you have stepped on are standing ready finally to be noticed for what they are--that's human like the rest of us.

BzzzGORK Lird..... Lizard..... Lizards... Gizzards.... Lizard's gizzards.

Yes, human like the rest of us. Moan and groan, bitch and pout, fuck up plenty. Sweep what mistakes you can under the carpet. Maybe you're hiding behind a religion because you think that will make you better. You're human, your church is human too, only sometimes it forgets. Hiding behind a religion will only make some people think you're better.

Is science your church? Is religion your science? Do you have a church, or are you hiding behind something else, or are you hiding at all? Is fear your church? Is joy your church?

Learn to enjoy more than just joy. Take it as free advice (or SHIT!).

This is my propaganda, folks. It's the conversion chapter. Take this, if you will, as a crystal warning. If you will, you can take it as just a crystal. Just so long as you *will*.

Maybe God is the answer. Maybe there really is a man in the sky, and in the fields, and in the ocean, and in the black space, and in my heart. Maybe there really is something already in everything and still expanding, a consciousness stretched beyond human comprehension since the beginning and still stretching today. How can there be a nothing without an everything? Only more nothing can come from nothing.

Even if that's true, America, hiding behind a religion won't help you one bit. Hiding behind anything will only make you an easier target and a bigger mark. This time the subverts are the supposed devotees.

Look within for infinity. Look without for its expression.

Walk with me. Hold my hand and I'll take yours and we can stand together. If we stand tall we won't fall to the drowning tides, for we've gotten together to resist and we've got better than this or that. Just take my advice, resist the whore and splice the inhibiting factor.

These streets be never easy. That is both a request and an observation. I thought you might want to know.

I thought you might want to know. To know about that, or about something else. To know for certain. To grasp something, anything, completely and be certain what you're grasping is a concrete idea. To hold in the palm of your hand an undefeatable idea and to be justified in being sure.

Just think and keep thinking, examine everything in front of you and then put more in front of you and when you're out of room, look behind you.

Look behind and to the left, then to the right, then up. Eventually, look inside. No, start looking inside right off. Don't look behind you. Don't even look in front of you.

It's okay to look behind you now.

I'm willing to admit, as hard as I've tried to get it right, my vision of reality might be partially or completely bogus. I see no way of eliminating those possibilities. But I feel justified in believing what I believe, because I haven't lied to myself, and because I've done and will continue to do all that I can. Except when I get distracted, which is daily. Even getting distracted is something, and can be harnessed as something later. Still, nobody's time can or should be devoted entirely to the pursuit of truth. Were all time dedicated to the pursuit, we'd miss out on living those truths we find.

Taking all this into consideration, who am I? What am I? What am I doing inside these

pages?

Chapter 10: Running From the Law

I am the shotgun, cocked. I am the bullet spray. I am the blood. I am the bodies. I am the sidewalk.

You are in the bullet spray. The hordes of them are in the bullet spray. And nothing.

Nothing is in the bullet spray. Nothing is my shield.

I am walking through the chaos streets created by my gun. The explosions and the tears, the screams and the running, the dropping bodies, the shattered car windshields, all mindless. There is no reason for any of this-and that is the reason.

I'm sick of thinking myself into a headache all the time. I'm exploding. I've been tick-tick-ticking away so long and everybody heard it but me.

"KB, when you come to school ready to kill everybody, don't kill me, okay?"

There is no reason to reason. In the end, mere uncertainty proves too hard to swallow. Logic is just another bar for my cage. Well, I submit to the insanity. You hear me!? Mother fucker!

Only in submission can freedom be found. I bought that line ages ago. Unthinking, moving down the streets, for an instant I am free of it all. And I am nothing. And I am in the bullet spray.

The veins are sizzling beneath my skin. Flesh melts. Blood evaporates. I am an unidentifiable glob of swirly on the sidewalk.

The screams and the moans, the honking horns and the sirens approaching, the gusty winds, the booming silent protests of the corpses... Maybe these things are real. They can't reach me now, for I am a puddle slithering home, a snake flowing east.

There will be a day when the bacon racers will shut off their sirens and leave me be. Until that day comes, I flee. Cindy runs, too. She's with me even in this darkest of places.

Some of this is wishful thinking.

The bars, they're chasing. The cages are rattling with the rage of the hungry, lonely beast within. The cages need new beasts to bed with the old.

How do you think prison would treat me? How do you think the chair would treat me? More sizzles beneath my skin.

Dare you sympathize with me, reader? If you've been paying attention, you should know me pretty well by now. Those people I killed, you don't know them at all. Is your sympathy with them or with me? This is the decisive moment. You have to choose, man.

Cindy's driving down 95 and I ask her, "Is your sympathy with me or the people I killed?"

"I'm with you right now," says Cindy. "I'll always love you," says Cindy.

"That's the kind of thing a parent would say," I say. "I didn't ask you if you loved me. I asked you if you sympathized."

"I empathize," says Cindy. "If you're asking if I feel sorry for you, I don't. If you're asking if I understand, I'm trying really hard. I don't think any less of you for what you did today," says Cindy. "I know you," says Cindy, "and I love you despite your faults. It's important. I shouldn't have to wait for you to ask, either, before I tell you I love you."

"What is love, anyway?" After so many years of pondering, after uncovering so many answers, I'm still exploring that question. I don't have the courage to voice the question.

"If murder isn't enough to make you think less of me, what could possibly make you think less of me?" I ask. I already know the answer. For some reason, I'm feeling very insecure and desire comforting.

I'm shivering in my seat, balled up in the fetal position.

"I don't know," says Cindy. "I've always tried to judge actions without judging the person. "You're human, KB. Human like the rest of us. When you're ready to recover, I'll do my best to help

you heal."

That's enough. My shivering ceases sufficiently to allow the arrival of the Nod. (yeah, right)

Let me tell you about our baby in the back seat. His name is Baby White the Coke Sack. He is a big fucking sack of cocaine sleeping in the back seat. He loves Mommy and Daddy equally.

Behold, the power of chiiii--... .. COCAINE.

What is the value of unique experiences? Immeasurable, because they are unique. of course there's also the value of personal pleasure and safety and the joy and security of loved ones (blood in the gutter)

Chapter 11: An Illusion Fades

We're in the car when it happens. I realize these girls are all impossible fantasies, fantasies based more on other fictions than on real experiences. I reprimand myself for creating such beautiful monstrosities. She Hulks, Brides of Frankenstein, all of them.

Cindy is reaching for me when she vanishes.

The car goes spiraling out of control, then it veers off to the left. Driving on the interstate without a fucking driver! OH HOLY FUCKING SHIT MAN!

I only dent a few doors before returning control to the situation. Now it is my hands on the steering wheel. I'm driving straight now. Getting my shit straight now.

And I hit the back roads, and I hit those bitches hard. That's what Christopher's Walk-ins would do, man. I'm zooming swiftly through the tangled webs. I'm not trying to get anywhere except far, so I can't possibly get lost. Just gotta keep my eyes on the road.

The system is cranking some live John Cale. I'm blazing, man. Can't nobody out-blaze my shit.

Sherlock Holmes, at it again. Heh.

The snow is everywhere. It's a winter wonderland.

HAHAHAHA HA HA HA HA! Oh, the red brine! Oh, the wind chime! Oh, the far crime! Oh, the lost dime! Oh the oh oh oooOoOooooooOOOOHH!!!

I'm preparing for the war. Hopefully, the war will never come. If it comes, motherfuckers, I'll be ready. Got my black boots on. Got the chain and the shotgun and the speed I need to fight the good fight. You'll try to take me out and you'll fall on your ass because I'm towering too high above you. Not that I ain't got no love for you. It's all just the oogie hoogie boogie.
BOOOO!

Who the fuck

saidtha ts aidt h a tsaidthat?

No, ain't no Po Po down here.

They all hibernated indoors for the coming Russian Winter.

All of them? Well, them's too many for all.

Revel in it with me. Roll amidst the muck and await your first incision.

I wonder why Kris Rook seems to like Robitussin so much... Hmmm...

What the hell? "Here, kid, drink this. That's good, yes? Yesss..."

What is this thing I'm witnessing? Dressing sprinkled over the icing in the olive oil? Stranger than that, folks. A real life perversion of the flesh, a perversion of the worst kind.

I slit the thirsty old bastard's throat with a butcher's knife. An appropriate end for such a low ends meat dealer.

Juxtaposed, the scenes. Juxtaposed, the moods. Juxtaposed, the awful sights. Conrad said, "The horror, the horror."

Is it because I lost my illusion? My precious, gone! What precious!?

What precious was there minutes ago? There was nothing minutes ago. There is only now. There is only now and the blazing.

Blazing down the back roads. They smoke behind me.

Not even a hot trail can alert the trailers now. They're too far back. The webs are too sticky for them. Lost in the dust, drowning in the jurisdictions.

I've probably never killed a cop before. I've never knowingly killed a cop before. I wonder what it would be like.

It happened days ago off of 34th Street. That territory is so far behind me now. The investigations aren't going well.

Have I ever been photographed? I don't take very good photographs.

Who knows my name? Not the fallen or the dying. A few of the dead.

Chapter 12: All Things End, Neil

All things beginning must end, they say. I say only change ever begins and change never ends.

Except the illusions, exceptions. Accept?

The funeral music is playing in the rose garden. The roses have just recently gone out of reason and season and fashion. It's a lucky thing. Now nothing obligates my giving a fuck about roses. There are roses, I like them. That is all.

Life will never end, for life is real, and all real things are infinite. Only finite things are illusory.

Like characters. Invented characters. Exposed characters, on the other hand, are reflections on real characters, therefore, limitless in potential and real.

AHHH!

-- --
-` vw -_p_*
--:-`--(-``_`o (l)`
; o O

I slam on the breaks(brakes!). It is too late. The tree was just moving too fast. His back is cracked and mine is more than broken. The trickling blood glistens within the magical radiance of the full moon.

-end

What is death, friends?

the End Times

The History of the Universe

A banana peel slipped across the keypad. Doctor Yihaamon Salvidre, brilliant keypad owner, examined the banana peel thoughtfully before avariciously attacking the dried insides. It was a banana peel black with the wisdom of the ages.

Doctor Yihaamon Salvidre considered the possibilities. His fingers twittered and intertwined and lingered over the control panel. So much depended on the outcome of the push of a button. It was a ridiculous situation.

It took ten men to translate the document Doctor Yihaamon Salvidre was readying himself to open. It took days of hard work and discussion and dedication and note-taking and heated arguments. The task seemed impossible. How does one translate a document written in a language forgotten too soon to die?

A language which might as well have never existed. One does not, ten did.

Ten did. Ten accomplished the deed. Without the aid of computers. Why, then, so much drama surrounding the push of a button?

Doctor Yihaamon Salvidre's index finger descended upon the proper key. An explosion followed.

Before the beginning, before before, there existed limitless consciousness. This consciousness existed and exists in a state of perfection, experiencing everything totally, from joy to sorrow, mercy to vengeance, and love. This consciousness satisfied the natural impulse of consciousness by creating.

The beginning occurred.

Matter, space, and life occurred. Conflicts and resolutions occurred, expansion occurred.

These things continue to occur as Creation develops.

Creation is self-expression. The Creator's greatest expression of self came in the form of soul. To the greatest of life forms was granted this thing, soul.

Soul is consciousness limited during life by flesh and the world. Soul is consciousness granted the freedom to struggle to develop or to exist in a state of stagnation forever. The development of consciousness is the development of soul. The development of soul leads to a greater attunement with the Creator and a greater separation from the world.

The Creator expanded, expands forever within and without his creation while remaining separate from it. Meanwhile, souls continue to struggle and the world and the flesh continues to corrupt.

There was a planet. Life on the planet was made diverse and plentiful. Placed in charge of the diversity was a lone conscious being. This being knew love, yet had no one on the same level with which to share this unifying force. For that reason, a piece of this being was made into another conscious being, and these two beings came to know one another. These two beings, united, came to share in triumph and misfortune. His was hers and hers was his.

Seduced by the world, seduced by a serpent, a serpent of power, a serpent of masculinity, a serpent of trickery, a serpent; it was simply a part of the world exercising its devious influence. ...

It was not long before...

The hole filled with...

A flesh completed...

The document was missing pages. Hundreds of pages, perhaps thousands, existed as dust. History has a way of erasing things. But the document's biblical influences, or the document's influence on the Bible, became instantly obvious. It was a momentous discovery never to be fully understood.

"Ah, well," said Dr. Salvidre to himself. "At long last, the document itself may be transported to a museum where it belongs. Perhaps this translation will satisfy the Vatican."

(The Vatican would not, in fact, be satisfied. The Vatican would thoroughly examine everything twice through agents of its own.)

Dr. Salvidre emailed the document to Pope Joshi, Three-Headed Snake of Discord, and everybody else he knew. His tale ends there.

Janet Walters was waiting by the river for a dracoliche. The dracoliche arrived cloaked in blue shadows. The blue shadows slithered and slivered like coiling, hissing serpent tongues. Slobber dripped cruelly from the creature's bloated lips.

"Good to see you," said Janet Walters.

"Where's my money, bitch?" asked the dracoliche. A scaled tail began whipping and lashing back and forth beneath the blue. Dangerous beasts need not hear the small talk.

"Hidden in my tightly locked locker," said Janet Walters. "You'll have it as soon as you deliver the heads of the ten translators."

"Eh, slight problem there," said the dracoliche. "I've killed all the translators. The heads are in this sack." The dracoliche presented a bloody brown sack of heads to Janet Walters.

"What's the problem?" asked Janet Walters, examining the heads.

Said the dracoliche, "They were able to translate the document."

Horror struck

Like an off-key piano

Like a volcano

Swallowing an island tribe.

Said Janet Walters, "What?"

A man wearing a paper bag over his head and nothing over his body ran by screaming, "We're doomed!"

Janet Walters fell into a wooden park bench. She looked at the dracoliche and said, "He may be right."

Said the dracoliche, "Just give me my damned money bitch."

Agent Fielding stood by the pooping tree waiting for a package. 9:30, thought Agent Fielding. *I know it was supposed to happen at 9:30.*

At ten o'clock, the opium faery watched Agent Fielding in silence from atop a black cloud. The opium faery had zoomy eyes. To zoomy eyes, Agent Fielding was a not unattractive man.

The package was never delivered. Agent Fielding walked away, the opium faery flew away. One of them would be smoking some opium.

By the day's end, the pooping tree had squatted twelve times. There was much kirsplurshing.

At the opium den. There were other faeries. Things were pretty laid back. Our Boy Henry was outstretched across a squishy pink feather mattress. Our Boy Henry was running low on cash but had up to that point so wisely managed his spendings the level of fun far exceeded the level of survival fear.

"Agent Fielding has been lazing by the pooping tree down town again," whispered an opium faery to Our Boy Henry.

Our Boy Henry asked, "Did he get anything? Or was he stood up again?"

The opium faery sighed. "Oh, poor, unfortunate Agent Fielding. Will he forever be disappointed?"

"I hope so," said Our Boy Henry before drifting off into a dream world beyond the most fantastic imaginings of the average Joe.

Lucky Smiles was out patrolling his favorite city. Chrystal never sleeps at night, now or then. Chrystal wakes up at 4pm and settles down again at around 5:30 in the morning. Sometimes, when it rains, the city skips sleep for a few days. Tears always did keep Chrystal awake.

Lucky Smiles didn't have to worry about the rain. He had a black raincoat coiled around his ankles. The collar whipped around his neck like fire. No rain could touch his head because his bowler hat was water-resistant. Rubber boots splashed through puddles like they were meant for the mud.

That night it was clear out. The moon was full. The stars sprinkled their energies upon the planet. A triple corona sweetened Lucky Smiles' dry and skinny lips. The cigar's tip burned more beautifully than any star, more beautifully than the sun, almost as beautifully as a moon alight with stolen brightness.

Lucky Smiles inhaled and exhaled as if he were smoking a fine cigarette, savoring cloudy decay enveloping his lungs. He walked and smoked. The two went together better than vodka and breakfast.

It had been a while since Lucky paid the opium den a visit. He went by there that night just because it was on the way. On the way to the end. Of the path he designed for himself. He wasn't looking for oblivion or inspiration that night. He was looking for a woman by the name of Ginger Flamingo Georgian Cushion Lover Batkinson. Ginger Flamingo Georgian Cushion Lover Batkinson had but a handful of hangouts and Lucky Smiles knew them all.

It was important to track the whores. Certain tides moved with the whores. Ginger was the queen of the whores.

Lucky found her leaning into a telephone pole drinking in the passing crowd with the allure of her young eyes. Only Ginger's eyes were young. She was a neglected, dusty old doll stripped down to the underwear. Her hair, once a metallic black shining with the morning sun, had caught so much rainwater rust ran through it. She was smoking a Newport, slapping her thighs, curling her fingers out and in towards her heaving sandbag chest.

"Hey there," whispered the crusty voice of the whore-queen.

"It's been a while," said Lucky Smiles. "How's business been lately babe?"

Ginger flickered artificial eyelids in a half-assed effort to summon up some vestige of those seductive powers lost to the golden years. "You want something," she said. She flicked her Newport out into the busy, neglecting streets.

Lucky wanted something, all right. Information. It was always information when he came to this side of town. Nothing else was valuable enough to merit the risky journey.

"You know the price," said Ginger Flamingo Georgian Cushion Lover Batkinson.

Lucky pressed his lips against the dried mouth of the hag and toyed with her blackened tongue, a blackened tongue dancing between blackened teeth. He took a nipple between fingers and

squeezed a sagging breast until the pain-pleasure sent shivers through Ginger's body, at which point he recoiled from the unholy embrace.

Ginger smiled. She dragged her dry tongue against her dry lips. She said, "Nicely done man-meat. I am momentarily satisfied. Speak quickly."

"One of your girls," said Lucky Smiles, "saw something. Last Tuesday. It happened by the downtown docks. We need to talk, the girl and I."

"If there was anything I could tell you," said Ginger, "I would tell you."

Said Lucky Smiles, "I want you to arrange a meeting, of course."

And Ginger said, "Of course. You haven't paid enough for that."

"Oh you know babe there are things I hate and things I loathe. I'm carrying an evil treasure. I loathe resorting to evil things, but you've driven me to it." Lucky Smiles retrieved from an inner pocket of his raincoat a small plastic baggy twist-tied shut. The baggy contained three round white rocks the size of gumballs.

Greedy hands

Snatched the sack.

Before running off to smoke some crack, Ginger said, "Helena will meet you inside the arcade at midnight."

Pope Joshi looked down upon Alfredo from a wheelchair throne. The ivory back of the chair reclined slightly. Skinny ankles crossed. Pope Joshi heaved out breath.

Alfredo twitched a bit.

"Say again," said Pope Joshi.

"I say they seem to have discovered Abel's Gospel."

"Ridiculous!"

Pope Joshi heaved out breath.

Alfredo twitched a bit.

"Have they accurately dated the document itself?" asked Pope Joshi.

Alfredo said, "Dated before translated. But of course you know it could not be an original. Still, from what we've seen of the language, and from what we've seen of the translation, and from what we've since dug up out of the ol' library, everything seems perfectly genuine."

"Have we thoroughly examined everything twice through agents of our own?" asked Pope Joshi.

"Yes," said Alfredo. "Everything seems perfectly genuine."

"Things are not always as they seem," said Pope Joshi.

"Things are never as they seem!" shouted Agent June at the top of her lungs.

Sound waves damned near shattered many a stained glass window.

"The value of unique experiences is immeasurable."

"Who said that?" asked Our Boy Henry.

"'Twas not I."

Our Boy Henry sighed and went back to sleep. He hadn't woken up yet.

The pooping tree got a bad case of diarrhea. It scared all the birds away. Luckily, faeries could handle the stench. Fielding, too, could stand the stench and the wait. Packages...

Speaking of luck, a strange sort walked into an arcade at midnight. It wasn't Helena. It was all Smiles.

There were so many crazy machines inside the House of Games. It was maddening guessing which did what when and where it happened. For that reason, a cheerful little fellow by the name of

Georgio had been hired as an explainer.

"This is the fantasy machine!" exclaimed Georgio for the benefit of Lucky Smiles, who was leaning against a wall all the way on the other side of the spacious game-filled room. The exclamation just barely made it over thousands of harmonized clicks and ticks and sirens and laser beams and cut across to Lucky Smiles' sensitive ears.

"Oh," said Lucky Smiles too softly for Georgio to hear.

"You want to play?" asked Georgio. "You can have a completely 100% free preview! Step right up, sir!"

Lucky Smiles was much too thrifty to refuse freeness. He stepped right up.

"Ah, good," said Georgio. "You have ears for the knock of opportunity. Now, seat yourself here, cover your eyes with this, these wires plug in over there, this goes over your ears..." Ten minutes later, Georgio had everything in order.

The electrodes pulsed in beautiful patterns lost to Lucky because Lucky was temporarily lost to the world. Sensations, foreign sensations, filled him. Foreign sensations became native sensations. A world arrived.

He was riding a camel out into the biting desert sands. He was wearing a raincoat. The wind robbed him of his bowler hat. His hair, long and black and fluttering in the wind, soaked in sun the same as his raincoat and his rubber boots. Thirty seconds in the desert and already he was burning.

Burning with a passion, a passion barely ignited by the wind and the yellow ocean drifting by his camel's feet and the sun on high. He knew fires hotter than any man should feel. He was a sword forged in a heat beyond nature's capabilities.

They couldn't burn him. They had been tempted by myths to try to burn the protector. They couldn't do it. Even away from his city, away but not really away, they couldn't burn him. They couldn't even get him to smoke.

She came, transported the same as Lucky Smiles, a woman in a yellow robe standing on the horizon, waiting for her man. Somehow, Lucky knew it was Helena when he rode up and gave her a ride.

They were moving into rocky dirt ground when it all faded out. She was clutching his waist didn't know direction when the tides changed and they weren't in a desert anymore. They were naked together in the cold, clutching for warmth, desperate for touch, firmly pressed bodies separated by the unknown forces as the tides changed again hands reaching for hands...

There was black on her side, black on his side, they were being sucked into the hole.

Lucky Smiles knew oblivion. What kind of games were they trying to play? The bastards. Lucky Smiles reached through the void, grasped the strings, reached through the void, grasped Helena's hand, pulled, pulled...

They were together. A clear and starry sky lit a beach. Hands held, they were looking out into the ocean. The waves crashed and tugged lightly at their ankles. Wet sand drifted over their naked feet. A breeze tickled nipples and testicles and other things. Peace.

Lucky Smiles threw back his head and his eyes shot open. Helena did the same in a chair across from him. Lucky ripped himself free of plugs and looked around frantically for the explainer. Where was the explainer? Cowering in another part of town.

"Some trip," said Helena.

"Yeah," said Lucky Smiles. "It was supposed to be a bad one."

"Ginger sent me," said Helena.

"I know," said Lucky Smiles. "It's been awhile, babe."

They walked into the café and talked over two steaming cups of Joe. Lucky lit up a triple corona.

Weeping would not. Sadness for later. Regrets chased away. Sorrow for sorrow's sake. The

tears held behind the dam. A finger plugged the hole in the damn. Damn, man.

"How's your dreams?" asked Lucky Smiles.

"Better," said Helena. "Sometimes, pleasant. Things haven't been bad these past few years..."

"And the johns?" asked Lucky Smiles.

"They never seem to change," said Helena. "But I can take care of myself these days."

"Funny you should say so," said Lucky. "I heard you had a little trouble in that area a few nights back."

"Yeah." Helena laughed a gasp. "Yeah, man. We're not all like you. Some things, none of us can handle alone. Some rare things most of us don't have to handle period. I guess you can't know too much about loss, you being the man that never seems to lose."

"I haven't seen you in years, Helena," said Lucky Smiles.

"I haven't seen you in years," said Helena. "We're even there."

Lucky looked down at the table. His eyes drifted up to the coffee mug steam. He sipped his coffee. He smoked his cigar. He rested the side of his chin on his fist.

"I just wanted to talk to you," said Lucky Smiles. "I know what it is you saw. I know where it's hiding. It won't bother any of you again after tonight."

Helena said, "Cut the bastard into little pieces and feed them to his mother."

"His mother already has enough to deal with."

Helena wiped hair and sweat back off of her face. Her hand glided down to her mug, which trembled slightly as she lifted it to her lips. She drank the remaining half a mug of coffee and sat the mug back down. She said, "We need a drink."

Lucky smiled. He said, "It's been a while, Helena."

Janet Walters bitchslapped a little man in a red coat. She said, "This is all your fault, Ziaaeeiri. You're supposed to keep an eye out for things like this. How could you let such an important document fall into the hands of the world at large? Do you realize people can now read the beginning of Abel's Gospel on the Internet?"

Ziaaeeiri rubbed his cheek. He said, "You're breaking my concentration, Janet. Back the fuck off."

Janet Walters found a home for her metal boot heel in the crotch of Ziaaeeiri. She said, "No need to concentrate, Ziaaeeiri. Everything's already gone to shit. Why didn't you see any of this coming?"

Ziaaeeiri squirmed around on the floor.

Janet Walters walked into an adjoining room. She padded across a fine velvet carpet and kneeled at the foot of a throne. She grasped an old and withered hand and kissed a golden apple core index finger ring. She released the withered hand and dropped her head. Her hair fell in front of her face.

"Rise," commanded Illuminatus Primus Jonas Kohan Khan.

Janet did rise.

"Report," commanded Illuminatus Primus Jonas Kohan Khan.

"Yes. Well, all of the translators are dead. I have had the heads in the sack the dracoliche gave me checked out. Of course it will be obvious they were murdered. The murders, however, will be clueless mysteries to all parties involved, including the lower branches of your own organization. There will be much tension between the four nations which provided the translators."

"Fuck them," commanded Illuminatus Primus Jonas Kohan Khan.

Janet said, "Yes, I believe that was the intention. Still, the problem of the document will not go away. Jzearuth thinks the worldwide distribution of the document is a sign that things are heating up. It won't be just us and the terrorists shaking up the world anymore. The world is shaking of its own volition."

Illuminatus Primus Jonas Kohan Khan said, "I am well aware. There is also the problem of the other document."

"Other document?"

"I have every reason to suspect a billionaire by the name of Carlson Cartwheel Turner has in his possession the rest of the so-called Abel's Gospel. He stole the damned thing from us three months ago. Now that a translation of the beginning has been made available, he will have no trouble at all in getting the rest of the thing deciphered. This may have already happened."

Janet wanted to know, "Why are you only now bringing this to my attention?" Instead of asking that she asked, "What do you want me to do?"

"Deliver a package to Agent Fielding. Agent Trevor is already handling the situation. Once a package has been delivered to Agent Fielding, the matter should sort itself out."

"You're quite sure?" asked Janet Walters. "Agent Fielding is a dullard. I have never heard of Agent Trevor. If your Carlson "Cartwheels" is permitted to actually read Abel's Gospel..."

"We're all fucked," said the Illuminatus Primus. "Yes, I'm well aware. However, do what you're told, bitch."

Janet Walters went to go kick around Ziaaeeiri some more. Afterwards, she would put together a package.

Three-Headed Snake of Discord checked his email at the local library. "Holy shit!" he shouted, against every objection permeating from the librarian glaring disapprovingly from behind her desk.

One of the single most important emails in the entire history of emails had been sent by Yihaamon37@hotmail.com, sent four days ago. Three-Headed Snake of Discord threw his chubby hands in the air, waved his arms and fingers about, and shouted, "Glory glory, if there is any glory, glorify me in me darkest hour! I mean, holy mother fucking monkey-flung flying shit bits and tittles, this is huge! And to think, the world knew about it before me."

Three-Headed Snake of Discord exited the library with a friendly wink toward librarian and librarian patrons.

Most of the players are in the know. Who gotta know now? A big fat cow set fire to an ugly and unpainted barnyard fence by covering the fence with gasoline and igniting and laughing harder than any cow had ever laughed before.

Three-Headed Snake of Discord danced on glass and this is what he said:

"Yo mothaa of tha fucking lion patrol, I ain't listenin' to that Disney shit. Eat your own mother then fuck her when you puke dat bitch. Slap her three times to Tuesday. I'm a street performer!"

Three-Headed Snake of Discord attacked random citizens sidewalk-walking with his discordic shenanigans.

"Crazy brown tea!" shouted Snake at lady-with-shopping-bag. "Crazy brown tea coming after me! Crazy brown tea coming after me! Chase the flowers and their powers will be yours. Suck in the wind, woman. Take that polluted air to heart. Just don't let the heart turn black."

The woman walked on, disoriented but filled with a greater quantity of wisdom. The wisdom would be useful always.

A dais desiccated the husk. The husk rotted away.

"Blackness is rotting everything," claimed the rottenness. Torrential rottenness was a natural occurrence to the goonies. Said Three-Headed Snake of Discord, "They own everything! Hide away your blue jays. The haystack is listening out for the command. Take my hand boy and I will guide you to the light.

"The light is the answer. Hope is the answer. Compassion, they think compassion is the

answer.

“Love thy neighbor as thyself,
“As thyself.”

He was still dancing when the swat team got called in and everything went berserk. Berserk like the berserker madness of the berserker warriors.

“Bandanas they should wear. We need to know when the warrior is approaching,” said Three-Headed Snake of Discord. That was all that had to be said.

Crazy late-night phone calls lead to dead ends.

Ceremonially smoking his last cigar, Lucky Smiles walked into a convenience store to get a slurpy. It was a brave and adventurous moment.

The toys flew straight through the roof.

It ended there/

I’m following in the footsteps of a mountain's trembles. The mountain trembles because it knows that which does belong and that which does not.

The fox called on the hound. She said, “See here, hound. I’ve got protection.” One thousand foxes ripped apart the hounds. It was a wild and crazy terror-filled experience. It hadn’t happened in decades In what ways could this new experiment go wrong?

If it was new, how could it have happened? But that’s the thing, it hasn’t happened backwards yet. Some fellow must try the sidewinder. Now if only he could find his fly swatter...

The footsteps padded on late into the night. Not only was it irritable, it was irrational. Why walk circles all your life? But that was what they seemed to be doing upstairs. Moving this here, then here again, then here. It was sort of ridiculous, if you thought about it in the proper light.

The Three-Headed Snake of Discord decided to become a sample maker. He worked at Costco. The rules were quite flexible. One day, he would master the fine art of learning to sample pictography.

A betrayal had occurred. It was all on the one which who whom on after preceding the proceedings of him could nameless confirm. Holding the rabbit, a capture achieved by the hunter.

The pooping tree swayed and sprayed gallantly one day as a gorgeous package arrived. Before the women could respond, Agent Fielding leaped and chirruped, and a faery flew at an incredible pace. Through dreams and fancy and into the den flew the faery. Our Boy Henry was waiting lazy-grinning and eager-eyed.

Billionaire Carlson Cartwheel Turner was the guest speaker at Hearnmouth College of Business. Unbeknownst to the faculty, a faculty eager to listen in on Carlson's speech to learn all sorts of useful business tips and make their own millions to billions, Carlson Cartwheel Turner had come prepared to conduct a theological discussion.

He was saying, "For a religion of freedom cannot be fully understood by beings suffering from the mental limitations we suffer from today and tomorrow, as the world's influence limits at least to some extent our development. Still, a religion of freedom, following the proper struggle, may be partially understood and harnessed to gain a greater understanding... This greater understanding is freedom, we may assume. But of course it must always be a choice.

"I will always be the first to admit nothing may be proven. Even evidence is limited by the distractions of the procurers of the evidence, since nothing that fails to draw the procurer's attention will be paid any attention. Some things, however, may be established as more likely than other things.

The key, then, to unlocking the most probable reality must be to struggle for an objective weighing of the evidence... A weighing which can only be conducted by the subjective human mind. But if the human mind must always be subjective, might not it be possible that, in struggling to understand our own subjectivity, we may gain not only a deeper understanding of self, not only an objective interpretation of self's inclinations, but also a deeper understanding of what, if anything, exists *behind* it all? Digging further and further into the depths of consciousness, would it be out of the question that we might discover something yet deeper?

"If there is a single, stable, correct interpretation of reality, we cannot arrive at it as we are now. We cannot arrive at what I would like to call "dry cement" simply because we are finite beings too easily corrupted by an infinity of choices and influences. On the other hand, we may very well arrive upon the *most likely reality*, a kind of "wet cement", if you will, by weighing the evidence and including amongst the evidence *our own subjectivity*. If we understand our own subjectivity we have a much greater chance of correctly interpreting evidence.

"Now, the religion I was discussing earlier would be much different than any existing religion in that it would be inhuman. It would have to be inhuman because it would be a revelation beyond total human comprehension. And anyway, what is considered human, what is referred to as human nature, has much more to do with instinct and impulses of the flesh than desires of the spirit, or true consciousness, of mankind. The ultimate goal of a religion of freedom would be the liberation of spirit. Consciousness expansion would be primary. Furthermore, a failure to expand from the limitations placed on one's consciousness would be slavery; a failure until death in this respect would mean eternal slavery. A failure until death would mean a failure ever to really live, for what is life without freedom?

"It is only fair, then, to at least attempt a definition of freedom. Freedom is a comprehension of self, leading ultimately to a becoming self, and then a comprehension of surroundings, and then a comprehension of things existing outside surroundings. If there were ever a creator, as I imagine, then this creator must have been expressing itself. Understanding creator, therefore, must lead to a deeper understanding of self, ad visa versa.

"I am of course talking about..."

A bullet pierced the front, then the back, of Carlson Cartwheel Turner's skull. As the body dropped, two or three students came suddenly to understand the message. It was a moment of enlightenment designed to lead to more enlightenment.

Lucky Smiles was kicking back a few with his bestest gal Helena when the bar erupted into violence. He said, "Helena, I think I'm starting to feel the whiskey. How about a brawl?"

Helena said, "Let's go outside instead. I feel like puking."

As the vomit did profusely flow, Smiles tapped his girl on the back. He said, "I've never in my life gone through that much Bourbon before."

Helena said, "Lucky, you silly, we were drinking whiskey." She wiped the dribble from her cheek and passionately embraced with puke-breath her lover.

There would be more embracing later on into the morning. "For now," announced Lucky with chivalrous pride, "I've a monster to slay! Terry-ho!"

Helena wanted to know, as Lucky was wandering off, "What's Terry got to do with any of this?"

Dawn. Dawn of the sun. Dawn of the runs in Starchy Stockings(meaningless gibberish). Dawn with red hair poses for comic book artists.

It was dawn when Lucky began the hunt for the night-beast. It was a bad time to begin such a hunt. He gave up on the hunt and had some drunken sex with an old girlfriend/prostitute.

Then he woke up.

The hunt commenced once more!

Lucky Smiles found the bastard at a ghetto gas station called King's Helmet.

The bastard was a mutant lurching Italian-Spanish fellow called Sir Widecrack Wisecrack. He was a used sponge dealer hopelessly addicted to crack and heroin and bottled chess of the American variety and brand new sponges. He was a might bit successful in the used sponge business and this was good because he needed sponge money to buy more sponges and things besides sponges.

Word was Sir Widecrack Wisecrack had crossed the thin line between crazy killer and crazy mother fucking whore-killing psychopathic doggy-kicking shit-fucker. Lucky Smiles had heard as much from a variety of reliable money-grubbing rumor mills. Just to make sure word was truth, Lucky waited inside the gas station buying cigarettes for two hours watching Sir Widecrack Wisecrack in the hopes of tracking the bastard night-monster across deadly unknown territories and catch Sir Widecrack Wisecrack attempting evil deeds.

Sure enough, after two hours, Sir Widecrack Wisecrack padded off. Lucky Smiles followed at a distance. Lucky Smiles was a master tracker. Tension built up torrentially. Torrential tension continued escalating. Wisecrack spotted a prostitute -- and charged!

Luckily Lucky happened to be a damned fast runner. Lucky lunged and stabbed with a cheap pocket knife into the back of Sir Widecrack Wisecrack's sweaty neck.

In Richmond there existed a homeless sage. The sage prowled the darkened paths and the perilous rocks of the Bell Island nights. He enjoyed as much the rejuvenating warmth of Bell Island days, or the cool and exotic comfort of Bell Island storms. He liked watching the waves crash and clash. He liked watching those tranquil places in the water. He had climbed high hills and power plants and the fence on the other side of the bridge entrance to the island.

This bum was known as Samuel to frequent visitors. That or the crazy bum. Whatever name they called him, they respected him. A few even knew him. Samuel was a friendly man. He was always ready to spin a tale or a philosophy, so long as there were ears willing to listen. Those brave or curious enough to talk with Samuel the Sage always exited conversation with a feeling of personal metamorphosis.

Samuel knew the answer to many mysteries. This one particular afternoon, he was pondering the mystery of doom. In particular, he was pondering the mystery of the doomed.

"Can they be saved?" Samuel wondered aloud. "Can they be saved or have they doomed themselves? Does anyone decide to live the life of a slave? Does anyone, consciously or otherwise, come right out and pick, given the choice intellectual and spiritual freedom or an infinity of nothing, of clever illusions imitating something without really amounting to anything, of oblivion? Does anyone choose oblivion? The oblivious, do they all choose oblivion?"

Samuel paced back and forth across a shore of smooth gray rocks. There were a few others on the rocks. Visitors making themselves at home, as visitors should, after all. A few people were playing in the water.

Samuel asked a woman in a pink bathing suit, "If there is choice, when is the decisive moment when the choice must be made? Death? Is it that? Is not choosing a choice? If so, there are those that do choose, but only after a while. In that case, there is no decisive moment. Thank you for your assistance."

The woman in the pink bathing suit gave Samuel a funny look and turned around. She walked up to her friends and began a normal conversation. She needed some normal to negate the weird.

Samuel resisted the temptation to gaze eternally at the beautiful ass crease in the pink bathing suit and

Samuel went on. "There is no decisive moment, but there must be limited time to choose. Otherwise, nothing is certain, none *can* perish, and life is without meaning. Those that perished should be mourned. Oh, the sorrow! That some perish, that so many perish, that any perish! But if there were not the possibility of doom, there would not be the possibility of choice. And choosing, maybe

choosing means choosing correctly. That moment when everything clicked, the clicking was thanks to circumstance, and it is thanks in part to circumstance that I choose.

"Circumstance cannot be blamed for everything. Even circumstance is subordinate to the whim of consciousness, for any being the slightest bit conscious of *anything* has a particular perception because of that consciousness. That perception is the determining factor in how the choice is made. The choice is made based on how the perceiver *chooses* to perceive the circumstance. A paradox, at last! I must be getting closer to the truth."

Samuel scratched the white hairs topping his head. He meditated upon his own discourse.

"Only the chooser can choose," said Samuel. "No person can liberate another person. No person can choose for another person. The person must choose liberation. Liberation must be something beyond the person's normal reaches, otherwise the choice would seem obvious, and be made by all... but I'm rambling. What line of thought was I exploring?"

Samuel scratched his head again. Scratching helped get his head right.

"Ah, yes," Samuel said. "The person must choose. The most I can do for any person, then, is to show the person that choice exists. The person must figure out for individual self what the choices are."

Something strong and fast pushed Samuel over the rocks and into the raging river. For an instant, Samuel had forgotten about the danger, and the danger had found him.

Agent Fielding ripped straight into his fruitful reward, a reward ripe for ripping. The roof of the package combusted into so many cardboard fragments. The contents of the glorious prize were well worth examining. Such a bounty became revealed as had never been observed by our Agent Fielding.

A pawn, yes, but a pawn of the highest degree. So much was being staked on the predictability of incompetence. Perhaps our Agent might surprise them all.

It was weapons, of a sort. A belt of daggers; 3" blades, 2" hilt, made for throwing. They would follow any target from any distance. And they would yield such accuracy. And somehow, legend claimed, the daggers of 23 were ripe for 23 perfect shots. There were but six daggers. As throws be made, somehow, blades find their way back to the thrower's hand.

And there was a bracelet to protect him from the demons of the tunnel. All the signs pointed to a journey into the tunnel. The tin can tunnel kicked so far across the flooded ditches until stabilized as a bridge. It was a gate that could only be opened with the proper magic. The bracelet held the magic.

To the tunnel, then. Agent Fielding was destined for that other world across.

Agent Fielding was headed first for the island city. It would be in Chrystal he would discover the gate into the tunnel.

Agent Trevor was sporting the glittering spiked shoulder pads and the heavy hanging chain and the spurred black leather boots of the vengeful flame-headed role model of his childhood. And he carried a sawed-off double-barrel shotgun at his side in a nifty brown sheath. He could draw that bitch faster than quicksilver. He had named his gun Sara, after a woman he had never known.

Trevor was throttling a black Harley he had only recently managed to master. Master it he did indeed, however, for he was a traffic-weaver and a runner from the vanguard. The vanguard of Carlson Cartwheel Turner's servants ready to slay a successful assassin. But Trevor was too fast for swords and pistols that night. Agent Trevor was a black blur and a flowing blond hair-tailed comet. He slipped through a river of traffic like he was parting the Red Sea.

It was a run, all right. It was a race against unseen forces. The mission was not yet complete. There was still one target crosshairs for elimination.

Or at least, the crosshairs were moving.

An ice cream bar of the caramel variety was available for purchase at a nearby drugstore. Our

Boy Henry took a stand in order to walk out to the drugstore. Little time elapsed between departure and arrival and return. Phases in a sojourn made merely to satisfy a hunger.

The opium faery landed on Our Boy Henry's shoulder when the emaciation began. Now the opium faery was landing on Our Boy Henry's shoulder as the emaciation came to a close. An empty belly filled quickly when introduced to the wonderful carbs of dairy delight.

Whispered the opium faery into Our Boy Henry's ear, "A package has been received out by the pooping tree."

"At last," said Our Boy Henry, "Agent Fielding has been released from the vigilance of his watch."

Said the opium faery, "It is so. Unfortunately, the comfort of the watch leaves with the release. Dangers gather in Fielding's future. He is to cross dark waters, then dark lands, then a dark tunnel into mysteries. He is to stumble through things which have ensnared both the brave and the wise of the past."

Our Boy Henry gave a solemn nod. He said, "Traveling for Fielding will mean traveling for me. The visions warned Fielding would be headed this way. For now, there is time to wait. Track the bumbler at your leisure until he enters the city. Report back here at such a time."

Our Boy Henry injected the heroin. His faery exited in a sputter of wings.

Pope Joshi fluttered and threw back his head. He coughed twice. He furiously, desperately, roughly, wiped the snot from beneath his gaping nostrils. Long hairs twittered together within the nostrils.

Glares flared up behind wide eyes. Spectators appeared somewhat confused.

Pope Joshi said, "Such tragedy! The world is erupting into madness. Violence everywhere. World affairs going straight into chaos. How could we have let this happen? The end is near."

"Perhaps," said Agent June.

"Probably," said Alfredo.

"Probably," said Pope Joshi. "Now, then. What are we going to do about it?"

"Something serious," said Agent June.

"Something terribly spiritual and dogmatic," said Alfredo.

"Spiritual indeed," said Pope Joshi. "And things are certainly something serious. This matter will require intense concentration. Summon up a council of popular religious type folk. We should mull things over with religious type folk."

"Yes," said Alfredo. "That would be best. But only the best of the Church, of course."

"Of course," said Agent June. "I'll get right on that," said Agent June.

"And you, Alfredo," said Pope Joshi. "Search the library, Alfredo. Find out all you can about this Abel's Gospel. Search the Internet, too. I want a massive pile of papers placed upon my desk by the week's end. You will, of course, verbally summarize everything in the papers upon delivery."

Love was in the air. The mended hearts of yesteryear had placed lingering connections, lingering feelings, and a lingering touch upon the scales against the negative. The weight had come out in their favor. Romancing would carry over on into all the trying days to come.

A tart named Chelsea was singing to the passing sailors at the docks. One gruff sailor took Chelsea in his gruff arms and bloodied her tightest hole with various memorably painful insertions. The insertions were a compensation for a penis of the starved maggot variety. Chelsea gave up on sailors that night.

The sailor's name was Fielding. He was a heartless one at times. He took no pleasure save in the pleasure of his own pleasure. He would find within the city many other pluckable young whores. None would scream as musically as Chelsea.

Lucky Smiles was unawares as to the doings of newcomers. He was distracted by a loudly pulsating heart. He spent his days lazing around the house smoking hashish with flawless Helena. They conducted many glorious perversions together. The walls shook late on into the night.

Helena had a skin soft as silk with muscles lean and hard beneath. Her legs could do anything.

Oh, her legs could do anything.

Hair dripped from her head in liquid black tendrils. As she screamed and as he screamed and as the ground moved, tendrils slipped back from the face of the goddess and caught behind her little rounded ears. Glistening flesh succumbed not to weariness.

There was a wedding conducted by an Anabaptist named Chaplain.

The breeze caressed the smooth sea. Gulls rode that breeze.

The real trouble came when Fielding found his can. He entered the tunnel well equipped for the journey, poorly equipped for the mystery. There were things crawling through the thick muck of the tunnel. It was muck thick on the ground and thick on the ceiling. It was a slowly dripping yellow muck, a tranquil brown muck, and a smelly dull gray muck. The crawlies came close to Agent Fielding. Not too close. The bracelet on Fielding's arm radiated a throbbing purple when any of the crawlies came too close.

Our Boy Henry learned of the disturbance before Lucky Smiles. Our Boy Henry had his eye on the sky focused most of the time on Agent Fielding. Our Boy Henry knew what a dangerous journey Fielding was daring. Our Boy Henry would dare the same without the protection. For Our Boy, no protection would be required.

He simply drifted through the threads and he was in that land. He had been there so many times before. Laughing and shrieking silently, and watching the drifting flowers and the little ones everywhere. It was where he had found his faery. It was not an easy place to be. It was a beautiful place to be.

The beauty was in the colors and the smells. The colors ran together like jars of paint spilled out over a table, wet paint left alone to linger and blend and bubble a little. The colors were dark purples and bright greens and yellows shooting through as lightning. The colors were hypnotic explosions here and peaceful combinations of cool greens, cool blues, hot oranges over there.

The smells! Henry's nostrils soaked in the smells slowly, let sweet pies and foreign spices and ginger and exotica captured creep up into the depths of his nose. His lids fluttered and he swayed back and forth concentrating on the goodness, on the pleasure of the smells.

Little people lived in little trees in little tree houses. The little people watched all without once considering interfering. To them, big matters were best left with big people. The show, however, was always an appreciated entertainment. Windows worked like televisions. In many of the little people tree houses, couches surrounded windows, families spent dinner and most of the day sitting on the couches.

Agent Fielding was around, somewhere. Our Boy Henry's sensitive nostrils detected the Illuminati detective.

Our Boy Henry was not the only one detecting. Lucky Smiles sensed the disturbance in the magic behind the city. It was a sensation that arrived as a cramp in Lucky's side.

Lucky wouldn't interfere. He had never gone to the land beyond. At least, he hadn't been but once, and that was years ago. The scariest day in his entire life.

Agent Fielding was journeying. Nothing more. He had no real goal in mind. He had no substantial reason for being where he was. He had a strong suspicion he was headed in the right direction. That was all.

Our Boy Henry appeared before Agent Fielding. This was intentional. Such power fermented within the chest of Our Boy Henry. Precision was always likely.

Agent Fielding asked, "Are you the one I've come for?"

Our Boy Henry said, "Nay, sir. 'Tis I that's come for thee."

Agent Fielding scratched his head. He said, "I've never received any visitors before."

"You're a pawn," said Henry. "My heart bleeds for the pawns. I was a horrible chess player once. In life, I was a pawn once. Nobody enjoys being the dispensable puppet. Why is it, then, that there are so many puppeteers? Oh, I can't stand for it. For myself, I've set out to cut some strings."

Said Agent Fielding, "Man, stop talking that nonsense."

"You're a dull one," said Henry. "Oh, you're a dull one, but what harm is there in that? Stupidity is not a criminal offense. You deserve mercy as much as any man. Which is to say, good sir, you don't deserve mercy at all. Come, take my hand."

"What madness is this?" asked Agent Fielding. "I don't have time for you. I am on a mission."

"Aye, a mission," said Our Boy Henry. "My dear sir, you've been assigned the mission called death. Will you accept this blackness? You aren't ready."

"I'm ready for anything!" shouted Agent Fielding. "You have no idea the training I've survived."

"You aren't in training anymore, Fielding. Come, take my hand."

The hand was there before him. Agent Fielding had to choose. Should he accept this merciful gesture? He sensed doing so would be a betrayal against the agency for which he cared so much. The hand seemed right. Something about the hand seemed right. Agent Fielding reached out his hand...

Ziaaeeiri gasped.

Fingertips touched, it's just too much, the world turned. The world readied itself to pounce upon the incompetent ass transport attempting with long ears and a stiff back to carry everyone else's load. Henry was not that person.

Agent Fielding found himself within the deepest darkest depths of the opium den. He looked at Henry and asked, "This is your layer?"

Henry smiled brightly. He lightly brushed his hair and tightly wound a tale. It was a tale of much truth. Henry said, "I know myself. I know what I was and what I am. I know that I could be more, that there will always be more me to discover. The thing I don't know is how to escape this trap I've made."

With that, he plunged the needle into his arm. A little woman with wings landed on his shoulder. He kissed the soft blue hair flowing in waves from her narrow little head.

The lizards chanted to the winged serpents in the East. The East used its magic to soak in the blood of the monkey, but only in the jungle. It mattered little so long as the blood was mammalian, and so long as there were humans near by. Human beings soaked through the lizard skin like a reflection coming to focus on a shaken clear water surface.

New bloodlines surged electric through the cultural chains. The Europeans and the world coming under influences not quite outer-worldly but yet Not-Of-This-World. The influences did spread until the network was a cage and the bars were everywhere. Everywhere above, for the cage was a sphere ensnaring the will of the people of the world.

The world's influence, as sinister as any, lingered quietly beneath alien influences.

Corruption shot like black veins through it all.

Ziaaeeiri gasped. The hallway glared in his direction. A true vision at last? Ziaaeeiri's raised hands and arms and suspended them at his sides. His head fell forward. His eyes became black as pavement. His smile spread to cartoon proportions.

The corpse of Henry Miller was lecturing somewhere in the background. Really, not lecturing at all. Exploring and expanding as always in a language beyond everyone, sitting atop Kafka's castle and sprinkling about the dust of invisibility. It was changing, the castle. It wasn't anymore a creation of Kafka at all. And the students saw it happen.

Background noise, all of it. Noise, all of it. What was important was Ziaaeeiri and his news. Not even Janet Walters could kill the glory of the glorious.

The Illuminatus Primus was waiting all ears in an adjoining room. Never before had the marble floor glowered so brilliantly beneath the embers of many fancy wall torches.

Said Ziaaeeiri, "A pawn has been snatched from our grasp through the workings of a diagonal assassin."

"The bishop must be identified," said Illuminatus Primus. Then, "Where was the vision staged?"

It was so difficult for Ziaaeeiri to trace. He had traveled so rarely. He was forced to backtrack into the thick of it.

...

Finally, vibration cut the silence.

"Somewhere in Chrystal," said Ziaaeeiri, "there is a den of faeries and men. Within this dark den you shall discover both the pawn and the pawn-snatcher. Beware, this one is stronger."

"None too strong for my grasp," said Illuminatus Primus.

"Probably," agreed the drifting far-off voice of Our Boy Henry.

The spider webs were getting pretty sticky. Too much prey was getting stuck in the invisible threads. Too many spiders were weaving into one another's tapestries. It was miraculous how they weaved. Patterns connecting into structures coiled around the bars.

Helena and Lucky strolled leisurely down the sidewalk. Fingertip occasionally brushed against fingertip as swinging arms pulled close then ripped apart.

The pair visited the park and drank of a bottle of sweetest honey mead. A crescent moon buried its chin beneath a horizontal gray beard. A few stars twittered behind the beard.

The park was a paradise of tall rocks and dirt paths into thin woods and high hills. It was not a large park. It had a field of grass with benches for sitting. It had rocky beaches for peaceful meditation. It had areas unexplored but easily located. It was large enough.

The birds were drifting. They were watchful creatures.

Agent Fielding looked from side to side, top to bottom, then in and out. His eyes were still adjusting when he tripped over a body sprawled across the floor. The body shouted up insults. Soon, the body was once more at rest.

An opium faery landed on Agent Fielding's shoulder. The faery asked, "What are you going to do now?"

"What am I supposed to do?" asked Agent Fielding.

"I've been watching you," said the faery. "I'm certain you haven't a clue."

"I didn't need a faery to tell me that," said Agent Fielding.

The opium faery kissed Agent Fielding on the cheek and flew away. Agent Fielding scratched his head.

Three-Headed Snake of Discord was posing as a gabbler outside of a gas station one day, talking about the gadflies, when a blonde woman in a gray convertible pulled up beside him and asked, "What is all this gabble?"

"Why, shenanigans," said Three-Headed Snake of Discord. "The importance of shenanigans

must not be overlooked."

The blonde woman asked, "Would you like a ride to a secluded spot so that we might perform hot and sweaty shenanigans together?"

"Certainly," said Three-Headed Snake of Discord. He hopped into the convertible and said, "I'm not one to refuse any sort of shenanigans."

With a screeching of tires, the gray convertible zoomed out of the gas station parking lot.

Uncomfortable metal springs plagued the mattresses of the world. This caused many restless nights for the masses. It was a plot to corrupt the dreams. Secrets were being sent through the dreams.

The water supplies were everywhere being polluted. Drinkable water was harder and harder to come by. The wasteland was expanding.

Plagues were being created in all government laboratories. Much creative energies were being focused on such projects. Viruses and bacteria became the clay of the artists of the New World.

Maggots were hatching in the meat. Vegetables were burning in the sun, then drowning in the acid rain. Following an eleven-year drought it rained nearly every day of every month year-round.

The world was getting hotter, then colder, then hot again. Sometimes, the world was strangely tepid. Actually, the world was developing an ambiguity to defeat the minds of the planet's brightest scientists.

Only a silent minority knew the truth. Only the silent minority and a few loud-mouthed bums. And some other people, too. The point is, the majority far outnumbered the minority. Where there was change, things were different from the way they used to be.

The worst of the world's troubles came when toilets everywhere refused to flush. The world smelled of much poo that day. A tree of infinite pooping was responsible. And why not? After all, there was no longer a watchful agent around to keep the tree from resorting to evil shenanigans.

Agent Fielding was considering things. He thought, "Deep down, wasn't I happy standing by the tree? Wasn't I happy waiting? Oh, and I was so pleased when my package arrived! How has my organization ever done me wrong in the past?"

"They haven't, in the past," said Our Boy Henry from a bed of pillows. "Your presence here is an act of faith in me."

"Why should one blind faith replace another?" asked Agent Fielding.

Our Boy Henry smoked a little opium through a long wooden pipe.

"I should leave this place," said Agent Fielding. "Here, I am merely relying on the word of others. Elsewhere, I might pave my own golden path."

Said Our Boy Henry, "You are already more enlightened."

Agent Fielding found the door. He walked outside. He embraced the rays of the sun with open arms. A warm and jovial sensation filled him.

The new day had come.

The best of the Church of Dogma were to be invited to attend a special meeting concerning the meaning and direction of the present world. The meeting took place on the Fourth of July and much jubilation preceded serious discussion.

Frank Fruitford brought up the first serious topic. He said, simply enough, "Incest!"

"Yes," said Gregory Braveheart. "That one's always pretty dark sin. Incestuous relations must be condemned, now and always."

A circle of approval went `round the table: "Here, here!" "Yes, of course." "Certainly right sir." "Aiy!" "Yeah, okay." "Right on my brother."

John James Smith brought up another important topic. He said, "What about that heaven and hell situation? Hell's kind of a bummer lately, don't you think?"

Once again, there was unanimous support. Pope Joshi declared the wor(l)d "hell" stricken from the Church's vocabulary.

"And what's our stance on Armageddon?" asked Cardinal Richardson.

"We're against it!" declared Robert Anton Halberd.

"Here, here! Yes, of course. Certainly right, sir. Aiy! Yeah okay. Right on, my brother!"

"All right, boys and girls," said Pope Joshi. "Are you ready to save the world?"

"Herehereyesofcoursecertainlyrightsiraiyyeahokayrightonmybrother."

The Church prepared to put a stop to the end of the world. Agent June would be a key player in this purpose.

Alfredo too knew of things to do.

A man named Fred would passively monitor the situation in Chrystal City.

And there were many important pieces beyond the grasp of the Church.

Meanwhile, a branch of Richmond writers struggled to make an impact on the bitter bars encaging the world. Bitter bars created by the world. Some of them had escaped. Their hands were outstretched. "Come, take my hand," they were saying. They wanted to liberate the minds of their generation.

A few hands would touch. Conversion would be slow. It is so much harder to make a conversion to freedom. A conversion to anything else is so simple, and so common. Any good idea besides freedom often yields the grapes of easy acceptance.

These writers hoped one day to be discovered because the masses needed a thinning out. There should be no more masses. The boundaries should wither away and get sucked into the wind. It could happen. It would take patience and dedication and an occasional surrender to subconscious currents and an occasional rowing up the streams.

Minds cannot be liberated in the general. Possibly, minds cannot be liberated in the plural. Only the mind, your mind, can ever be free. Only the person, only you can ever escape. There is more for you to discover. All you have to do is put everything on the table, risk everything in the search. The first task, then, must be to find the meaning of everything.

Agent Trevor thought to find his target lazing about Our Boy Henry's den of faeries and other magick. Agent Fielding had flown the coop. Ah, well. Where had the dullard to hide?

But Agent Fielding was a recently acquired target. He was scheduled for elimination merely because he had been allowed to escape. None should be permitted to escape. The slightest twitch towards the path to escape might corrupt others to join in the walk across the path. It would be terrible if the masses disintegrated.

That was how they saw things.

Things must be easy for the secret societies to order. Things must be easy for the open societies to order.

Our Boy Henry had freed a pawn from pawndom. This was an unforgivable sin.

Our Boy Henry was trapped regardless. He *knew* freedom but he couldn't reach it. His mind was pulling... At least he had the good fortune of suffering only from those trappings of his own design. And he could direct a few unenlightened strays towards the proper path...

A threat, a danger. No need to let Our Boy Henry go on living. What purpose would be served in that?

Agent Trevor touched the double barrel of his shotgun to Our Boy Henry's temple. A faery trailed quicksilver as she snatched the shotgun away. No matter. Agent Trevor, as an executioner, was unparalleled. He always had another weapon.

A chain, a chain of much symbolism, intertwined `round the neck of Our Boy Henry and strangled until Henry fell pale and limp upon the dusty floor.

Agent Trevor left the opium den in search of more easy prey. His nose twitched. He followed the scent of warm reawakened blood.

Three-Headed Snake of Discord thanked his ride, a woman happy to service with a smile, and he took to the streets again. There was such bliss in the mere act of walking along at a steady pace. It was so easy to ride the pavement on foot. So much was connected in the downtown where he was headed.

He was headed for the center of the world. A city of distress and adventure and joy and other supreme emotions and other supreme experiences. A city of exquisite surprises. He was headed for Chrystal. People in need of his company were waiting there and they didn't even know it.

Two of those people had found bliss in the eternal arms of love. Lucky Smiles and Helena were splitting a vanilla milkshake and just chilling on the sidewalk. Surprisingly, both were out of the loop when it came to the big events going down everywhere. They didn't know 23 or Illuminati or maggots in the meat or the upcoming Agent Trevor vs. Agent Fielding battle of wits to the death. Still, they knew enough.

Lucky Smiles knew the city. The city knew Lucky Smiles. He had a niche around every street corner. Even if he couldn't observe the patterns, he had a pretty good sense for the big web.

He had his triple corona and also the good fortune of a massive chocolate blunt to share with his girl Helena. Helena was good at sucking on the big blunts. She was always up for a nice creamy dank stick to suck on.

It didn't even matter to Lucky. Lucky had all the hookups. He knew how to get the creamy deluxe. He knew enough to hook his girl up right.

And there were other considerations. The safety of the patrons of Chrystal. Lucky carried heavy responsibilities on his shoulders. He kept them in a sack he carried with pleasure. It was just another burden of love.

So odd Lucky felt when he saw a man in leather and spikes ride by on an angry hog. He sensed something was up. Danger was in the air. He got a faint impression of the crosshairs that would one day soon be focused upon his own head. Chance alone diverted the crosshairs that night to a more immediate target.

Lucky and Helena embraced beneath the stars and soaked in raging currents of lust. They found an abandoned sailboat on the beach. It serviced as the makeshift love nest to climax the night.

Ginger Flamingo Georgian Cushion Lover Batkinson mourned daily the disappearance of Helena, a favorite whore. She never should have accepted those tasty crack rocks Lucky traded her. She never should have arranged that meeting at the arcade.

"Damn," said Ginger Flamingo Georgian Cushion Lover Batkinson.

Janet Walters sought to make a contribution to the game. She asked Illuminatus Primus Jonas Kohan Khan, "What work have you for me?"

"Little," said Jonas Kohan Khan. "Perhaps you could locate a slippery snake and squeeze until the snake is dead."

"Perhaps," said Janet Walters. "Tell me more about this snake."

"He riddles and weaves, this one," said the Illuminatus Primus. "Do not let his trickery ensnare your spirit."

"My spirit is fortified in cold stone," said Janet Walters.

"How sad," said dead Our Boy Henry's faery. She flew quickly from the scene, having absorbed much useful information.

Agent Fielding was splashing through mud puddles. His hickory brown pants could handle the rainwater. It was a minor annoyance, the dampness. Nothing compared to the stinging uncertainty of the nicheless existence he had so recently and so knowingly stepped into.

Agent Fielding knew nothing of Agent Trevor. That one was a grave mystery to all but the heads. The heads monitored Agent Trevor lest they be decapitated.

Agent Fielding turned down an alley lined with the wrinkled whores of decades past. They were goddesses once. Some of them were men once. In any case, they were nothing more than prunes anymore.

Agent Fielding tosses a few charity nickels into the air. Some landed heads up. Some of the prunes jumped for the coins. It seemed like so much change raining down upon the pavement. There was much clanging and clinging. In actuality, only \$.35 had been tossed.

The jaws of the agency were closing in. They were such vicious jaws, lined with so many razor teeth. Teeth were clenched as Trevor's hog pulled up to the end of the alley.

Trevor, Agent Fielding knew, was a foe. He was a black avenger waiting to prance upon any employee arrogant enough to quit the company. He was an Illuminati tool, really nothing more than a pawn with a powerful bite.

Agent Fielding turned and ran and as that motorcycle gave chase down the alley, he took sanctuary in an open garbage can. Trevor zoomed by without tasting first blood.

Eventually, Fielding would have to leave the trashcan. The best thing would be to do that right away. Fielding climbed out of the garbage. He made it around the corner of the alley before Trevor had time to turn his motorcycle. If only there was an opening...

A club! Fielding ducked into a room throbbing with dancers. He released his body to the vibes of the music.

Trevor parked his motorcycle beside the sidewalk. He walked into the club. It would be so difficult finding one within so many. Suddenly, the masses had become an obstacle to foil the contrivings of the mass-manipulators.

The club was point one for Fielding. Fielding even found time to do a few shots at the bar. All he had to do was watch out for Trevor. Should death in the form of black leather and chains and spurred boots and spiked shoulder pads appear, Fielding had only to dive into the throbbing crowd and lose himself to the currents of people flooding in and out of the club.

No, already, the crowd was thinning. It was getting early. People were heading home for comfort and sleep. Anyway, one building cannot hide a man for long.

Agent Trevor was guarding the exit. The back way out was off limits to club guests.

Fielding saw the hopelessness of his situation and he laughed. Fielding laughed and laughed until Agent Trevor cut Fielding's throat with an ice pick.

Elsewhere, Chelsea was having rough sex with a dirty john. She had forgotten all about Fielding the Sailor. Were she to hear about Fielding's death, the news would bring neither pleasure nor joy. Chelsea had, thanks to a world willing to direct the way, found apathy.

Murky waters coated a hard and rocky soil. When Fred's sailboat had beached itself upon that soil, he had considered it his duty to investigate the anomaly. As far as he knew, he had been sailing open sea. That he was now stuck upon a swampy two-inch deep sandbar seemed an odd mystery.

Many unusual things have occurred due to voyages home from Chrystal City. Rarely does anyone visit Chrystal with intentions less than unusual.

Fred exited his luxurious and usually reliable craft to explore surrounding terrain. Were his eyes to be trusted, the sandbar went on for miles.

It was an island of some kind. It was not any island he had ever heard of. Furthermore, it was completely submerged.

Fred traversed the filthy film of water coating the island. He walked within a contemplative

silence too dense for comfort. Something had ignited some spark within his mind, and the resulting forest fire was too much for him. Thought passed like light rays.

It was a beast, or a titan, or a god. It came to be standing before him. An instant earlier, he could see the horizon. Now, that tranquil line was obscured from view by this towering, black, walking, convulsing volcano? demon? sea monster? 'Twas a thing of size and girth, a thing of tentacles and jiggling flesh, a thing of shadows though the sun had already risen high that day.

"We have waited aeons for the coming days," spake the creature. Its voice echoed for miles without disturbing normal air or space, a voice echoing for miles within the mind, a voice to pierce the many miles of the many depths of the mind. It was a dark voice.

Fred knew not what to say.

"Perhaps, in the days to come, as ignorance everywhere peaks, a darkness shall return empty and all-consuming enough to set us free. We shall rule once more over the thinking beings of the cosmos. No more will we rely on the petty cults scattered across the face of this and other earths for occasional, temporary, limited escapes. Oh, no. The wrong barriers are diminishing, and when they are significantly damaged it will be Our Kind slipping through the cracks!"

A hand, four-fingered, moist, hard yet prone to jiggle, crusty around the knuckles, covered Fred's head and neck and chest and obscured vision and smell and hearing and breath. These sensations and other aspects of Fred's normally perceived reality were replaced, briefly, with an infinity of terrible slideshow visions and notions and depth-perceptions, whole perceptions focusing only on depth, and on the different attributes depth might be required to have.

Physically released and pushed by a will not his own, Fred walked back to his sailboat. He climbed aboard and sailed away from that place.

Lucky Smiles and Helena were sitting on a park bench. An old woman with a silk robe and a sagacious smile approached. The old woman sat farther down the wooden bench. She looked at Lucky and she looked at Helena and she said, "Hello, I'm Bird Lady."

"Hi," said Lucky.

"Hey there," said Helena.

Lucky asked, "Why do they call you Bird Lady?"

"Oh, they don't know what to call me," said Bird Lady.

Helena asked, "Why are you called Bird Lady?"

Bird Lady said, "I know everything about birds. I know other things, too. I am in the know."

"Oh," said Helena.

"Other things?" asked Lucky Smiles. He had never seen this woman before. He had never even heard of Bird Lady. It was at that instant he came to realize there were important people in Chrystal he didn't even know about.

"Other things," said Bird Lady. "It is because I am curious. I am a very curious person. Take that to mean anything you want."

"What are you curious about?" asked Helena.

"Today, I am curious about love. What do you suppose that word means?"

Helena said, "Love is often attempted, by poets and others, as some bizarre mixture of lust and affection. Love is an infinite thing that exists outside of circumstance. Love connects everyone regardless of rights and wrongs. Between two people, love is an eternal, absolute, unifying force."

"That is your definition?" asked Bird Lady.

"It is the best definition," said Lucky Smiles.

Bird Lady stood and walked away. She thought it best to leave the two lovers in peace.

Snake was rowing a canoe through some pretty choppy waters. The sea was a bitchy broad that night. She lifted up Snake's little boat and took it for a ride straight through hell. Waves as high as

the gods came crashing down on all sides. The boat had to be frantically drained or it would tip over. Sharks and other things lived in the wrestling waters.

It was an exiting exciting journey. It was as had been expected. Snake of Discord arrived upon a sandy shore of Chrystal City. He abandoned the canoe to the whims of the tides. He walked up and down the length of the beach. Eventually, he left the beach.

He exited the beach via a paved path into the heart of the city. The path went on and on. It split apart in fifty directions. It was a strand in an intricate woven tapestry. Snake followed that strand with an uncertainty completely lacking in any sense of bother.

Janet Walters was already on the island. She was sprinkling the tealeaves upon her water bowl in order to purchase a spell. The spell, successfully cast, revealed the location of *her* target. There beneath the tealeaves she saw the image of Snake walking the streets. Snake was just a hop, skip, and a mile away.

Janet Walters exited her comfortable one-story city apartment to give chase. She left the bowl and the tealeaves behind. She knew where to go. She would have to hurry.

She jogged down the sidewalk.

It would take mere moments to acquire the target.

Janet Walters was not like Trevor.

Where was Trevor, come to think of him? Focusing the crosshairs?

Yes, Trevor was standing on a roof focusing the crosshairs of his assault rifle. He was awaiting the arrival of two lovers. He had posted himself a building away from their abode. Coincidentally, it was in Trevor's general direction Three-Headed Snake of Discord was headed. Three cows rushing to the hammer.

Well, there are bulls and there are cows. If a person aims to knock off a cow, a person should be certain it's a cow he's knocking. Neither Snake nor Lucky nor Helena could fairly be termed "cattle".

Besides, three to two is pretty good odds.

Agent June was sucking Pope Joshi's wrinkly little cock out behind the garbage cans of Saint Michael's Cathedral when a voice rang through the outdoor air. "Joshi!" it shouted. "Pope Joshi! Where are you! I've urgent news to report!"

Luckily, the cum was already warming June's throat and drizzling down her chin. Joshi covered his cock and spun around his wheelchair. Agent June wiped her chin on her sleeve, licked her lips, and followed Pope Joshi into a Cathedral backdoor.

"Where were you?" asked Fred when he finally located the Pope. "I looked all over the cathedral, in and out."

Pope Joshi asked gruffly, "What about in and outs?"

After an awkward pause, Fred said, "I have news concerning the fate of the entire world!"

"Well, speak up," said Pope Joshi.

"In Chrystal City, sir, the war is being waged. The final battles have already begun. Our Anabaptist infiltrator Chaplain has reported so much activity... The rest I learned for myself by using the Mirror, then by sailing to the city."

Pope Joshi gasped. He said, "Use of the Mirror is forbidden except under the most extreme circumstances!"

"Yes," said Fred. "I wouldn't have done it if it weren't Armageddon."

"What about that place?" asked Pope Joshi.

"Nothing has happened there," said Fred. "Still, we all know the end is coming."

"We've taken a vote on that," said Pope Joshi. "We aren't going to let the world end."

Agent June noticed something strange about Fred. He seemed like a husk of a man sucked dry of all but the juice of artificial passion. His voice was mechanical, a mechanical imitation of human emotion with a lingering undertone of melancholy. And maybe it was her imagination, but she seemed to sense some lurking fear buried deep below every surface manifestation of Fred's personality.

"Well, something is certainly going to end," said Fred.

"Tell me more about the situation in Chrystal," commanded Pope Joshi.

"Key players a clashing head on. Many key players have already fallen. The outcome of this clash between players will determine the fate of the game. The strange thing is, there are still players totally ignorant of the game itself."

"Go on," said Pope Joshi.

"Well, the Illuminati are represented. So are the independents. We don't have any active players in Chrystal. If you don't send somebody at once, the Church will completely miss out on the final battle! Send a warrior, Your Holiness, or all is lost for the Church."

"I see," said Pope Joshi. "Agent June, fetch the Knights of the Hand at once! At once, I say!"

Agent June bowed and exited the Cathedral. She ran all the way to Spain and ordered the twelve Knights of the Hand to Chrystal for the final battle. The Knights of the Hand constructed a canoe and began steadily rowing towards the city.

Meanwhile, Trevor fired away at air. Trevor's bullets could outrun sound but they couldn't catch the merry Lucky Smiles, a dancer darting here to there with such speed. Trevor's aim was perfect every time. Every time, the bullet hit the pavement, forced up sidewalk or road, and stopped buried in the ground. Every shot missed the blurry target.

Trevor's eyes were fast. Those eyes could follow the bullets. Those eyes couldn't follow Lucky Smiles.

Wait, where had he gone? Lucky Smiles had vanished.

Janet Walters was monitoring the situation from a distance. She was going to hunt down Snake, as she had been ordered, but this opportunity had arrived most unexpectedly on the way to killing Snake. Now, Janet aimed to kill the woman Helena. Helena hadn't yet been touched. She'd ran into the apartment while Lucky distracted the bullets. Well, Janet Walters could get inside that apartment. The door was constructed of a weak wood easily combusted or kicked in.

Janet waited. Soon, the time would be right. But where was Lucky?

Clouds gathered overhead. The lightning rained down with the salt water. Angry thunder rumbled threats behind the lightning.

Trevor saw Lucky Smiles in the distance, looking up at the sky. Lucky was chanting to the sorrow of the city, calling on the tears of all the yesterdays, drumming a frantic beat on the sidewalk. Then he was gone again. A lightning bolt struck the rooftop next to Trevor. There stood Lucky, face red with the rushing angry blood pumping from a kettledrum heart.

Trevor dropped his rifle to swing a chain. He knew as he swung that chain that the time for dying had come.

"You'll never find it!" shouted Trevor as his neck went *snap!*

Below, the Three-Headed Snake of Discord was dancing in the rain.

Twelve knights arrived via canoe upon the shores of the city. They disbanded from the canoe and rushed into the storm. It was hard to see. There was so much diagonal rain. How would they ever find the battlefield in time?

Janet Walters rushed into Helena's apartment. The door wasn't locked. Helena was waiting with a loaded pistol. She fired three shots into Janet Walter's chest. The limp body severely stained the carpet.

There was one last earth-shattering crackle as twelve yellow bolts sizzled through the heavy metallic armor of the Knights of the Hand.

As the storm disbanded, Snake's mad laughter violently pierced the sudden calm. He continued dancing. Everyone in the city heard his cackle. And Lucky Smiles looked down at Snake and wondered. And Helena looked out at Snake and wondered.

Helena walked outside.

Lucky Smiles took the stairs to the bottom of the building and walked outside.

Three-Headed Snake of Discord ceased laughing. He looked from Lucky to Helena.

"You know," said Three-Headed Snake of Discord, "I'm not blessed in seeing the chaos. The chaos is everywhere so easy to see. I'm blessed in seeing through the chaos."

Snake reached into his coat. He retrieved a thick black book. He dropped the black book in the middle of the road. The book was entitled Abel's Gospel.

Snake said, "I really think you two should read this," then he walked away.

Introduction:

Abel's Gospel

I know that God is near as I write this, for I can feel his presence pressed against my skull.

The air is so sweet. The pressure is exquisite.

I was the first child, as far as I know. And my father, ah, the first to speak, the first to breathe, the first to be. So many things never were before his first footfall.

Eve and Adam, Mom and Dad, were the first to fuck. She was the first woman to bear children. Oh, my mother was beautiful. The first ray of feminine divinity.

I made my share of mistakes and they made theirs, I'll be the first to admit. But I'm only human, after all. If I hadn't fumbled, I never would have stumbled onto this vision. And how could I have foreseen the bloody betrayal?

God knows the story.

In the beginning, there was God. Then came the Light. As some strange irony of reality, the light bearer became an eternal symbol of nauseous darkness.

But I am starting too late. This story begins before the beginning.

Before the beginning, before before, there existed limitless consciousness. This consciousness existed and exists in a state of perfection, experiencing everything totally, from joy to sorrow, mercy to vengeance, and love. This consciousness satisfied the natural impulse of consciousness by creating.

The beginning occurred.

Matter, space, and life occurred. Conflicts and resolutions occurred, expansion occurred.

These things continue to occur as Creation develops.

Creation is self-expression. The Creator's greatest expression of self came in the form of soul. To the greatest of life forms was granted this thing, soul.

Soul is consciousness limited during life by flesh and the world. Soul is consciousness granted the freedom to struggle to develop or to exist in a state of stagnation forever. The development of

consciousness is the development of soul. The development of soul leads to a greater attunement with the Creator and a greater separation from the world.

The Creator expanded, expands forever within and without his creation while remaining separate from it.

Meanwhile, souls continue to struggle and the world and the flesh continues to corrupt.

There was a planet. Life on the planet was made diverse and plentiful. Placed in charge of the diversity was a lone conscious being. This being knew love, yet had no one on the same level with which to share this unifying force. For that reason, a piece of this being was made into another conscious being, and these two beings came to know one another. These two beings, united, came to share in triumph and misfortune. His was hers and hers was his.

Seduced by the world, seduced by a serpent, a serpent of power, a serpent of masculinity, a serpent of trickery, a serpent; it was simply a part of the world exercising its devious influence. ...

It was not long before the terrible void returned. The rift existed not only between my father and my mother, not only between them and their outcast son Cain, not only between them and their children, and me, their lost child... Not only that. The rift between Adam and God, and Eve and God, grew along with the rift between Adam and Eve. And soon, none living could see the other side of the chasm.

There were the children of Cain, and there were the children of Adam and Eve. And their children and their children's children. With every new generation, mankind grew further apart from their nurturing creator. They would have had infinity within their grasp had they but reached... But none were there to teach the way.

The angels, too, were having children.

I was blessed with the Way. That was because I was taken from the battlefield before its corrupting influence set in.

God told me the meaning of, A flesh completed...